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LANGUIN ACTIVE READING

LEVEL 3

# The Yearling

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings



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### What's the book about?

- 1 Look at the picture on page 43 and talk about it. What can you guess about the boy, his home, and his feelings for the fawn?
- 2 Put these animals in the correct group.



- a They work on the farm where the boy lives. dog,
- b Their meat or milk is food for the boy and his family.
- c They are very dangerous.

### 1.2 What happens first?

Look at the pictures on pages 1–11. What do you think? Circle the correct words.

- 1 The story happens in the 1890s / 1990s.
- 2 It starts in *winter* / *spring*.
- 3 The boy, Jody, lives on a farm in *Alaska* / *Florida*.
- 4 He lives with his *mother and father* / *brothers and sisters*.
- 5 He goes out to look for a *bear* / *deer*.

# Jody's First Water Wheel

*"He should run! He should build water wheels!  
One day, he'll stop being a boy."*

There was a thin, straight line of blue smoke coming from the little house in the woods. As the smoke reached the blue April sky, Jody watched it change from blue to gray. His mother was hanging up the pots after the noon dinner. He was thinking, "She'll wash the floor after she sweeps it. So, she won't miss me if I go down by the river."

Jody looked across the field of **corn**, put down his **hoe** and started walking. It was spring and the corn could wait another day. He jumped over the **fence**. Old Julia, his father's dog, was with his father in Grahamsville. But Rip and Perk saw him and ran after him. Their tails **wagged** happily when they saw him. But Jody sent them back to the yard.

Jody thought, "Those two dogs are good for nothing except **hunting** deer. They like me only when they're hungry. Old Julia's a good dog, but she's **Pa's** dog.



**corn** /kɔrn/ (n) long, yellow vegetables that come from a tall plant

**hoe** /hou/ (n/v) a long tool for taking unwanted plants from the ground

**fence** /fens/ (n) something of wood or metal that is put around an area of land

**wag** /wæg/ (v) to shake from side to side

**hunt** /hʌnt/ (v/n) to follow animals, usually because you want to kill them

**Pa** /pa/ (n) an old word for *father*

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I want one that's mine. I want one that'll lick my hand with his little pink tongue." But, Jody thought sadly, "**Ma** hates pets. To her, they're just more mouths to feed."

The road dropped below him twenty feet—down to a little stream. This was a secret, beautiful place. The stream joined Lake George—a part of the St. John's River. This great river went north and into the ocean. Jody felt excited, looking at the beginning of the ocean. He liked to think, "Only me and the wild animals come to this place."

He took out his knife and cut some long, thin sticks from a tree. He wanted to make a water wheel. Grandma Hutto's son Oliver taught him how to do it last year. "I've never made one alone," he thought. He cut small holes and pushed sticks carefully into them. It took a long time. When he finished, he put the wheel in the stream. The stream pushed it. It turned easily. "Maybe it'll never stop," he thought, as he lay down close to the water. Watching his wheel, he slowly fell asleep.

When he woke up, the sun was gone. A light rain was falling. He got up. Suddenly, he noticed the **tracks** of a deer in the sand near the stream. The tracks were sharp and pointed—the tracks of a doe. They were deep in the sand, so she was large. Maybe she had a fawn inside her. He looked around for other tracks and found tracks of squirrels and raccoons.

Jody couldn't tell the time of day in the grayness. Then suddenly, the rain stopped and the sun shone again. The sky looked beautiful. Jody felt full of happiness. He was grateful to be alive. He turned and ran toward home.

They called their land Baxter's Island. It belonged to his father, Penny Baxter. Jody could hear the horse, the cow, and the dogs—they all wanted their supper. He opened the gate and ran to find his father.

Penny Baxter was standing at the woodpile. Jody saw his father's hands. They were big compared to the rest of him. Penny was picking up a pile of wood, doing Jody's work. Jody ran to him.

"I'll get it, Pa!"

"Where have you been, son? I was looking for you."

"I went down to the stream."

"It was a beautiful day for that," his father said. "When I was a boy, I liked going down to the stream, too. But your mother . . ." he said, looking at the house, ". . . your mother doesn't understand us. Women don't. She doesn't know that you weren't here. Now, go take her some wood."

Jody filled his arms with wood and hurried to the house. His mother was making supper.

**Ma** /ma, mə/ (n) an old word for *mother*

**tracks** /træks/ (n pl) signs of feet on the ground; a *track* is a path

# The Yearling

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

American English  
*Contemporary*

Jody Baxter makes friends with a young orphaned deer called Flag. A powerful tale famous for its descriptions of the natural world.

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