

FLIGHT OF THE FALCON



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FLIGHT OF THE FALCON

BOOK 1 OF
FALCON'S QUEST
A TRAIL LIFE ADVENTURE SERIES

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DEDICATIONS

BRYAN DAVIS

To every boy who feels the warrior spirit within, you know that God is calling you to do something great, to be a heroic man of God. This story is for you. As you continue your faith journey, you will be living your own story as you soar in your faith and become a man after God's own heart.

MARK T. HANCOCK

To Luke and Logan, whose love of reading inspires me to write stories for boys. And to the tens of thousands of Trailmen across the USA, whose love for adventure inspired this one.



CHAPTER 1

VOICES AND OTHER STRANGE NOISES

The sound of a crying girl rode the air. Dylan set his model airplane on the sidewalk in front of his house and listened as the crying continued. Was she a teenager? Maybe a young woman? Hard to tell. She sounded more ghostly than real, like a phantom in a dream.

Everything turned blurry. Dylan blinked. Was he dreaming? Maybe, but it seemed so real.

He shrugged. Back to the fun. He pressed a button on his handheld, remote-control unit. The plane's propellor spun, and the wheels turned, sending the silvery-blue craft zooming down the driveway. Two seconds later, it lifted off and took flight, the summer sun gleaming on its metallic shell.

"Yes!" Dylan pumped a fist, then quickly returned his hand to the controller. Since a big tree stood in the plane's path, he pressed the button to make it roll to the left, but the tip of the left wing broke off and fluttered toward the ground.

"Rats!" He tried to correct with a hard right turn, but the plane seemed to have a mind of its own and flew over the roof. Soon, a crunching sound followed.

As Dylan ran around the house and through the open gate to the backyard, questions peppered his mind. How could the wing be that fragile? It didn't even hit anything before it broke. Again, the dream idea came to mind, but he shook it off once more.

Ahead, the plane lay on the grass near the door of Dad's office building, not much bigger than a shed. At least it used to be his office until that terrible day two years ago, the day he left and never returned.

Leaning over, Dylan picked up the plane. Although the propellor was still twirling slowly, the mangled fuselage and broken wing proved that this model was like all the others he had built—worthless.

He flung the airplane across the yard. The crippled craft sailed in a tight circle and zoomed toward him. It smashed into the office door, broke in half, and fell to the ground, now completely ruined.

As Dylan stared at the broken plane, an odd humming sound reverberated from within the office, and the girl's weeping tones joined it.

Dylan touched the doorknob but hesitated to turn it. After Dad went missing, a strange feeling raised prickles on his neck whenever he walked past this building. Ever since that fateful day, only the police had set foot inside. After they rummaged through the office and took whatever clues they could find, Mom closed the door for good. She installed a combination lock on the latch, saying that the office would stay as Dad left it in case he returned someday.

Dylan let his shoulders sag. Memories of Dad came to mind, especially rides in the Cessna, seated as the copilot. While Dad flew the plane, he talked about how everything worked, and he often let Dylan steer through various maneuvers. Dylan even took off and landed a few times, listening to Dad's constant instructions. Those flights were the greatest thrills ever.

Other memories drifted in. Dad often shared his sketches of airplanes and explained all the details to Dylan. Those sketches would really help with his new project—building his own model airplane, one that would fly without eventually crashing like the pile of junk lying crumpled on the ground.

The hum from the office interrupted his thoughts as it rose and fell in volume along with the girl's cries. How could someone be in that locked building? Maybe something electrical was running in there, like a computer or a fan, and it just sounded like a girl. Whatever it was, it needed to be turned off.

Of course, Mom never said he wasn't *allowed* to go inside. Her only instructions were to keep everything in order if he ever *did* go inside. Still, that creepy feeling had kept him out for two years, too scared to do anything more than shiver. But since he turned twelve last week, maybe now he could suck it up and go in, especially since he had memorized the combination when he had thought about entering at least ten times before.

Dylan spun the combination wheel through its three numbers, removed the lock, and turned the knob. As he pushed the door open, the hinges creaked, and sunlight

poured in. A musty odor wafted past along with the aroma of old books.

He peeked inside. Facing the wall to the right, a wheeled swivel chair sat with its seat pushed under a desk that held a computer and monitor. On the opposite wall, shelves filled with books stood from floor to ceiling. Drawings of airplanes covered the other walls, especially close to the desk, some framed and some just sheets of paper stapled to various exposed studs. A few of the drawings sported sketches of falcons, Dad's favorite bird.

When he walked in, the humming noise grew louder, though now the girl's voice no longer joined in. Trying to follow the sound to its source, he blew a layer of dust off the computer and set his fingers on top. No vibration emanated. He touched the monitor. Same there. What a strange mystery!

Dylan craned his neck. Now the hum seemed to come from the back wall of the office. He followed the sound to a knee-high cardboard box labeled "camping gear," the flaps folded on top. He pulled the flaps open, revealing a pair of hiking boots, a military-style canteen, a backpack, and a belt with an attached Swiss army knife.

"Cool." He pulled the boots out and set them on the floor. The last time he tried Dad's boots on, they were too big, but maybe now that he had grown so much, things would be different.

He pulled off his shoe and slid his foot into a boot. It was still too big, but with a few extra socks, it wouldn't

be bad at all. He put the boot back in place and again searched for a source of the humming, but he found nothing.

When he knelt and closed the flaps, the sound seemed to rise from the box and drift toward the front of the office, like an invisible flying motor. Then, it quieted.

Dylan put his shoe back on, walked to the desk, and listened. Still no sounds. Very strange. But now that he was in here, he might as well go ahead and look for the sketches.

Knowing where Dad kept them, Dylan pulled a desk drawer open, withdrew a file folder, and opened it on the desk, revealing a stack of sketches. He paged through them—mostly prop planes from World War I and II, including several of the P-51 Mustang, one of the great fighter planes some U.S. pilots flew during World War II. Each sketch included detailed instructions about how to build a working model that would receive remote-control commands.

Dylan smiled and whispered, “Jackpot!” He studied the instructions of the newest and coolest model, but it seemed so complex. Maybe he could figure it out, and maybe he couldn’t. One fact seemed clear, since this model was almost six feet long, the materials would cost more than Mom could spare. He needed help, especially from someone who had parents who might offer to fund the project.

He closed the folder. Who could he possibly get to help him? No one else at school seemed interested in airplanes. Most of them were into video games or taking

videos of themselves and posting them online. And anytime he asked other students about model airplanes, they always either rolled their eyes or called him a nerd. Who wanted that to happen again?

With the folder tucked under his arm, he turned to leave the office, but the humming sound resumed. He set the folder back on the desk, then, letting his ears guide him, he walked to an eye-level shelf and slid a big book out. He set his ear close to the gap where the book used to be. No, the hum wasn't coming from the shelf.

He raised the book to his ear. It definitely emanated from the book. He read the title—History of Aviation. It made sense that a pilot like Dad would own a book like this, but how could it make that sound?

Dylan laid the book next to the folder, sat in the chair again, and opened the cover. The hum instantly grew louder. Using his thumb, he rifled quickly through the pages and listened for the loudest point. When the noise peaked, he flipped the book to that page. On the left-hand side, a photo showed a black-and-white image of a P-51 Mustang.

An odd motion caught his attention. He drew his eyes closer. The propellor was actually spinning, and smoke poured from the plane's exhaust. The engine had to be running, explaining the source of the noise.

Dylan whispered, "Impossible. Maybe I really am dreaming."

A new motion appeared—the pilot waving. A voice joined the hum, shouting, "Hello, Dylan!"

Dylan slammed the book closed. Within seconds, the hum died away. Then the girl's lamenting voice returned. He looked toward the source. A teenaged girl sat on a box, her hands covering her face. Trying not to tremble, he rose, walked over to her, and crouched. "What's wrong?"

She lowered her hands and stared at him with brilliant blue eyes, a stark contrast to her ragged green T-shirt and unkempt brown hair that fell past her shoulders. Tears streamed down her dirty cheeks. "Can you help me?"

"I'll try. What's your name?"

"Maya."

"Okay, Maya. How can I help you?"

"I am being held hostage, but I don't know where I am. Please rescue me."

"You don't know where you are?" He waved an arm. "You're here in my father's office."

She blinked at him. "Your father is Tim Baxter. I see him in your face."

"You know my father?"

"You're Dylan. He told me about you." She smiled. "He is so proud of you."

Tears crept into his eyes. "When did you see him? Do you know where he is?"

She faded into transparency, like a ghost. "Help me, Dylan."

His voice spiked. "But how?"

“Find a boy named Alan Sproles. He is a model airplane lover, like you. Together, the two of you can find me.”

She disappeared completely.

Dylan swallowed hard. What was going on? Of course this had to be a dream, but what could it all mean?

He closed his eyes. If only he could force himself to wake up, maybe he could remember what he saw and figure out if this Alan Sproles person was real.

As he crouched with his eyes closed, darkness swam through his mind, then dizziness. After a few seconds, he toppled over and every thought fled away.