

## Hoot by Carl Hiaasen

### Book Information

Carl Hiaasen, Hoot  
Quiz Number: 61464  
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292 Pages  
Book Level: 5.2  
Interest Level: MG

Roy, who is new to his small Florida community, becomes involved in another boy's attempt to save a colony of burrowing owls from a proposed construction site.

**Award:** Agatha Award; ALA Notable/Best Books; IRA's Teachers' Choice Award; Newbery Honor; Parent's Guide Book Award/ Honor Book; Smithsonian's Notable Book; Young Reader's Choice Award/Nominee

**Topics:** Adventure, Rescue/Save; Animals, Owls; Community Life, Environmental Issues; Recommended Reading, IRA - Young Adults' Choice; Recommended Reading, IRA/CBC Choice; Recommended Reading, Junior Library Guild Selection; Recommended Reading, YALSA Best Books for YA; Recommended Reading, YALSA Popular Paperbacks; U.S. States/Regions, Florida

### Main Characters

Beatrice Leep a tall girl with curly blonde hair, the stepsister of Mullet Fingers

Chuck E. Muckle a top-level executive at Mother Paula's All-American Pancake House

Dana Matherson a bully who torments Roy

David Delinko a police officer who investigates the vandalism at the Mother Paula's building site

Garrett a skateboarding friend of Roy

Kalo a trainer of guard dogs

Kimberly Lou Dixon former Miss America runner-up and actress who portrays Mother Paula in advertisements

Leroy "Curly" Branitt the supervising engineer of the Mother Paula's construction project

Miss Hennepin the vice principal of Trace Middle School

Mr. Eberhardt Roy's dad, who works for the Department of Justice

Mr. Ryan Roy's history teacher

Mrs. Eberhardt Roy's mom

Mullet Fingers the nickname of Napoleon Bridger Leep, a boy who wants to stop the development of the land where burrowing owls live

Roy Eberhardt a boy who is new to the community of Coconut Cove, Florida

### Vocabulary

**abandoned** having been left behind, usually purposely; deserted

**agitated** upset or troubled; stirred-up or excited; anxious or disturbed; lacking peace in one's mind; not calm; not at peace; having been put through a turbulent change

**commotion** a violent, troubled, or noisy activity or movement; a disturbance or disorder; an outburst, stir, or fuss; a confused movement

**demonstration** a public protest; a public display of group feelings

**encountered** met unexpectedly or by chance; met or confronted in battle; came upon or up against

**grimly** in a grave, serious, or unsmiling manner; in a sad, dark way; in a gloomy way; without hope; blackly; sourly; ironically; bitterly; glumly

**intently** with great focus or concentration; in a determined manner; with purpose or determination; closely

**intruders** unwelcome visitors or guests; trespassers

**involuntary** done without thought, will, or power of choice; done reluctantly or unwillingly; not under the control of the conscience; not involving thought or choice; unplanned; uncontrollable

**kiosk** a small structure with one or more open sides used to sell merchandise; a booth; a small area set off by walls for special use

**lunged** suddenly reached or thrust; pounced or swiped; moved quickly forward

**portable** able to be carried; movable

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**resume** to continue to do something that was once stopped; to take up again; to begin again; to restart; to begin anew

**surveillance** spying; close or secret observation

**vandal** someone who willfully or purposely defaces or destroys property

### Synopsis

Roy Eberhardt and his family, who have moved often because of Mr. Eberhardt's job with the Justice Department, have recently moved to Coconut Cove, Florida. One day while bully Dana Matherson is tormenting Roy on the school bus, a strange boy running along the sidewalk catches Roy's attention. Roy is determined to find out who the boy is. As he attempts to solve the mystery, Roy learns that the boy goes by the nickname Mullet Fingers and is the stepbrother of classmate Beatrice Leep. Beatrice has a tough exterior and plays on the soccer team. She is very protective of her stepbrother, who has been sent away to military school by his mother, who no longer wants him. Mullet Fingers has run away from school and lets only Beatrice know he is in Coconut Cove. He stays in an old ice-cream truck in an auto junkyard.

Later Roy learns that Mullet Fingers is the person responsible for various acts of vandalism to the future site of Mother Paula's All-American Pancake House. Mullet Fingers's clever pranks, including moving the survey stakes, putting small alligators in the portable toilets, and releasing snakes on the property, cause continuous delays in the start of construction. They also create several humorous dilemmas for the foreman, Curly Branitt.

Mullet Fingers takes Roy and Beatrice to the construction site to show them the reason he has been vandalizing the property, a pair of burrowing owls that are nesting there. Roy is sympathetic to the plight of the owls and decides to help. With advice from his father, Roy visits City Hall to check if Mother Paula's has secured the necessary permission to build on the site. He learns that the document he is looking for is missing. He explains the situation to his classmates, who ultimately show

support for the owls by joining him in a demonstration at the groundbreaking ceremony along with Beatrice and her soccer team. Mullet Fingers has stuck himself into an owl burrow with only his head showing to stop construction, and the other kids unite with him against the Mother Paula company. Because of this demonstration, construction is again delayed. With Mr. Eberhardt's help, it comes to light that Mother Paula's is hiding information. As a result, the restaurant can no longer be built on the site where the burrowing owls are nesting.

Through these events, Roy and Beatrice have become friends. Soon after the incident, Mullet Fingers leaves again, and only Beatrice knows where he is.

### Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

#### Inferential Comprehension

How did Officer Delinko's view of the construction of Mother Paula's All-American Pancake House change from the beginning of the story to the end?

*At first, he was determined to do his job by protecting the site and catching whoever was vandalizing it. After he saw the owls for himself, his opinion began to change. By the end of the book, he actually helped the demonstrators in their attempt to protect the owls.*

#### Constructing Meaning

What did Roy do to try to convince his father that standing up for the owls was the right thing to do?

*He showed his dad a picture and description of the burrowing owls, asked how his dad would feel if someone wanted to flatten his house, and reminded his dad of a time they had counted five horned owls in a tree.*

### Teachable Skills

**Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for**  
**Hoot**  
**by**  
**Carl Hiaasen**

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**Understanding the Author's Craft**

**Recognizing Cause and Effect**

**Comparing and Contrasting**

**Responding to Literature**