

Believable or Not?

Nothing ever happens the way one wants it to happen. Whenever an item is needed, it is not there, and where it is not invited, or wanted there, it must appear. Unless in a fantasy, a dream, or a story, a hand-crafted story, does anything happen the way it is needed. *Hatchet* is a story that portrays paradise as reality, and reality as a miracle realm. In this story, Gary Paulsen (author) gives Brian Robeson his, not paradise, but necessities, so that he can survive when his survival is most needed. Brian's past is a regretful one, where his surroundings are full of treachery and chaos, but always, everything he needs is there for him. His life is filled with food, love, care, and a shelter, along with extras, such as a friend, education system, and a healthy environment. Over time, living in the wilderness causes him to lose those extras, but he gains the knowledge of how to provide himself with the necessities. He gains "tough hope" and strength, as well as independence through his 54 days in the country wilderness, and this will stay with him, even as he goes back to the city ways. Through this journey in the wilderness, Brian changes, for it is those days that shape him. By doing the impossible throughout, Brian's adventures become realistic; He deserves this survival, and so he earns it, as does everyone who works for their own life, happiness, and survival.

The 54 days spent in the country by Brian are the days where he changed most significantly. The ending, where he finally is rescued by a plane is the result of Brian's hard work. It is not scientific or provable, but it has been experienced enough by very many around the world that it is fairly believable to say this: If one works hard to get something, even if it has nothing to do with retrieving a needed item or wish, it appears if enough effort is put into other necessities. In Brian's case, he wants to be rescued, so he works hard to stay alive, and his wish comes flying to him in just 2 months. If Brian had not worked at all to help himself, this would never have happened. There is a famous quote that says, "God helps those who help themselves" (Benjamin Franklin), and this is a pure example of why Brian survived. There is also another reason Gary Paulsen's ending of being rescued is believable, because Brian, throughout the course of the story, proves that anything could happen. Although in reality, a search plane coming to the rescue could not have been possible, in the story, it would be possible. For example, in reality, surviving a plane's nosedive into the water would not be possible, and not getting infected, or getting hurt because of porcupine quills, being able to remove them without any doctor's experience is impossible. Therefore, Gary Paulsen sets up the reader to believe those things could happen in the story, so, even if it is hard to believe in reality, through the story, the ending is very believable.

Just as the author repeats the unexpected, the author foreshadows the ending through pairs of repetition. If read very carefully, the book is known to repeat at least one sentence every paragraph. Gary Paulsen writes, "Brian was stopped. He was stopped. Inside he was stopped. He could not think past what he saw, what he felt. All was stopped. The very core of him, the very center of Brian Robeson was stopped and stricken with a white-flash of horror, a terror so intense that his breathing, his thinking, and nearly his heart had stopped. Stopped" (Pg. 5). This repetition of the word, Stopped proves the author's way of writing. He repeats almost everything, and there is double of everything as well. He repeats animal encounters with Brian, and gut cherries, and foolbird attacks, as well as fishing attempts and ways to create a shelter. If all of those are repeated, then shouldn't the sightings of search planes or any other planes be repeated as well? This is a foreshadow of the future, because he has repeated all of Brian's experiences, except for meeting with a search plane, so shouldn't it at least have to happen soon? Eventually, it does, and because of the author's repetition, it is not surprising and quite believable.

Hatchet ends in a way that Brian deserves it to end in. Because of his hard work and all those days of lost hope praying that he will survive, eventually the reader presumes that the ending will be one where he manages back home. Most children's books have endings where the protagonist is safe and happy, having learned something from a certain adventure. *Hatchet*, as any other children's story, ends this way, as the author sets up with repetition and the characters' actions. Throughout his journey, Brian is accompanied by any readers journeying with him, and when a search plane brings him home to his parents, this is no surprise. No surprise at all.