

A Child's Introduction To the Principles and Mechanics of
Flight

By

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Based on an idea by Jeremy Saunders

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EXT.HOUSE.PRE DAWN.

Empty sunburn street. Morning dew clings to the grass, a rusty slide sits on the front lawn. A line of green bins are perched neatly on the footpath all except for number 20. Birds flit across the sky.

1 INT. HALLWAY/LIVINGROOM/KITCHEN.PRE DAWN.

An empty hallway, patches of early morning light play on the floor. The living room curtains are drawn, the room is filled with an orange glow as the dawn light struggles through the cloth.

TOBY (O/S)

Dad? Dad?

An angle-poise lamp sits on the kitchen table illuminating a pile of electronic parts, plastic pieces in various painted and unpainted states, a half assembled model plane, brushes in mucky water and piles of tiny paint pots.

2 INT. TOBY'S ROOM. DAWN.

TOBY (6, fragile, wide-eyed and innocent) sits up.

TOBY

Dad!!

Toby gets up and wanders out of his room and down the hallway wearing his pyjamas. He wanders into his Dad's bedroom.

TOBY (O/S)

Dad where are you?

3 INT.MIKES ROOM.DAWN

Toby looks into his father's room, the bed is made, it is empty.

4 INT. HOUSE. DAWN.

Toby wanders into the living room, calling for his father, the silence slowly sinking in. He looks out the window to the driveway, it's empty. Under the street light a bird pecks at a pizza box sticking out of the unemptied bin. Toby runs off with a burst of energy.

5 INT BATHROOM. DAWN

Toby swings open the bathroom door.

TOBY

Dad!

The bathroom is empty.

6 INT. TOBY'S ROOM. DAWN.

Toby sits sadly on the edge of his bed, his big eyes staring into space. An aeroplane mobile spins slowly overhead. He is still for the longest time. He slowly gets up and walks into the living room.

7 INT. KITCHEN/DINNING ROOM. DAWN.

Toby sits down at his model plane, the light coming back into his eyes. He picks up the instruction book and tries hard to read it.

TOBY
Cement-the-left-side-of-the
fus-e-lage A to the
right-side-of-the fus-e-lage B.

He picks up a tube of glue and attempts to squeeze out the last drop to no avail.

Toby stares out the window, the dawn sun skimming the backyard. From the hallway a clock chimes five times. Toby walks to his room.

8 INT. TOBY'S ROOM. DAWN.

He pulls his school clothes up from off the floor and dresses himself. He opens his piggy bank and empties the few coins into his hand, then he gently opens a small box that sits beside his bed and takes out a silver brooch, he tucks it lovingly in his pocket.

9 INT. BATHROOM. DAWN.

Toby climbs onto a stool and stands in front of the bathroom mirror. He attempts to pat his wild bed hair into place with some water. He looks down and sees three toothbrushes in a cup; one blue, one red and a small orange one, he picks up the large red one and furiously brushes his teeth. He jumps down.

10 INT. KITCHEN. DAWN.

Toby makes himself a packed lunch with all the skill and concern for nutrition that one would expect from a six-year-old. He attempts to cut the bread, now rock hard, with a large sharp knife. After several perilous attempts he decides on crackers spread a centimeter thick with jam.

He wrestles with the cling wrap and loses control. The crackers fall face down on the floor. Toby grabs a brown looking banana, zips it into his bag then goes to the table and picks up the empty tube of glue.

11 INT/EXT. KITCHEN/DINNING. DAWN.

He walks out of the back door, bag and jacket in hand. As he's about to pull it shut, he stops. He thinks. He folds a piece of cardboard and places it on the door jamb over the latch. Gingerly he pulls the door shut and heads off to school.

12 EXT. STREET. DAWN

Toby walks down a suburban street towards a main road. He stands at the curb like a frightened rabbit. He looks right, left, right and left again for good measure. A few cars fly by as he steps gingerly out across the road. A car honks loudly from behind him, he runs to the other side.

13 EXT. SCHOOL. DAWN

A car passes by revealing Toby sitting outside the closed school gates perched on his bag, holding the brooch in his hands. His feet kick softly against the brick wall.

A rubbish truck approaches, as it slows down the driver leans out the window.

RUBBISH TRUCK DRIVER

Hey buddy, what you doing? it's Saturday!

Toby sighs and puts his head in his hands. He picks up his heavy bag and slowly heads back home.

14 EXT. STREET.MORNING.

Toby kicks a stone along the footpath, he spots a gardenia bush and picks a few flowers. He looks up and sees a convenience store at the end of the road. With renewed purpose he heads towards it.

15 INT. STORE. MORNING.

Toby searches the shelves for the same tube of glue he holds in his hand. He finds it and goes to the counter.

SHOP ATTENDANT

That's \$8.90 please.

Toby places a hand full of money on the counter. The attendant counts it.

SHOP ATTENDANT (cont'd)

That's six, you need three more little man.

Toby digs fruitlessly into his pockets.

(CONTINUED)

TOBY

I don't have anymore.

SHOP ATTENDANT

Well it's not enough, go ask your
mum for three more dollars.

Toby takes the glue and heads back down the aisle. He places it back on the shelf. He pauses as a mum and her two daughters pass him then he grabs the glue and runs out of the shop.

16 EXT. STREET. MORNING.

Toby runs hard, he is breathing heavily, he looks back over his shoulder several times to check he is not being chased.

17 EXT. STREET/BASKETBALL COURT. MORNING.

Toby's pace slows, he comes to a corner, he stops, he looks one way then the next spinning around, he is lost. Across the road some boys play basketball, TIM, PETE and BILLY, (three 9yr olds, rough, big for their age) they see Toby in his uniform.

BILLY

Hey come here!

Toby moves tentatively towards them, stuffing the flowers in his pocket.

BILLY (cont'd)

How was school?

The boys all laugh.

TOBY

(cautiously)Do you know where
Nelson St is?

PETE

Your on it pinhead.

Pete faints throwing the ball at Toby. Toby flinches dropping the glue. Billy picks it up.

BILLY

What's this for Macgyver?

TOBY

I'm making a plane.

The boys laugh.

(CONTINUED)

TOBY (cont'd)
A model plane, it's a Lockneed
AC-130 Hercules with four engine
turboprop made for airborne
assault and search and rescue.

TIM
Sounds like a steaming pile of
nerd to me.

The boys laugh hysterically. Billy goes to put the glue in his pocket.

BILLY
Thanks this might come in handy.

But before he can Toby panics, he runs towards Billy, kicks him hard in the shins, grabs the glue and runs off.

BILLY (cont'd)
Ahhh you little shit!

Toby is off down the road like a shot.

PETE
You'll keep mummy's boy.

18 INT. LIVING ROOM.NOON

Toby draws on a big piece of paper with textas. He sticks the drawing on the living room window facing out onto the street and places the flowers on the sill.

19 EXT.HOUSE.AFTERNOON

Toby sits at the kitchen table, he is struggling to read the model aeroplane instructions.

TOBY
Cut out the ver-t-ical
stab-i-liser.Draw a di-a-gonal
line between the two points and
cut along the line.

Toby is lost in concentration as he works on the plane. he mixes glue and assembles various parts.

TOBY (cont'd)
(absently)Mum! I'm hungry.

Mum!

Toby stops suddenly, he stares into the distance, his eyes welling up. He looks out the window. The washing line turns slowly in the wind.He climbs down and goes to the kitchen.

20 INT. KITCHEN.AFTERNOON

Toby opens the fridge, he pulls out the milk and takes a huge gulp from the bottle. He grimaces, coughs and spits the milk onto the floor; it is off. He pours the sour milk down the sink and watches as it swirl down the drain.

21 EXT.DRIVEWAY.DUSK.

Toby stands on the footpath outside his house kicking stones into the gutter.He looks up and down the street expectantly. The evening is still, not a car, not a person in sight. Toby's drawing is stuck to the front window, backlit from inside, it is of a man, a woman and a boy in front of a house with the words.

I LOVE YOU, TOBY XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

He plays with the brooch in his hands and watches the street lamp above him flickering into life. A plane flies overhead. He jumps as a bike whizzes past him from behind and disappears into the shadows.

22 INT.KITCHEN/LIVINGROOM.NIGHT.

Toby is in the pantry collecting things to eat. He takes his pile over to the table; biscuits, chips and ice cream, he begins enthusiastically making inroads. A loud and colourful cartoon plays in the background as he continues assembling the plane.

23 INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Toby, now lying asleep at the table, wakes up with a start. He is bathed in the glow from the TV, he watches the screen; a young women sits by an overturned car she is bleeding from the head. The films music is fobeboding. He watches with increasing terror then quickly turns off the TV.

24 INT. HALLWAY/MIKE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Toby walks swiftly down the dark hallway to his Dad's room.It's still empty. He lies on top of the bed. Shadows flicker across the ceiling. He is motionless for a moment before climbing down and wiggling himself under the bed.

He pulls out the brooch from his pocket,it seems to give him a degree of comfort. Holding it close he buries himself under a jacket and closes his eyes.

25 INT.MIKES ROOM. DAWN

Empty bed. The clock radio kicks into life announcing the news at 5am.

Toby's small figure rolls out from underneath the bed. There is a long moment of stillness as he soaks up the empty room. He's on the verge of tears.

The wardrobe door is open, Toby can see dresses hanging lifeless on their hangers, womens shoes in an untidy mess on the floor.

26 INT. HALLWAY / LIVING ROOM. DAWN.

Toby walks out and yells down the hallway.

TOBY

Dad? where are you?

He walks past the hallway table and stops to look at a photo of a woman standing next to a Cessna plane, she is hugging Toby, huge smiles on both their faces. Toby leans in and stares at the picture. They both have the same beautiful brown eyes.

27 INT. KITCHEN.MORNING.

Toby continues with the model plane, reading from the instructions.

TOBY

Once the body is assembled she's ready to paint. Yes!

Toby begins painting.

28 INT. KITCHEN. MORNING.

Ants surround a puddle of milk left on the bench top. Crawling wildly in all directions.

29 INT.LIVINGROOM.MORNING TO AFTERNOON

The drawing in the living room window turns the deep yellow of late afternoon.

30 INT. KITCHEN TABLE, AFTERNOON

The plane is nearly finished, Toby hooks up some wires to the remote control. He pulls out the small brooch from his pocket, he holds it gently in his hand; it is a pilots badge with two small wings at each end and the name Elle Summers engraved in the middle, he places it gently inside the plane. The phone rings.

31 INT. HALLWAY.AFTERNOON

Toby picks up the phone.

TOBY

Hello.

MIKE (O/S)

Hello Toby. Oh, it's so good to hear your voice. Are you okay?

Toby is a little guarded.

TOBY

I woke up and you weren't there.

MIKE (O/S)

I know Toby. I'm so, so, sorry.

TOBY

Where did you go? Where are you? I looked everywhere.

MIKE (O/S)

I just... It's just been... Dad's just been very sad. I'm...

TOBY

When are you coming home? I couldn't cut the bread and it got wasted.

MIKE (O/S)

It's okay. I'll be home very soon. Let's talk about it then, we'll go somewhere nice. You can have a milkshake.

TOBY

Can I have a Milo shake like Mum makes?

MIKE (O/S)

Well, I can make one for you. You can show me how she did it. We'll make one together.

TOBY

a pause, crying) I can't remember it properly.

MIKE (O/S)

(starting to cry)
I have to go buddy.

(CONTINUED)

TOBY

Why?

MIKE (O/S)

(sobbing) I just do Toby.

TOBY

But dad!...

MIKE

(sobbing uncontrollably) I'm so sorry Toby. I'm on my way, I'll see you very soon.

TOBY

No I don't want to see you, I hate you. I want to see Mum!

Mike hangs up. Toby slams down the phone full of anger and grief.

32 INT/EXT. DINNING ROOM/STREET.AFTERNOON

Toby grabs the model plane and puts it in his backpack, he runs out the back door, jumps on his bike and speeds off down the street.

33 EXT.STREET.AFTERNOON

Toby's face is streaked with tears.He bikes fast.

34 EXT.LANEWAY DUSK

He turns down a narrow lane between two fences that struggle to stand upright under the weight of the hanging foliage.

A figure comes towards him, it is Billy. Toby stops. Billy is blocking his path, Billy smiles

BILLY

You always this stupid or is today a special occasion?

Billy notices Toby is crying.

BILLY (cont'd)

What's the matter mummy's boy?

TOBY

Stop saying that!

BILLY

Why should I mummy's boy, you gonna cry some more?

(CONTINUED)

TOBY
Because she's dead!

Toby jumps back on his bike and speeds off, leaving a stunned Billy in his wake.

35 EXT. STREET. DUSK

Toby crosses a street and runs through a bushy track bursting out onto a bald cliff face, the sea and sky churning in front of him.

36 EXT. ESCARPMENT. DUSK

Toby and the plane stand some 30 meters back from the edge, pointing proudly towards the horizon. The sea is laid out below him, sprawling off into infinity, a steep drop. He holds the remote control. Toby is serious, determined. He starts up the plane.

As the plane starts to pick up speed with an incredible insistent buzzing Toby starts to run as fast as he can towards the edge. He feels the grass hitting his legs as the edge of the escarpment draws nearer, the plane speeding along beside him.

Running fast, determined, the plane roars past him and lifts off into the air just as Toby reaches the edge of the cliff...and stops.

Toby jumps and shouts in euphoria as the plane shoots over the edge of the escarpment ahead of him, flying almost along the horizontal axis.

TOBY
There she goes!

The plane's wing flashes in the sunlight as it soars off towards the horizon, straight and true.

Toby tries to turn the plane. Nothing happens. He wiggles the joystick more and more frantically. Turns the power switch on and off. Wiggles the joystick again.

The plane continues flying away from him in a straight line.

TOBY (cont'd)
No, Come back!

He turns over the remote and opens the battery compartment, wiggles the batteries around and tries again. Nothing.

TOBY (cont'd)
No!

(CONTINUED)

All Toby's hard work, flying away from him. It's too much to bear. Toby angrily discards the remote. He stands at the edge of the cliff watching the plane disappear. The plane that carries his mother's brooch roaring through the hazy afternoon, smaller and smaller with every passing moment.

The sound of the buzzing grows quieter and quieter leaving only the sound of crickets and the occasional whisper of a passing car. The plane now a distant dot continues towards the horizon. Toby sits at the edge of the world.

He turns, in the distance his father walks towards him, a large bandage on his forearm.

THE END