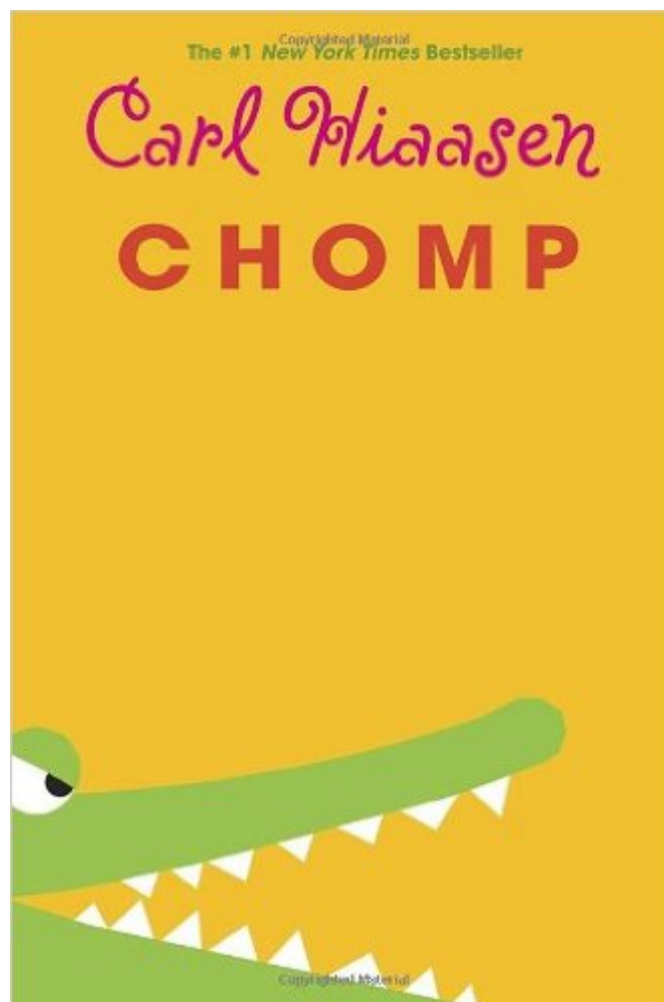


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# Chomp



## Synopsis

The hysterical #1 *New York Times* bestseller from Newbery honoree Carl Hiaasen featuring gators, snakes, bats that bite, and reality show hosts gone wild! When Wahoo Cray's dad—a professional animal wrangler—takes a job with a reality TV show called *Expedition Survival!*, Wahoo figures he'll have to do a bit of wrangling himself to keep his father from killing Derek Badger, the show's inept and egotistical star. But the job keeps getting more complicated: Derek Badger insists on using wild animals for his stunts; and Wahoo's acquired a shadow named Tuna—a girl who's sporting a shiner courtesy of her father and needs a place to hide out. They've only been on location in the Everglades for a day before Derek gets bitten by a bat and goes missing in a storm. Search parties head out and promptly get lost themselves. And then Tuna's dad shows up with a gun . . . It's anyone's guess who will actually survive *Expedition Survival*. . . Only in Florida—and in the fiction of its native son Carl Hiaasen—does a dead iguana fall from a palm tree and kill somebody. • *New York Post* "Chomp" is a delightful laugh-out-loud sendup of the surreality of TV that will be enjoyed by readers of all ages. • *Los Angeles Times* "Chomp" shines in its humorous, subtle tweaks on pop culture. . . . The real satisfaction, however, is not so much in the book's humor but in its truth. • *Time Out Chicago Kids*

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 800L (What's this?)

Paperback: 290 pages

Publisher: Ember; Reprint edition (March 12, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0375868275

ISBN-13: 978-0375868276

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.6 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (672 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #7,500 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #20 in [Books > Children's Books >](#)

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Age Range: 10 and up

Grade Level: 5 and up

## Customer Reviews

Novelist and Miami Herald columnist Carl Hiaasen is known for his love of his home state of Florida, and his relentless championing of environmental issues for the benefit of the wildlife and natural habitats of the state. Many of his novels for adults have plots revolving around environmental concerns, and the storylines of his juvenile novels, of which "Chomp" is the fourth, are all centered on issues relating to man's interaction with the environment. In the tradition of his adult novels, "Chomp", like Hiaasen's three previous juvenile novels -- "Hoot", "Flush", and "Scat" -- is inhabited by a cast of characters who are well drawn for their roles. Hiaasen's characters are often pretty wacky, and though dialed back from the craziness found in his adult novels, there is an entertaining level of zaniness in "Chomp" which kids in the target audience will enjoy immensely while they learn about the environmental issues underlying the story. There are greedy, somewhat dim, bad (or at best, bad-ish) guys who exploit the environment for their own gain, and good guys who, sometimes reluctantly, find themselves going to bat for the environment. The juvenile protagonists in the story, a (presumably middle-school age) boy with the unlikely name of Wahoo Cray and his school friend, a girl with the equally unlikely name of Tuna Gordon, are sharp, smart, resourceful kids with whom juvenile readers will identify.

Chomp is a funny book. It is also a little bit crazy and even zany at times. While I love reading books geared for younger audiences, I had trouble not rolling my eyes a few times with this one. It wasn't so much the crazy incidents that occurred, like Wahoo's father being hit on the head by a frozen iguana, or the naming his son "Wahoo", or the fake survivalist reality star that stumbles into trouble at every turn. I was happy to laugh at that stuff and chalk it up to good clean fun, and it was. What I had trouble with though, was some of the character interactions. Wahoo and his father decide to help out with a TV series so that they can get caught up on financial troubles that started after a frozen iguana literally knocked the father out of work for a while. His Mother flew to Asia to earn some money tutoring, so Wahoo and his father work the TV show together. As they are packing up to leave for the wilderness, they run into a classmate named Tuna who is being abused by her drunken father. This was the part that bothered me. Wahoo doesn't know Tuna very well, but instead of getting her real help, they take her along with them on their trip. It felt so sudden and random. Naturally Wahoo and Tuna become good friends along the trip and are trying to figure out what to do with her father upon their return. Tuna's absolutely crazy father ends up chasing them

into the wilderness all drunk and shooting at people. I also didn't like that after Wahoo's father is shot in the foot, he tells his son to lie to the mother and tell her one of their animals got to it. I know it sounds like I am being harsh, I just think we have to be careful with serious topics such as abuse and promote honesty. I loved the crazy reality star that gets lost and thinks he is turning into a vampire.

This is the fourth of Hiaasen's middle grade/YA eco-themed books. I loved Hoot and Flush, haven't read Scat, yet. This was another fun read that tackles some interesting social and ecological issues. This book wasn't as much of a mystery as the previous books, it was more of a eco-thriller of sorts. I didn't like it quite as much as Hoot, but I liked it just as much as Flush. Wahoo Cray lives with his father and mother and a ton of animals. His father is an animal wrangler and as such has numerous snakes, gators, etc living in his backyard. After being hit in the head by an iguana who fell off a tree Wahoo's dad has been having horrible headaches and trouble working. When Wahoo's mom takes a two month job in China to make ends meet, Wahoo is concerned about how he will manage his dad. Then his dad takes a job as an animal wrangler with a reality TC show called Expedition Survival! Now they have paying work, but when a girl named Tuna joins the team while fleeing her abusive father, things start to get a little crazy. Like normal with this series of books there are some societal issues discussed: reality TV, cruelty to animals, alcoholism, and abuse. Also like normal all of these issues are meshed in with a story that is quirky and humorous at times. The fake survivalist that Wahoo's dad is working for is an absolute hoot. He is so crazy and funny and quirky. Wahoo and Tuna are great characters as well; they are faced with some tough situations and do a bang up job of making it through everything fine. With the crazy survivalist trying to do stranger and stranger survival stunts Wahoo's dad has his hands full keeping the guy alive. Add to this Tuna's drunk gun-slinging dad and you have a book that is more action and thriller than mystery.

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