

## Young Adult Fiction

**“Black Star, Bright Dawn,”** *Scott O’Dell*, 1988

Her name was Bright Dawn, a teenage Eskimo girl. He was Black Star, part husky but mostly wolf, with ice-blue eyes. Together they were a team – about to begin the famous Iditarod dogsled race through the cold wilds of Alaska. Bright Dawn couldn’t believe it when her father asked her to take his place in the race. She didn’t think she could do it: the trail was one thousand miles long between Anchorage and Nome, with unforeseen hazards along the entire route.

Bright Dawn had Black Star and she knew he would lead her to the finish line. But neither she nor her dog expected a cold, blinding whiteout, a belligerent bull moose, ice that could crack and splinter at any time, and much more. Soon Bright Dawn was not only depending on Black Star for the race, but for her life.

**“Brian’s Hunt,”** *Gary Paulsen*, 2003

Millions of readers of *Hatchet*, *The River*, *Brian’s Winter*, and *Brian’s Return* know that Brian Robeson is at home in the Canadian wilderness. He has stood up to the challenge of surviving alone in the woods. He prefers being on his own in the natural world to civilization.

When Brian finds a dog one night, a dog that is wounded and whimpering, he senses danger. The dog is badly hurt, and as Brian cares for it, he worries about his Cree friends who live north of his camp. His instincts tell him to head north, quickly. With his new companion at his side, and with a terrible, growing sense of unease, he sets out to learn what happened. He sets out on the hunt.

Gary Paulsen expertly delivers a riveting story that brilliantly combines two of his great themes: the human animal’s place in nature, and the mysterious and wonderful bond between humans and dogs.

**“Tracker,”** *Gary Paulsen*, 1984

For John Borne's family, hunting has nothing to do with sport or manliness. It's a matter of survival. Every fall John and his grandfather go off into the woods to shoot the deer that puts meat on the table over the long Minnesota winter.

But this year John's grandfather is dying, and John must hunt alone. John tracks a doe for two days, but as he closes in on his prey, he realizes he cannot shoot her. For John, the hunt is no longer about killing, but about life.

“The River,” *Gary Paulsen*, 1991

"We want you to do it again."

These words, spoken to Brian Robeson, will change his life. Two years earlier, Brian was stranded alone in the wilderness for 54 days with nothing but a small hatchet. Yet he survived.

Now the government wants him to go back into the wilderness so that astronauts and the military can learn the survival techniques that kept Brian alive. Soon the project backfires, though, leaving Brian with a wounded partner and a long river to navigate. His only hope is to build a raft and try to transport the injured man a hundred miles downstream to a trading post-- if the map he has is accurate.

“The Sea, The Song and the Trumpetfish”, *Fay S. Lapka*, 1991

Thirteen year-old Sylvie isn't thrilled about spending Christmas in Hawaii, away from her family and stuck with a great-aunt she's never met. But her vacation is anything but boring. Her adventures with new friend, Keauka, and his donkey, Cane, revolve around a peculiar woman who keeps popping up in their lives. Why is this woman so attracted to the sea? And what is so special about the animals on the island? Sylvie and Keakua are determined to unravel the mysteries.

“The Sign of the Beaver, *Elizabeth George Speare*, 1983

When his father returns East to collect the rest of the family, 13-year-old Matt is left alone to guard his family's newly built homestead. One day, Matt is brutally stung when he robs a bee tree for honey. He returns to consciousness to discover that his many stings have been treated by an old Native American and his grandson. Matt offers his only book as thanks, but the old man instead asks Matt to teach his grandson Attean to read. Both boys are suspicious, but Attean comes each day for his lesson. In the mornings, Matt tries to entice Attean with tales from [Robinson Crusoe](#), while in the afternoons, Attean teaches Matt about wilderness survival and Native American culture. The boys become friends in spite of themselves, and their inevitable parting is a moving tribute to the ability of shared experience to overcome prejudice. *The Sign of the Beaver* was a Newbery Honor Book,