

Crash



T H E H E I G H T S



Chapter 1



Rafael Silva was at work. It was his last day before vacation. He was looking forward to time off. He wanted to spend time at home in the Heights. He missed his family. Then the phone rang. He picked it up.

“Hello,” he sighed.

“Is this Rafael Silva?” the man on the phone asked.

“Yes,” Rafael replied.

“This is Jack Wheeler. I own a company in California. We need a new building. And we need it fast. Can you help?”

“I would like to,” Rafael said. “But I am going on vacation.”

“That’s okay. You can start after,” Jack said.

Then Jack Wheeler had an idea. The Silvas should vacation in California.

“You can come to California. Bring the family. And you can stop by. You can see my company,” he said. “I have a plane. I will fly you here. I will pay for the hotel.”

“That’s very nice,” Rafael said.

“There’s a lot to do here,” Jack said. “It’s a fun place.”

Rafael was happy. His kids would like Jack's plane. Ana was in Mexico with her parents. He said yes.

It was the next day. It was time for vacation. The Silvas were at the airport. They were waiting for the plane. A car pulled up. A man got out. He was big. He was over six feet tall. He had long, black hair. The Silvas looked at each other. They looked scared.

The man smiled. "Hello," he said. "Are you the Silvas? I'm Johnny. Johnny Hightower. I'm your pilot."

"Yes," said Rafael. "We're the Silvas. These are my kids."

Lilia, Antonio, and Franco said hello.

Eleven-year-old Lilia looked at

Johnny. “Where’s the plane?” she asked.

“Over there,” said Johnny. He pointed to a small, silver plane.

“Looks small,” Antonio said.

Johnny laughed. “It’s big inside. We’ll all fit. I fly this plane every day. And I’m a big guy.”

Everyone walked to the plane. They loaded their bags. Then they got inside. Johnny was right. The plane was big. Soon they were in the air. They looked out the window. The plane flew high. Everything looked small.

Franco read a book. Antonio played his DS. Lilia took a nap. Rafael looked at his kids. Only Ana was missing.

They flew for hours. Rafael looked out the window. The sky was dark. It looked like a storm.

“Oh man!” Johnny yelled.

Rafael jumped. “What’s wrong?” he asked.

“It’s a storm. It’s a big storm. We’re headed for it!” Johnny said.

Lilia screamed.

“It’s okay Lilia,” Rafael said calmly.

“Your dad’s right. It will be okay. We’ll fly over it,” said Johnny.

The storm got bigger. Clouds were everywhere. The small plane headed into the storm.

Chapter 2



Rain hit the plane. It was loud. Everyone looked scared. They were afraid to look out the windows. But Franco looked. He saw lightning. He heard thunder.

“This is a big storm,” Franco said.

It was windy. The plane shook.

“What if the wings fall off?”

Antonio gasped.

“They won’t,” said Franco.

“How do you know? You can’t tell,” argued Antonio.

“Boys! Stop fighting!” yelled Rafael. “Johnny needs our help.”

Lightning lit the sky. The thunder was loud. The lights went out. The plane went dark. Then the plane fell.

“The lightning hit us!” Lilia yelled.

The Silvas looked scared. Johnny looked scared. The plane was going down! The storm was loud! It was very dark!

“Can you call the airport?” Rafael asked Johnny. “Ask them for help. Tell them our location.”

“No!” Johnny yelled over the noise. “We have no power. The radio is out.”

“Try anyway! Please!” Antonio screamed.

Johnny got on the radio.

“Mayday! Mayday!”

It didn’t work. The radio was dead. No one heard them. Johnny tried to fly the plane. It didn’t help. The plane fell. They were going to crash!

“Can we make it?” Rafael asked Johnny.

“I think so. I think it will be okay. I will crash land. We are over the desert. There are no trees. The ground is flat. But it will be scary. Hold on tight!” Johnny said.

Rafael looked at his kids. They looked scared. The plane fell. It fell fast. Johnny tried to steer. He tried to slow the plane down. The ground came closer and closer.

“Hold on tight!” Johnny yelled again.

Lilia closed her eyes. Antonio screamed. Franco held his breath. The plane hit the ground. It hit the ground fast. It was over. They were on land. They made it!

“Are you guys okay?” Rafael asked.

One by one, they replied.

“Yup,” said Franco.

“Alive, but scared,” Antonio cried.

“I’m okay,” called Lilia.

“How about you Johnny?” asked Rafael.

“I’m fine,” Johnny said. “But the plane isn’t. We can’t fly out of here.”

“No one knows where we are,” Lilia sobbed.

“Yeah,” said Antonio. “The radio broke. No one heard our Mayday!”

“True,” Rafael said. “But they will know we crashed. They will find us.”

“What do we do now?” asked Franco.

Johnny looked around. He needed a plan. They were in the desert. He knew the desert. He knew they’d be okay. They had to be careful. But they would be okay.

The desert was an odd place. It was hot all day. It was cold all night. They’d stay out of the sun in the day. They’d try to keep warm in the night.

There was some food in the plane. But there was no water. They needed water.

Everyone got out of the plane.

They stood in the sand. The desert was hot! The sun was bright.

“Wow!” Antonio said. “It is hot out here!”

“Yeah, we need to find water,” Johnny said. “Grab water bottles. We can fill them.”

“Where is the water?” Lilia asked.

Johnny pointed. He pointed to a big mountain.

“Up there,” he said.

They all looked. The mountain was far. It was big. It wouldn't be easy. But they needed water. They could be lost for days.

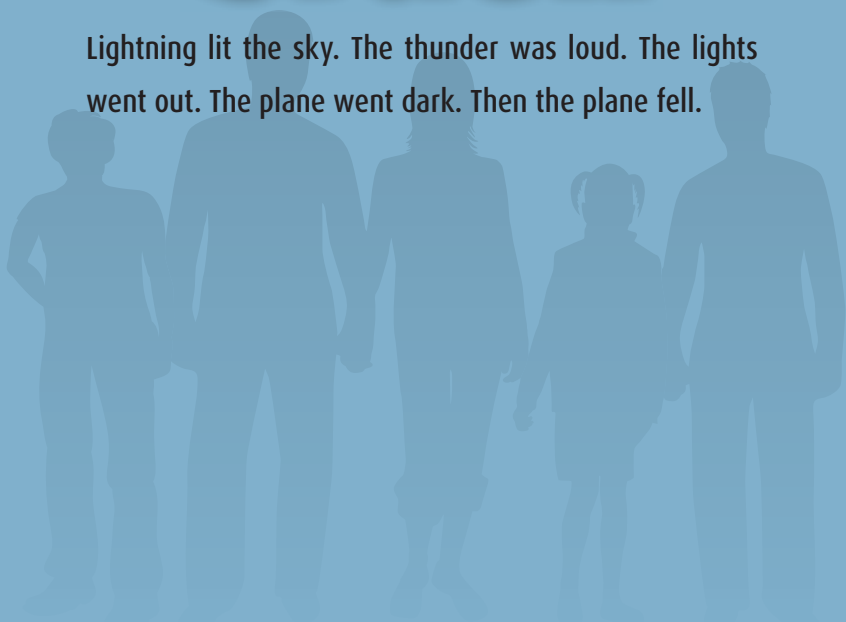
“We'll go in the morning,” Rafael said. “Let's get some rest.”

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