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# Togo



## Synopsis

Togo wasn't meant to be a sled dog. He was too feisty and independent to make a good team member, let alone a leader. But Togo is determined, and when his trainer, Leonhard Seppala, gives him a chance, he soon becomes one of the fastest sled dogs in history! His skills are put to the ultimate test, though, when Seppala and his team are called on to make the now-famous run across the frozen Arctic to deliver the serum that will save Alaska from a life-threatening outbreak of diphtheria. In the style of *Akiak*, winner of the Irma S. and James H. Black Award for Excellence in Children's Literature, along with five state awards, Robert J. Blake's detailed, carefully researched oil paintings complete the story of the adventure that inspired the internationally famous Iditarod race.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (37 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

When I was growing up in Seattle there was an old man that lived in our neighborhood, he was a former dogsled racer that had retired to the Ballard area. I used to stop and visit him after school. His wife would give me cookies and milk and Leonhard would tell me stories about his days in Nome. One story he always told was about the great deeds that Togo, his favorite lead dog, had done. Togo had saved Leonhard's life on numerous occasions. Leonhard told me the story about the

serum run into Nome during the diphtheria epidemic. As he and Togo returned to Nome after a run of over 150 miles in one day they were met by someone coming out from Nome with Balto at the lead. Leonhard handed off the serum and rested his dogs. Then Balto got all the glory as he returned to town with the serum. Balto ran only a few miles from Nome and was considered a "scrub" freight dog by Leonhard. It broke Leonhard's heart - he always told me how much it upset him when they put a statue in Central Park to Balto, and they even decked it out in Togo's colors (ribbons). I was so thrilled to see Robert Blake's release of Togo. I immediately bought a copy and as I read it, it was as if Leonhard was telling me the story again as he had so many years ago in his living room in Ballard. Blake's extensive research is "right on" and he has done a wonderful job of retelling the story as it actually occurred. I highly recommend Togo to anyone interested in what really happened in the 1924 Serum Race. Robert Lane Ashland, OR

Togo is a great book for children to learn about courage and determination. A must for dog lovers! I highly recommend this book for any child.

Togo is a beautifully written book for children. The character of this special dog shines through these pages to inspire young and old. Also a great read for adults who love animal stories.

This is a visually beautiful book that tells a beautiful story. This is a story of courage and strength. Togo's story needs to be told. I even purchased a copy for my son's elementary school library.

Robert Blake does his homework, writes a beautiful story and even paints the illustrations in this beautiful children's book. Togo is a heart-rending story about the Siberian husky some folks believe was given short shrift after the Great Serum Race of 1925. Togo, his handler, Leonhard Seppala, and his team of brave sled dogs ran a total of 260 miles, farther than any team of dogs during the dramatic race against time to get diphtheria vaccine to Nome in January, 1925. The book includes a map of the trail that begins in Anchorage where the serum is loaded onto a train and taken to the end of the line in Nenana. There the dogsleds take over. Seppala and his team leave Nome headed for Nulato, 300 miles from Nome, where they are to pick up the serum and take it back to Nome. They race through a raging winter storm for three days. On the fourth day, they almost miss the musher they're to meet because Seppala can't see or hear in the storm. However, Togo's ears shoot up, and Seppala finally hears the other musher's voice. Another team ends up taking the serum the last leg to Nome, and this is where the controversy begins. The other musher, Gunnar

Kaasen, and his dog, Balto, owned and trained by Seppala, made the final leg of the journey, also with much difficulty. A hero's welcome awaited them in Nome, and Kaasen's and Balto's names became well known around the world. Togo gave his all to get the serum to Nome, and never raced again. Balto spent his last days at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, along with his sled mates, and a statue of him was erected in New York's Central Park. However one views the days after the race, it was nothing short of a miracle that the dogs and mushers of the great serum race covered the same distance in five days that it took the U.S. mail system 30 days to cover, and did so in the most horrendous weather conditions imaginable. Mr. Blake is also the award-winning author of the children's book, *Akiak*, about another great Iditarod husky. Also recommended: *Balto and the Great Race* by Elizabeth Cody Kimmel and *The Great Serum Race* by Debbie S. Miller. Carolyn Rowe Hill

I once thought Balto (He is a hero too) was the hero of the Serum Run, but now, I know it's Togo. All those brave dogs deserve recognition, but Togo's story deserves to be better-known. Go, Togo!

The book is beautiful. My son and I are following the Iditarod race electronically. In order to understand this race, we were looking into the original Great Serum Race and information about dog sledding. This is an eloquently told story based on facts that is fitting for an elementary student. The artwork is fantastic and helps pull you into the brutal winter conditions that is tied to the story.

This is a wonderful true story about those who should not be forgotten. "Togo" is a beautiful example of the blessings of sacrifice, love, devotion, and perseverance. Truly a story to touch your heart.

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