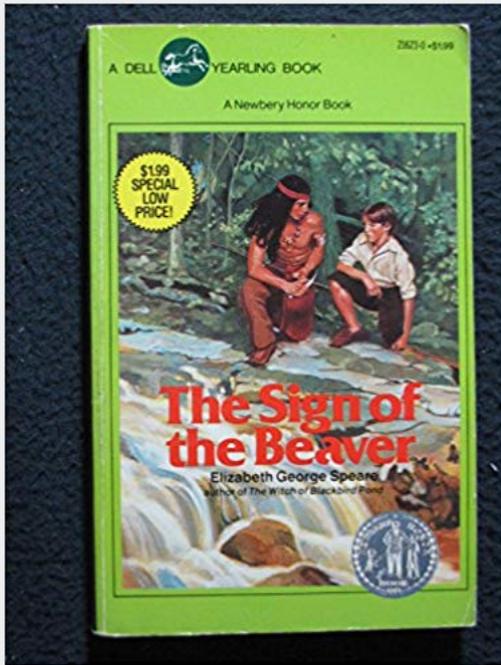


## Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth George Speare



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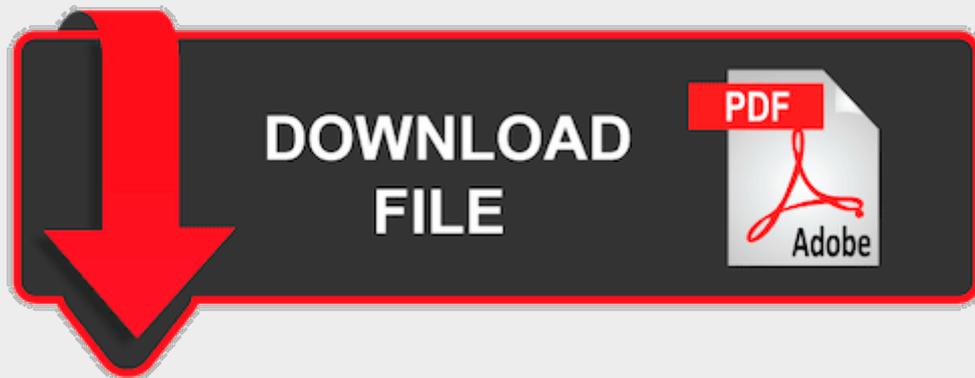
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## Reviews of the Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth George Speare

### 1. [NIC&R#

My grandson moved to a new school and we found out that the class had already read The Sign of the Beaver. I purchased it so we could use it for our bedtime story and catch up with the class. It turned out to be a wonderful story. It really held the attention of my 5th grader. While the main characters are boys, I think that girls and boys will enjoy it -- maybe 3rd grade and up. I liked it, too. It is fast-paced and has some wonderful

sketches. The importance of family, respect for others and the environment, resourcefulness are just some of the values this story gently incorporates.

## 2. hardy

First published in 1983, *The Sign of the Beaver* is a children's classic. This edition contains an introduction by Joseph Bruchac, which essentially states that the book is racist and sexist but a worthwhile historical novel nonetheless. It's startling to see this kind of apology prefacing a children's book, but the apology is useful. The terminology and attitudes within the story are not only outdated; they're offensive. However, Bruchac is also correct that the book is a vivid tale of wilderness survival and adaptation, filled with descriptions of cross-cultural interactions and the deepening respect and brotherhood between the white boy Matt and his Native American friend Attean. I found *The Sign of the Beaver* interesting and worth reading, even though much of the terminology bothered me.

## 3. Kazijora

Matt and his father have gone ahead of the rest of the family to build a cabin on their new land in Maine. Now, his father is returning to Massachusetts to get Matt's mother and siblings, leaving Matt to guard the new home and garden. Matt's dad expects to be gone only seven weeks. What could happen in that time?

First, someone steals the gun that Matt's dad left behind for him. Then Matt meets some of the Indians in the area. The chief wants Matt to teach his grandson, Attean, to read English. Attean is two years older than the twelve-year-old Matt, and Matt looks up to him. As the weeks progress, Attean begins to show Matt how to live off the land. Will that help Matt survive until his family returns?

While this book isn't as famous as the author's two Newbery Award winners, it's still a great read. The characters of Matt and Attean are so

real, and watching them change step by step is captivating. Even though I've read this book several times, I had a hard time putting it down on my latest reread.

Really, this is two coming of age stories, Matt's and Attean's. But underneath that is the story of race relations in 1768 Maine. There are so many layers to the story, which is part of what makes it easy to get into the story.

If you are looking for more books b Elizabeth George Speare, definitely pick this one up. You'll be captivated before you know it.

#### 4. Qwne

My son read this for his fourth-grade book report. He found the book on Amazon and picked it out, which was surprising to me. His assignment was to find "realistic fiction" that he hadn't read before, so that ruled out the Harry Potter, Star Wars and Wimpy Kid books.

It has the feel of a classic tale, but seems a bit old fashioned in its tone and writing. My Minecraft and YouTube-loving son found it to be boring in some parts, but he got through it and did a great book report.

#### 5. Inth

My son needed to read this book for school, however, I decided to read it to my family. This is a great book that left my kids wanting me to read more every time we opened it. It is easy to understand and incorporates family and friendship values. This book will stay on the shelf as I know we will read again in the future.

## 6. Quamar

I liked the adventure, and Attean and Matt. I chose this rating because I really, really liked it very much. I cried, and cried, but they were years of joy.

## 7. Gosar

"Twelve-year-old Matt is left on his own in the Maine wilderness while his father leaves to bring the rest of the family to their new settlement. When he befriends Attean, an Indian chief's grandson, he is invited to join the Beaver tribe and move north. Should Matt abandon his hopes of ever seeing his family again and go on to a new life?" (goodreads.com)

When I first started student teaching, my collaborating teacher gave me this 1983 YA novel to teach 5th graders. I fell in love with the characters and Elizabeth George Speare's writing style. Tight but descriptive, and full of emotional impact, there is not a wasted syllable. This is a story of innocence, wilderness survival, the kindness of strangers, respect, trust, and friendship. The characters of Matt, Attean, and the grandfather clearly "leap off the pages!" Multi-award-winning, "Sign of the Beaver" is well worth your child's reading time -- and yours too!

## 8. This story could, and probably did, in many ways, happen in this time in history.

A young boy, not yet a man, left to 'hold the fort', so to speak, in a wilderness while his father went back to fetch the rest of the family. He would have surely died if he had not been befriended by the people already there (Indians).

The underlying message is that there were many who learned to look

beyond the stories of 'scary' Native Americans, and discover they were people, not monsters. And how they were driven off their 'land' by the white settlers, but also, when treated with respect, were willing to co-exist.

Learning 'survival' at this young age would be good for young people in today's society, instead of walking thru malls talking on their cell phones.

The 2 young boys teach each other skills, and become friends.

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