

Swamplandia!

author: Karen Russell

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Synopsis

author	Karen Russell
readBy	Arielle Sitrick, David Ackroyd
inLanguage	english

From the celebrated twenty-nine-year-old author of the everywhere-heralded short-story collection *St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves* (‘‘How I wish these were my own words, instead of the breakneck demon writer Karen Russell’s . . . Run for your life. This girl is on fire’’ *Los Angeles Times Book Review*) comes a blazingly original debut novel that takes us back to the swamps of the Florida Everglades, and introduces us to Ava Bigtree, an unforgettable young heroine.

The Bigtree alligator-wrestling dynasty is in decline, and Swamplandia!, their island home and gator-wrestling theme park, formerly #1 in the region, is swiftly being encroached upon by a fearsome and sophisticated competitor called the World of Darkness. Ava’s mother, the park’s indomitable headliner, has just died; her sister, Ossie, has fallen in love with a spooky character known as the Dredgeman, who may or may not be an actual ghost; and her brilliant big brother, Kiwi, who dreams of becoming a scholar, has just defected to the World of Darkness in a last-ditch effort to keep their family business from going under. Ava’s father, affectionately known as Chief Bigtree, is AWOL; and that leaves Ava, a resourceful but terrified thirteen, to manage ninety-eight gators and the vast, inscrutable landscape of her own grief.

Against a backdrop of hauntingly fecund plant life animated by ancient lizards and lawless hungers, Karen Russell has written an utterly singular novel about a family’s struggle to stay afloat in a world that is inexorably sinking. An arrestingly beautiful and inventive work from a vibrant new voice in fiction.

Reader's comments

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