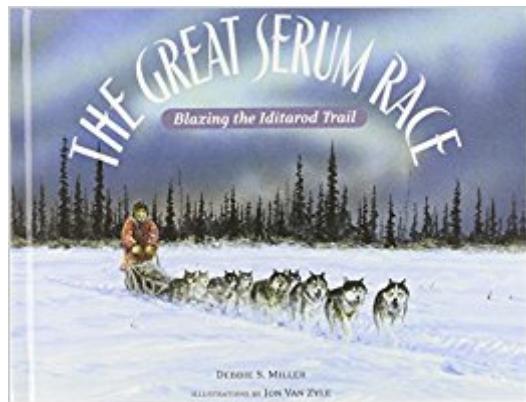


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# The Great Serum Race: Blazing The Iditarod Trail



## Synopsis

Ride shotgun with the heroic mushers whose bravery inspired the Iditarod. In the winter of 1925, Nome, Alaska, was hit by an unexpected and deadly outbreak of diphtheria. Officials immediately quarantined the town, but the only cure for the community of more than 1,400 people was antitoxin serum and the nearest supply was in Anchorage—hundreds of miles of snowbound wilderness away. The only way to get it to Nome was by dogsled. Twenty teams braved subzero temperatures and blizzard conditions to run over 600 miles in six days in a desperate relay race that saved the people of Nome. Several of the dogs, including Togo and Balto, became national heroes. Today their efforts, and those of the courageous mushers, are commemorated every March by the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. Jon Van Zyle's stunning oil paintings capture the brutal conditions, pristine wilderness, and sheer guts and determination demonstrated by the heroic mushers and dogs. --This text refers to an alternate Library Binding edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Grade 3-6-Hot on the heels of Robert J. Blake's *Togo* (Philomel, 2002) comes another version of the story of the relay race across Alaska to save the people of Nome from an outbreak of diphtheria in 1925. While Blake focuses on one particular dog, Miller tells the more complete tale, beginning with the first dying children and including all of the details of carrying the serum from Anchorage, 1000 miles from its destination. The conditions were terrible as dog teams and mushers dealt with all sorts of problems caused by temperatures as low as 64 degrees below zero. Much of the story focuses on Leonhard Seppala, the musher who owned Togo, Balto, and many other sled dogs.

Included are a list of the mushers who participated in the relay, additional information on the dogs that ran, brief information on the Iditarod, a trail map, and photographs of Seppala and Togo. Van Zyle, official artist of the Iditarod and a musher himself, has created vivid, full-spread paintings to bring the story to life. This book does not have the intensity of storytelling or art that is found in Togo, but for children whose interest is piqued by Blake's book, or for older readers, this is an excellent account told with lots of detail and drama. Susan Oliver, Tampa-Hillsborough Public Library System, FL  
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Gr. 2-4. This picture book for older children tells the full story of the legendary 1925 race to Nome, Alaska, to deliver diphtheria antitoxin serum. The run was actually a relay, completed by many mushers and teams (a chart showing the name of the musher and the distance covered is included in the back of the book), although a dog named Balto seems to have the best press agent; his participation in the race is memorialized with a statue in Central Park and a feature-length movie. There's a lot of text here, but Miller's telling is exciting, and her details are compelling. Particularly outstanding are Van Zyle's acrylic-on-Masonite illustrations that perfectly capture the icy chill and dim light of the Arctic. Simply put, each scene in the double-page spreads looks damn cold. Back matter describes what happened to some of the dogs that helped deliver the serum and explains how the serum run became the basis for the Iditarod. For more history about the race, suggest also Lew Freedman's *Father of the Iditarod* (1999). Todd Morning  
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Great book with great artwork. Great for 3rd-4th grade reading level.

My nephew loved this. I gave it to him for Christmas along with a stuffed animal husky which I also bought on and it made a great gift! I felt good giving him a book that was educational along with a toy. He's 7.

Easy read; written for children but has the true story surrounding the diphtheria epidemic in Nome. Contains the names of the mushers who participated in the dog sled run from Nenana to Nome as well as their portion of the trail.

Excellent book. I loved it.

This is another great Iditarod book.

This was a very good rendition of the serum race of 1925 to save hundreds of people, especially children, from dying of diphteria. I recommend the book, especially for children. Pat Harris

Great book. Illustrations very well done. This is a great story to read to children from kindergarten up. Older students will enjoy reading it on their own to learn more about the original participants who brought the much needed medicine to Nome, Alaska.

Awesome and informative!

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