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The Wolf's Boy



Synopsis

An outcast boy and a young wolf against an Ice Age winter . . . Kai burns to become a hunter and to earn a rightful place among his people. But that can never be. He was born with a clubfoot. It is forbidden for him to use or even touch a hunter's sacred weapons. Shunned by the other boys, Kai turns to his true friends, the yellow wolves, for companionship. They have not forgotten the young human they nurtured as an abandoned infant. When Kai discovers a motherless cub in the pack, he risks everything to save her, bringing her back to live with him. But as winter draws near, Kai's wolf grows ever more threatening in the eyes of the People. When the worst happens, Kai knows that they must leave for good. Together, they embark on a journey into the north—a place of unimaginable danger—that tests the power of friendship and the will to survive. Award-winning author Susan Williams Beckhorn delivers a powerful tale set in Paleolithic times. Inspired by modern discoveries, Susan's careful research creates a vivid picture of a time when the first wolves came to live with humans and forged a bond that lives on to this day.

Book Information

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Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

Gr 4-7 • Kai was born with a club foot and should not have lived. His mother left him with the yellow wolf mother, who had two cubs of her own, believing this was certain death for

her young baby. Instead, the wolf mother nurtured Kai, and one day his human mother returned to the den to reclaim the baby she left for dead. Now, Kai is ridiculed and tormented by the other boys, including his older brother Sen. They call him "Wolfboy." He longs to join the hunt, but tradition forbids him from even touching any of the weapons. Kai often finds himself back in the company of the yellow wolves, the only place he feels truly at home. When he happens upon a cub in need, Kai decides to take the tiny creature back to his takka and nurse her back to health. With his father's approval, Kai keeps the cub and names her Uff. The two become instant companions. But as Uff grows, she becomes more threatening. When a terrible accident leaves Sen scarred, Kai knows that he must leave for good, embarking on a dangerous journey into the North. Beckhorn weaves together a striking account of survival and an engaging look into how the wolf became such an integral part of human life. Set in prehistoric times, Kai's story is based on modern discoveries in France, where fossilized footprints of a boy and a canine were found walking side by side.

VERDICT Strong writing and character development combined with a little-seen setting in middle grade historical fiction make this a first purchase. —Annette Herbert, F.E. Smith Elementary School, Cortland, NY

"This bracing, well-told story, laced with themes of self-responsibility, compassion, and honor, is both vital and nourishing." —Kirkus (starred review) KIRKUS BEST MIDDLE-GRADE BOOKS OF 2016 —Kirkus

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