

Booklist Magazine

Book: *A River Closely Watched*
Author: Jon Boilard
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The all-male DuBois clan is well known to local police. Though Grandfather Earl is now senile, his two adult sons, Blackie and Thaddeus, are still trouble. Thaddeus has just been released from prison but has already violated parole and is on the run. Blackie, teenage Bobby's father, has just killed a policeman.

Is Bobby headed to foster care?

Not if Uncle Thaddeus has anything to say about it. Whether Bobby wants it or not, Thaddeus takes the boy on the lam with him and together they head for the high timber, pursued by the police; by Blackie, who has escaped from custody; by Ed, a soulless tracker; and by various aggrieved others. And then a hurricane blows in, and all bets are off.

Boilard's first novel is an exercise in noir, or perhaps it might be better described as Southern gothic come to rural New England. Whichever, it is a darkness-drenched celebration of violence. Yes, the author leaves a skein of loose ends, but his treatments of tone and mood are spot on, and his story is compulsively readable.

--Reviewed by Michael Cart