

Hatchet Chapter 18 Questions

1	Brian hesitates to go inside, worried that the plane could sink. However, he reasons that it has been stable for two days and hasn't moved while he worked on it[rw1], so he climbs into the water with his body inside the supports and cables of the plane's frame. Brian dives down feet-first several times, feeling for the survival pack, until he finally touches it with his foot. He dives down one more time, head first, and grabs the cloth bag. Eyes open, Brian catches sight of what was once the pilot's head, now a nearly bare skull with the flesh eaten away by fish. Horrified, Brian vomits in the water and barely manages to return to the surface with the survival pack.
2	After recovering his breath, Brian returns to the raft and continues to use the hatchet to cut into the body of the plane. He makes a big enough hole to move partway inside, but sees nothing there. He realizes that he will have to go all the way inside to look for the pack. He continues cutting away the aluminum, saving the pieces of metal as he goes. Finally, he has cleared away most of the outside and can see the metal frame of the plane extending down into the water.
3	Breathing as deeply as he can, Brian attempts to dive to the bottom of the lake. Even going as deep as he can, he is still several feet from the bottom. He surfaces and then tries again, kicking and paddling as hard as he can. This time, he touches the bottom and opens his eyes to search for the hatchet. Brian does not see the hatchet until he is almost out of air, but then he catches sight of it and just manages to grab the handle. He reaches the surface just before he runs out of air.
4	Brian is horrified to see that the hatchet is gone, realizing that without it he has no means of making fire, tools, or weapons. He is unable to believe his own carelessness, thinking that only his old self would have done something so silly, but he is forced to accept that it is gone beneath the water. Although he does not know how deep the lake is, Brian decides that he must dive down and retrieve the hatchet.
5	Brian continues to move around the tail of the plane on the raft, searching for openings. Frustrated at finding nothing, he punches the plane and is surprised to find that the aluminum exterior collapses under his hand. The outer shell of the plan turns out to be light and easy to break, so Brian uses the hatchet to cut away large pieces of the aluminum. Excited, Brian cuts more and more of the metal, but in his rush he suddenly drops the hatchet into the lake below.
6	As evening falls, Brian pushes the raft back to shore, getting weaker and weaker as he goes. After he manages to move the survival kit onto the land, he spends hours dragging it down the shore back to his camp, fighting the mosquitos as he goes. At last, Brian arrives at his shelter and immediately falls asleep.
7	Brian is overcome with fear for several minutes, trying to forget what he saw. Eventually, he can breathe again and hears the "peace sounds" of the birds and trees, which begin to calm him. Working slowly, Brian wriggles back out of the frame of the plane and pulls the cloth bag with him, though it gets stuck several times. Eventually, he gets it out onto the raft.

Define the words correctly

nibble		loosen		rubber	
forced		lung		canvas	
cables		choked		clutched/ clutch	

What shape did Brian cut the aluminum pieces into?

What literary devices are used here? Try to name two.

*He hung that way for several minutes, choking **and** heaving **and** gasping for air, **fighting** to clear the picture of the pilot from his mind.*

Did Brian really see the pilot in this paragraph?

What's the missing word?

His head _____ into a bracket as he cleared and he reached up to grab it and was free

What does this missing word mean?

Chapter 18

Brian worked around the tail of the plane two more times, pulling himself along on the stabilizer and the elevator, but there simply wasn't a way in.

Stupid, he thought. I was stupid to think I could just come out here and get inside the plane. Nothing is that easy. Not out here, not in this place. Nothing is easy.

He slammed his fist against the body of the plane and to his complete surprise the aluminum covering gave easily under his blow. He hit it again, and once more it bent and gave and he found that even when he didn't strike it but just pushed it, it still moved. It was really, he thought, very thin aluminum skin over a kind of skeleton and if it gave that easily he might be able to force his way through ...

The hatchet. He might be able to cut or hack with the hatchet. He reached to his belt and pulled the hatchet out, picked a place where the aluminum gave to his push and took an experimental swing at it.

The hatchet cut through the aluminum as if it were soft cheese. He couldn't believe it. Three more hacks and he had a triangular hole the size of his hand and he could see four cables that he guessed were the control cables going back to the tail and he hit the skin of the plane with a frenzied series of hacks to make a still larger opening and he was bending a piece of aluminum away from two aluminum braces of some kind when he dropped the hatchet.

It went straight down past his legs. He felt it bump his foot and then go down, down into the water and for a second he couldn't understand that he had done it. For all this time, all the living and fighting, the hatchet had been everything-he had always worn it. Without the hatchet he had nothing-no fire no tools, no weapons-he was nothing. The hatchet was, had been him.

And he had dropped it.

"Arrrgghhh!" He yelled it, choked on it, a snarl-cry of rage at his own carelessness. The hole in the plane was still too small to use for anything and now he didn't have a tool.

"That was the kind of thing I would have done before" he said to the lake, to the sky to the trees. When I came here - I would have done that. Not now. Not now ..."

Yet he had and he hung on the raft for a moment and felt sorry for himself. For his own stupidity. But as before, the self-pity didn't help and he knew that he had only one course of action.

He had to get the hatchet back. He had to dive and get it back.

But how deep was it? In the deep end of the gym pool at school he had no trouble getting to the bottom and that was, he was pretty sure, about eleven feet.

Here it was impossible to know the exact depth. The front end of the plane, anchored by the weight of the engine, was obviously on the bottom but it came back up at an angle so the water wasn't as deep as the plane was long.

He pulled himself out of the water so his chest could expand, took two deep breaths and swiveled and dove, pulling his arms and kicking off the raft bottom with his feet.

His first thrust took him down a good eight feet but the visibility was only five feet beyond that and he could not see bottom yet. He clawed down six or seven feet, the pressure pushing in his ears until he held

his nose and popped them and just as he ran out of breath and headed back up he thought he saw the bottom-still four feet below his dive.

He exploded out of the surface, bumping his head on the side of the elevator when he came up and took air like a whale, pushing the stale air out until he wheezed, taking new in. He would have to get deeper yet and still have time to search while he was down there.

Stupid, he thought once more, cursing himself - just dumb. He pulled air again and again, pushing his chest out until he could not possibly get any more capacity, then took one more deep lungful, wheeled and dove again.

This time he made an arrow out of his arms and used his legs to push off the bottom of the raft, all he had in his legs, to spring-snap and propel him down. As soon as he felt himself slowing a bit he started raking back with his arms at his sides, like paddles, and thrusting with his legs like a frog and this time he was so successful that he ran his face into the bottom mud.

He shook his head to clear his eyes and looked around. The plane disappeared out and down in front of him. He thought he could see the windows and that made him think again of the pilot sitting inside and he forced his thoughts from it-but he could see no hatchet. Bad air triggers were starting to go off in his brain and he knew he was limited to seconds now but he held for a moment and tried moving out a bit and just as he ran out of air, knew that he was going to have to blow soon, he saw the handle sticking out of the mud. He made one grab, missed, reached again and felt his fingers close on the rubber. He clutched it and in one motion slammed his feet down into the mud and powered himself up. But now his lungs were ready to explode and he had flashes of color in his brain, explosions of color, and he would have to take a pull of water, take it into his lungs and just as he opened his mouth to take it in, to pull in all the water in the lake his head blew out of the surface and into the light.

"Tchaaak!" It was as if a balloon had exploded. Old air blew out of his nose and mouth and he pulled new in again and again. He reached for the side of the raft and hung there, just breathing, until he could think once more-the hatchet clutched and shining in his right hand.

"All right ...the plane. Still the plane.."

He went back to the hole in the fuselage and began to chop and cut again, peeling the aluminum skin off in pieces. It was slow going because he was careful, very careful with the hatchet, but he hacked and pulled until he had opened a hole large enough to pull his head and shoulders in and look down into the water. It was very dark inside the fuselage and he could see nothing-certainly no sign of the survival pack. There were some small pieces and bits of paper floating on the surface inside the plane-dirt from the floor of the plane that had floated up-but nothing substantial.

Well, he thought. Did you expect it to be easy? So easy that way? Just open her up and get the pack-right? He would have to open it more, much more so he could poke down inside and see what he could find. The survival pack had been a zippered nylon bag, or perhaps canvas of some kind, and he thought it had been red, or was it gray? Well, that didn't matter. It must have been moved when the plane crashed and it might be jammed down under something else.

He started chopping again, cutting the aluminum away in small triangles, putting each one on the raft as he chopped-he could never throw anything away again, he thought-because they might be useful later. Bits of metal, fish arrowheads or lures, maybe. And when he finally finished again he had cleaned away the whole side and top of the fuselage that stuck out of the water, had cut down into the water as far as he could reach and had a hole almost as big as he was, except that it was crossed and crisscrossed with aluminum-or it might be steel, he couldn't tell-braces and formers and cables. It was an awful tangled mess, but after chopping some braces away there was room for him to wiggle through and get inside.

He held back for a moment, uncomfortable with the thought of getting inside the plane. What if the tail settled back to the bottom and he got caught and couldn't get out? It was a horrible thought. But then he reconsidered. The thing had been up now for two days, plus a bit, and he had been hammering and climbing on it and it hadn't gone back down. It seemed pretty solid.

He eeled in through the cables and formers, wiggling and pulling until he was inside the tail with his head clear of the surface of the water and his legs down on the angled floor. When he was ready, he took a deep breath and pushed down along the floor with his legs, feeling for some kind of fabric or cloth-anything-with his bare feet. He touched nothing but the floor plates.

Up, a new breath, then he reached down to formers underwater and pulled himself beneath the water, his legs pushing down and down almost to the backs of the front seats and finally, on the left side of the plane, he thought he felt his foot hit cloth or canvas.

Up for more air, deep breathing, then one more grab at the formers and pushing as hard as he could he jammed his feet down and he hit it again, definitely canvas or heavy nylon, and this time when he pushed his foot he thought he felt something inside it; something hard.

It had to be the bag. Driven forward by the crash, it was jammed into the backs of the seats and caught on something. He tried to reach for it and pull but didn't have the air left and went up for more. Lungs filled in great gulps, he shot down again, pulling on the formers until he was almost there, then wheeling down head first he grabbed at the cloth. It was the survival bag. He pulled and tore at it to loosen it and just as it broke free and his heart leaped to feel it rise he looked up, above the bag. In the light coming through the side window, the pale green light from the water, he saw the pilot's head only it wasn't the pilot's head any longer.

The fish. He'd never really thought of it, but the fish-the fish he had been eating all this time had to eat, too. They had been at the pilot all this time, almost two months, nibbling and chewing and all that remained was the not quite cleaned skull and when he looked up it wobbled loosely.

Too much. Too much. His mind screamed in horror and he slammed back and was sick in the water, sick so that he choked on it and tried to breathe water and could have ended there, ended with the pilot where it almost ended when they first arrived except that his legs jerked. It was instinctive, fear more than anything else, fear of what he had seen. But they jerked and pushed and he was headed up when they jerked and he shot to the surface, still inside the birdcage of formers and cables.

His head slammed into a bracket as he cleared and he reached up to grab it and was free, in the air, hanging up in the tail.

He hung that way for several minutes, choking and heaving and gasping for air fighting to clear the picture of the pilot from his mind. It went slowly-he knew it would never completely leave but he looked to the shore and there were trees and birds, the sun was getting low and golden over his shelter and when he stopped coughing he could hear the gentle sounds of evening, the peace sounds, the bird sounds and the breeze in the trees.

The peace finally came to him and he settled his breathing. He was still along way from being finished-he had a lot of work to do. The bag was floating next to him but he had to get it out of the plane and onto the raft, then back to shore.

He wiggled out through the formers-it seemed harder than when he came in-and pulled the raft around. The bag fought him. It was almost as if it didn't want to leave the plane. He pulled and jerked and still it wouldn't fit and at last he had to change the shape of it, rearranging what was inside by pushing and

pulling at the sides until he had narrowed it and made it longer. Even when it finally came it was difficult and he had to pull first at one side, then another, an inch at a time, squeezing it through. All of this took some time and when he finally got the bag out and tied on top of the raft it was nearly dark, he was bone tired from working in the water all day, chilled deep, and he still had to push the raft to shore. Many times he thought he would not make it. With the added weight of the bag- which seemed to get heavier by the foot-coupled with the fact that he was getting weaker all the time, the raft seemed barely to move. He kicked and pulled and pushed, taking the shortest way straight back to shore, hanging to rest many times, then surging again and again.

It seemed to take forever and when at last his feet hit bottom and he could push against the mud and slide the raft into the shore weeds to bump against the bank he was so weak he couldn't stand, had to crawl; so tired he didn't even notice the mosquitos that tore into him like a gray, angry cloud. He had done it. That's all he could think now. He had done it.

He turned and sat on the bank with his legs in the water and pulled the bag ashore and began the long drag-he couldn't lift it-back down the shoreline to his shelter. Two hours, almost three he dragged and stumbled in the dark, brushing the mosquitos away, sometimes on his feet, more often on his knees, finally to drop across the bag and to sleep when he made the sand in front of the doorway. He had done it.