



## Akiak: A Tale From the Iditarod

By Robert J. Blake

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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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### Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

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

An action-packed tale of daring, determination, and dedication. (*School Library Journal*)

Young readers will cheer the heroic dog on in this satisfying outdoor adventure. (*Kirkus Reviews*)

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**Edward Christensen:**

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