

Dear Mr. Rawls,

Your book "Where the Red Fern Grows" is my all time favorite book. I read it when I was Billy's age so the book really came to life. The reason that I connected with Billy and the book in general so well is because of the things Billy did throughout the book. Things like hunting, fishing, training and playing with his dogs as well as just being in the outdoors.

When the book describes Billy's "puppy love" that part really stood out to me because I shared that with him. What I had was more of just the love for a dog. As Billy experiences the ups and downs of being a dog owner I understood his emotions very well. I particularly enjoyed the parts of the book when it really describes his dogs and the things that he did with them. The story of my dog "Cooper" matches with Billy's very closely. I spent countless days playing and hunting with Cooper. In your book when Old Dan and little Ann get injured by a mountain lion is a close match to what happened to my dog. Cooper got into it one night with a raccoon when we were raccoon hunting. As in the book when Billy was on his own, I was also.

The way my story differs from Billy's is that I shot and raccoon and it fell from the tree injured. Cooper did as he was trained to do and went to retrieve the raccoon. It was still alive and ended up tearing my dogs face up pretty good. Billy's mom sewed up his dogs but we had to go to the vet immediately. Cooper ended up being okay where as in your book Billy's dogs were not. My dog's story doesn't end in a good way either. He ended up chasing a female dog that was in heat and never returned home.

Another way I connected with the book was when you wrote about the ways Billy made money to buy his dogs. When you wrote about him selling bait to the fishermen I remembered

several things I did when I was little just like that to make some pocket change. Such as selling walnuts that I had picked up in my backyard and going to the end of my driveway to sell football programs from Friday night games on Saturday mornings.

The last way that I really make a connection with your book was with Billy's passion for hunting and fishing. I have hunted and fished for as long as I can remember. The parts about raccoon hunting and sitting on the banks of the river for hours just made your book very memorable to me because I did those things just like Billy.

I connected with Billy in so many ways that this book almost seemed like a biography to me. I would recommend your book to anyone because it has so many life lessons in it and is just a very good book. "Where the red fern grows" is definitely my all time favorite book.

Drew Harsin
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