The Last Sunset

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Abstract

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THEY had long since lost sight of the formation and were now hanging limply over a hungry sea, a sea eagerly waiting for their fuel to give out.

A painful, lonely silence clouded the interior of the plane as each man listened reverently to four big engines eating up precious gasoline.

Johnny sat quietly in the nose. He noticed that the broken pillows of clouds below were turning a pale crimson as the sun moved gently toward the horizon. Farther below, the dark sea rolled steadily southward, absorbing both the light and shadows from the sky above. Johnny watched the plane's tiny shadow skirt from one cloud to the next. He had watched this interesting little feat many times before, but today it fascinated him no end and he shook himself from the trance.

The plane was letting down. The time must have come, Johnny thought. He hurried back to his place for ditching.

As the plane passed between two clouds and eased below the ceiling, Johnny looked up to see enchanting off-shade rays of gold and violet pour luxuriously from the heavens.

The plane made a slight turn into the wind and the colors vanished. Johnny wondered if the water would be cold; he gave a little shrug, braced himself and prayed. There was a sickening scrape as the plane met its shadow on the water. Almost instantly the plane buckled and tore into two pieces as though it were paper.

Johnny felt cold water and tasted salt, let his breath out till it was a gay faintness far away inside him . . . Now he could see the sun shining again, more brightly than he'd ever imagined. . .