

Dear Gary Paulsen,

You are my favorite author, and although I have only read four of your books I really think you have changed my life. When I read all of your “Brian” books I changed my outlook on life.

Before I read your books I saw life as bleak and boring. Worst of all I thought I had a bad life but in reality I had video games, movies, television, a computer, lots of toys, good food, and a loving family to share it all with. But after I read your books, I realized how good my life is. Your books reminded me that some people are not as privileged as I am. You write about how rough Brian had it and it made me think of how bad some people in Africa lived.

One scene that I recall in particular is when Brian goes to the grove that is abundant with “gut cherries”. There he sees a bear but he is not frightened because he knows that bears are misunderstood animals that only attack when provoked. And now I realize that just like bears are misunderstood, many people misunderstand life because they take their luxuries for granted and think they have a bad life. Unfortunately many people fail to recognize that they are fortunate to have good food, warm shelter, and proper clothing.

What your books taught me is that whenever we have to do something boring like mow the lawn, is that we should stop and think about how lucky we are to have a home with a lawn to mow. We should stop and remember that some kids in the world do not have a home and clean drinking water or adequate food. Some kids lead a difficult life.

Your words helped me to see the error of my thinking but many people still do not understand that we are lucky to live good lives. This is what saddens me the most when I see kids who have more than their fair share complain that they still want more. They focus on what they lack instead of recognizing the abundance in their lives.

You as a writer truly inspire me to be a better person and enjoy the luxuries I am fortunate to have.

Sincerely,

*Gabriel Toromoreno*