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The Good Dog

By Avi

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The Good Dog By Avi

In the Colorado mountain town of Steamboat Springs there must be three hundred dogs.

Jack's malamute, McKinley, is the leader of them all. But Jack, being human, has no way of knowing that. For him, his family's dog is just a great pal. And protector.

Jack cannot know that Redburn, a "leash-licking" Irish setter, is McKinley's rival for the job of head dog. The boy cannot know, with the sudden hillside appearance of a she-wolf, Lupin, that not only McKinley's job -- but his *life* -- is in danger. Lupin's message: Dogs free yourselves from mankind. Come join us, we who need you to replenish our diminishing wolf pack in the wild.

But imagine how a good dog, loyal to his human pup, would hear Lupin's call!

McKinley's thrilling story tells itself, as first he and the boy together encounter Lupin in a canyon perfect for an old-time ambush, and later as they try to save her from both Redburn and a neighbor, a vicious man armed with a gun and a grudge. No one -- not even McKinley -- can foresee the end.

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The Good Dog By Avi Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Themes reminiscent of Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* ring throughout this vividly imagined animal story. From a canine perspective, Avi (Poppy) relates how a malamute named McKinley's life changes after he encounters a wolf. Head dog in Steamboat Springs, McKinley leads a busy life, protecting his family (including his "human pup," Jack) and keeping order among his canine compatriots in the mountain town. While trying to aid a runaway the forlorn greyhound, Duchess, whose owner offers a reward for her return McKinley encounters Lupin, a wolf who hopes to recruit dogs for her dwindling pack. Lupin's indictment of dogs ("tongue-lapping, tail-wagging slaves who take their food from bowls!") both stirs and shames McKinley; he soon finds his loyalties torn as he simultaneously tries to foil Jack's misguided plan to join the wolves, keep a wounded Lupin safe from those hunting her and fend off Redburn, a conniving Irish setter bent on usurping the hero's place as head dog. The action moves along at a crackling pace, reaching a crescendo in a dramatic moonlight confrontation. The dog's-eye point of view allows for some creative touches, including insights into animal behavior and the vocabulary McKinley uses for various human objects ("eating sticks" for utensils; "a block of staring papers" for book; "glow box" for television), but most compelling of all is the transformation of McKinley's happy-go-lucky character into a truly majestic leader. Ages 8-12.

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From School Library Journal

Gr 3-6-A story with a decidedly canine point of view that will delight dog lovers. Jack's malamute, McKinley, is the top dog in Steamboat Springs, CO. His enemy is not a cat but a sad excuse for an Irish setter, Redburn. Sedate small-town life is interrupted by the appearance of Lupin, a she-wolf that urges dogs to free themselves from the tyranny of domesticated life. The noble McKinley tries to help her, and save a mistreated greyhound, but is misunderstood and relegated to the "dog house" by rather dim-witted humans. Communication between dogs and humans is awkward at best. There is a lot of dialogue among the dogs, among the humans, and between humans and dogs. The people come off as pretty stupid and McKinley is rather tolerant of the limitations of his "human pup" owner. It is confusing that sometimes McKinley seems to understand exactly what humans think and say and at other times professes ignorance. Still, fans of the film version of *The Incredible Journey* and *Beethoven* will lap this up as it has a very cinematic feel. Many scenes seem almost written directly for film. Readers will have no problem following the rapid, almost relentless action. John Erickson's "Hank the Cowdog" series (Viking) and James Howe's "Bunnicula" series (Atheneum) are similar in tone.

Marilyn Payne Phillips, University City Public Library, MO

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 3-6. Life is good for malamute McKinley. As head dog of Steamboat Springs, Colorado, he enjoys both his leadership role and the responsibility of looking after Jack, the boy he regards as his "human pup." But when Lupin, a wolf with a mission, shows up, McKinley's comfortable world is turned upside down. Hoping to recruit dogs to replenish her dwindling pack, Lupin promises freedom from what she calls enslavement by humans. Before long McKinley's leadership is challenged and his loyalty to Jack is tested as he finds himself

wondering why it is that humans think they own their dogs. It's a valid question and Avi presents it, from McKinley's point of view, in an interesting mix of adventure and animal rights advocacy. A welcome element of humor in the otherwise serious story derives from Avi's creation of dog names for human objects: TV, for example, is a "glow box"; a book is "a block of staring papers." Avi's many fans will, doubtless, be glad to stare at the always-inventive author's latest block of papers. *Michael Cart*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mark Frey:

In this 21st one hundred year, people become competitive in every single way. By being competitive today, people have to do something to make them survive, being in the middle of typically the crowded place and notice simply by surrounding. One thing that oftentimes many people have underestimated the item for a while is reading. Yeah, by reading a guide your ability to survive boost then having chance to stay than other is high. For you personally who want to start reading any book, we give you this particular The Good Dog book as nice and daily reading reserve. Why, because this book is usually more than just a book.

Lucile Brown:

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Marie Aultman:

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Barbara Erickson:

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