Hatchet

By Gary Paulsen

Reviewed by Connie Bennett, Vinton Public Library Clerk

Junior Fiction

Published by Simon and Schuster 1987

Is there any middle-aged reader among us who has missed this classic, three-time Newberry Honor Winner? We listened to this book in audio format about 20 years ago and promptly added a new favorite to our collection. Although written in 1987, Gary Paulsen has written a story that is almost timeless, and I enjoyed this re-reading as much as the original encounter with our 9 year old son.

In the beginning, thirteen year old Brian is sad, but also full of hatred for the judges that finalized the divorce between his parents, and the lawyers that didn’t care. His mother buys a hatchet for Brian’s trip to see his father, and this gift becomes the focal point of the adventure.

Without giving away too much of the story, suffice it to say that the airplane crashes and Brian is alone in the Canadian Wilderness. The remainder of the book is a story of survival against all odds, a boy coming of age, and the power of thought and silence in the mind of a young man as he matures. The edition also contains a reader’s guide for the book club, or a class. Enjoy this book again, or for the first time; it will be enjoyable in either case.

*Other books in the series:*

* The River
* Brian’s Winter
* Brian’s Return
* Brian’s Hunt