

"PILOT EPISODE: ESSENTIALS OF FLIGHT"

By Jeb

OPEN ON  
PRINCIPAL ADMIRALS OFFICE

PRINCIPAL ADMIRAL

Well, Ms. Plane, your records show perfect attendance, perfect grades throughout all four of your years here at plane flying academy.

LAURA PLANE

Thank you, sir.

PRINCIPAL ADMIRAL

Your review went well, and your psychological evaluation deems you perfectly stable, good to fly. You should be ready for graduation this spring! Congratulations!

PRINCIPAL ADMIRAL goes to stamp Laura's paper as complete, but then she stops.

PRINCIPAL ADMIRAL

Oh. That's odd.

LAURA PLANE

Whats that, sir?

PRINCIPAL ADMIRAL

This says you've never completed a single flight in a plane. You havent even logged a single minute in a cockpit. Clerical error?

LAURA PLANE

No, its not... That's... true, sir. I got all of my teachers to substitute research projects instead of practical flying exams. I'm sure I can figure out how to fly once I get out there, since I know all the aerodynamics and thermodynamics and anatomy of a plane, I know planes inside out. I—

PRINCIPAL ADMIRAL

*Ms. Plane.* we can't graduate a pilot who has never successfully completed a flight course. It's a huge liability for our schools perfect reputation. We've only ever had one instance of a student graduating without having finished a flight course. Im sure youre familiar.

LAURA PLANE

(softly) Joe Crash.

PRINCIPAL ADMIRAL

Indeed. We dont want another Joe Crash on our hands. He's like our Voldemort. The Voldemort of the flight school world. (sigh). But I think there is a solution to this. Killing two birds with one stone, if you will.

LAURA

(excited) Y-yeah? Killing birds?

PRINCIPAL ADMIRAL

There's a new student here. A rookie who shows a great deal of promise. But she's... unconventional. Her name is—

CUT TO

CLASSROOM

LAURA PLANE

... Rookie Jones?

ROOKIE JONES

Hm?

LAURA PLANE

Laura Plane. I'm eager to learn under you, they say you're the best rookie plane flyer they've ever had at the school!

ROOKIE JONES

Sure, that's me alright.

CUT TO

FLASHABCK TO PRINCIPAL ADMIRALS OFFICE

PRINCIPAL ADMIRAL

Rookie Jones, the whiz kid. Shes not called that coz shes good at flying but because of repeated public urination incidents. Shes been to plane jail seven times and failed her empathy 101 course six times since enrolling here. I'm going to have you tutor under her. But I also want you to tutor her. Sort of a mutual tutoring situation.

LAURA PLANE

Im not sure I understand, sir.

PRINCIPAL ADMIRAL

You see, shes sort of like in top gun:maverick when there's the one hotshot who doesnt want to work with others, except this time its in more of an autistic way thats not so cool and sexy but is moreso very annoying. I want you to teach her how to study. and she can teach you how to actually fly.

LAURA

And what if it doesnt work out?

PRINCIPAL ADMIRAL

Then im afraid youll both fail, and therell be nothing more i can do.

CUT TO

CLASSROOM

We're back to Laura talking to rookie jones. ROOKIE JONES is clearly not paying attention.

ROOKIE JONES tosses a paper airplane, which falls to the ground quickly. She takes another piece of paper and tries again, once again failing.

ROOKIE JONES

Damn things won't fly...

ROOKIE JONES, frustrated, takes the paper and balls it up, throwing it. This time it sails far, hitting someone in the head. Its an admiral. The admiral turns, furious, and sees Laura and Rookie holding paper.

ADMIRAL

ROOKIE! PLANE! DETENTION!

LAURA PLANE

But... I didn't-

ADMIRAL

I don't care! DEETENTIONNNNNNNN!

CUT TO

DETENTION

ROOKIE is still folding paper airpolanes.

ROOKIE

Ugh...

LAURA

Still wasting time on that?

ROOKIE

I didn't ask for your input, pal.

LAURA

Hey, I didn't ask to tutor some kid who can't even pay attention in class...

ROOKIE

Okay, *pilot who cant even fly*. Yeah, principal admiral told me that. Everyone in the pilot school knows.

LAURA

That's— I could do it if I wanted, I'm choosing not to!

ROOKIE

Sure.

LAURA

while we're here we should at least do some tutoring. Let's start on chapter one: *essentials of flight*.

ROOKIE

I know the essentials of flight. Get up there in the sky, and then zoom around. Then land. The end.

LAURA

Come on, dude. The quiz on chapter one is tomorrow, I need to get you ready for it so I can graduate, because for some reason my whole graduation hinges on me dragging you through this semester. So here I am, missing the Christmas parade so I can babysit you!

ROOKIE

(looking up in fear) Wait... the Christmas parade is today? I thought it was Sunday.

LAURA

Yeah it's today, we're missing it right now, but really we need to focus on—

ROOKIE

No, no no... Principal Admiral's life is in big danger...

LAURA

What?

ROOKIE

Um, so...I was gonna add some custom stuff to my plane to make it super fast so I could do better on my flight tests. I didn't want anyone to find it, so I hid it on Santas sleigh, I figured I would be able to move it before the parade. It's rigged to blast off as soon as someone pushes the button, which is weirdly easy to access and could be pressed on accident very easily. Kind of a design flaw...

LAURA

What kind of stuff are you talking about?

ROOKIE

Oh, yknow.... Um... Super jet 2000s.

LAURA

...Oh my god. Those are super illegal because they have the power to blast someone a hundred miles from their starting location at a mach 10! If principal admiral is in the sleigh and those blast off...

ROOKIE

...then its lights out, santa. As in, death from falling from the sky. I need to get to that parade before the sleigh blasts off.

LAURA

Okay. Ill help you, but after this, I;m reporting you to the academic fraudster committee for using illegal plane blasting engines!

ROOKIE

Okay, fine, just hurry up before I accidentally kill someody!

CUT TO

ChrsiTMAS PARADE

They run around for awhile at the parade looking for the sleigh.

LAURA

I looked it up and these things have tracking devices attached. So I tracked the bitcoin VPN using a Trojan horse I backdoored into the servers using html API algorithms—

ROOKIE

In English Goddammit!

LAURA

...Bascially looks like it already blasted off.

ROOKIE

Oh man. Im gonna get kicked out of flight school. It's over.

LAURA

Hey, itll be ok, chin up. Not everyone belongs in flight school.

ROOKIE

You dont get it.... I got nothing to go home to... What am i gonna do... You dont get it... youre a city girl... i grew up on a small farm in oklahoma and my whole family lives there but my pas dying wish was to sendt me to flight school because he believed in my dream and if i cant finish my dream then it was all for nothing and ill just have to go back there and be a nobody again, just little old rookie Jones, shucking hay, and ill never become the best pilot in the world and everyone will be disappointed in me... this is my only chance to make a career.... And our principal might die which would also be lame I guess.

LAURA

Well hey... its not over yet. According to my calculations itll land at 34.1504899, -94.5346436. If we can intercept at an adverse yaw at absolute altitude, we can rescue the admiral from the cockpit before the sleigh reaches terminal velocity.

ROOKIE

God dang! How'd you find this? You got magic powers?

LAURA

It's jsut physics, the curve of his landing will follow a formula of drag and gravity plus momentum. The formulas velocity of-

ROOKIE

Ughhh. Ok, don't tell me. Just get in the plane.

LAURA

Right. Get in the plane. Okay yeah. Any second now. Any second. Yup.

FINALLY she gets in.

ROOKIE starts flying the plane. LAURA is visibly scared to be in a plane and ROOKIE can clearly tell.

ROOKIE

Can I ask you something?

LAuRA

What?

ROOKIE

Why did you even come to flight school academy if you're so scared of planes you won't even get in one?

LAURA

None of your business.

ROOKIE

Yeah, okay. Just saying, if you can't fly a plane, it doesn't matter how much you tutor me and i tutor you, they're not gonna let you graduate. None of my business though.

Beat. Long silence.

LAURA

... I came here to get revenge.

ROOKIE

You what?

LAURA

I– Look out!

Rookie pulls the plane away from a bird or some kind of obstacle at the last second.

ROOKIE

See, I'm the best there is. Okay, time for YOU to get tutored- you turn the plane with the *thingy*–

LAURA

You don't even know the name for the *steering wheel*?

ROOKIE

And you push this button, i don't really know what this one does but i always just go ahead and push it, nothing bad has happened yet...

LAURA

Seriously, how do they let you come to school every day?

ROOKIE

I know you think i'm some kind of novice, but i grew up flying crop dusters since i was four. I don't know what I'm doing at all, but the plane always just seems to guide me, and work out in the end. Like magic.

LAURA

Magic? Really?

ROOKIE

All of this is kinda magical. I really thought i was gonna get kicked out of school but now we're gonna fix everything what else would you call that?

LAURA

Thats because of *my* research that found the flight path! If you learn the formulas, and you research, you have control over what happens. But You seem to just go along with whatever and not worry about it! If a plane is magic that implies that it's some inexplicable force, and not a piece of machinery that literally comes with an instruction manual, that i have memorized and you have somehow never touched!

ROOKIE

Fine, if you know so much, then you fly it.

ROOKIE lets go of the wheel and they start to dive toward the ground

LAURA

Are you insane>?!>!?

ROOKIE

Come on, go for it, ms. instructions manual!

LAURA grabs the wheel but freezes in terror, and they keep plummeting. Lots of beeping sounds and GPS instructions overwhelming her.

ROOKIE

You gotta let the plane guide you! Dont think, just feel it– theres no past–

CUT TO

FLASHBACK TO HER PARENTS DYING BY BEING MURDERED BY A GOOSE

CUT TO

PRESENT

ROOKIE

–Theres no future to worry about–

CUT TO

FLASH FORWARD TO LAURA graduating flight school.

CUT TO

PRESENT

ROOKIE



Forget everything you ever learned, and everything you're worried about... and just *fly*.

BEAT. complete silence. LAURA closes her eyes and she steers it.

ROOKIE

See? Essentials of flight.

LAURA smiles.

ROOKIE

Hey, it's the sleigh, pull over.

ROOKIE pulls up to the sleigh and they pull the admiral professor out of it before it crashes into the side of a cliff.

ADMIRAL PROFESSOR

That was close! You two saved me. I was at the parade and suddenly I was flying... whoever's responsible for this will be expelled for sure... and they'll deserve it, because I could have died...

ROOKIE finally looks guilty.

ROOKIE

...Actually, I have to do the right thing and take responsibility.. the whole thing was kind of my fault—

LAURA

—we totally did save you, sir, you're welcome! It was a Christmas miracle. Right rookie?

ROOKIE

But...

LAURA smiles at ROOKIE.

ROOKIE

...Right.

ADMIRAL PROFESSOR

Well, keep up this kind of heroics and you two might just prove me wrong and be the best damn team of pilots this academy has ever seen. I always knew you might have had it in you, potentially.

They land back at the school.

CUT TO  
SCHOOL

TEACHER

Ok class, heres your quizzes on chapter one back!

ROOKIE got an F. LAURA got an A+.

ROOKIE immediately starts folding hers up into a plane and throws it but it doesnt go far.

ROOKIE

I don't get why I cant get tehse dang things to go farther...

LAURA PLANE hesitates, but hte treacher isnt looking.

LAURA PLANE

(sigh) I cant believe im about to engage with this, but... You're not doing it right. You have to fold it to get maximum lift.

ROOKIE JONES

What?

LAURA PLANE

Look.

Laura folds it up precisely and scientifically and mathematically and all. She throws the plane, and it flies perfect.

ROOKIE JONES

Woah. Christmas magic.

LAURA

It's just physics.

Beat.

ROOKIE JONES

I remember growing up on the farm I always used to see the crop dusters fly, and I thought it was magic, that they were able to get up in the air like that. Its part of why I wanted to fly in the first place.

LAURA

Then you grew up and realized it was nothing special, right?

ROOKIE JONES

No. still magic. now I just know how to make the magic happen.

Rookie makes a perfect airplane like Lauras and it flies.

ROOKIE

...And I guess that starts with actual studying. So what do you say? Will you tutor me, even though I'm a big screwup and all?

LAURA

Yeah. But only if youll tutor me too. Im realizing theres more to plane flying than whats in here.

She indicates her stack of textbooks.

LAURA

But it's still physics. Not magic.

ROOKIE

Maybe its a little bit of both.

The two watch the planes fly past the classroom window.

LAURA

Rookie?

ROOKIE

Yeah?

LAURA

...Merry Chrismtas.

While they arent looking, outside the window, Satna flies across the moon.

THE END OF EPISODE 1