



## Brian's Winter: Novel-Ties Study Guide

*By Gary Paulsen*

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## **Brian's Winter: Novel-Ties Study Guide** By Gary Paulsen Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

First there was *Hatchet*, Paulsen's classic tale of a boy's survival in the north woods after a plane crash. Then came a sequel, *The River*, and, last year, *Father Water*, *Mother Woods*, a collection of autobiographical essays introduced as the nonfiction counterpart to *Hatchet*. Now Paulsen backs up and asks readers to imagine that Brian, the hero, hadn't been rescued after all. His many fans will be only too glad to comply, revisiting Brian at the onset of a punishing Canadian winter. The pace never relents—the story begins, as it were, in the middle, with Brian already toughened up and his reflexes primed for crisis. Paulsen serves up one cliffhanger after another (a marauding bear, a charging elk), and always there are the supreme challenges of obtaining food and protection against the cold. Authoritative narration makes it easy for readers to join Brian vicariously as he wields his hatchet to whittle arrows and arrowheads and a lance, hunts game, and devises clothes out of animal skins; while teasers at the ends of chapters keep the tension high ("He would hunt big tomorrow, he thought.... But as it happened he very nearly never hunted again"). The moral of the story: it pays to write your favorite author and ask for another helping. Ages 12-up.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 5-9—At the conclusion of *Hatchet* (Macmillan, 1987), Brian Robeson is rescued after surviving a plane crash and summer alone in the north Canadian woods. Now, in this second sequel, Paulsen shows what would have happened if the 13-year-old boy had been forced to endure the harsh winter. For a brief time, Brian lives in relative luxury, living off the contents of the recently recovered survival pack, which included a gun for hunting. Then, his freeze-dried food runs out and his rifle fails, and he realizes how careless and complacent he has become. Suddenly aware of the changing seasons, he works frantically to winterize his shelter, fashion warmer clothes from animal skins, and construct a more powerful bow and arrow. About the time he has mastered winter survival, he discovers a dog-sled trail that leads him to a trapper and final rescue. The same formula that worked before is successful here: the driving pace of the narration, the breathtaking descriptions of nature, and the boy who triumphs on the merits of efficient problem solving. The author's ability to cast a spell, mesmerize his audience, and provide a clinic in winter survival is reason enough to buy this novel. Although the plot is both familiar and predictable, Paulsen fans will not be disappointed. —Tim Rausch, Crescent View Middle School, Sandy, UT

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 5<sup>^</sup>-9. Writing with simplicity, Paulsen is at his best in an elemental story of wilderness survival. In this sequel to his widely popular *Hatchet* (1987), he spells out an alternative ending many readers have tried to imagine: What if 13-year-old Brian hadn't been rescued before winter came? What if he had had to face the cold months alone in the Canadian north? This time Brian has a survival kit he found in the crashed plane (including two butane lighters, a rifle, a fishing line, and a sleeping bag), but otherwise he has to find food, shelter, and clothing from the world around him. He sees himself like the first Americans, learning to make arrowheads and snowshoes, getting to know the sounds and tracks and weather of his place in the wild. Of course, Brian is extraordinarily resourceful and inventive. What's more, he somehow recovers from everything without injury, even after being knocked unconscious by a 700-pound moose. There's no suspense; we know he'll make it. Yet, as in the autobiographical *Woodson* (1990), Paulsen writes with the authoritative particularity of someone who knows the woods. This docunovel is for outdoors lovers and also for all of those adventurers snug at home in a centrally heated high-rise. The facts are the drama. *Hazel Rochman*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Margaret Burton:**

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