

Woodsong

Gary Paulsen

We have bear trouble. Because we feed processed meat to the dogs, there is always the smell of meat over the kennel. In the summer it can be a bit high¹ because the dogs like to “save” their food sometimes for a day or two or four—burying it to dig up later. We live on the edge of wilderness, and consequently the meat smell brings any number of visitors from the woods.

Skunks abound, and foxes and coyotes and wolves and weasels—all predators. We once had an eagle live over the kennel for more than a week, **scavenging** from the dogs, and a crazy group of ravens has pretty
10 much taken over the puppy pen. Ravens are protected by the state, and they seem to know it. When I walk toward the puppy pen with the buckets of meat, it’s a toss-up to see who gets it—the pups or the birds. They have actually pecked the puppies away from the food pans until they have gone through and taken what they want. **A**

ANALYZE VISUALS

Examine the painting closely. What do you see?

scavenge (skāv’ənj) v.
to search for discarded scraps

A SETTING

Reread lines 1–14. What description does Paulsen give of life at the edge of the wilderness?

1. **it can be a bit high:** the smell can be rather strong.