



Will Hobbs

Jackie's Wild Seattle
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Q: JACKIE'S WILD SEATTLE involves wildlife rescue in and around a big city, and features a girl narrator. What's the story behind this story?

A: It all started with a newspaper clipping about a wildlife volunteer rescuing a coyote from an elevator in an office building in downtown Seattle. The article said that this man and his partner, a Border collie, rescue all different kinds of wildlife for a rehab center in the woods outside of the city. I had to meet the man and the dog and go visit the center. It was the beginning of an acquaintance with many amazing animals—eagles, owls, seals, bears, raccoons, squirrels, skunks, to name a few—and the people dedicated to helping them survive their often perilous world, the cities and suburbs they share with us. After several visits spanning several years, I had the inspiration and the ideas to propel a story. Some of the rescue situations in the book are patterned on real-life rescues, while others are completely made up.

Over the years, many readers have told me how much they liked the narrator of *Downriver and River Thunder* being a girl in a mixed cast of boys and girls. I wanted to do the same thing with this new story. My narrator, Shannon, handles the animal rescues, joined by her little brother Cody and her uncle Neal, while an older teenager named Tyler plays a crucial role back at the wildlife center. Thematically, *Jackie's Wild Seattle* is about the circle of healing—the healing of people as they help heal the animals.