

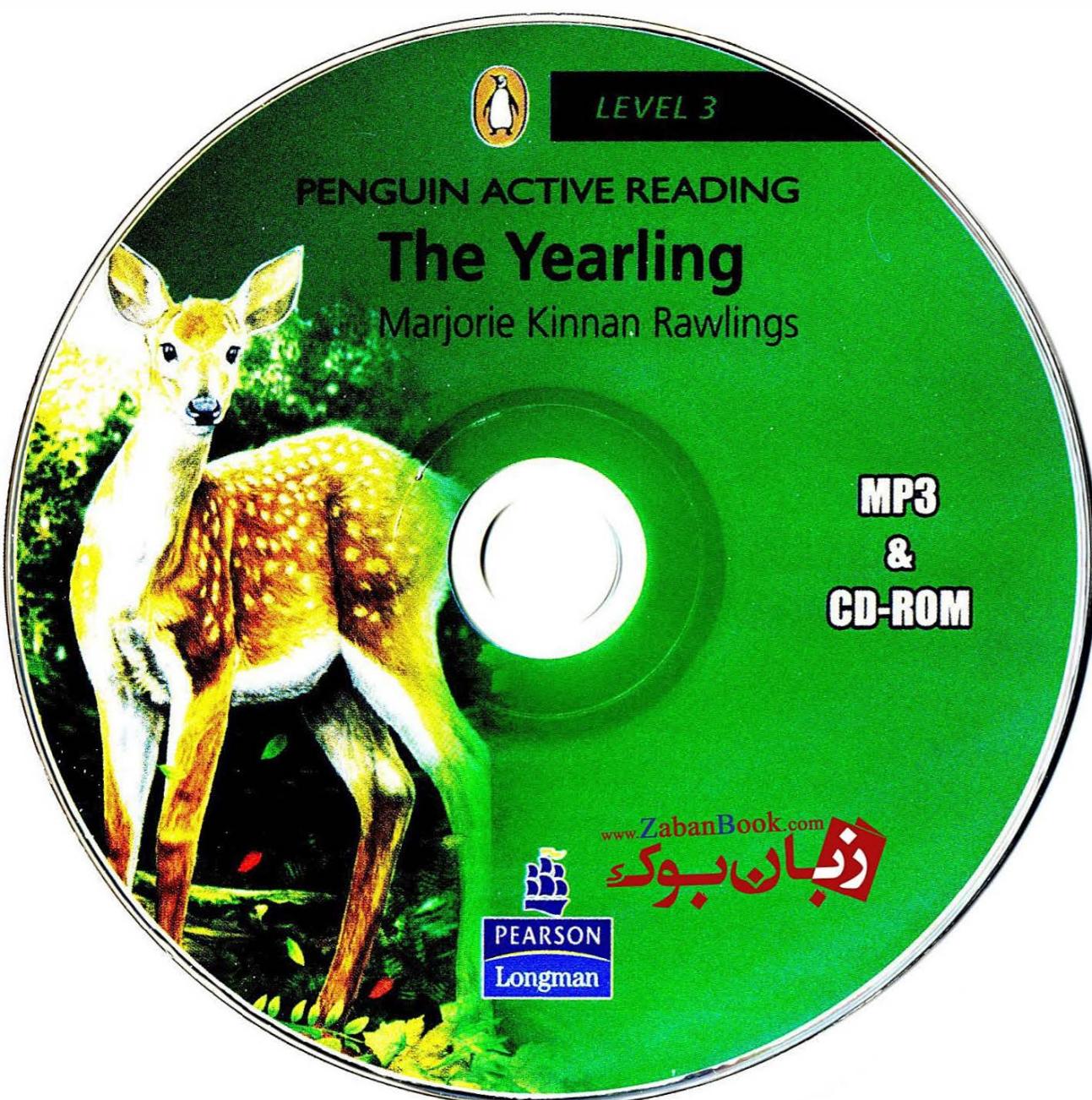


# The Yearling

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

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Level 3

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Series Editors: Andy Hopkins and Jocelyn Potter

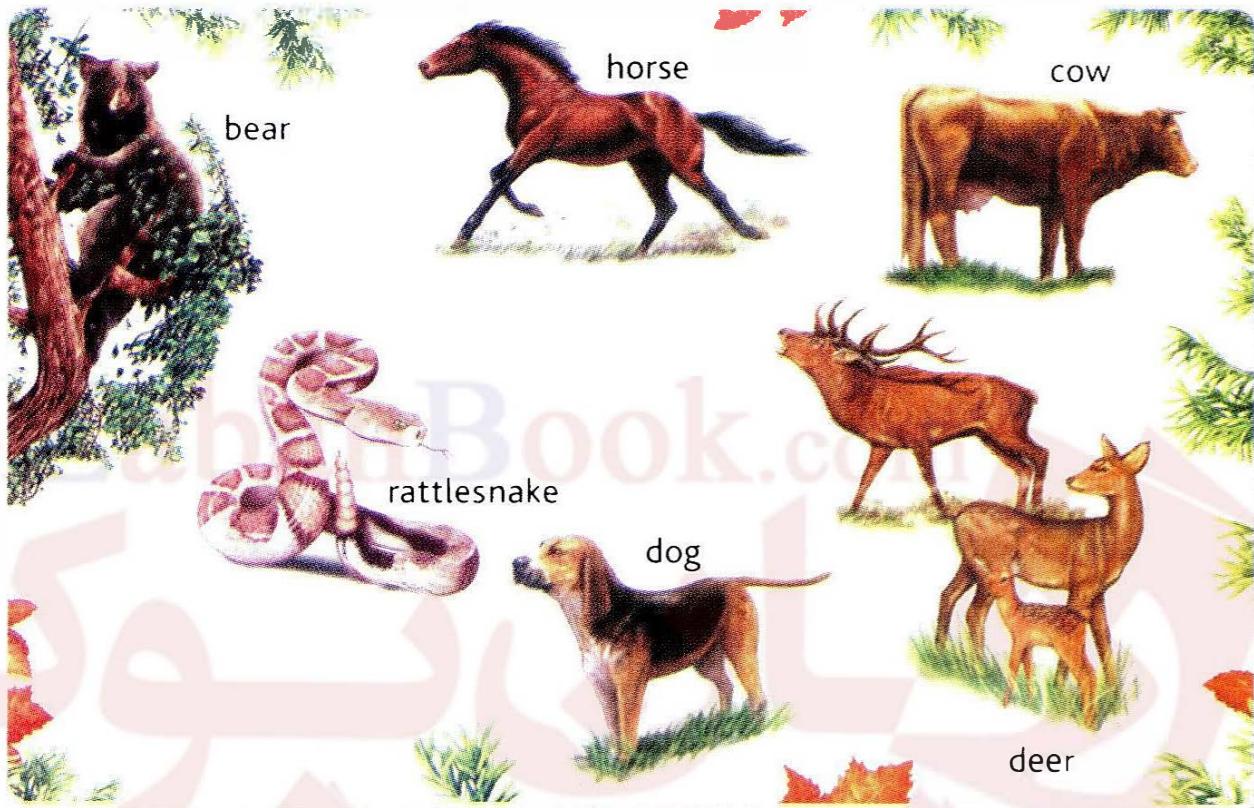
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1.1

**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

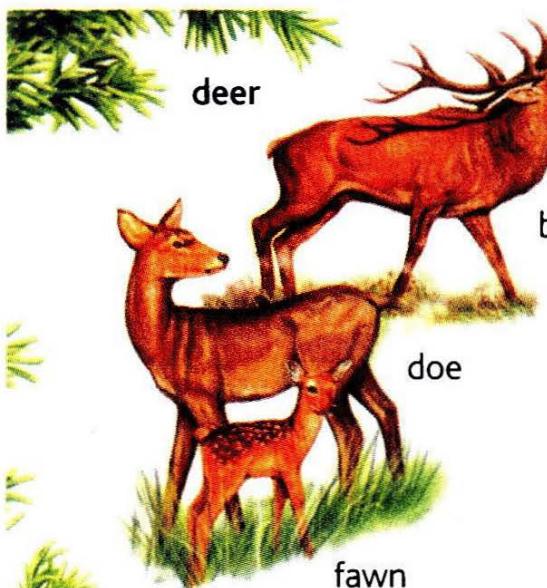
**hoe** /hoʊ/ (n/v) a long tool for taking unwanted plants from the ground

**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** /pɑ/ (n) an old word for *father*



deer

buck

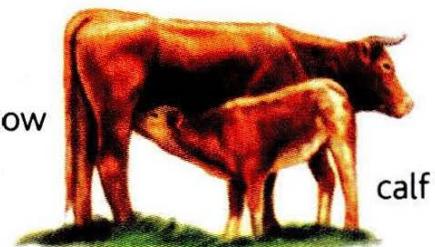
doe

fawn



squirrel

cow



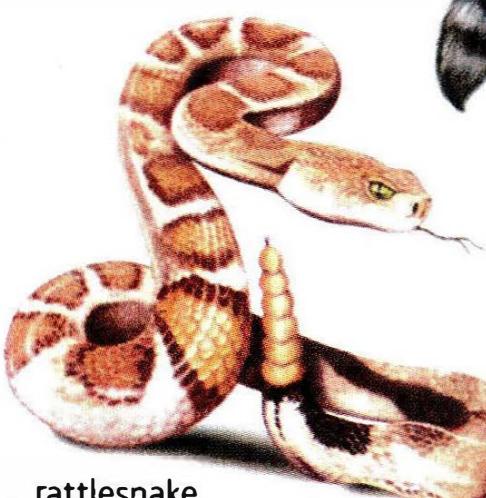
calf



fox



rabbit



rattlesnake



raccoon

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

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

"It smells really good, Ma. That isn't cornbread, is it?"

"Yes, it is. And it's ready, so hurry. Call your father."

Jody ran to the **barn**. His father was getting milk from Trixie, the cow.

"Must I feed old Caesar?" Jody asked.

"No, I've fed him and the dogs. Take this milk to your mother. Don't drop it like you did yesterday."

Ma Baxter sat, waiting for them. She was a large woman and her body filled one end of the table. Jody and Penny sat down.

"You hungry tonight?" she asked.

"I can eat a horse!" Jody said.

"That's what you say now. But your eyes are bigger than your stomach."

"I can eat a horse, too," said Penny. "I'm always hungry after a trip to Grahamsville!"

In winter, there was very little food on the Baxters' table. But it was spring now, and there was more food. After supper, Jody lit a **candle** so his mother could wash the dishes. He looked out the window and saw the big, round full moon.



**barn** /bɑrn/ (n) a large farm building where you keep, for example, animals or vegetables

**candle** /'kændl/ (n) a tall, round stick; you burn it to produce light

Buck sat up straight and said, "You and me are friends, Penny Baxter. Get up here behind me and show me the way. When we finish, we'll go to Volusia for the Christmas party."

Penny got on Buck's horse and Jody got on Mill-wheel's. Penny didn't like the idea of the Forresters at the party. But there was nothing that he could do.

The bear weighed about four hundred pounds, so they cut it into four pieces. Buck didn't want to cut it up, because he wanted everybody to see its great size. But Penny didn't agree. After much discussion, Buck listened to Penny.



They arrived at Baxter's Island after dark. Ma wasn't there and the house was dark. Jody called for Flag, but Flag didn't come. Jody was afraid. He called again. This time, Flag came running. Jody wanted to take him to Volusia, but he couldn't. So, he put him in the barn and gave him some food.

The Forresters went to Volusia with Penny and Jody. Buck took the bear skin. He put it on before he walked into the party at the church. Some women screamed when they saw him.

"Take it off, Buck—or someone will shoot you," Penny said.

Most of the men and boys stood around Penny and listened to the story about the hunt. Ory greeted him, then went and got a plate of food for her husband. The men were excited and asked a lot of questions.

There were great piles of food, and the church looked very pretty. Grandma Hutto gave Jody a lot of different cakes.

Ma Baxter said, "If you eat all of those cakes, you won't eat any meat or bread."

"I don't want any," said Jody happily.



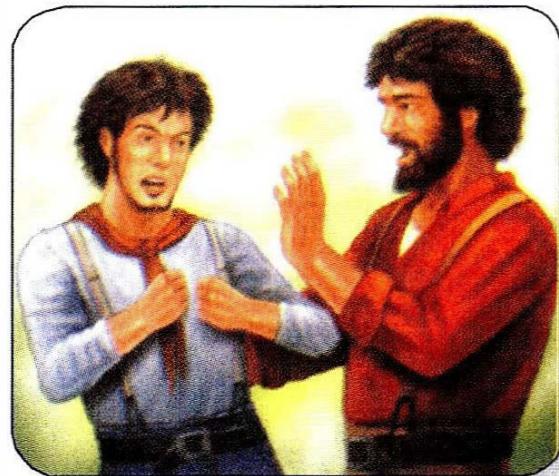
- 1 Work in pairs. It is the day after the Christmas party in Volusia. Have this conversation.

**Student A:**

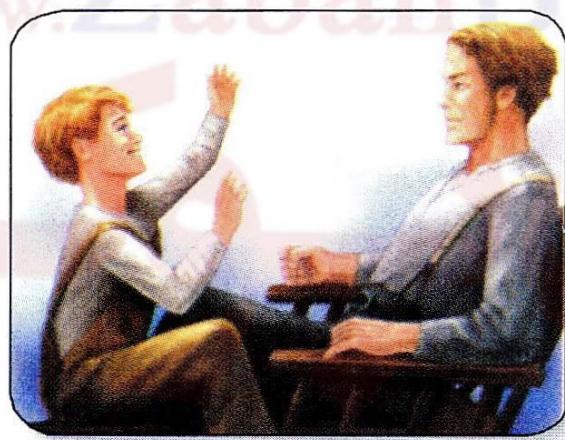
You are Lem Forrester. You are angry with the Baxters. Tell your brother why.

**Student B:**

You are Buck Forrester. You don't want trouble between your family and the Baxters. You think the Baxters are good people. Tell your brother why.



- 2 Work in pairs. It is twenty years after the end of the story. Have this conversation.



**Student A:**

You are Jody's son. You want a pet. Ask for one, and ask questions about your father's pet fawn.

**Student B:**

You are Jody. Tell your son about your pet fawn. Then decide: can your son have a pet or not? Explain your reasons.

- 3 Think about yourself, your family, and your friends. Has anyone had similar problems to Jody's? Think about trouble with neighbors and problems with pets. Make notes below, and then discuss what happened.

Notes

## Project *Staying Alive*

**WORK WITH TWO OR THREE OTHER STUDENTS.**

- 1** In the story, Penny almost dies from a rattlesnake bite. The natural world is a dangerous place. Write a list of other ways in which the natural world can kill you.

You are caught in an electric storm

A bear attacks you in the woods

- 2** Read Kath Levin's story and then have the conversation below.

I was walking in the mountains with some friends. Suddenly snow started to fall down the mountainside. It was very frightening. We held onto a tree, but the snow carried me down the hill. I pulled the neck of my T-shirt up over my face and kept my mouth closed. I fell for a long time and



the snow covered me. I made an air space around my mouth.

Then I kicked hard, and got near the top of the snow. I pushed my hand up until the tops of my fingers were above the snow. But then I couldn't move. I waited and waited. It was so cold! After half an hour, I heard my friends shouting. I shouted back, and soon they found me.

**Students A-C:**

You are Kath's friends. You have just saved her. Ask her how she is. Find out how she stayed alive.

**Student D:**

You are Kath. Answer your friends' questions.

- 3** Talk about the dangers of the natural world in movies, books, or TV shows. What happens to the people in stories like these? Do they die? If not, what do they do to stay alive?



- 4** Read the sentences below. Which information sheet do you think they are from? Write A or B.

**A** **BIG CATS**  
How to stay alive!



**B** **A WALKER'S GUIDE**  
How to stay alive in an electric storm!



- 1    **B** Keep away from open fields. You don't want to be the tallest thing in the area.
- 2    Never go near babies. Mothers often attack to protect their children.
- 3    Don't make fast or sudden movements. Always move slowly.
- 4    If a big cat bites you, pull hard on its biggest lower teeth.
- 5    If you are carrying metal things, put them at least six meters away from you.
- 6    Don't wait under a single tree. You'll be safer in a space between a group of trees.
- 7    If you are losing a lot of blood from a bite, burn your skin with red-hot metal.
- 8    Make your body into a ball. Keep your feet together, with only your toes touching the ground. Close your eyes. Put your hands over your ears to protect them from the noise.

- 5 Your group is going to make an information sheet about staying alive. Choose a danger of the natural world. Find information on the Internet. Plan and write something that you can put on the wall.

# The Yearling

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

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*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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