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Flight

By Matthew Schnell

Bradley sat at his father's workbench, his hands resting on the arms of the chair while his legs dangled over the seat. His father stood beside him.

The old oak bench held together by black screws had a sheet of white cardboard covering it. On the far left was a revolving tool holder, holding dozens of small hand tools. On the far right were several small bottles of paint, neatly arranged on a plastic holder. Overlooking the workbench was a metal cabinet with two doors and a luminescent light.

Bradley's father opened the box holding an unassembled DC-4 airplane with Merlin engines. As soon as the box was off Bradley grabbed the instruction booklet and flipped through the pages.

“Okay buddy, first you need to take your nippers and cut the pieces out.”

“Okay,” said Bradley and put the tip of the nippers to one of the pieces holding the landing wheels.

“Woah woah woah, hold on. It’s better if you cut twice. First you snip off the plastic from the farthest end, then you snip it off the piece itself. That way you don’t stress it as much. Once you have those pieces out, give them to me and I’ll cut off the shavings.”

“Why can’t I do that?”

“Because you need to use a really sharp knife, and you’re too small.”

“Okay... but next time, I wanna do it.”

“You show me you can use my tools without hurting yourself and I’ll think about it,” he said, and rubbed Bradley’s head before he sliced off the leftover nub.

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Bradley watched his father from the dining room table as he nommed a slice of pizza. “Yeah... yeah, I know... all right... well it’s not like I can do anything about it, can I? Your piece of shit lawyer saw to that... why the hell do you have to live in another country anyway? Two states over isn’t enough for you? ...Cute. Bye,” he said and hung up the phone. “Bitch,” he said under his breath.

“Is everything okay, Dad?”

“Yeah, buddy, it’s fine, don’t worry.”

“Mom’s going to take me isn’t she? She always said she wanted to live abroad.”

“Don’t worry about it. The judge said she wouldn’t let her have you until she found a place to live that meets his standards. She’s not taking you anywhere anytime soon.”

“Cool. Come on, eat up. The pizza’s getting cold.”

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An announcement rang through the PA in some foreign language as Bradley wheeled his luggage through the airport, his father right behind him.

Bradley looked at the gate that said in big bold letters, “Gate 73,” and set his suitcase down. He turned and looked at his father.

“This is it,” he said, looking Bradley in the eyes. “This is your flight.”

Bradley swallowed and looked back at his father, tears in the corners of his eyes. “Don’t worry, Dad, I’ll be okay. Just promise me you’re not gonna finish that Boeing 747 without me. I know you hate having unfinished projects lying around,” he said, as his tears leaked across his cheeks, and his voice breaking.

“It’ll be in the workshop waiting for you,” he said, tears streaming down his face.
“I promise I won’t touch it until you get back.”

Bradley started to cry as he nodded to his father. “We’re gonna finish that thing...
as soon as I get back.”

“Come here you,” his father said and pulled him into a hug.

Bradley wrapped his arms around his father and sobbed into his coat. He hugged
him as tightly as he could, until the PA announced that his flight was due to depart in fifteen
minutes. His father patted him on the back and pushed them apart.

“Come on. You don’t want to miss your flight,” he said and wiped the tears out of
his eyes.