The Poacher's Son by Paul Doiron
BPL Mystery Book Discussion February 10, 2025 at 4PM

Characters (full series guide: https://www.pauldoiron.com/characters) :

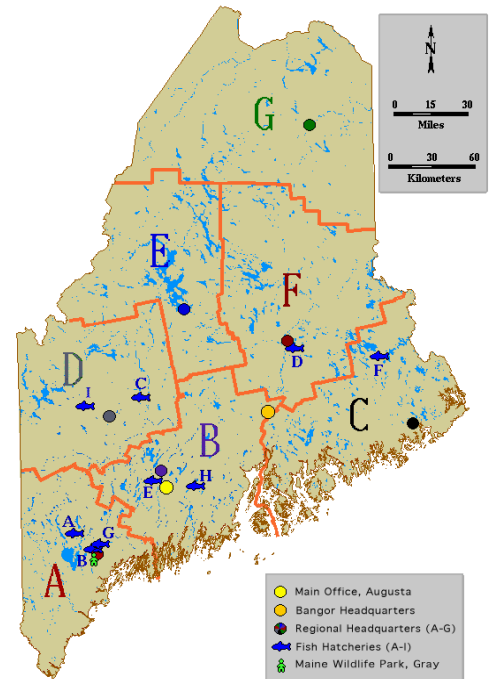|		
Mike Bowditch – warden	Kathy Frost — warden sergeant, Mike's boss	Bill Brodeur — deputy sheriff, Somerset County, Maine (deceased)
Jack Bowditch – Mike's father, a guide at Rum Pond Sporting Camps (and poacher)	Charley Stevens — Maine Warden Service Chief Pilot (Retired)	Jonathan Shipman — director of environmental affairs, Wendigo Timberlands, LLC (deceased)
Marie (Bowditch) Turner – Mike's mother	Ora Stevens — Charley's wife	Truman Dellis — Jack Bowditch's (estranged) friend, a guide at Rum Pond Sporting Camps (and poacher)
Neil Turner — Mike's stepfather, a tax attorney	Russ Pelletier — Owner of Rum Pond Sporting Camps	Vernon Tripp — owner of Natanis Trading Post, Dead River (first on the scene)
Sarah Harris — Mike's girlfriend from Colby College	Brenda Dean — Jack Bowditch's girlfriend (formerly B.J.)	Wayne Soctomah — detective lieutenant, Maine State Police

Questions (https://www.pauldoiron.com/new-page) :

1. Mike knows that his father has a history of violence. Why do you think he believes so strongly in his innocence?

2. Mike chooses his job over his relationship with Sarah, but when his estranged father becomes a prime suspect in a murder case, he impulsively drops everything to support his claim for innocence. Why do you think Mike puts his father before his job when he isn't able to do the same for Sarah?

3. Mike says, "my mom . . . had depths to her heart I'd never be able to fathom." How is he similar to his mother in this respect? Is this quote relatable to his father? If so, how?

4. What attracted Mike's mother to his father and why did she stay with him as long as she did? What are the ramifications for Mike's relationships?

5. Mike learns from his mother that she has had periodic contact with Jack since their divorce. What do you think compelled her to keep reaching out to him?

6. How does Mike's first experience with his father at Rum Ponds Sporting Camps affect him and his relationship with his father? Do you think it strengthens or weakens their relationship? Why?

7. Almost all of the characters (Mike, Charley, B.J./ Brenda, etc.) have scenes in both the present story and Mike's flashbacks. In what ways do these characters change between the years? In what ways do they stay the same?

8. What role do Mr. DeSalle and his young son play in the story? How do they act as for Mike and his dad?

9. How does the expression "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree" apply or not apply to the book?

10. What role do you think the North Woods setting—and Mike's relationship with it—plays in the story?

From the Author's Note:

Many of the places in this story don't exist on the map of Maine but two important exceptions are the townships of Flagstaff and Dead River. In 1950 the Central Maine Power Company built a dam at Long Falls and flooded the Dead River valley northwest of Bigelow Mountains. Flagstaff and Dead River are gone, but sometimes, when the water is low on Flagstaff Lake, you can take a boat out and peer down at the ruins of what were once two vibrant North Woods villages.

https://www.pauldoiron.com/blog/2010/5/8/the-towns-below.html

It's almost inconceivable today that a Maine town (let alone two) could be erased from the landscape by a single powerful corporation, but I suppose you should never say never.

<u>More Mike Bowditch Mysteries</u>

1. The Poacher's Son (2010)

2. Trespasser (2011)

3. Bad Little Falls (2012)

4. Massacre Pond (2013)

4.5. The Bear Trap (2015)

5. The Bone Orchard (2014)

6. The Precipice (2015)

7. Widowmaker (2016)

8. Knife Creek (2017)

Rabid (2018)

9. Stay Hidden (2018)

Backtrack (2019)

10. Almost Midnight (2019)

The Imposter (2020)

11. One Last Lie (2020)

The Caretaker (2021)

12. Dead by Dawn (2021)

Skin and Bones (2022)

13. Hatchet Island (2022)

Snakebit (2023)

14. Dead Man's Wake (2023)

15. Pitch Dark (2024)

16. Skin and Bones (short story collection; May 2025)