

UNFORSEEN
VOYAGE

Mari Ann Caudill

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Unforseen Voyage

On a winter eve, the pilot navigates the airship around the mountain peaks. The ship hits turbulence, and the pilot curses under his breath. The clingy clouds cause hazardous conditions, even with the ship's spotlights. The pilot attempts to pull the vessel out of the air current, but he cannot. The vessel rocks back and forth with the intensity of the winds. His hands grip the wheel as sweat streams down his face.

Aria Blackstone, a black-market business owner, confiscated the ship and hired the two pilots to help transport stolen goods to a buyer. The vessel tilts upwards, causing Aria to tumble back, sliding across the floor. Different scenarios race through her mind as she regains her balance. She tosses her goggles and runs toward the pilot and co-pilot. Her face is flush, and her heart races as she reaches the men.

“I told you, idiots, to watch the turbulence at the peaks.” She pushes the co-pilot out of his seat and grabs the wheel. “I don’t wish to die tonight, do you?”

“What kind of question is that?” harps the co-pilot.

“Aria, this trip is not worth the price you paid,” the pilot warns. “The controls are out of whack, and nothing is responding.”

“It’s too late to back out of the contract. Just pull the wheel as I do. Hopefully, we can get out of this mess alive.”

The pilot does as she orders, but it’s too late. The ship’s bottom scrapes the rocky surface of a mountain, and an explosion rocks the ship as a fire breaks out in the engine room.

“Well, now we have another problem,” she says, hitting the controls with her fist. The ship jerks as it comes out of the current. “Help me bring this ship down for landing.”

The dashboard and spotlights flicker.

“That is not going to happen. The fire is causing damage. We need another plan,” the pilot pleads. “My wife is pregnant.”

“You should have thought about that before joining this dangerous job,” Aria snaps.

“Aria, can you use those mechanical wings to fly us out of here?” the co-pilot asks.

“They have never been tested to transport more than

one person.”

The airship jerks again, and the lights go out. A reddish glow is visible outside the window as the fire intensifies. The ship glides slowly downwards towards the darkness.

“Grab your parachute vest and meet me at the emergency exit.”

Aria hurries to the top level with a flashlight in her hand as the men grab their vests. She equips herself with the parachute and mechanical wings. The pilot and co-pilot arrive as she opens the emergency door.

“Both of you need to grab onto the handlebar as we step out. If you lose your grip, you better deploy your parachute.”

Once out of the airship, Aria expands the mechanical wings and activates the headlamps providing minimal visibility. The airship crashes into the mountains and explodes, creating a smoky scene. Aria glides down to the unknown.

THE END

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