

JESSICA

This is a radio show about a woman on an airplane.

KATE

And there's another woman.

JESSICA

Two women on an airplane and it's flying through the middle of the darkest possible night. It's a radio play about two women-

KATE

On an airplane.

JESSICA

Flying out over the pitch blackness but they know what's underneath them because one woman says to the other woman-

KATE

Who is the flight attendant.

JESSICA

*Where are we?*

KATE

*That's a good question - an even better one, is, 'what the fuck am I doing here?'*

JESSICA

The first woman looks confused. The second woman realizes she's still at work.

KATE

*Sorry. Over a jungle. There's a jungle down there. With screaming monkeys and snakes and all kinds of terrible things. But don't worry. We're in an airplane. Would you like a bag of nuts?*

JESSICA

There is a sound effect guy somewhere using a foley for sound effects. He creates a very realistic sound of a bag of nuts being opened fitfully, the woman's hands are shaking, she is very very tired. *I'm so tired. I can't sleep.*

KATE

The flight attendant is making her way up towards business class. Everyone else on the plane is completely passed out. Even the babies. And the drunk annoying fat ones. The foley guys makes snoring sounds, gently, background noise. She pushes her cart a few rows, and then leaves it in the middle of the aisle. She turns. The seat next to the woman is empty. It's the only empty seat on the entire plane. The flight attendant sits down next to her.

JESSICA

There is a moment of shock, like, is this supposed to happen? Can this happen? What are the rules?

KATE

*Pills.*

JESSICA

*What?*

KATE

*I take pills for that. Sleeplessness I mean. I can give you some.*

JESSICA

*Pills - for - oh, no, I've never - I wouldn't really want to start-*

KATE

*They can make you sleep so deep. A sleep without bottom, without end. You take a pill - well if you're me you take three - I've already taken two on this flight alone! One to go before oblivion. Seven hours in the air is a long time to stay vigilant, you know? The two pills puts me under a blanket but my eyes, see them, my eyes are still open.*

JESSICA

The first woman, whose name is Betty-

KATE

*See them, Betty?*

JESSICA

Betty looks into the eyes of the flight attendant.  
*Yes. How did you know my name was Betty?*

KATE

*Oh you know the roster I have a roster of everyone on this flight.*

JESSICA

*Oh is there anyone famous on board?*

KATE

*Just you.*

JESSICA

Betty is confused because she's not famous, she's an actress, yes, or trying to be, she tells people that she is an actress and she did have that one commercial that one time that aired in secondary markets but how could this woman, this flight attendant-

KATE

Whose name is Dora.

JESSICA

How could Dora know? Did Dora see the commercial?

KATE

*Do you want three pills, Betty?*

JESSICA

*I'm sorry, did you - did you live in Albany like three years ago? There was a public access, a station, did you happen to see a spot, a a commercial I guess, advert-*

KATE

*I don't know what the hell you're talking about.  
What the hell are you talking about?*

JESSICA

It's at this juncture that the turbulence starts.

KATE

The sound effect guy does some really interesting things with a sheet of plastic, he goes for an aural representation of queasy movement, the way your stomach feels just as a roller coaster drops, he strives for what that sounds like - it's what makes him such a vital part of the radio broadcast team.

JESSICA

*What was that?*

KATE

*Oh just turbulence honey a little turbulence nothing to be worried about  
You want three pills?*

JESSICA

*It's like the plane is shaking itself apart.*

KATE

*Oh no*

*No actually you might be-*

*Hmm.*

The flight attendant senses that something is not going as planned, something ineffable, her vigilance lowered even to the two-pills-in amount still tingling with some sensation of danger, the equilibrium a little off.

JESSICA

The ominous music that the foley guy is playing on his digital Casio keyboard isn't helping matters much. It's his own composition. Vaguely reminiscent of Trent Reznor.

KATE

*No it's really nothing at all hon-*

JESSICA

The captain gets on the intercom and no one but the two women hear him because somehow they're all still asleep even though all the overhead compartments are rattling like in a high wind and two of them have popped open and the bags have fallen into the aisle, the aisle is just full of shit like suit cases and the beverage cart moving on its own, really fast down towards the opposite end of the plane because the plane is no longer upright-

KATE

*These things happen all the time and this is why I take my pills, my little blue pills-*

JESSICA

*Yes give me three pills give me three pills now please and a sparkling soda no no no wait a tomato juice do you have tomato juice?*

KATE

*We have bloody mix-*

JESSICA

*Yeah bloody mix is fine just give me the pills-*

KATE

And so Dora the flight attendant makes her way up the precarious aisle as the plane falls out of the fucking sky at a 90-degree angle, shit flying every which way, she's going for the tomato juice and it just so happens that one can has disentangled itself from the beverage cart and comes hurling through the air, this flying projectile, I mean they're all flying projectiles at this point, it's just a matter of what's containing what, and Dora reaches her hand out and-

JESSICA

'SHOOP.' The sound effect guy really nails it. The catching effect of a hand around a full aluminum cylinder full of Bloody Mary mix.

KATE

*Here you go.*

JESSICA

Betty take the can. Th oxygen mask falls in front her face but it's like she doesn't even notice. Everyone else is still asleep. Betty opens the can.

KATE

'SCHK.'

JESSICA

*Give me the pills.*

KATE

Dora slides her hand, long fingers, red chipped nail polish, into her flight attendant uniform's tightly tailored front pocket and digs around.

*There's only two - there's only two in here I must have miscounted, I must have actually already taken three which would mean - what would that mean?*

KATE (cont'd)

There's a moment a really profound one in Dora's mind about what if she was asleep and sleep walking and the plane really wasn't crashing and this was all happening in a dream state and this woman Betty she recognizes not from a minor commercial but it's actually a wedding three weeks back and Betty was on the catering staff and Dora was there because her sister was getting married for a third time to another asshole but the food at these weddings was reliably good and being a flight attendant Dora could pretty much fly for free wherever she needed to be, this particular case in Virginia, and at the point that she was being served the totally solid food by a smiling but inattentive Betty the caterer, she noticed that her mother was in attendance and immediately started planning her emergency escape route - but neither Betty nor Dora will have time to recognize this previous interaction, at least not in this radio play - and then Dora's fingers locate the third pill, hidden behind some tissue.

*Oh here it is.*

JESSICA

Betty takes the pills.

The beginning of a life long addiction.

The life long part being approximately forty seconds or less unless they somehow survive this crash, the plane really is crashing.

KATE

The sound effects guy pours out a viscous liquid really close to the mic so that we can hear how it sounds when Betty drinks the bloody mary mix to get those pills down into her stomach where they can effectively knock her out.

JESSICA

'GUGUGUGUGUGUGUG'

KATE

*What did you say?*

JESSICA

Betty didn't say anything but now she wants to, she remembers someone's advice. *I just remembered - it was like this online trip advisory board, and it was about this flight, there was like this big alert, a warning, it said, 'Whatever you do, don't fall asleep' as though falling asleep on this flight was bad, was a bad thing, I don't know why, I assumed maybe for jet lag purposes but now I'm wondering if it was more sinister and oh my I took the pills I should never have taken those pills OH MY GOD I'M FALLING ASLEEP-*

KATE

The sound effects guy pulls a black velvet bag out from his pocket and puts it over the mic. The sound of darkness enveloping someone whole.

JESSICA

Then silence.

Really silent.

The radio crackles.

Static.

And that's it.

That's the end of the radio play.