

Early Level 4 Non-fiction – Wildboy: The Journey of Brando Yelavich

You're walking along a wild, lonely stretch of coastline. Suddenly you hear something crashing around in the bush. The mystery creature stumbles onto the beach, and you see it's a goat. What do you do? If you're Brando "Wildboy" Yelavich, you don't think twice: a wild goat means dinner. You shoot it, skin it, gut it, and chop it up. Then you bag the pieces and strap the whole lot to your backpack. By the time you set up camp later that night, you'll be grateful for the protein to add to your seaweed stir-fry.

Sound like a day in the life of your average teenager? Amazingly, just a few months earlier, Brando Yelavich had been just that. Living with his sister and parents in suburban Auckland, he had a comfortable existence. There was food in the fridge, so he didn't have to scan the *horizon* for wild animals when he was hungry, but Brando remembers often feeling depressed and stressed out.

"I fought with my parents about everything," he says, "and school was a really bad fit for me. I have ADHD and dyslexia, and it's taken me a long time to learn that I'm much better in practical situations than in a classroom. After I left school, I went through a few jobs that didn't work out. I ended up lying around doing nothing much. It was a really negative cycle."