

The Sugarcane Kids and the Red-bottomed Boat

By Charlie Archbold

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Blurb:

Middle-grade readers can join the Sugarcane kids as they collect clues and try to solve a mystery in this bright, fun and captivating Australian adventure.

Bernie mutters to me. 'No way. Who'd go into the mangroves at night?'

I swallow. Not me. Not into Sebastian land. No one would head into crocodile heartland in the middle of a dark night. No one, unless they had a very good reason.

Andy and his best friend Eli live in a small coastal town in far north Queensland. When Eli's cousin Jacob is arrested for a jewellery theft, Andy and Eli both know he is innocent. The police have evidence. But something is not right, and Andy and Eli need to work out what, and fast or Jacob will end up in jail. So, with the help of twins Bernice and Fletcher (AKA Bernie and Fletch) and Andy's trusty sausage dog, Washington, they set out to hunt for clues to what really happened. The trail points to a mysterious red-bottomed boat rumoured to be hidden deep in the mangroves.

Does it hold the evidence they need to prove Jacob's innocence?

Can they find it without getting lost forever?

And how will they outwit Sebastian, the legendary gigantic saltwater crocodile?

Charlie Archbold's action-packed new middle-grade adventure is a fun story of sleuthing, courageous deeds, the triumph of good over evil - and the power of friendship.



Lamont Review:

Eli and Andy are best friends who live in far north Queensland. Eli's cousin Jacob has been accused of stealing jewellery, but the boys are certain that he is innocent.

With his court case fast approaching, they decide that the police aren't going to find the real crooks, so they are going to have to do it themselves. With the help of their friends, Bernie and Fletch, they set about hunting for clues and everything points to a mysterious red-bottomed boat, half buried in the mangroves, named Ruby.

But the mangroves are in Sebastian territory, and you don't want to go into territory belonging to a gigantic crocodile unless you really have to. Can they find new evidence to help Jacob, or will the evidence be lost to Sebastian?

This is an action-packed adventure, with lots of clues and clever detective work.

The characters are all relatable, as is the school setting, and the relationship between Eli and Andy, and their families. At its heart this is a story about friendship and family, and helping each other.

Perfect for students in Year 3 and up, especially those who love a good detective story.

Reviewed by Michelle