

Tradewinds by Lisa Goodwin

We'd been circling Maui for thirty minutes, flying on fumes and facing an electrical malfunction, when the landing gear miraculously came down. Crisis averted. Or so the pilot claimed. But how could he have known for sure that the tires wouldn't buckle upon impact and send us cartwheeling down the runway?

I had reason to wonder.

Every other night for the past two weeks, plane crashes had plagued my dreams. I would've blamed it on pre-flight anxiety had I not sometimes seen the future in my sleep. Usually the dreams were just dreams. But occasionally they were a prediction, and I never knew the difference until the visions actually happened. That was why my chances of surviving this flight seemed so uncertain.

Too terrified to face my fate, I closed my eyes and waited.

The airplane dove, sending my heart freefalling and flooding my ears with pressure. The plane whined, shuddered, punched the pavement, and skidded like an express shuttle barreling toward hell. Someone screamed, possibly me. Then the world fell silent and still.

Dead still?

There was only one way to find out.

I peeled open my eyelids and found my mother staring back at me. "We made it," she said.

Maybe the plane hadn't crashed. Or maybe we were in heaven. Judging by the view outside the airplane window, it could've gone either way. In the distance were mountains—not snow-capped cliffs, but emerald buttes that disappeared beneath the clouds. Beside me was the topaz blue ocean that stretched into forever. And absolutely nowhere I looked were there cornfields or cows or flat brown land. Yes, this was definitely paradise.

Mom pulled out her phone, and I immediately decided we were alive; heaven wouldn't have allowed addictive electronic devices. And my mom's husband sure as hell wouldn't have still existed.

Editor's Critique: I started reading this entry and just devoured every line. The writing is captivating, with the problem presented and a sympathetic character telling the story. The narrative flows nicely, hooking the reader. By the end, I wanted another page to read! The first-person narrative doesn't put this in the category romance realm--though there are always exceptions. Nicely done and a pleasure to read. Best of luck with your writing and the contest!