



My Life in Dog Years

By Gary Paulsen

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Gary Paulsen has owned dozens of unforgettable and amazing dogs. In each chapter he tells of one special dog, among them Cookie, the sled dog who saved his life; Snowball, the puppy he owned as a boy in the Philippines; Ike, his mysterious hunting companion; Dirk, the grim protector; and his true friend Josh, a brilliant border collie.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 4 Up?Paulsen reveals bits and pieces of his own life story through his experiences with eight of his dogs. After a heartfelt dedication to Cookie, the sled dog who saved his life, the author introduces readers first to Snowball, the puppy he acquired when he was seven years old and living in the Philippines, and then follows chronologically with profiles of other canine companions. He concludes with tales about Josh, the border collie with whom he currently shares a home. Paulsen is a master storyteller with a dry wit. His description of his dog Fred, whom he claimed was actually "nuclear in his capacity for destruction," and his account of his Great Dane Caesar, who was so petrified of trick-or-treaters that he would hide in the bedroom closet every Halloween with a housecoat over his eyes, are sure to elicit smiles. Paulsen can also make readers sigh when he relates how Snowball saved him from being bitten by a poisonous snake and how Cookie pulled him out of the water when he fell through the ice while trapping beaver. The statement, "Josh...is a person. I do not think in my heart that he is a dog," gives youngsters a real sense of how the man looks at these animals. An attractive pen-and-ink sketch of the profiled animal opens each chapter. This well-written, readable reminiscence serves as a tribute to the dogs in one person's life, written by someone who considers them his best friends.?Carol Kolb Phillips, The Library, East Brunswick, NJ
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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 5[^]-10. Paulsen's style has been smoother, but this honest, unpretentious celebration of dogs further entrenches his reputation as an author who is as successful at writing nonfiction as he is at writing novels. In roughly chronological chapters, he introduces eight memorable canines he has known and loved over the years. Some were pets, others he knew as trusted partners or protectors--from Snowball, the first, to Josh, who "if possible . . . is always with me." Although the chapters are linked by small details and references (often easy to recognize from his previous books), each can stand alone, with several, including a wildly funny one devoted to an adopted Great Dane named Caesar, promising good read-aloud material. Paulsen differentiates his canine friends beautifully, as only a keen observer and lover of dogs can. At the same time, he presents an intimate glimpse of himself, a lonely child of alcoholic parents, who drew strength and solace from his four-legged companions and a love of the great outdoors. Poignant but never saccharine, honest, and open, these engaging canine character studies are guaranteed to charm animal lovers and Paulsen's fans, especially those who know *Woodson* (1990) or *Father Water, Mother Woods* (1994). There's something to please at every turn of the page. *Stephanie Zvirin*

From Kirkus Reviews

Paulsen paid loving tribute to the sled dogs in his life in *Puppies, Dogs and Blue Northerners* (1996) so gives eight more canine companions equal time: Snowball, who saved his life when he was seven, to Caesar, an enthusiastic Great Dane who "overwhelmed the furniture" but was gentle with children, to Fred, who did battle with an electric fence, to Quincy, who did battle with a bear that attacked the author's wife. Thoughtful, ironic, often hilarious, these vivid character portraits not only make winning stories, but convey a deep respect for all dogs: "They are wonderful and, I think, mandatory for decent human life."
(illustrations, not seen) (Memoir. 10-13) -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Christopher Rayes:

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Maria Forshee:

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