

*The True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp*

Kathi Appelt

Reviewed by: Annie, 24

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The tale of raccoon brother's J'miah and Bingo is interwoven with that of twelve-year-old Chap Brayburn. Though strangers, the raccoons and Chap are out to accomplish the same goal: protect their beloved sugar cane swamp. J'miah and Bingo, members of the True Blue Scouts of the Sugar Man Swamp, operate out of an abandoned car, known to them as information headquarters because its radio is activated during lightening storms, giving them vital information. During one such storm, information headquarters' radio announces the approach of a herd of feral hogs known to trample, uproot, and eat everything in their path. This news prompts J'miah and Bingo on a quest to wake the Sugar Man, the enormous and seldom seen protector of the swamp.

Meanwhile, Chap, who has grown up next to Sugar Man Swamp and whose family uses the sugar cane from the swamp in the fried pies they sell, faces the threat that the owner of the swamp will develop the land and force Chap's family to move away. Like the raccoon brothers, Chap sets out to find proof of the Sugar Man in order to scare those threatening him off.

Kathi Appelt keeps the book interesting with short chapters and alternating between the J'miah and Bingo's perspective and Chap's perspective. I thought this novel was just the right length and would recommend it to boys and girls of all ages. The Sugar Man is an intriguing idea and adds a mythical aspect to the novel that is not too unbelievable. I would love to read more books like this and I know kids will love it.