

## CHAPTERS 1–3: The Plane Crash

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### KEY PASSAGE | Chapter 1, Paragraphs 10-14

In this passage, Brian’s thoughts flash to his parents’ divorce and to the Secret that he has not shared with anyone—the secret about his mother that has led to the divorce. He does not reveal it now, but the knowledge of it troubles him.

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**Discussion Prompt:** What can you infer about Brian’s character from his reaction to the divorce and the Secret? What clues to his emotions can you take from the tone of the passage and the author’s use of language and repetition?

### VOCABULARY

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**tundra****tun•dra** *noun*

A cold, flat, nearly treeless plain in an arctic region

*Little grows in the tundra but mosses, lichens, and small shrubs.*

**humor****hu•mor** *verb*

To go along with someone else’s wish or mood

*Instead of driving, she decided to humor his desire to walk.*

**turbulence****tur•bu•lence** *noun*

Gusts and motion in the atmosphere; “bumpy” air

*The pilot turned on the seatbelt sign because of turbulence.*

**altimeter****al•ti•me•ter** *noun*

A device used in airplanes to measure distance above sea level

*According to the altimeter, the plane was still climbing.*

**channel****chan•nel** *noun*

A route or passageway

*The hole in the back fence opened a channel to animals who wanted to feast in our garden.*

## CLOSE READ

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1. How does Brian feel about his mother as she drives him to the plane that will take him to Canada? List the words or phrases from the text that helped you identify his feelings.

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2. What experience has Brian had that helps him understand what is happening to the pilot? Why do you think the author tells readers that Brian has had this experience?

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3. How does the narrator tell readers that Brian is shocked and panicked at the beginning of Chapter 2? List words or phrases from the opening paragraph of the chapter that convey these feelings.

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4. What are the two choices Brian faces in landing the plane? How does he assess those choices, and which choice does he make?

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5. Why does Brian “need” a lake at the beginning of Chapter 3?

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## CHAPTERS 4–7: Finding Shelter and Food

### KEY PASSAGE | Chapter 5, Paragraph 48

Prior to this passage, Brian has been taking an inventory of his assets, which amount to little more than his clothes and his hatchet. But now he remembers what his English teacher, Mr. Perpich, used to say to the class: the asset that is the most valuable of all is *you*.

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**Discussion Prompt:** What did Brian’s teacher, Mr. Perpich, mean when he told his students that *they* were their most valuable asset? Why is it important for Brian to remember this now? How will he apply Mr. Perpich’s advice in *Hatchet*?

### VOCABULARY

**abated****a•bat•ed** *verb*

Lessened, reduced, or decreased in amount, degree, or intensity

*The noise of the traffic abated as we climbed higher up the hill above the town.***asset****as•set** *noun*

Something valuable to have or own.

*Knowing a foreign language is a valuable asset for a traveler.***motivated****mo•ti•vat•ed** *verb*

Having a strong reason to do something; inspired; enthusiastic

*After last week’s disappointing loss, our whole team felt motivated to do better.***naturalist****nat•u•ral•ist** *noun*

A person who studies nature, especially animal and plant life

*The naturalist pointed out places along the shore where birds were nesting.***pulverized****pul•ver•ized** *verb*

Crushed; reduced to dust or powder

*We threw the snowballs against the wall and pulverized them.***gorge****gorge** *verb*

To stuff with food

*There was a mountain of ice cream, but I decided not to gorge myself and so I ate just a little.*

## CLOSE READ

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1. Why does Brian remind himself of his name, age, and situation? What other facts does he try to provide?

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2. How do Brian's thoughts about the likelihood of rescue change over the course of this chapter? Find evidence in the text to support your answer.

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3. Why does Brian feel that he is lucky to discover the rock overhang? Quote from the text to describe the advantages of the overhang and why Brian is glad to find it.

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4. Use evidence from the text to list at least two problems Brian has solved in Chapter 6, and describe how he has solved them.

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5. What thought process allows Brian to overcome his fear of the bear and return to the raspberry bushes? Support your answer with details from the text.

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## CHAPTERS 8–12: Two Fires and a Missed Chance

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### KEY PASSAGE | Chapter 8, Paragraph 12

Prior to this passage, Brian reached a very low moment: frustrated in trying to start a fire, he throws his hatchet at a marauding porcupine and receives a leg full of quills in return. Now, looking back at that emotional low point, he sees it as a key lesson in survival—not to wallow in self-pity, mainly because that attitude achieves nothing.

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**Discussion Prompt:** What does Brian mean when he rejects feeling sorry for himself because it “doesn’t work”? Discuss what it says about Brian that he places a value on something according to whether it works or not. Do you think this shows a change in him? Explain.

### VOCABULARY

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**gingerly****gin•ger•ly** *adverb*

With care or caution

*He walked gingerly on his twisted ankle.***tinder****tin•der** *noun*

A dry substance that catches fire easily

*We gathered dry grasses and tiny leaves to use as tinder for our campfire.***flammable****flam•ma•ble** *adjective*

Easily set on fire

*It had not rained for a long time, so the dry wood on the forest floor was highly flammable.***regulate****reg•u•late** *verb*

To control or direct

*My mother regulates the amount of time my brother and I spend on social media.***dormant****dor•mant** *adjective*

Inactive; asleep

*The independence movement was dormant until an inspiring leader appeared.*

## CLOSE READ

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1. Brian uses trial and observation to figure out how to use the hatchet and other ingredients to make fire. Study the text to describe what he tries and what he observes.

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2. What emotion is competing with Brian's happiness at making a fire, and why? Look for evidence in the text to explain your answer.

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3. How does Brian put clues together to figure out the identity of the animal he hears in the night, and how does he benefit from figuring out what it was doing? Find the relevant textual evidence.

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4. How has Brian's hunger changed since the plane crash? Use the text to describe his hunger in his first days in the woods and his situation in Chapter 12.

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5. Refer to the text to describe the events that led to—and that explain—Brian's fire not being seen by the rescue plane.

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## CHAPTERS 13–15: Advances and Reversals

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### KEY PASSAGE | Chapter 13, Paragraphs 35-37

This passage shows another instance of Brian bouncing back after hitting bottom, emotionally. Devastated by losing the chance of rescue, he has now changed his focus from rescue to survival. He has regained his optimism based on his ability to learn and problem-solve. He calls his new attitude “tough hope.”

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**Discussion Prompt:** Discuss what Brian means when he thinks “I am full of tough hope” at the end of Chapter 13. Reread the preceding paragraphs and compare the hope that Brian has lost with the new hope he has gained. What does it tell you about hope?

### VOCABULARY

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**funk****funk** *noun*

A low, dejected mood

*I've been in a funk ever since I found out he didn't invite me to his party.***punky****pun•ky** *adjective*

Slow-burning

*The wood was wet after the storm, so we only got a punky fire going.***snowball****snow•ball** *verb*

To cause to grow; become larger or more intense

*The rumors started to snowball after he posted the story on his social media sites.***impaired****im•paired** *adjective*

Weakened or damaged

*His impaired vision forced him to walk slowly.***stabilize****sta•bi•lize** *verb*

To balance or make steady

*Bending the wing tips up can stabilize a paper airplane.*

CLOSE READ

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1. Find the passage in the text that tells how much time has passed since the plane crash. What does this passage tell you about how Brian thinks about the time since the accident?

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2. What does the narrator mean by the phrase “He was new” in Chapter 13, paragraph 17? Compare it with the “old” Brian he has replaced, drawing on textual details in your answer.

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3. Cite evidence from the text to describe how Brian solved the problem of using a bow and arrow to catch fish.

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4. Find the passage in which Brian explains what allows him to finally see the foolbirds. Restate the passage in your own words.

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## CHAPTERS 16–17: An Ill Wind Brings Opportunity

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### KEY PASSAGE | Chapter 17, Paragraph 29

Prior to this passage, Brian has let his thoughts wander to what his mother might be doing back home. Then he watches a beautiful sunset over the lake. Now, in this passage, he has a flash-forward thought. In the unlikely event that he is rescued, he pictures himself back home, watching TV, and thinking about here, the lake, and the reflection of the sunset.

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**Discussion Prompt:** What message is the author conveying through the scene in which Brian imagines himself at home, visualizing the lake? Compare the meaning of these two places to Brian—his home in New York City and the home he has created in the wilderness. Is one place more “home” to Brian than the other? Explain.

### VOCABULARY

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**attitude****at•ti•tude** *noun*

Position or posture, often conveying a point of view

*He stopped pacing, snapped his fingers, and struck an attitude of someone who just had a brilliant idea.*

**incessant****in•ces•sant** *adjective*

Unending; without interruption

*The baby's incessant crying made sleep difficult.*

**ruefully****rue•ful•ly** *adverb*

With regret; sorrowfully

*Paul shook his head ruefully when he remembered the fish that got away.*

**stymied****sty•mied** *verb (participle)*

Unable to solve a problem; stumped, helpless  
*Derrick was stymied and could see no way to escape Rae's queen, knight, and bishop.*

**fuselage****fu•se•lage** *noun*

The main body of an airplane

*The wings and tail of an airplane are attached to the fuselage.*

## CLOSE READ

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1. What does Brian discover about how to keep the moose from attacking him? Find textual details that explain.

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2. Draw from the text to describe Brian's state of mind after the tornado.

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3. Why does Brian want to reach the plane?

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4. What problem does Brian face when constructing the raft, and how does he solve it? Refer to the text for your answer.

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## CHAPTER 18—EPILOGUE: To the Rescue

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### KEY PASSAGE | Chapter 19, Paragraphs 8-9

In this passage, Brian is reflecting on the mixed blessing of the new devices and utensils that have come to him through the survival pack. Just as the rifle has taken the place of the bow and arrow and all the ingenuity and skill that went into it, so the butane lighter gives him a flame in a second, replacing the need for sparks and tinder that have become part of his routine. The treasures have left him feeling both richer and poorer.

### YOUR STUDYSYNC® TV

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**Discussion Prompt:** Discuss Brian’s mixed feelings about the rifle and Brian’s use of the butane lighter. Do you think Brian was fortunate not to have had the survival pack from the beginning? Why? Compare what he gained from having the survival pack and what he gained without the survival pack.

### VOCABULARY

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**formers****for·mers** *noun*

Pieces of a structure or object that provide the overall shape

*The tent’s formers were light, strong, and flexible.*

**surging****surg·ing** *verb*

Moving forward with great force

*The surging waves crashed over our deck as the winds grew stronger.*

**trigger****trig·ger** *verb*

To cause or activate

*For me, red shoes always trigger thoughts of The Wizard of Oz.*

**initial****in·i·tial** *adjective*

first; early

*My initial thought about the book was that it must be nonfiction, because it seemed so real.*

**ineffective****in·ef·fec·tive** *adjective*

Not working; not producing results

*She tried to find the answer, but her efforts were ineffective.*

## CLOSE READ

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1. Why does Brian make such a desperate effort to retrieve the hatchet? Quote from the text in your answer.

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2. How does Brian manage to save himself from drowning following his horror at seeing the dead pilot?

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3. How does Brian’s retrieval of the survival pack result in his being rescued?

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4. Use evidence from the text to explain the “up and down feelings” that Brian experiences from using the contents of the survival pack

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5. Based on the information in the text, what do you think would have happened to Brian had he not been rescued when he was? Explain your response. Refer to textual details in your prediction.

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