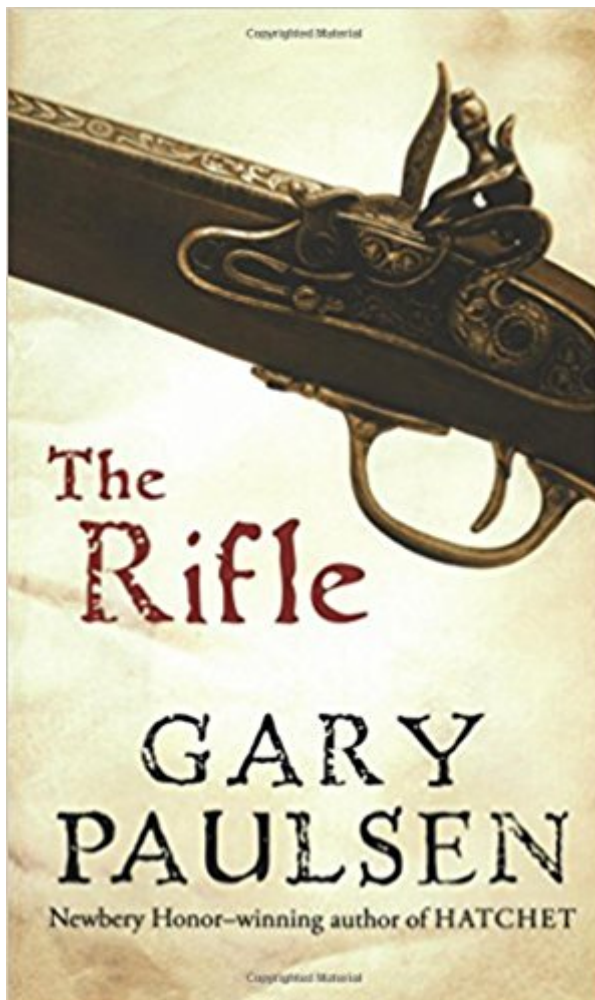


The book was found

# The Rifle



## Synopsis

A treasured rifle passed down through generations is the cause of a tragic accident in this timely tale. With subtle mastery and precision, this tough, thought-provoking novel challenges the idea that firearms don't become instruments of destruction and murder until they are placed in human hands. Each book includes a reader's guide.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1480 (What's this?)

Paperback: 112 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; 1 edition (November 1, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0152058397

ISBN-13: 978-0152058395

Product Dimensions: 4.5 x 0.3 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.1 out of 5 stars 105 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #65,369 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #19 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Violence](#) #26 in [Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > United States > Colonial & Revolutionary Periods](#) #66 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Violence](#)

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Grade 5 Up?This novella focuses on a specific weapon crafted during the Revolutionary War. At the book's conclusion, set in 1994, this rifle still functions and performs as it was designed to do. Paulsen, who can create vivid portraits of individuals in relation to specific places, takes the focus off the people here, although they remain distinct characters, and puts this object—a rifle—at the core of the story. Although he seems to be saying that people don't kill people, guns do, this message is not sustained. The circumstances seem so unique and the love of weaponry so strong that the anti-gun theme is fatally weakened. For anyone whose mind is made up on this issue, this book will probably not change it. However, it could lead to intense discussion and exploration of how our society has evolved into its present gun-loving culture and into the intense anguish and human cost we collectively ignore as we continue our love affair with weaponry. For readers willing to think

about this issue, for those looking for ways to introduce the debate, there is no better vehicle than this short, engagingly written story of one rifle and its fatal impact on one modern boy. ?Carol A. Edwards, Minneapolis Public Library Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Gr. 7<sup>^</sup>-9. In his latest novel, Paulsen explores the history of a flintlock rifle, meticulously describing the skill and artistry of gunsmith Cornish McManus as he spends months creating a gun both beautiful and "sweet" (meaning accurate). Using his usual spare style, Paulsen describes the rifle's use in the Revolutionary War and follows its story into the twentieth century, when it is exchanged by a scathingly depicted gun fanatic for an Elvis-on-velvet painting, and ultimately ends up killing a teenager, Richard, in a freak accident that occurs without human intervention. The omniscient narrator, who speaks in an ironic tone reminiscent of Kurt Vonnegut, details the events small and large (943 baseball games; finding a genetic cure for heart disease) that Richard missed by dying prematurely. Paulsen's message is clear and cutting: a machine made for killing, no matter how lovingly crafted and benignly kept, remains a machine made for killing. Susan Dove Lempke --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Love reading it still today. Reminds me of when I first picked up the book and just loved it in high school. Now I own a flintlock and realize the challenges of shooting one and everything make it even better.

Very Good

Arrived quickly! Its a great book for anyone! Quick but facinating read

I grew up loving hatchet and went on a Paulsen spending spree. This is now one of my favorite books of all time

108 pages of very good writing. An excellent story about a man and his hand made rifle and how many different owners it had and where it's final resting place was. A very fast and a very good read.

My 10-year old's teacher recommened this book for a book report. She read it in about 3 days, she

couldn't put it down and begged me to read it. She actually purchased this for her great uncle as a Christmas present! We all enjoyed this read.

Is this book pure anti-gun propaganda as portrayed in the many negative reviews? No. It's way more sophisticated and nuanced than that. The reviewers who condemn it as mindlessly or perniciously anti-gun either have very thin skins or are guilty of a knee-jerk reaction to the end of the book. Paulsen is an outstanding writer and has written a story that takes aim at simple mindedness about guns. The book brings to life the connection between a particular weapon and death. But, not all the deaths inflicted by the intentional use of the rifle in question are presented as morally wrong in principle; Paulsen has a mature understanding of the necessity of violence in certain circumstances (his book *Hatchet* is a fantastic example). He also has a mature understanding of how we can become too accommodated to violence and death and their instruments. Whether one advocates for gun ownership or not, this book provides powerful fodder for reflection and discussion. I recommend it highly to conservatives and liberals alike. It is definitely not a simplistic anti-gun screed.

The book has roughly four parts. 1) First 20 or so pages are about the rifle being created. It seemed a bit much middle school readers (readers that have this in my local summer reading list) due to all the technical gun smithing terms running around. 2) Then there is a good bit where a revolutionary soldier has the rifle and uses it well during the war. 3) It becomes 1993, the rifle eventually finds its way into the hands of a gun enthusiast. This is where the true bias of the author creeps in. The guy is someone that lives in a motor home, carries cash only, and fear the government while going to gun shows and amassing weapons. The events in Waco, TX take place and this character sympathizes with the cult that was massing firearms. Adding to the bias is that this character was given a particular fixation with Jesus Christ along with his obsession for firearms and the Constitutional right to bear arms while fearing the government. The character is a stereotype that is so severe it seems based off of the author's worst nightmares. 4) The next owner of the gun is a man that trades the "gun nut" for it. 5) Then we get about 12 pages of back story on a nice boy that is well loved by his parents (despite chronic ear infections in his early years). We get this story because the next part has the characters celebrating Christmas (oh the tragedy, it's during Christmas!) and the rifle (which is set above the fireplace) goes off when a spark from the fireplace lands exactly on the rifle in such a way to ignite the powder that has been sealed away airtight for over 200 years. The rifle fires and shoots the boy in the head. 6) But the bias doesn't stop there!

Then we get 2 pages about all the things this boy would have done if he had lived! We hear about the sunrises, sunsets, sports (other usual stuff he'd have experienced) and then we learn that he would have fallen in true love and married the girl, would have gone to medical school and would have cured some sort of heart disease or something. Really? Why not make him President of the United States and solve all social & medical issues as well as find fairy dust along the way?7) And of course there is the epilogue. The rifle is negligently thrown over a bridge and a fisherman happens to be there and takes the rifle. I honestly felt like Kate Blanchett was narrating about the ring from "Lord of the Rings" but this time she was talking about the rifle with it's will to move on and spread pain and loss.

Pros: I found it very fun to read, started and fished it on the gym Treadmill in one afternoon. It was sort of like I couldn't put it down, but only because I couldn't wait to see what happen next (look below in the "cons" and you will see how that isn't a good thing). I couldn't wait to see the anti-gun propaganda continue. It's like a roller coaster ride of bias.

Cons: The obvious agenda of the author is sickening. It is full of very far fetched moments. Maybe even less believable than the fire place igniting the powder in the 200 old rifle is that idea that not one person fired the rifle since the revolutionary war. I buy that maybe no one could tell it was loaded, but it's hard to imagine it wasn't test fired somewhere safe shortly after being acquired since 1993. I don't think I've ever met a gun owner that used a firearm simply as display and didn't make sure it did what it was supposed to before/right after buying.

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A British rifle man; the journals and correspondence of Major George Simmons, Rifle brigade, during the Peninsular war and the campaign of Waterloo

Build Your Own AR-15 Rifle: In Less Than 3 Hours You Too, Can Build Your Own Fully Customized AR-15 Rifle From Scratch...Even If You Have Never Touched A Gun In Your Life!

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Life of Dr. William F. Carver, of California: Champion Rifle-shot of the World, His Capture by the Indians (1878)

The Ferguson Rifle

Love My Rifle More than You: Young and Female in the U.S. Army

Colder Than Hell: A Marine Rifle Company at Chosin Reservoir

The Riverton Rifle: My Story &#151; Straight Shooting on Hockey and on Life

American Rifle: A Biography

The American Krag Rifle and Carbine (For Collectors Only) Â®) Full-Auto Conversion Of The SKS Rifle

The rifle in America (Firearms classics library)

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