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Wild Man Island
ISBN13: 9780380733101

Q: WILD MAN ISLAND starts in a sea kayak and leads readers deep into caves on Admiralty Island, Alaska: What inspired this story?

A: I've been under the spell of the North ever since my childhood in Alaska. More and more, I've been returning to Alaska, and sometimes my adventures inspire a story. Several years ago my wife and I went on two sea kayaking trips in southeast Alaska, a six-day trip along the shores of Chichagof Island to see the humpback whales, followed by a three-day trip to Admiralty Island, where we kayaked to the mouth of a stream to watch the huge coastal grizzlies catching salmon. Several years went by as I was thinking, I'd sure like to write a sea kayaking story. Right about then I became aware of fabulous fossil finds in caves in southeast Alaska. I was astounded to learn that Alaskan caves might be hiding secrets about the earliest people ever to enter the Americas. That's when I began to picture a story that would start with kayaking and lead into the caves.

Admiralty Island was the setting I chose. It's one of the wildest places left on Earth. I read that a wildlife biologist had reported seeing a dog running with wolves on Admiralty. In my story, I thought, whose dog might that be? Maybe there's someone hiding out on the island. The dog might, be his. Now I was ready to have fourteen-year-old Andy's sea kayak capsize, for him to swim ashore and enter a dangerous world of survival and archeological discovery—I love writing stories filled with mystery and suspense, and this one was quite a ride.