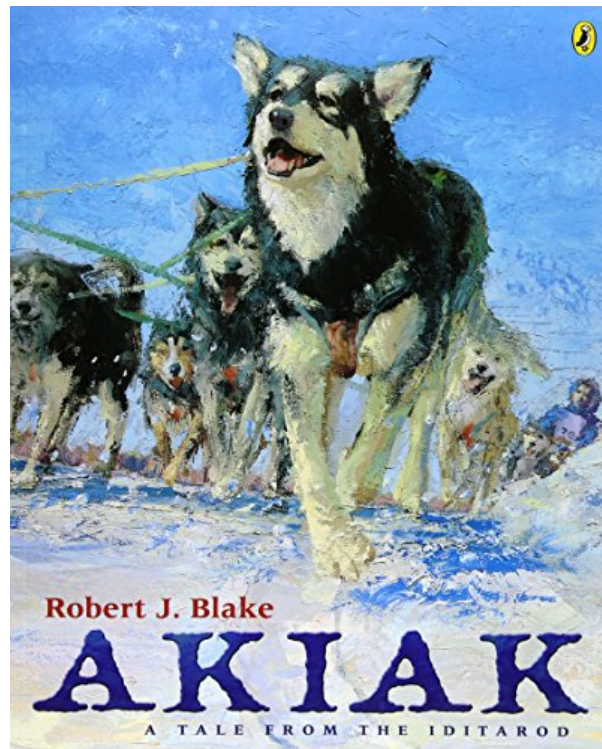
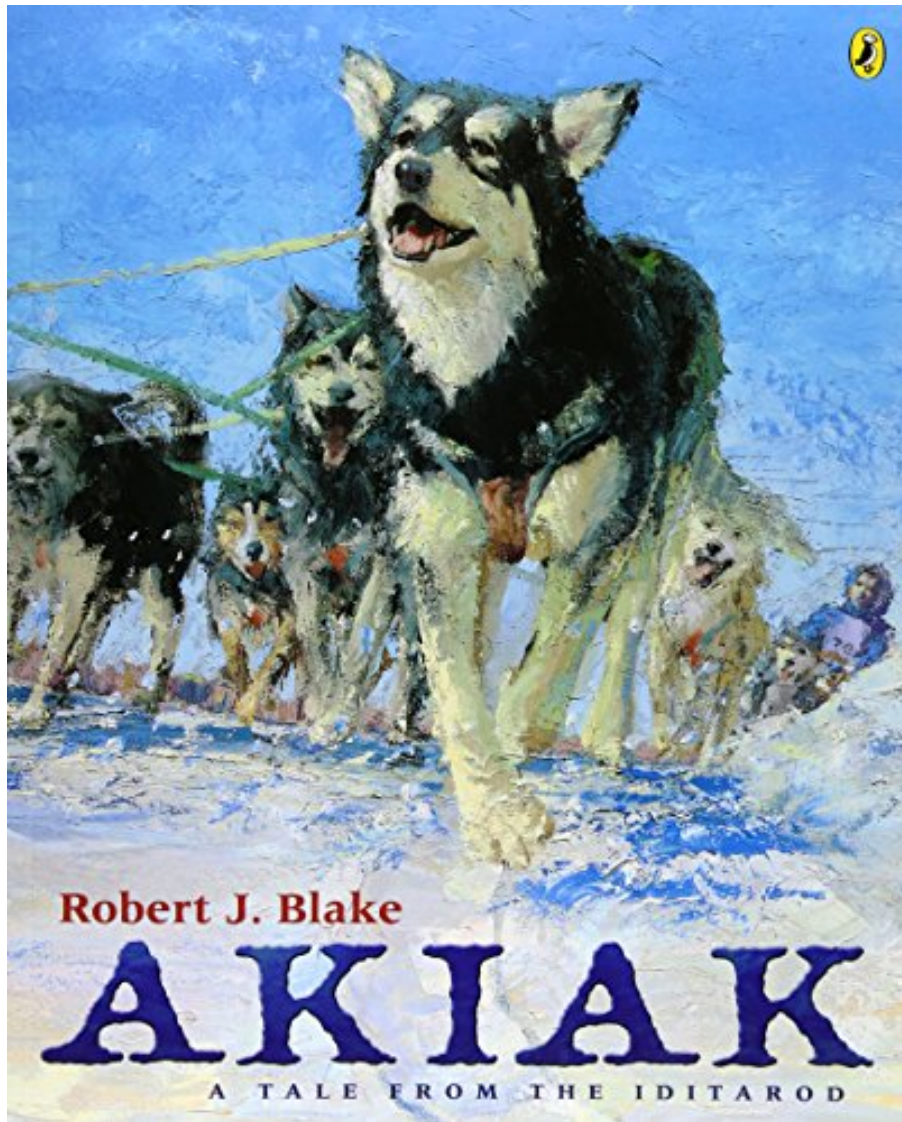


# AKIAK: A TALE FROM THE IDITAROD BY ROBERT J. BLAKE



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Kindergarten-Grade 3. Left behind because of an injury, a lead husky sets out on her own to find her team and win the race. An action-packed tale of daring, determination, and dedication.

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From Kirkus Reviews

From Jack London's *Call of the Wild* to Gary Paulsen's many tales, the relationship between humans and dogs as they face the harsh northern climes has captivated readers. Recapitulating that theme is Blake's story of the 1,151-mile Iditarod from Anchorage to Nome; Mick's lead dog is Akiak, who pounds through wind and across snow, never getting lost. Then, on Day Four, ice jams up one of Akiak's pawpads and she is taken out of the race and almost flown home. She twists free of her handler before the plane takes off, pushes through blizzards and past checkpoints, sticking to the trail and eventually meeting up with Mick; according to the rules, Akiak cannot be harnessed up again but she does prevent her mistress from taking the wrong trail before climbing aboard the sled for the ride to a first-place finish. Blake's naturalistic icy blue paintings chronicle Akiak's independent race across lone landscapes, burrowing in snowdrifts for shelter and escaping well-meaning trail volunteers. The rugged style translates well from the ocean setting of *Spray* (1996) to the untamed Alaskan terrain; the textured slathers of oil paint in repeated cold tones are perfect for icy plains, tracks in the snow, and rooftop icicles. Akiak's efforts may not constitute life-and-death drama, but young readers will cheer the heroic dog on in this satisfying outdoor adventure. (Picture book. 5-10) -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Review

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When she hurts her paw on the fourth day of the race, Akiak can no longer compete in the Iditarod—the famed dogsledding race through 1,151 miles of Alaskan terrain. Her musher has no choice but to leave her behind. The rules say once a dog is dropped from the race, it may not rejoin the team. But ten-year-old lead dog Akiak doesn't know the rules, and nothing will stop her from catching up to her team. Akiak has never won the race before. Will she be able to help her team win this time?

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Most helpful customer reviews

23 of 25 people found the following review helpful.

A heartwarming dog story from the land of bitter cold!

By X. Libris

We recently added "Akiak" to our elementary school library collection, because one of our primary classes was following this year's Iditarod. It instantly became a popular title, and several other classes have thoroughly enjoyed it as a read-aloud.

I can see "Akiak" becoming an annual tradition, right before the first "mush" of the famous Alaskan sled-dog race.

In frosty clear language, accompanied by his museum-quality oil paintings, Robert Blake, presents a day by day account of Mick's team, initially led by 10 year-old Akiak, until she "can't run on that paw." Akiak is left at a dog drop, but refusing to be flown out, she breaks free to chase after her team, many hours behind.

In this "incredible journey," students get a taste of the Alaskan's passion for this unique sport, learning about the hardships and rules of the race along the way. The trail map on the end papers would be helpful for those wanting to turn this into a simple geography lesson.

This excellent story works on many levels. This is worth reading, even if you're just looking for a heartwarming dog story!

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Ain't No Stopping Her Now - She's Got to Mush!

By BeatleBangs1964

A beautiful malamute named Akiak is featured in this book about Alaskan sled dog runs. The story of the old malamute who literally ran herself into the snow, when she reached a point where she could not "run on that paw," Akiak is taken to a dog drop off place. The malamute's indomitable spirit shows through. Instead of waiting for the little puddle jumper plane to fly her out of the area, the curly tailed dog escapes and rejoins her team, even though the team has a lead of several hours on her. The spirited malamute brings to mind MacFadden & Whitehead's 1979 classic, "Ain't No Stopping Us Now." There ain't no stopping Akiak now - she won't give up!

Readers not only race with the mushers, they run with the malamute who would not give up. Her travels and travails become those of the readers; her success will leave readers cheering with delight.

The drawings in this book are masterpiece paintings and readers will come away with a good understanding of dog racing and the rules and history of this sport. A trail map has been included along with some final notes about the sport of dog racing. A masterpiece of a book!

16 of 20 people found the following review helpful.

Colorful dramatic paintings add to the descriptive narrative

By A Customer

I strongly advise parents to adopt this book as one of their all time favorites. It explains an American tradition that most of us are unfamiliar with. The paintings alone are worth the cost of the book. Mr. Blake has used true artistry to describe the trama of the Iditarod. We Loved It!

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