



Junior Book Club in a Bag

Discussion Questions

Northwind by Gary Paulsen

1. In *Northwind*, the author depicts nature as both a formidable adversary and a great teacher. How do these two depictions contribute to Leif's survival and development?
2. By their actions, the four men that exited the ship were sentencing the villagers to death. How was this so?
3. What did Old Carl do to try to ensure the survival of some members of the village? What flaw was there in his plan?
4. What always happens when Leif dream about his mother? Why do you think this happens?
5. How do the whales act as Leif's teachers throughout his journey? How does understanding the whales' behavior influence Leif's own ability to problem-solve and survive?
6. Leif uses storytelling to preserve memories and heal from past traumas. How do you think creating these stories helps Leif develop a stronger sense of self, and what storytelling method would you use if you were in his position?
7. Leif learns survival skills from Old Carl. If you were in Leif's position, how would you expand upon the skills taught by Old Carl to not only survive, but to adapt and grow in an ever-changing environment?
8. How does Leif's life on the ships shape his character? Trace how these trials helped him later in life. How is life in the canoe different from travelling the sea on a ship?

The above questions were created by Clarington Library, Museums & Archives staff to enhance your discussion of the book.

Author Biography

Gary Paulsen is the distinguished author of many critically acclaimed books for young people, including three Newbery Honor books: *The Winter Room*, *Hatchet*, and *Dogsong*. He won the Margaret A. Edwards Award given by the American Library Association for his lifetime achievement in young adult literature. Paulsen has also published fiction and nonfiction for adults. He divides his time between his home in Alaska, his ranch in New Mexico, and his sailboat on the Pacific Ocean.

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.ca/authors/23384/gary-paulsen>

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