

## 5th Annual Books & Company Workshop Exercise

January 1, 2016

Thank you for participating in this year's workshop. We will be reviewing the following short story as part of the presentation. This is an exercise in editing. There are numerous problems with this document: point of view, punctuation, spelling, echos, viewpoint intruder. The dialogue also needs a lot of work. I'm sure there are others I have missed.

Edit this document in preparation for the workshop and bring it along. If you have a First Reader, have them edit it through and come along as well, or at least review their input to make the story better.

As it is written now, it contains 836 words. Your final edit should not be more. According to Stephen King, it should be 10% or 84 words less (752). Also compose a title for it.

Looking forward to seeing you on January 31<sup>st</sup> at the Prince George workshop in ArtsSpace above Books & Company - ED

## 5th Annual Books & Company Workshop Exercise

(Title)

It was a sunny day and brilliant sunlight streamed in the window.

Basking in the sun's warmth, Lyle Anderson turned around when Wendy said, "Long Lake is fogged in."

Lyle hated it when Wendy told him the weather in that, 'you can't go, tone'.

"Can you tell me if the weather department has any indication when it will lift?" he asked.

"I've read the report thoroughly and it seems to indicate it will lift by noon," she replied.

Lyle banged his hand on the desk. "I would like to know how it can be fogged in up there and we have brilliant sunshine down here."

"Look, Lyle, I don't make the weather. I just report it, okay?" she retorted angrily.

Wendy could feel Lyle's frustration as he walked across the hall to Barney's office.

Barney Lamb was the owner of Remote Wilderness Air, a fleet of seven bush planes. Normally on floats, Barney had changed them allover to skis for the winter. Lyle's plane, one of two old Norseman Barney kept flying out of love for aviation history, was the only one sitting on the ice outside CPA's office.

Lyle walked into Barney's office without knocking. Behind a desk sat Barney Lamb. He was an older man with pewter grey hair, thinning at the temples. He looked at Lyle with eyes

boarded by crows feet, and bushy black eyebrows. Today he needed a shave. Over top a white tee shirt, he wore a red and black plaid woolen shirt with the sleeves turned up. He wore a brown leather belt that held up beige pants. He wore woolen socks and scuffed tan work boots. Knowing what was coming next, he never even looked up.

“Barney,” Lyle said, “you have to let me fly to Long Lake.”

“Not before the fog lifts, my boy,” Barney said.

“Wendy doesn’t know how thick the fog is. It might only be ground level. Two Crows’ kid has pneumonia, for God’s sake. Let me fly over and check it out.” Lyle said.

“Its my airplane your putting at risk,” Barney said.

“Damn, it’s Two Crows’s child that may die,” Lyle said.

Feeling his pilot’s frustration, Barney leaned back in his big chair, shaking his head.

“Lyle, how long have you flown for me?” he asked.

“Six years,” Lyle said.

“Have we ever lost an airplane in that time?” he asked.

“No, but we’ve bent up a few,” Lyle said, thinking of the time he bent a ski landing in a snow drift.

Raising from his chair, Barney walked over to the window. Brilliant sunshine reflected off the frozen lake. Only the airplanes painted yellow and red, broke the harsh white light making Barney squint. “We’ll wait.”

“Bloody hell. If it was a white kid you’d have a plane up in the blinding blizzard.”

Wheeling around, Barney pointed a finger straight at Lyle. “Don’t you pull that on me. You know damn well it makes no difference. Now get out of here.” Barney threw his pencil after him. “And don’t bend up my airplane.”

On the way out Lyle grinned and winked at Wendy. He’d long ago learned how to pull the old man’s chain.

“Their’s still fog over the lake,” Wendy said.

“I’ll get in,” Lyle said.

“Not before noon.” Wendy said.

“This is a mercy Flight,” Lyle said.

“Take lots of fuel,” Wendy said.

Lyle ignored her, put on his parka and went outside. White light reflecting off the ice hurt his eyes. Walking over to the airplane, he pulled off each of the wing covers and stowed them in the back of the airplane before climbing inside and taking off. An hour later he was circling the north end of Long Lake. Nestled between two mountains, the narrow body of water ran on for twenty miles. Today, the entire twenty miles was shrouded in fog. Lyle looked at his watch. It read eleven thirty. He circled the valley until noon, then picked up the microphone and called the base. “Hello base.”

“Base here.”

“Wendy, I thought you said the fog would lift by noon.”

“I told you, I don’t schedule the weather,”

Banking left, the aircraft swung around in brilliant sunshine. “I’ve got fuel to last until two-thirty. Tell Barney I’ll fly around until then.”

Two-thirty came and went. Lyle knew if he didn’t leave soon, he’d run out of fuel on the way home.

He started to pull the heavy Norseman around and return to base when Wendy came on the radio. “Lyle.” Even through the static, her voice was tense. “Two Crows phoned to say his daughter can hardly breathe.”

The radio remained silent as Lyle reviewed his options. “Wendy.”

“Go ahead.”

“Will the fog lift?”

A long pause. “It’s getting late, but I’d say yes.”

“Okay. I’ll stay. They have fuel here for my return flight.”

An hour later, Lyle had no choice, he let Barney Lamb’s oldest airplane descend into the fog.