

Uncertain Summer

Jessica Lee Anderson

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In this entertaining book, each child has their own highly relatable reason for wanting to find Bigfoot.

Jessica Lee Anderson's *Uncertain Summer* is a fun juvenile adventure full of great lessons.

Everdil Jackson knows that her family is having financial problems. When a contest is announced offering one million dollars for proof of Bigfoot's existence and her parents give her a new digital camera, she knows exactly what she must do.

Everdil, her brother Emmet, and their friend Tim join forces to hunt for the monster. They are joined by Everdil's former best friend, Shawna, who is back in town for several weeks. The four friends are determined to get a photo of Bigfoot—if life and the challenges of growing up don't get in their way.

In this entertaining book, each child has their own highly relatable reason for wanting to find Bigfoot. Emmett and Everdil know that their parents need the money. Tim wants to help his father, a cryptologist, prove that Bigfoot really does exist. Shawna just wants something to do and someone to do it with.

Two adult figures—a well-known politician who has been in trouble for illegally hunting big game and Swamp Sam, who believes that Bigfoot monsters are organizing to form an army—provide an interesting twist. They make the children's hunt more dangerous, which proves to be a wonderful device for exploring the challenges that kids face: changing relationships, parents who have struggles of their own, even sickness and death.

The book takes place in a small town called Uncertain, Texas, and this setting supports the story beautifully. The children ride their bikes everywhere and swim in a muddy lake. They spend time exploring the woods and the area parks. They encounter the sometimes dangerous wildlife that inhabits swampland. The landscape that might be home to Bigfoot is described well, with lines like "The moss hanging from the cypress trees appeared like giant webs."

Lessons about friendship, family, and what it takes to be happy elevate this juvenile adventure that imparts skills for dealing with everyday struggles.

CATHERINE THURESON (September/October 2017)

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