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# Wolf's Boy, The



## 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 club foot. 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 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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## Customer Reviews

THE WOLF AND THE BOY by Susan Williams Buckhorn tells the compelling story of a boy and his wolf set during the Ice Age. Born with a clubfoot, baby Kai is left for the wolves. Miraculously he survives and forms a special bond with the wolf pack. Although shunned by his people, the boy develops a relationship with a homeless wolf cub and the pair journey into dangerous, unknown territory. From fascinating rock art to amazing Paleolithic creatures, this carefully researched novel will bring the prehistoric time period to life for young readers. Librarians will find a large audience among middle grade youth who enjoy action-adventure stories. The Paleolithic time period will be a particular draw as well as the animal story. To learn more about the author, go to [...] Published by Disney-Hyperion on June 7, 2016. ARC courtesy of the publisher.

Wow! I thoroughly enjoyed this book by Susan Williams Beckhorn. A friend who said she was pacing herself because she liked it so much recommended *The Wolf and the Boy* to me. I was happy to read it as both a children's author and a lover of wolves. Not only could I not pace myself, reading as much as I could at a sitting, I also lamented its ending. I wanted more. *The Wolf and the Boy* will appeal to anyone who likes to root for the underdog (in this case, a boy with a disability) and anyone interested in the evolution of man's best friend. While very little of the science of this evolution is explained, it is not necessary, nor missed. The story carries itself and the reader inherently grasps the underlying mechanisms that made such a transformation from wild animal to devoted friend possible. This is a wonderful coming-of-age story set in prehistoric time and simply a delightful read.

Loved the story and couldn't put it down. So loved the fact that the author is a local community member. I've been waiting to read it and so glad I did. So what other people to read it!

An absolutely fabulous book that brings to life prehistory for the young reader. Great for dog lovers and adventure story lovers alike.

Kia goes through tough times with his wolf dog and survives together They hunt and and make a friend Ali g the way

Bought as a gift, she enjoyed it.

Loved this book! How did Wolf first become Dog -- friend of Man? It could have happened pretty

much like this! I didn't want the book to end, and I hope the author has plans to carry us along on some more prehistoric adventures!

A very long time ago, a baby boy is born with a withered foot. His father, obeying the rules of his people, leaves him out in the open, presumably to die. A mother wolf adopts him and treats him like one of her own pups. One night the boy's mother hears a human cry mixed in with the cry of the wolves. With great longing for her child, she rescues him. In this way, Kai—or Wolfboy as the village boys eventually call him—begins his difficult, pain-filled life.

**REVIEW** The author of *THE WOLF BOY*, (Disney Hyperion, 2016) Susan Williams Beckhorn, reached out to me after reading my post on Kirby Larson's blog. Her description of her book, *a first dog story inspired by the 1994 finding of the fossilized footprints of a boy and a canine walking side by side in Chauvet Cave in France* intrigued me. Although Susan and I probably disagree about the Biblical view of creation and evolution, I found this middle grade book for boys and girls to be well-written with many layers built into it. Interesting enough, Beckhorn incorporated a fictional creator/supreme being, Tal, into the story. At the story's outset Kai observes that, "Tal gives two arms, legs, eyes, ears. If one is hurt, the other grows stronger. Maybe Tal is trying to make me stronger." (p. 37) This not only reflects that a belief in a supreme being is common among cultures (Romans 1:20, Acts 18: 22-31) and that difficulties and trials are for our good (James 1:2-4, Romans 5:3-5), but also foreshadows Kai's journey. Despite his father's reservations and his brother's contempt, Kai gets to keep a wolf pup he rescues. This pivotal point is shown here: I carried the pup back to my bed. The little wolf nestled against me. She stretched out a foot, bumping my nose. I ran a finger over her muzzle. It was shorter than most. Her little skull seemed rounder too. "Will you be one of the People?" I whisper to her. "Or should I be one of the innos with you?" (p. 49) The friendship between Kai and his wolf who he names, Uff, grows as they do everything together: sleep, eat, play, and hunt small game and fish. Uff accepts Kai and his lame foot as normal; he doesn't treat him as cursed (tabat) as the other members of the community do. "You don't hate me for my bad foot," I put my forehead against hers. "You are my friend." (p. 70) Since he is tabat, Kai may not touch a weapon and therefore is not trained to be a blood hunter like other boys. As his brother and peers shame him he contemplates

running away, with the realization that he *ſſ* have to be able to hunt large animals in order to survive. "There must be a place in the world for us." Kai thinks. (p. 83) The shaman, both revered and feared within the community, is also disfigured. When he tells Kai that he has powers, Kai is puzzled. In another pivotal moment on Kai's journey the shaman tells him, "You are strange like me. You are other." (p. 86) Without including too many spoilers, Kai risks physical dangers and estrangement from his family and community, and leaves home. His survival journey is a great metaphor for his development as a young man in this unique coming of age story. Kai faces his fear of death, of losing Uff, and of being struck down because he has gone against the rules of the community by creating his own weapon. After his last test he realizes, "I was still myself--Kai, yet I was someone new." (p. 215) In the classroom, teachers can use this book to discuss disabilities, friendship, bullying, risk-taking, and survival. If I were a teacher I would latch onto the shaman's description of other and ask students if they ever felt that way or treated someone else like that. Here is a link to discussion questions. **GIVEAWAY** I am giving away my autographed hardcover copy of this book. Please leave a comment by July 20, 2017 for your chance to win it. Share this on social media or start following my blog (be sure to let me know what you did and leave me your email address if you are new) and I will enter your name twice. \*\*\*\*\*By the way, if you are interested in a Biblical view of the world's age, here is a link to Answers in Genesis.

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