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*Gloria Skurzynski , Alane Ferguson*

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**Yellowstone National Park buzzes with rumors about a wolf attack.**

**And a stalker edges through the trees, ready to kill.**

Unaware that they are in danger, 12-year-old Jack Landon and his younger sister, Ashley, have their hands full dealing with rough and rebellious Troy Haverson-- the teenage foster child who's just come to live with the Landon family.

From the opening moments at Old Faithful through the next 48 hours, the dramatic tension builds. Keen pacing allows for scenes of suspense, adventure, and tenderness as readers are caught up in the fate of three kids-- and the wolf they've come too call Silver.

## Wolf Stalker Details

Date : Published April 1st 1997 by National Geographic Society

ISBN : 9780792270348

Author : Gloria Skurzynski , Alane Ferguson

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# From Reader Review *Wolf Stalker* for online ebook

## Jimbo Pantas says

Given that it's written for kids, *Wolf Stalker* does not employ a complicated plot. I'm sure this is not a case of incapability or uncreativity; I read Alane Ferguson's debut novel back in high school and have reread it only recently, and although the prose is clunky almost all the time the plot development surely is a good hook. My guess is, National Geography hired Skurzynzki and Ferguson to write stories for kids to dish out a lesson, instead of entertainment. Sure, there's a bit of mystery, but it's what I've heard people call a "soft mystery." There's even an afterword written by the director of the Yellowstone National Park (a real person this time) urging people, especially kids, to be a little more conservationistic towards nature and its wild inhabitants. Can't say I enjoyed the book, but I can't say I didn't either. So I'll give it three stars, rounded up from two-point-five.

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## Garrett says

I love this book. The book throws a curveball at you. The guy who said that a wolf attacked his dog is the guy who tries to kill a wolf. And the man pointed his gun at Jack.

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## Amy says

This book was better than I thought it would be.

I'd been browsing the gift shop of the visitor center of Zion National Park when I was on vacation and came across an entire shelf of these children's mystery books where each book is set in one of the National Parks. I felt that was a bit of a weird premise, but I remembered devouring mystery books when I was a kid: Nancy Drew, Hardy Boys, Encyclopedia Brown; I felt, "why not?" and checked book #1 of the series out from the library when I got home. This is how I ended up reading *WOLF STALKER*, a book set in Yellowstone National Park and primarily about the wolf reintroduction program at the park.

For a kid's book it really isn't bad, and was surprisingly fun. I read it in a couple of hours and it was a pretty decent mystery and features kids doing things that kids probably shouldn't do (run into the wilderness with a bare minimum of supplies, touch wild wolves, help investigate a possible wolf hunter at his house with his many guns), but I thought it was pretty entertaining.

I think it's also neat that the co-authors are a mother/daughter team, the mother primarily a children's author and the daughter primarily a mystery author. Combining their talents to create a children's mystery series is a cool idea.

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## Julie says

3.5 Good solid mystery and I love the theme of the National parks. Good read aloud for grades 3-5,

especially if they are learning about the western states.

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### **The Third Place A Teen Library says**

F SKU mionp bk.1

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### **Aidan says**

The book I read was Wolf Stalker by Gloria Skurzynski. It follows Jack, Ashley, and Troy when they go to Yellowstone Park to investigate the mystery of a dog that was killed by wolves with their parents. The parents, Olivia & Steven, go to the scene of the dog while the kids stay at a small area waiting to be picked up by a local park ranger. Troy (who is a foster child) decides he wants to see some wolves and runs away to try and find one, prompting Jack and Ashley to follow. When they find Troy who has found wolves, they watch as two of them hunt down some deer. Suddenly as their watching one of the wolves is shot in the leg. They follow the wolf into the woods where they take care of him for about two days. Once they feel the wolf is better they leave him to himself. They find their parents who are relieved to see them and then go to the man whose dog was killed by the wolves. They realize that he was the one who shot the wolf they were taking care of and also was hunting for deer horn in Yellowstone. They call the authorities to report his crimes and then the book ends. Overall I think this was an interesting book. In the beginning Troy was a foster child who didn't like Jack that much. But after the woods and the wolf he's grown to come around to him.

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### **Jeremy says**

this is a great book.

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### **Danielle says**

I decided to read one last book in this series before putting it down altogether. This book takes place in Yellowstone National Park and this time the Landon family is investigating the death of a rancher's dog. The rancher claims the dog was killed by one of the recently reintroduced wolves in Yellowstone Park. While the parents are investigating the remains of the dog their children, Jack and Ashley, along with their foster child Troy, end up lost in the woods and protecting an injured wolf they see get shot. Of course, when they are rescued this is vital information to their parents investigation. Since this says it's a mystery, judging it as that the mystery isn't particularly complex. If you like mysteries that require a lot of thought then you will probably be disappointed. This (and most of the series) is more of an adventure story. I think this is probably my least favorite of the four books I've read in this series. It didn't feel as suspenseful as Running Scared (when they were lost in the caves) or have all around crazy going on like in The Hunted (when the kids were attacked by a bear!!!). It did get more interesting near the end when (view spoiler) What I also didn't didn't like was how annoying Jack was in this book, fortunately that was a part of his character arc in this book, so he learns by the end of the book to be less bossy. And this is something he learns from because he doesn't have this problem in later books. (yay continuity!)

If you like the other books in the series or think your kids might like them I recommend this book. It is interesting and usually educational.

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### **Tarissa says**

Wolf Stalker is the first in the National Parks Mystery series published by the National Geographic Society.

Book #1 follows Jack and Ashley Landon on an adventure in Yellowstone National Park, where their parents are working. Another boy, Troy Haverson, joins with the Landon family as the kids work together to sort out the source of a problem in the park. Wolves are getting hurt and a local news story breaks out about a rancher whose dog is killed by the wolves on the reservation. Bad publicity for Yellowstone soon ensues. The adventure leads the kids to an all-night camp out trying to save a hurt wolf they find... the question is whether or not it can survive until a rescue team arrives.

Overall, it's a fun story for young readers. There are a few key points to mention to parents though... The story mentions about "millions of years ago when the earth was formed". In one chapter it says that a boy runs off "cussing under his breath". I also don't approve of Troy's bad attitude, but I think the authors were trying to bring out how he had lived a rough life -- even then, not everyone has to have a bad attitude just because of their childhood experiences.

Wolf Stalker still has some good qualities about it, like showing kids what it means to protect the earth, and how to treat wild creatures.

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### **Jody says**

For kids/5th graders, I'd give it a 4, but for adults, a 3. These books are written for children, but being a National Park Ranger AND a Fifth Grade Teacher, I was DELIGHTED to bump into these at the gift shop in the visitor center at Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve in Idaho (of all places). I had never heard of them before. I was so delighted, in fact, that I wanted to buy all ten they had on display, but my husband said I could only choose two. The authors are mother and daughter. One is an award winning mystery writer and the other is an award winning science author, so they put their heads together and came up with these "educational mysteries", each taking place in a different national park, put out by National Geographic. So, I like to think of it as "Nevada Barr meets Trixie Belden." Nevada Barr writes ADULT mysteries about a female park ranger named Anna Pigeon, each mystery taking place in a different park. I've read all of Nevada's, but due to her increasing harshness, ugliness, edginess...whatever you want to call it, I don't think I can read anything else of hers in the future. I'm excited to see if any of my students will pick this one up!

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### **Jordan Wright says**

Audience: As young as second grade if your kids are gutsy. If not, maybe fourth grade. A few of the books (especially *Valley of Death* and *Over the Edge*) are pretty scary. I still have an irrational fear of flash floods from *Over the Edge* ha ha. But the good news is that there is no sexual content or foul language (as far as I remember).

Plot: Jack and Ashley Landon travel to various national parks with their veterinarian mother and wildlife photographer father. Each book features a new national park and Jack and Ashley learn about the park while solving some mystery the adults can't seem to figure out. The Landons are also a foster family and each book features a new temporary foster child whose rough past adds to the drama of the plot.

What makes them great?

These books are both entertaining and educational. When we read them as kids, my siblings and I learned all sorts of things about the national parks, wildlife conservation, and political controversy, all while hanging on the edge of our seats ( . . . or the side of the bunk bed in this case) to see how the mystery would be solved. I also liked how each new foster child brought in the perspectives of a different lifestyle or culture into the Landon family. It's a pretty good idea. These books are a great series to read aloud to kids, especially in preparation for trips to various national parks.

Where to find them?

We got them through a National Geographic subscription, which I imagine wouldn't work anymore. However, I have seen them at libraries and in national park bookstores and I am sure they are on Amazon somewhere.

Here is a list of all the titles and where they take place:

- #1 *Wolf Stalker* (Yellowstone National Park)
  - #2 *Rage of Fire* (Hawaii Volcanoes National Park)
  - #3 *Cliff Hanger* (Mesa Verde National Park)
  - #4 *Deadly Waters* (Everglades National Park)
  - #5 *The Hunted* (Glacier National Park)
  - #6 *Ghost Horses* (Zion National Park)
  - #7 *Over the Edge* (Grand Canyon National Park)
  - #8 *Valley of Death* (Death Valley)
  - #9 *Escape from Fear* (Virgin Islands National Park)
  - #10 *Out of the Deep* (Acadia National Park)
  - #11 *Running Scared* (Carlsbad Caverns National Park)
  - # 12 *Buried Alive* (Denali National Park)
  - #13 *Night of the Black Bear* (Great Smoky Mountains National Park)
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## Jackie says

*Wolf Stalker: A Mystery in Yellowstone National Park* is a fictionalized novel which deals with our nation's resources, their conservation, and most importantly with *The Wolf Preservation Project* that was begun in Wyoming. The Landon family, parents Steven and Olivia (who is a wildlife veterinarian) and kids Ashley and Jack travel together to try to solve the mystery of the apparent endangerment of the wolves in park. These wolves were re-introduced into their natural habitat and many citizens are up in arms about it...fearing that their farm and domestic animals are in danger. Dr. Olivia knows better.

So, they travel to Yellowstone to check out the facts and along with them is a troubled foster child, Troy who has abandonment issues. He is sully and withdrawn at first, but quickly bonds with a wolf that he names

Silver which has been illegally shot. He connects with the animal in a way that the others cannot.

This series, *Mysteries in Our National Parks* are full of environmental facts and paint a picture that kids and adults can relate to. The mystery adds an element of fast-paced tension. Great for a class studying this richly landscaped part of *The United States*.

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### **Charissa says**

This National Geographic YA mystery set in Yellowstone National Park was pretty good. I had to read it for a teaching credit assignment and thought it'd bore me, but it held my attention the whole way through. Written by a mother-daughter team for a series of mysteries set in different national parks, this is one I'd definitely recommend for younger kids who want to learn more about our country's national resources. This story deals with the wolves that have been reintroduced into Yellowstone. The main family takes in foster kids, and Troy (their current foster kid) is a troubled teen worried about his missing mother. Besides the education about national parks, I felt the characters taught me a lot too about diversity and empathy.

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### **Nancy says**

National Geographic published, this was well written. We are to be good stewards of the creation God has given us. This has evolutionary mention regarding "millions of years", and lousy attitudes on the kids' parts including lies, but a good story for young people who are grounded in the Truth and will not be swayed by these negatives.

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### **Wayne Walker says**

Twelve-year-old Jack Landon and his eleven-year-old sister Ashley live with their mom, Olivia, who is a wildlife veterinarian at the National Elk Refuge in Jackson Hole, WY, and their father Steven, who is a photographer. The family also takes in Troy Haverson, a somewhat rebellious thirteen-year-old boy whose mother has just disappeared. Then Olivia gets a call from Mike, head of Yellowstone National Park's Wolf Restoration Program, about a nearby rancher's dog which was supposedly killed by park wolves, and he wants her to come and investigate. When the Landons arrive at Yellowstone, there are all kinds of people picketing and protesting the wolves, and this slows down the rangers. After Mike comes, he, Olivia, and Steven need to go off to investigate the scene, leaving the children for another ranger to pick up. While waiting, the children see a pair of wolves, and as Jack is taking pictures, one of the wolves is shot. Troy runs after the wolf hoping to save it and perhaps catch the sniper, so Jack and Ashley run after him, and the three of them spend a cold night in the wilderness with the injured wolf. How will they survive? What really happened to the dog and the wolf? Is there more to the rancher's story than he's been telling? And will Troy's mother ever be found? Wolf Stalker is #1 in the National Parks Mystery series. I first saw a display of these books in the gift shop at Valley Forge National Historic Park in Pennsylvania and recognized the name of one of the authors, Gloria Skurzynski, from another wonderful book of hers, *The Minstrel in the Tower*, that we had read. Gloria Skurzynski and Alane Ferguson are a mother and daughter writing team. It was my hope that there would be one on Valley Forge, but there isn't, so I bought the one about Yellowstone. Originally, these books were called the "Mysteries in Our National Parks" and published in hardback but

most were republished in “digest edition paperback.” This one certainly has a lot of tension and excitement. However, there are some language and attitude issues. Besides a few childish slang terms (crud, crap, screwed), which I assume are used to make the characters seem “relevant” to modern readers, references to “cussing,” though no actual cuss words are found, and to a “nasty hand gesture,” though it is not described in detail, appear. Jack calls Ashley “tick brain,” and other examples of seeming disrespect occur. The truth is really stretched during the interrogation of the rancher, and on one occasion Jack is actually said to have “lied.” These things may not be issues for many parents, but others may find them somewhat objectionable. For these reasons, I would say ages 12 and up rather than 8 and up. At the same time, despite their spats, it is clear that Jack and Ashley really do love one another, and Olivia said that she “prayed and prayed” while the kids were missing. It’s an interesting story with a good premise and a lot of factual information, but some parents may prefer better role models. Other books in the series take place in Mesa Verde, Everglades, Glacier, Zion, Grand Canyon, Death Valley, Virgin Islands, Acadia, Carlsbad Caverns, Denali (Mt. McKinley), and Smoky Mountains National Parks. Another one in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park (Rage of Fire) is listed but apparently not available in a paperback edition.

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