

## The Way the Pen Flows

Style is an attribute unique to an author's presentation of ideas. R. B. Mitchell expresses his style vividly through his 2007 novel *Castaway Kid*. This autobiography begins in the younger years of Robby's life at the Covenant Christian home in Princeton, Illinois. Mitchell's ideas are portrayed through the elements of style selection of detail, point of view, and figurative language.

Mitchell's selection of detail is unique to his writing style. "She'd always been slim. But on this day her sunken cheeks made her look like people I'd seen in prisoner-of-war photos." Describing key characters like his mother, Joyce, with such vivid aspects paints complex visual pictures in the reader's mind. Mitchell also has an interesting technique for describing characters, like himself, through specific dialogue of others. Robby's apprehensiveness for the future is evident through his caseworker's comment, "But you do have to learn how to deal with life and control your frustration and anger. You have to stop thinking bad things are going to happen and look forward to all that is waiting for you. There's a good life ahead of you, but only if you choose to accept it." Mitchell's quotation of simple actions reflects his exceptional style. Mitchell states, "At age ten he'd has to peel his mentally ill mother's hand from his three-year-old sister's neck when the woman tried to strangle her own daughter." Through this deathly serious experience, the reader is able to visualize this young boy's effort to fend for his sister's life. Attention to detail maybe difficult for some authors, but for Mitchell his style flows right from his pen, allowing readers to participate in the full effect of Mitchell's past.

Point of view is a key factor to every story, as seen through R. B. Mitchell's work. Beginning his journey from age three until his current years enables one to follow the exact chronological steps of Robby's life. Mitchell once mentions, "Adults in our conservative farming town didn't appreciate my rebellious 1960 hairstyle. Several called me a long-haired hippie ruffian to my face," taking the reader back to the days where such views were prevalent. With Robby's personal thoughts, his true opinions are uncovered. "*Just give me the slightest reason to hurt you, and I won't hold back,*" races through Robby's head when the "townies" threaten him. Mitchell's perspective is strongly noticed in his first person style of writing, allowing the reader to observe the story as if he, himself, were in Robby's shoes. Like a puzzle piece that doesn't fit, Robby mentions, "Sometimes I'd glance through the picture windows of two story, wooden houses on Euclid Street. I'd see real families at dinner tables, smiling and eating, enjoying and understanding a sense of acceptance and belonging." R.B. Mitchell's unique point of view allows a roller coaster of emotions to flow through the reader's mind as he sympathizes and pities Robby's situation.

Language, the choice of words or style of writing, is a hard attribute for some writers to grasp, but Mitchell has it down to perfection, with his complex use of similes, metaphors, and personification. Robby remarks on his mother's attire declaring, "The outfit, dotted with stains and cigarette ashes looked like a wrinkled sack." This detailed simile adds such a negative connotation to Joyce's outfit comparing it to a dirty old sack. Once again, Mitchell's comments on his mother's appearance through a simple metaphor stating that, "her hair was the color of dirty snow." R.B. Mitchell's straight forward observation shows that Joyce's hair was not only "like" the color of dirty snow but that it

is simply this polluted tone. While visiting with his mother, Robby employs personification by describing his mother's dialect with human qualities. Explaining her staggering speech, Robby demonstrates, "Mother's words emerged slowly from her mouth, as if afraid of what they might find." Multiple forms of Mitchell's figurative language allow one to compare the experiences with his mother to familiar incidences.

Selection of detail, point of view and specific types of language all contribute to R.B. Mitchell's one-of a kind method of presenting his ideas. Picturesque mental images allow the reader to view Robby's life firsthand through his writing technique. His literary comparisons to familiar objects present the reader with a reassuring sense of recognition. Mitchell's differing viewpoints on his life infuses the reader with varying depths of intense emotion. Unlike many writers today, the way Mitchell's pen flows allows for a deep sense of sympathy, pity and hope to be revealed to all.