Hatchet Chapter 17 Questions

shudder		intact		shrunken (shrink)	
hatch		stabilizer		Tarzan	
stymied		evergreen		elevator (the word as it appears in this chapter...)	

What literary device is used to describe Brian's difficulty in pushing the raft?

What happened when Brian failed to keep the logs together without rope?

Did Brian really see the pilot in this paragraph?

What's the missing word?

He jerked his mind back to the lake. There was great _____ here - almost unbelievable _____. The sun exploded the sky, just blew it up with the setting color, and that color came down into the water of the lake, lit the trees. Amazing _____ and he wished he could share it with somebody and say "Look there, and over there, and see that..."

What does Brian call his raft?

What did Brian remember about his mother?

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Chapter 17

He turned back to his campsite and looked to the wreckage. He had a lot to do: rebuild his shelter, get a new fire going, find some food or get ready to find some food, make weapons - and he had to work slowly because his ribs hurt.

First things first. He tried to find some dry grass and twigs, then peeled bark from a nearby birch to shred into a fire nest. He worked slowly but even so, with his new skill he had a fire going in less than an hour. The flames cut the cool damp morning, crackled and did much to bring his spirits up, not to mention chasing away the incessant mosquitos. With the fire going he searched for dry wood-the rain had driven water into virtually all the wood he could find-and at last located some in a thick evergreen where the top branches had covered the lower dead ones, keeping them dry.

He had great difficulty breaking them, not being able to pull much with his arm or chest muscles, but finally got enough to keep the fire going all day and into the night. With that he rested a bit, eased his chest, and then set about getting a shelter squared away.

Much of the wood from his original wall was still nearby and up in back of the ridge he actually found a major section of the weave still intact. The wind had torn it out lifted it, and thrown it to the top of the ridge and Brian felt lucky once more that he had not been killed or more seriously injured-which would have been the same, he thought. If he couldn't hunt he would die and if he were injured badly he would not be able to hunt.

He jerked and dragged wood around until the wall was once more in place-crudely, but he could improve it later. He had no trouble finding enough pine boughs to make a new bed. The storm had torn the forest to pieces-up in back of the ridge it looked like a giant had become angry and used some kind of a massive meatgrinder on the trees. Huge pines were twisted and snapped off, blown sideways. The ground was so littered with limbs and tree-tops sticking every which way, that it was hard to get through. He pulled enough thick limbs in for a bed, green and spicy with the new broken sap smell and by evening he was exhausted, hungry, and hurting, but he had something close to a place to live again, a place to be.

Tomorrow, he thought, as he lay back in the darkness. Tomorrow maybe the fish would be back and he would make a spear and new bow and get some food. Tomorrow he would find food and refine the camp and bring things back to sanity from the one completely insane day.

He faced the fire. Curving his body, he rested his head on his arm, and began to sleep when a picture came into his head. The tail of the plane sticking out of the water. There it was, the tail sticking up. And inside the plane, near the tail somewhere, was the survival pack. It must have survived the crash because the plane's main body was still intact. That was the picture-the tail sticking up and the survival pack inside right there in his mind as he dozed. His eyes snapped open. If I could get at the pack, he thought. Oh, if I could get at the pack. It probably had food and knives and matches. It might have a sleeping bag. It might have fishing gear. Oh, it must have so many wonderful things – if I could get at the pack and just get some of those things. I would be rich. So rich if I could get at the pack.

Tomorrow. He watched the flames and smiled. Tomorrow I'll see. All things come tomorrow.

He slept, deep and down with only the picture of the plane tail sticking up in his mind. A healing sleep.

In the morning he rolled out before true light. In the gray dawn he built up the fire and found more wood for the day, feeling almost chipper because his ribs were much better now. With camp ready for the day he looked to the lake. Part of him half-expected the plane tail to be gone, sunk back into the depths, but he saw that it was still there, didn't seem to have moved at all.

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He looked down at his feet and saw that there were some fish in his fish pen looking for the tiny bits of bait still left from before the wind came. He fought impatience to get on the plane project and remembered sense, remembered what he had learned. First food, because food made strength; first food, then thought, then action. There were fish at hand here, and he might not be able to get anything from the plane. That was all a dream.

The fish were real and his stomach, even his new shrunken stomach, was sending signals that it was savagely empty. He made a fish spear with two points, not peeling the bark all the way back but just working on the pointed end. It took him an hour or so and all the time he worked he sat looking at the tail of the plane sticking up in the air, his hands working on the spear, his mind working on the problem of the plane.

When the spear was done, although still crude, he jammed a wedge between the points to spread them apart and went to the fishpond. There were not clouds offish, but at least ten, and he picked one of the larger ones, a round fish almost six inches long, and put the spear point in the water, held it, then thrust with a flicking motion of his wrist when the fish was just above the point.

The fish was pinned neatly and he took two more with the same ease, then carried all three back up to the fire. He had a fish board now, a piece of wood he had flattened with the hatchet, that leaned up by the fire for cooking fish so he didn't have to hold a stick all the time. He put the three fish on the board, pushed sharpened pegs through their tails into cracks on the cooking board, and propped it next to the reddest part of the coals. In moments the fish were hissing and cooking with the heat and as soon as they were done, or when he could stand the smell no longer, he picked the steaming meat from under the loosened skin and ate it.

The fish did not fill him, did not even come close - fish meat was too light for that. But they gave him strength - he could feel it moving into his arms and legs - and he began to work on the plane project

While making the spear he had decided that what he would have to do was make a raft and push-paddle the raft to the plane and tie it there for a working base. Somehow he would have to get into the tail, inside the plane - rip or cut his way in and however he did it he would need an operating base of some kind. A raft.

Which, he found ruefully, was much easier said than done. There were plenty of logs around. The shore was littered with driftwood, new and old, tossed up and scattered by the tornado. And it was a simple matter to find four of them about the same length and pull them together.

Keeping them together was the problem. Without rope or crosspieces and nails the logs just rolled and separated. He tried wedging them together, crossing them over each other-nothing seemed to work. And he needed a stable platform to get the job done. It was becoming frustrating and he had a momentary loss of temper - as he would have done in the past, when he was the other person.

At that point he sat back on the beach and studied the problem again. Sense, he had to use his sense. That's all it took to solve problems - just sense.

It came then. The logs he had selected were smooth and round and had no limbs. What he needed were logs with limbs sticking out, then he could cross the limbs of one log over the limbs of another and "weave" them together as he had done his wall the food shelf cover, and the fish gate. He scanned the area above the beach and found four dry treetops that had been broken off by the storm. These had limbs and he dragged them down to his work area at the water's edge and fitted them together. It took most of the day. The limbs were cluttered and stuck any which way and he would have to cut one to make another fit, then

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cut one from another log to come back to the first one, then still another from a third log would have to be pulled in.

But at last, in the late afternoon, he was done and the raft - which he called Brushpile One for its looks - hung together even as he pulled it into the water off the beach. It floated well, if slow in the water, and in the excitement he started for the plane. He could not stand on it, but would have to swim alongside.

He was out to chest depth when he realized he had no way to keep the raft at the plane. He needed some way to tie it in place so he could work from it.

And for a moment he was stymied. He had no rope, only the bowstring and the other cut shoestring in his tennis shoes-which were by now looking close to dead, his toes showing at the tops. Then he remembered his windbreaker and he found the tattered part he used for an arrow pouch. He tore it into narrow strips and tied them together to make a rope or tie-down about four feet long. It wasn't strong, he couldn't use it to pull a Tarzan and swing from a tree, but it should hold the raft to the plane.

Once more he slid the raft off the beach and out into the water until he was chest deep. He had left his tennis shoes in the shelter and when he felt the sand turn to mud between his toes he kicked off the bottom and began to swim.

Pushing the raft, he figured, was about like trying to push an aircraft carrier. All the branches that stuck down into the water dragged and pulled and the logs themselves fought any forward motion and he hadn't gone twenty feet when he realized that it was going to be much harder than he thought to get the raft to the plane. It barely moved and if he kept going this way he would just about reach the plane at dark. He decided to turn back again, spend the night and start early in the morning, and he pulled the raft once more onto the sand and wipe-scraped it dry with his hand.

Patience. He was better now but impatience still ground at him a bit so he sat at the edge of the fish pond with the new spear and took three more fish, cooked them up and ate them, which helped to pass the time until dark. He also dragged in more wood -endless wood-and then relaxed and watched the sun set over the trees in the back of the ridge. West, he thought. I'm watching the sun set in the west. And that way was north where his father was, and that way east and that way south - and somewhere to the south and east his mother would be. The news would be on the television. He could visualize more easily his mother doing things than his father because he had never been to where his father lived now. He knew everything about how his mother lived. She would have the small television on the kitchen counter on and be watching the news and talking about how awful it was in South Africa or how cute the baby in the commercial looked. Talking and making sounds, cooking sounds.

He jerked his mind back to the lake. There was great beauty here - almost unbelievable beauty. The sun exploded the sky, just blew it up with the setting color, and that color came down into the water of the lake, lit the trees. Amazing beauty and he wished he could share it with somebody and say "Look there, and over there, and see that..."

But even alone it was beautiful and he fed the fire to cut the night chill. There it is again, he thought, that late summer chill to the air, the smell of fall. He went to sleep thinking a kind of reverse question. He did not know if he would ever get out of this. Could not see how it might be, but if he did somehow get home and go back to living the way he had lived, would it be just the opposite? Would he be sitting watching television and suddenly think about the sunset up in back of the ridge and wonder how the color looked in the lake?

Sleep.

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In the morning the chill was more pronounced and he could see tiny wisps of vapor from his breath. He threw wood on the fire and blew until it flamed, then banked the flames to last and went down to the lake. Perhaps because the air was so cool the water felt warm as he waded in. He made sure the hatchet was still at his belt and the raft still held together, then set out pushing the raft and kick-swimming toward the tail of the plane.

As before, it was very hard going. Once an eddy of breeze came up against him and he seemed to be standing still and by the time he was close enough to the tail to see the rivets in the aluminum he had pushed and kicked for over two hours, was nearly exhausted and wished he had taken some time to get a fish or two and have breakfast. He was also wrinkled as a prune and ready for a break.

The tail looked much larger when he got next to it, with a major part of the vertical stabilizer showing and perhaps half of the elevators. Only a short piece of the top of the fuselage, the plane's body toward the tail, was out of the water, just a curve of aluminum, and at first he could see no place to tie the raft. But he pulled himself along the elevators to the end and there he found a gap that went in up by the hinges where he could feed his rope through.

With the raft secure he climbed on top of it and lay on his back for fifteen minutes, resting and letting the sun warm him. The job, he thought, looked impossible. To have any chance of success he would have to be strong when he started.

Somehow he had to get inside the plane. All openings, even the small rear cargo hatch, were underwater so he couldn't get at them without diving and coming up inside the plane.

Where he would be trapped. He shuddered at that thought and then remembered what was in front of the plane down in the bottom of the lake, still strapped in the seat, the body of the pilot. Sitting there in the water - Brian could see him, the big man with his hair waving up in the current, his eyes open ...

Stop, he thought. Stop now. Stop that thinking. He was nearly at the point of swimming back to shore and forgetting the whole thing. But the image of the survival pack kept him. If he could get it out of the plane, or if he could just get into it and pull something out. A candy bar.

Even that just a candy bar. It would be worth it. But how to get at the inside of the plane?
He rolled off the raft and pulled himself around the plane. No openings. Three times he put his face in the water and opened his eyes and looked down. The water was murky, but he could see perhaps six feet and there was no obvious way to get into the plane. He was blocked.

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