Nightmare on Flight 301



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Nelson Literacy Directions

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Nightmare on Flight 301

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Meet the Characters

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Dr Edward Simpson

A doctor
on Flight 301.



Crystal

A flight attendant
on Flight 301.



The Captain

The pilot
on Flight 301.



The Co-Pilot

Second in command
on Flight 301.



Flight 301

311 people aboard.

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Dear Reader

A midnight flight with 311 people on board; a mystery illness that strikes the passengers, pilots and flight attendants; and one doctor, who faces a nightmare that everbody dreads! For Dr. Edward Simpson, Flight 301 is the longest flight he's ever been on. And, with every minute, its frightening conclusion draws nearer!

Frank Pedersen
Author

Flightpath, Singapore to London



1. Changi Airport, Singapore
2. Heathrow Airport, London





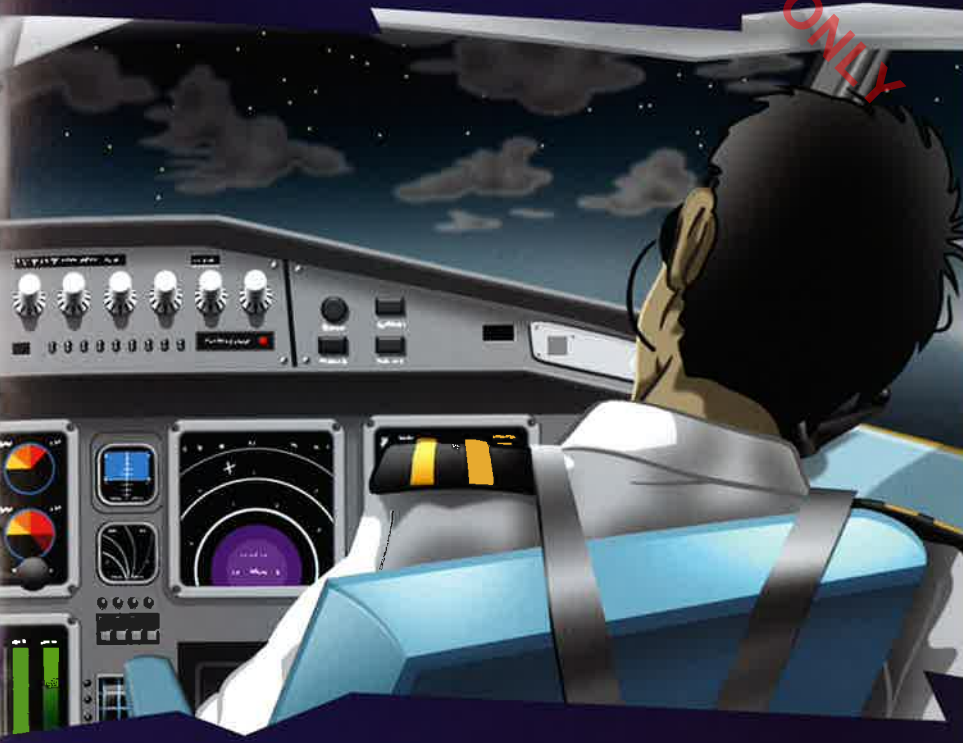
1 Mayday, Mayday, Mayday!

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It was everybody's worst nightmare. Dr Edward Simpson climbed awkwardly into the left-hand seat, fighting the panic he felt coursing through every fibre of his body. His mouth was dry. His hands shook. His feet were frozen to the floor and his heart was thumping.

Seconds before, his eyes, filled with dread, had stared at the horrifying vista before him. Nothing but dark night sky and, thirty thousand feet below, tiny clusters of light from distant cities and towns.

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He forced himself to focus on the myriad buttons, switches and displays. His hand hovered over the joystick to his left. He picked up the captain's headphones from where he'd put them, after removing them from the unconscious man's head.

Suddenly, voices crackled and hissed through the earphones. Other pilots talked in a strange language of numbers, letters and acknowledgments. It all meant nothing to Edward Simpson.

He stared nervously at the joystick again. Two buttons. One red, the other grey. One offered a glimmer of hope, the other turned the autopilot off and would lead to certain disaster. He took a deep breath and pressed the grey one.

"Mayday, mayday, mayday," he said, fighting to stay calm. He looked at the small plaque inset into the flight control panel. GLX01A. "This is Golf Lima ..." His mind went blank. He couldn't remember the phonetic alphabet that you were supposed to use. "This is Flight 301," he said instead. "We're in trouble."

The chatter through the headphones fell silent. Ten long seconds stretched out, with nothing but the hiss of radio interference.

Finally, a voice burst through the static, startling Edward. "This is Alpha Foxtrot Tango Six Nine, bound for Moscow. Flight 301, identify yourself."

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Edward pressed the grey button again. "I'm Dr Edward Simpson, a passenger on Flight 301, heading for Heathrow Airport, London." He was lost for words for a few seconds. "We don't have any pilots. I'm flying the plane."

Another ten seconds of silence.

"Are you kidding me?" came the incredulous voice.

"No," said Edward. "I wish I was."



Edward followed the terse orders he was given by the Russian pilot. "Switch your radio frequency to one two one decimal five zero," said the voice.

"How?" said Edward weakly. He stared at the array of switches and knobs in front of him.

"What kind of aircraft are you flying, Edward?" crackled the radio.

Edward hadn't paid any attention to the captain's announcements or the request to read the safety card from hours ago when it seemed like this was just going to be another boring long-haul flight. "It's an Airbus," he said. "I think."

He heard the voice take a deep breath and mutter something he couldn't hear. "To your right, in the centre console, is there a control unit with letters and numbers – much like a computer keyboard? Do you see it?"

"Yes," replied Edward.

"Don't touch it," warned the voice. "Below is the radio control. There's a large knob, with a smaller one inside it. Turn the large one until the display reads '121'. Turn the small one until it reads '50'. That channel is the international emergency channel. Rebroadcast your mayday and an emergency air traffic controller will reply to your distress signal. Good luck, Dr Edward Simpson."

"Thanks," said Edward. "What about you? Will you stay on the air with me?"

"No," came the voice. "The emergency channel will be clear. It'll just be you and the air traffic controller."

Edward Simpson turned the radio knobs. His earphones fell silent. Just him and an unseen emergency controller, thousands of kilometres away. He had never felt so alone.

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