

January 31, 2016

I would like to thank the participants in this year's workshop for their comments and suggestions in editing this story. Through the course of the afternoon we looked at :

PUNCTUATION CORRECTED

DIALOGUE CORRECTIONS

POINT OF VIEW PROBLEMS FIXED

MISPLACED MODIFIER CHANGED

VIEWPOINT INTRUDER COMPRESSED

ECHOS TAKEN OUT

SPELLING CORRECTED

GLITCHES RECONCILED

The manuscript was edited from 836 words down to 732 making for a tighter read. Feel free to download both the original work and this one. Spend some time comparing the two as this will help you to understand why editing is such an important part of writing.

ED

Long Lake Fog

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

Lyle hated it when she spoke in that, you-can't-go, tone. "When will it lift?"

"By noon."

Lyle banged his hand on the desk. "How come it's sunny here?"

"Look, Lyle, I don't make the weather. I just report it. Okay?"

Frustrated, 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, they had all been changed over 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 RWA's office.

Lyle walked in without knocking. Behind an old oak desk cluttered with papers sat his boss, pen in hand, sleeves turned up on a red and black plaid woolen shirt. Crow foot lines radiating from hazel eyes were more an indication of the stress involved in running an airline than age. His hair had been pewter-gray ever since Lyle had known him, although it had begun thinning at the temples over

the last couple of years. This morning he had come to the office needing a shave, something unusual that told Lyle about Barney's concern for the developing crisis.

"Barney. You have to let me fly to Long Lake."

"Not before the fog lifts, my boy," Barney said, while continuing to write.

"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."

Barney looked up at his pilot. "It's my airplane you're putting at risk."

"Damn, it's Two Crows' child that may die."

Barney leaned back in his big chair, shaking his head. "Lyle, how long have you flown for me?"

"Six years."

"Have we ever lost an airplane in that time?"

"No, but we've bent up a few." Lyle thought back on the time he wrecked a ski landing in a snow drift.

Rising from his chair, Barney walked over to the window. 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 pen 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.

"There's still fog over the lake," Wendy said.

"I'll get in."

"Not before noon."

"This is a mercy flight."

"Take lots of fuel."

Lyle ignored her, put on his parka and went outside. Sunlight reflecting off the ice hurt his eyes. Walking over to the airplane, he removed the wing covers and stowed them in the back of the cabin before climbing inside and taking off. An hour later he was circling the north end of Long Lake. Nestled between two mountains, the narrow, twenty-mile long body of water 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 turned a lazy circle in the clear blue sky. "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 began returning 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.