
Subject: Re: Winds of Change
Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Sat, 28 Jul 2012 03:38:22 GMT
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From: Tikatu Sent: 6/30/2007 2:25 PM

Diego had just looked up and out the window when he saw it. The engine nearest the plane exploded, spewing bits of metal. He screamed out, "The engine!", his shout added to other screams as the plane bucked and shuddered. He glanced again, and added, "It's on fire!" as he backed instinctively away from the long trail of flame.

In the cockpit, Captain Xu and her crew felt it too. Warning lights blinked fiercely red and sirens whooped all around them.

"Number Two engine is on fire!" Cheng shouted above the clamor.

"Shut it down!" Cai cried, fitting action to words. The engine stopped running, and the warning lights went out abruptly. The sirens ceased, but an urgent beeping showed that all four attendant stations were calling, trying to discover what had happened.

Back in the passenger section, Diego's eyes widened and he shouted again, "The engine! The fire's out!" All around him people echoed his cry; some sighed with relief, while others called loudly, demanding to know what happened. The plane began to dip toward the left, banking through some clouds.

"Restart engine Two!" Cai said sharply. Cheng nodded curtly and did so. The red engine indicator blinked furiously, flickered green, blinked red again, then finally flashed green and stayed that way.

Cai checked her instruments. "Good. Two is back on line." She breathed a relieved sigh, then speared her co-pilot with a look, and swore. "What happened?"

Cheng shook his head. "I don't know. Engine Two is functioning on half power," he squinted at one of the controls, "and we are losing fuel from the port tanks."

Liang chose that moment to speak. "Santiago reports we are off course and asks the reason."

"Tell them that we had a mechanical problem with engine Two. It has been restarted, and we are correcting course. Then answer the cabin crew's calls." She glanced at Cheng. "Go back and see to our cargo personally. Report to me when you get there."

"Yes, Captain." Cheng unbuckled his restraints, and slipped between the seats. He paused at the door from the cockpit. "Should I visually check for damage to the wing?"

"Yes," Cai said, nodding. "It would be helpful to know how bad it is. I will set the computer to record and estimate fuel loss. We need to know if we can make it to Santiago or can turn back and land elsewhere." Her lips thinned. "Then I will make an announcement to the passengers."

"Yes, Captain." Cheng nodded once and left the cockpit.

"With your permission, Captain, I will set up the computer," Liang said firmly. "Your announcement cannot wait."

Cai sat still for a moment, then sighed. "You are right, Liang. I will make the announcement now. I hope they will understand my; my Spanish is not good."

"At least your English is passable," Liang replied with a grin as his fingers flew over the computer's keys.

"For that I am thankful." Cai reached for the microphone, and in Mandarin, began, "This is your captain speaking. We are experiencing difficulties with one of our engines..."

to be continued...
