***Chapter 2***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

Brian checks the pilot for a pulse, but cannot find one. Brian turns back to the controls and tries to straighten the plane, which had begun to fly downward. When the plane is steady, Brian tries to decide what to do next. Brian remembers the radio. Brian takes the radio headset from the pilot and tries to contact someone. He hears nothing at first, but then realizes he must take his finger from the controls. Someone answers Brian’s call, but before he can get his full message across, he loses the signal.

Brian decides he must allow the plane to continue flying until it runs out of fuel even though he knows he is flying off course and the further he flies the harder it will be for rescue to find him. Brian reviews what he knows about planes, and knows that he must push the nose down when it begins to fall out of the sky to keep the speed up and pull the nose up before he hits ground to slow it.

Brian considers giving the pilot CPR but doesn't know how and suspects the pilot is dead. When the plane begins to swerve, he knows that he must act. He takes the controls and tries to guide the plane as the pilot showed him earlier. While he can straighten the flight path, he can't read the instrument panel, except the radio. Reluctantly he takes the radio headset from the pilot's head and in doing so accidentally bumps the controls, causing the plane to dive.

After Brian regains control of the plane, he attempts to talk on the radio, but there is no answer. Eventually he remembers that to use this type of radio, he has to turn the mike off. When he does this, Brian hears a faint response. He asks for help and explains his situation, but whoever is on the other end of the radio can barely hear him. He manages to tell them the plane has no pilot before the transmission breaks up. Brian listens for more than half an hour with no answer. He tries calling for help on the radio over and over again, every 10 minutes for three hours. As he waits between calls, he thinks of how he might land the plane himself, taking factors like geography and speed into consideration. Then the engines die.

Brian feels immobile after the pilot's heart attack, due to his state of shock at the events of the plane ride. The plane has continued without any assistance from Brian or the pilot, and Brian suddenly realizes he must take control of the plane. Confused by the numerous dashboard controls, Brian seeks the controls for the radio. Reaching over the pilot to remove his headset, he bumps the wheel and must make a serious of corrections to right it again. He tries to use the radio to no avail, as he loses the signal before he can convey any useful information. Every ten minutes for the rest of the ride Brian again attempts and fails to establish contact. Attempting to envision a successful landing of the plane, Brian finds he has insufficient time to prepare. The plane engine dies suddenly, forcing him to land earlier than he had expected. He points the plane's nose down and vomits.

***Analysis:***

As is common in adventure fiction, the novel quickly places its main character in a dangerous, action-packed, and suspenseful situation. A 13-year-old boy with no experience as a pilot is trapped on a plane with nobody to help. He has left the world of adults behind. Readers wonder: how will he function? What if the plane crashes? How will he survive?

The story will continue present life or death challenges for Brian throughout, and each will test his character. Brian's response to the catastrophe on the plane conveys important information to readers by showing how his mind works in a crisis. He tries to apply what he's been taught in the past to see what will help him in the present. In each case, he must adapt those teachings to his particular situation. By remembering what the pilot has told him, Brian guides the plane and saves his own life.

This chapter also demonstrates the kind of applied patience Brian will use to survive in the Canadian wilderness. If he can't find the answer he needs right away, he will try multiple approaches, testing to see what works or does not, always maintaining an awareness of his situation. Even before he crashes in the wilderness, Brian has the potential to grow and become self-reliant.

***Analysis (Ch1-2):***

Brian’s parents have recently divorced, so he is going on his first court ordered visit to his father. Brian’s father has designed a new drilling bit, so he is staying near the Canadian oil fields. For this reason, Brian is traveling on a supply plane with only the pilot. It is a complicated situation that has left Brian full of confusion and anger toward his mother. Brian saw something involving his mother that he refers to as the secret. This secret clearly upsets Brian and he blames it for the divorce and the destruction of his family.

As Brian flies toward Canada, the pilot has a heart attack. Brian does not know how to fly. There is no one else on the plane. Brian suddenly finds himself in a desperate situation that could cause his death. It is a clear indication of Brian’s character that he does not immediately panic.

Brian keeps a clear head, showing the reader that he is an exceptionally mature young man. Brian tries to speak to someone on the ground over the radio, but loses the signal before he can figure out how to tell them where he is. After the signal is lost, Brian is completely on his own.

Brian has read a great deal about planes and the pilot taught him a few things during the first part of the flight. For this reason, Brian has a good idea of what he should do when the plane runs out of fuel. Then Brian just has to wait for this to happen. The reader knows a crash will come; the only question is whether Brian knows enough about planes to survive the crash.

***Summary and Analysis Part by Part***

***Summary Part 1:***

[Brian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/hatchet/characters/brian-robeson) remains frozen for a minute, reliving what he saw and wishing desperately for the [pilot](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/hatchet/characters/pilot) to wake up. He decides that he has to help the pilot, but finds that he cannot detect any heartbeat or breathing. Panicked, Brian, feels the nose of the plane begin to drop and realizes that he will have to figure out how to fly the plane himself.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Brian’s ability to move past his panic and at least try to help the pilot shows his hidden capacity for growing through adversity, even though his ability to take action is still limited.

***Summary Part 2:***

Despite his terror, [Brian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/hatchet/characters/brian-robeson) experiments with the plane’s controls and manages to get it flying level again. He looks out the windows, hoping for a place to try to land, but sees nothing but trees and lakes. He is not sure which direction the plane is heading and is unable to read the navigational devices. Looking over the dashboard, Brian remembers the radio and decides to call for help.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Again, Brian overcomes his fear long enough to take some control of his situation. His ability to right the plane exemplifies the role of independence in this story: Brian does not ultimately avoid the crash, but the act of taking control himself nonetheless gives him the strength to survive this phase of his ordeal and take next steps.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Brian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/hatchet/characters/brian-robeson) takes the headset from the [pilot](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/hatchet/characters/pilot), even though he is horrified to touch his body, and uses the microphone to call for help into the radio. At first, no one answers, and Brian gives in to panic, screaming and crying into the microphone. He hears his own voice returning and suddenly remembers that the microphone needs to be off in order to pick up an answering signal. Brian turns off the microphone and hears someone faintly answering him, asking for a location and flight number.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Brian’s quick return to blind panic again demonstrates how easily he succumbs to desperation in the face of challenge. However, it is the sound of his own voice that returns him to his senses and lets him ask for help, which foreshadows the way that he will learn to rely on himself in the wilderness.

***Summary Part 4:***

Brian attempts to answer and explain his situation, but the responses are increasingly broken up and are soon gone altogether. Brian can only hear static through the radio. Brian calls for help again and explains who he is, but no one answers. He begins to despair, wondering how someone on the radio could help him even if they did answer. An hour passes, and Brian continues to call for help. Eventually, Brian realizes that the plane will run out of fuel if he does not land soon. He also remembers the [pilot](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/hatchet/characters/pilot) knocking into the controls and understands that the plane is no longer on its original course.

***Analysis Part 4:***

It seems for a moment that communicating through the radio will save Brian, but then the loss of this verbal connection leaves him helpless, providing an example of how crucial language can be to survival. Brian’s realization that the plane is off course also highlights the limits of his ability to control the situation. His independent response gave him strength and calm, but it did not actually fix the problem at hand.

***Summary Part 5:***

Frightened and confused, [Brian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/hatchet/characters/brian-robeson) decides to keep the plane flying until it runs out of fuel. Every ten minutes, he calls for help, and in between calls he attempts to plan the best way to bring the plane down when it runs out of fuel. Because landing in the water seems less dangerous than landing in the trees, Brian decides to aim for a lake when the time comes and try to slow the plane down as it hits the water. Even as he makes this plan, he feels that it will be impossible to carry out. Suddenly, the plane’s engine stops, and Brian has no choice but to aim the plane downward. Panicked, he throws up.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Even though he is terrified, Brian makes and carries out a plan for managing his situation, showing that he is already growing into the ability to respond to adversity with maturity. However, the plane’s sudden descent also underscores the essential unpredictability of life and hints at the limits of trying to control the complexities of the world.