

Tale of Dog Meat Part 1

By : Matthew Bissonette

The story of a Canadian World War 2 pilot who does insane stunts to impress the woman he loves.



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Tale of Dogmeat

by Matthew Bissonnette

Green Falls, Saskatoon, 1925

Green Falls was a small farming community not far from the city of Moose Jaw, a quiet place where nothing much happened. The village was found in an area of vast flat lands where no hill or mountain obscured the horizon. Shops, offices and the homes of the people were found along main street which had been recently paved. It was the booming twenties and it seemed everyone was making money; now some cars had begun to appear driving slowly down the streets. Around the town were the farmsteads, fields of barley and wheat. It was autumn so it was now the harvest, and the fields were being worked. It was early in the morning when finally something happened which Green Falls would remember for some time.

Outside town was the farm of the Tremblay family. Fred Tremblay was not a farmer, but flew a old bi plane and worked around the community as a crop duster. Behind the old, stone manor was a small airstrip. The plane was now in the barn near the house. Fred, who had flown as a pilot in the Royal Air Force in World War 1, was asleep in his bedroom beside his wife Muriel. But the room of their fifteen year old son Rex empty.

Outside the house Rex was busy opening the barn doors as Felicia Seguin, watched.

Rex, a tall yet slim young man with uncombed blonde hair and wearing his dad's old world war one flight suit, said, "Felicia, if I do something amazing, will you finally go on a date with me."

Felicia, who was a year younger than Rex, was french Canadian and spoke with an accent, was an attractive young woman with brunette hair down to her shoulders. She had known Rex since they were kids since she lived next door, for years she had politely refused Rex's advances. But he never gave up.

She asked, "so what will you do now, hope this is more successful than when you tried to parachute out of a tree."

Rex looked at her and said, "oh, you won't forget this."

Fred, who was almost forty and had thick white hair, awoke when he heard the engine of his plane start. He sat up and as Muriel awoke and groggily asked, "whose starting your plane?"

Fred then got worried. "what the hell is our son doing now!"

He jumped out of bed and put on his night coat and raced through the house. He emerged from the front door in time to see his bi plane start to roll out of the barn and towards the landing strip. The old wooden plane began to pick up speed. Fred began to run towards it.

He yelled, "Rex, get out of the plane!"

Then it flew up into the air and soon was above him circling the house. Fred had no idea what he was up to until he saw that the large doors on both sides of the barn were completely open.

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Fred pressed the palm of his hand to his face and muttered, "My son's a lunatic."

Then the plane came swooping down out of the sky and flew right towards the barn with a lot of velocity, Fred was sure he was about to watch Rex kill himself. But the plane through the doors with ease and flew out the other side and up into the air again.

Neither Felicia nor Fred could hear Rex laughing above them.

The bi plane finally landed and came to a stop near the barn. Rex jumped out and walked triumphantly towards Felicia.

He glibly said, "Now that you are astonished, will you finally go out with me?"

Felicia didn't seem impressed and began to walk away towards her parents home.

Rex loudly said, "That's not easy. I almost killed myself there."

She coyly asked as she left, "So how are you going to top yourself next time?"

Then Fred, angered, ran up and grabbed Rex by the collar of the flight suit and pulled him to eye level.

Fred threatened, "Touch my plane again, and so help me, you'll be bruised from head to toe. Now get inside."

Fred and Rex were inside the barn as night began to fall and a weak breeze blew across the land. Fred was standing on a ladder as he worked on the engine of his plane, Rex was leaning against the wall in the corner.

His father asked, "So you almost wrecked my plane and broke your neck to impress a girl?"

Rex shrugged. "Thought maybe she would finally go on a date with me."

"Rex, there are easier and safer ways to impress the Seguin girl. Ever think of something more conventional like getting her flowers?"

"Never occurred to me."

Fred explained as he loosed a bolt on the engine block, "I asked your mother a million times to marry me but she always said no."

Rex rolled his eyes. "I've heard it a million times. Then you shot down seven German's planes in the great war and then she agreed."

Fred told him, "Something like that. I remember those years like it was yesterday, I was so good I got cocky until I crossed paths with the Red Baron. I remember the fear I felt when I first saw that bright red tri-plane appear. I knew I had met the better pilot that day."

"Story gets better every time I hear it Dad."

Fred seemed solemn. "Every fighter pilot fears the day he meets the superior foe. You can be the best, but there will always be someone better."

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Rex seemed unimpressed. "Doesn't matter to me, there will never be another war."

They continued to talk, Rex was not aware in the far distance the clouds of war loomed and he would be part of it.

Outside Edmonton, 1933

Rex found himself on a train that night as it rumbled through the empty expanse of the prairies. He had hopped a freight train from Saskatoon and was headed West to look for work. The past years had been turbulent; aside from the fact the great depression had ruined the economy of Green Falls, but there was also the fact that both his parents had died from influenza. Rex had intended to run his father's crop dusting business but with all the local farmers bankrupt there was no business. So he left for Vancouver when he was in his early twenties.

He was sitting in an empty boxcar wearing a cheap suit and fedora. The darkened boxcar was illuminated by a kerosene lamp the other passenger brought. Across from Rex was a man around his own age, a scruffy looking guy who was dressed in a brown trench coat. For the past hour they had exchanged awkward glances in silence. Finally it was interrupted when the guy spoke.

"Headed to Vancouver?"

Rex nodded. "Yeah, looking for work. I'm Rex by the way."

The man grinned. "I'm Tim. I've come all the way from Ontario. The economy there is terrible."

Rex sighed and looked away. "Ain't any different in Saskatoon. I always thought I would fly for a living. Now, I don't know what to do."

Tim asked, "are you a pilot?"

Rex looked at him and confidently smiled. "You may not believe this, but I'm the greatest pilot you'll ever meet."

Tim seemed doubtful. "I'm sure every pilot says that."

"Really," Rex replied, "I could pull off maneuvers that even my father couldn't, and he was a World War 1 air ace. Of course though, he said I was reckless. He even once used the word suicidal."

Tim laughed. "Maybe your name should be Dog Meat."

Rex said, "I don't understand."

Tim explained, "no way will you live to be an old man. You'll end up as dog meat."

Rex seemed to think about something. "Do you want to know something crazy. I know when I'm flying a plane that I can't die. Over a dozen times I almost crashed my father's plane, but every time I would avoid crashing at the last moment. I admit and almost everything in life I had bad luck, but with flying, it is like I have luck on my side."

Tim asked, "got anyone back home?"

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Rex seemed momentarily sad. He then said, "My parents are gone. There was this girl, but she does not feel the same way. Last year I did five barrel rolls in my father's plane over the town I'm from to impress her. But no matter what I do, it is never enough for her."

"Maybe you should give up. There are a lot of women out there."

Rex looked out the open door to the boxcar and looked at stars in the night sky. He said, "I know we were meant to be together. Someday I'll do something to impress her. I just don't know what."

There was silence for a few moments when Tim then speaks.

"Did you hear that the Nazi party in Germany has just taken leadership of their parliament?"

Rex shrugged. "That kind of thing, you know politics, I find it boring."

Tim went on. "That runt Adolf Hitler, I thought he was a joke after that failed attempt to take over the German Government. But now, now I think another war is coming."

Rex said, "Most older people remember the last war, I doubt they would let another one erupt again."

Tim frowned. "Mark my words. These Nazis have to be stopped because they'll never relent. Another war is coming, mark my words. If you are a great pilot, then there might be some need for you."

Rex seemed to contemplate then said, "Well if that happens I'll enlist. Maybe if I shoot down twenty enemy planes, maybe then Felicia will go on a date with me."

Tim seemed to smirk. "You should do that."

Then they were silent again as the train headed West.

Green Falls, Saskatoon 1939

It was dusk as Rex walked down the long dirt driveway towards Felicia's family home beside his old place, still wearing his old suit. A lot had happened in the past years and the almost thirty Rex had been wandering across Canada by rail aimlessly. Even when he did find employment, it never lasted long. But as he approached her house and knew finally he had found his purpose.

He walked up onto the porch and knocked on the front door. He waited several moments until the door opened and Felicia looked out, she had on a brown dress. She seemed to stare at him for a few seconds. She seemed older yet her eyes still seemed youthful and vibrant.

She asked, "Do I know you?"

Rex took off his hat. "It's Rex."

She momentarily smiled then seemed to become serious. "Rex, what are you doing here?"

"I've signed up to the Royal Air Force, the RAF."

She said, "A lot of guys in town have enlisted in the army."

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Rex explained, "there is talk that Germany may attack England this year and their desperate for pilots with experience. I flew my father's plane for more than ten years."

Suddenly Felicia frowned. "This is another stunt to impress me isn't Rex, that is why you came here. You think if you join the war effort I'll finally go out with you. I really don't want to see you die just to win me."

Rex looked into her eyes. "I'm doing this because the past ten years I've have not found a damn thing I'm good at. I'm a great pilot, and there is a need for great pilots right now."

Felicia seemed concerned. "My father lost two brothers and three cousins in the first great war. Rex, your flying is life threatening enough with other planes shooting at you."

Rex said, "I came here because I wanted to know if I could write to you while I'm over there. I really don't have anybody, I thought since we known each other so long that maybe you wouldn't mind."

Felicia then smiled. "I'll read your letters Rex, as a friend."

Rex then turned to leave, but she suddenly stepped out from the doorway and placed a hand on his shoulder. He turned around to face her and they stared mutely at each other for a brief moment.

"What is it," Rex asked.

Felicia smiled again. "Rex, if you shoot down thirty enemy planes I'll have dinner with you when you get back."

Rex seemed perplexed. "Thirty planes. That is a lot."

"I know you can do it," she told him.

Rex then began to walk away and said, "you'll see. Thirty planes."

She watched him walk off into the night. She feared that she would never see him again.

Ottawa, Ontario 1940

Not far from the capital city of Ottawa was a military airfield base. Canadian pilots trained here by the Royal Air Force. There was a long runway as well as a tower and several large hangers. An older Spitfire, an plane with greenish camouflage paint, swooped down out of the sky towards the landing strip. Two other pilots, wearing their flight suits, where gathered at the end of the runway.

Willy Peterson, a tall man with auburn hair who was base commander, quipped to the other pilot, "most accident prone pilot I've ever met, but damn he can fly a plane."

The other pilot, a short man named Phil Denton, said, "he is coming in to fast."

The spitfire then descended towards the land strip as its landing gear extended and the plane landed and came to a sudden halt. Rex then opened the canopy of the plane and jumped out. Peterson then walked towards him as Phil followed.

Rex took of his flight cap and said, "my best landing yet."

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Phil smirked. "Dog Meat, I'm surprised you've survived flight training."

Rex shrugged. "I'm the best pilot here and you know it."

Phil replied, "The German's won't have to shoot you down, they just have to wait for you to crash from your flying."

Peterson looked Rex over. He said, "Well pilot, are you ready for actual combat?"

Rex told him, "I'm not getting any readier."

Peterson then grinned. "You got your wings. Though I'm amazed you're still alive after some of your maneuvers, I can't deny you're the best pilot I have. You are being assigned to Royal Air Force Command in Britain. Military Intel indicates that Hitler may attack England within a month or so. You'll report to a small airfield outside London. Hope you are ready to fight the Luftwaffe."

Rex seemed thoughtful for a moment. He then said, "Those German's won't know what hit them."

Phil then laughed. "Can't wait to see the Luftwaffe cross paths with Dog Meat."

Rex had been given the name Dog Meat by his fellow pilots at the base, his reckless flying antics had gotten him this nickname and it had seemed to stick.

Phil said, "Good luck anyways."

In a small barracks near the airfield was where the pilots slept Rex was writing. It was a large room of bunk beds where many pilots slumbered. Rex was laying on his side in a bottom bunk and was writing a letter to Felicia, light provided from the full moon beyond a window. He had been in training for several months and had sent her a letter every week. She had not written him back but still he wrote to her. His letters were long pages of how he felt about her, and how he knew they were meant to be together. He waited anxiously for her to write him but the letter

never came.

He finished writing then put the letter under his pillow then laid on his back. Rex closed his eyes, knowing that in the coming weeks he would be in a war.

London, England 1940

It was almost autumn when Rex arrived at Churchill Airbase outside of London one morning. It was several runways as well as large hangers near a tower. There were also barracks as well as some other buildings. The airfield was bustling with activity. The green military transport truck rolled past the gate and came to a stop. Rex and a lot of other pilots, all wearing their uniforms, jumped out from the back holding their duffel bags.

A man was standing before them. He had a prominent jaw, was large in stature and a very serious expression on his face. He was in his mid thirties, had a mustache and wearing a uniform with a lot of medals.

He, with a British accent, said, "I am squadron leader James Wilson. I will begin with the situation could not be anymore serious. France as well as much of Europe is now controlled by the Nazis. England is now alone against this enemy. We know they are preparing an air assault which it will be our job to thwart. I hope

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you gentlemen wanted action because soon you'll get some. You'll each be assigned to a squadron and assigned a plane. I expect nothing but the best. Now go to your quarters and unpack.â

The crowd of new pilots began to disperse. Rex waited behind for awhile when a pilot approached. He had sandy brown hair, a thin figure and was wearing a flight suit. He seemed younger than Rex.

The pilot, with a British accent, asked, â let me guess, your a canuck.â

Rex asked, â how did you know?â

The guy replied, â don't know mate, guess you all look the same. I'm pilot Richard Nelson.â

â I'm Rex Tremblay anyways.â

Richard then slightly laughed. â Tremblay, funny, you actually were assigned to my squad.â

Rex asked, â who is our squad leader?â

Richard told him, â that stiff you just listened to. Jame Wilson.â

Rex said, â anything I should know since I'm new here?â

Richard explained, â follow Wilson's orders to the letter. The bloke has no sense of humor. Are you ready to shoot down some krouts?â

Rex nodded. â You'll see. I'm a great pilot.â

Richard asked, â would you like to see your plane?â

Rex then seemed interested then said, â I would love to.â

Richard led Rex towards a hanger a distance away. As they walked, Richard said, â I'm a good pilot to. But I have not seen any action yet. I'll tell you this though, we got a fight coming our way.â

Then they arrived at a hanger and they walked into the large metallic building. Inside where several Spitfire fighter planes. There were three in the hanger. The two closer ones were of newer design and were painted a camouflage green. But the Spitfire in the back, with a silver paint scheme, seemed older. The plane was dented and there were a few bullet holes in it.

Richard led him to the plane in the back. Rex looked at it as he ran his hand against the metallic hull.

Richard said, â she is older and has some problems, but better planes are assigned to experienced pilots.â

Rex seemed entranced. He whispered, â she is perfect.â

â OK,â Richard said, â the boys will paint it tomorrow.â

Rex shook his head. â If it is OK, I think I will keep it silver.â

Richard laughed. â Sure. I'm sure no one will care. Anyways, I have some duties to attend to so I'll be off. Can't wait to fly with you.â He then ran off.

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Rex put his duffel bag down and climbed up onto the wing of the plane. He then opened the canopy of the cockpit and got inside. He looked at his controls and put his hand on the flight stick. He then smiled.

Rex said, "OK girl, guess we'll be flying together."

Later afternoon.

It was several days later when Richard found Rex alone in the hanger, painting a tasteful image of a brunette woman's face on the nose of his silver spitfire while standing on a ladder. Rex did not notice as Richard walked slowly up behind him.

"Nice painting," Richard remarked.

Startled, Rex dropped his paint brush and turned around to see Richard. Rex said, "sorry, did not see you there."

Richard looked at the image of a woman on the plane. "Where did you get the idea for that?"

Rex shrugged then climbed down the ladder and used a rag to wipe the paint from his hands. He said, "just a woman I know."

Richard asked, "got a girl back home?"

"No," Rex replied, "there is this woman, but we are just friends. I've been writing her every week."

"Does she write back?"

"No, she hasn't. I'm sure he has a reason."

There conversation was interrupted when squadron leader Wilson, wearing his flight suit, walked into the hanger. He looked silently at Rex's plane for a moment then frowned. Wilson said loudly, "Tremblay, what do you think you are doing?"

Richard and Rex both looked at him. Rex said, "thought I would decorate my plane."

Wilson seemed incensed. "Maybe the yank's air force permits their pilots putting half dressed women on their planes. But in my squadron, I prefer if our planes were identical. You should paint your plane so it is similar to the rest of the squadron."

Rex looked at him and said, "I want my plane to stand out."

Richard told Wilson, "come on, does it really matter?"

Wilson grunted. "Pilot Tremblay, I reviewed your records from the air base where you trained. It indicates that you are some hot shot who's flying is dangerous. Your record says that while you are a competent pilot, you also are reckless."

Rex smirked. "There is a long line of people who have called my flying reckless."

Richard laughed. "Rex, can't wait to see you fly."

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Wilson did not seem amused. "While you fly in my squadron, you follow my rules. Your plane will be painted the same as ours. I will not tolerate some Canadian pilot who has a death wish."

Before Rex could respond the screeching sound of a siren blared from outside the hanger. The siren continued when a man's voice spoke from a loud speaker somewhere.

"All pilots, get ready to scramble. German bombers have been sighted over the English channel flying towards London."

Richard smiled. "Finally, some action."

Wilson turned to walk away but said as he left, "pilots, get into your flight suits and man your planes."

Richard looked at Rex. "Ready to kick some German ass?"

Rex nodded. "Let's go do this."

Richard and Rex raced off to prepare.

Half an hour later as the sun set in the West.

A squadron of four Spitfires flew south. Wilson, Richard and a Scottish man named Greg McDonald flew the first three Spitfires which all were painted camouflage

green. Rex flew the silver Spitfire in the back as he and his squadron flew over the country side towards the English channel.

Rex sat in his pilot's seat and felt nervous about his coming battle. Then Richard's voice spoke over the radio.

"So, Dog Meat, ready to fight?"

Rex replied, "let's send these German's back all the way to Berlin."

Greg's voice, with a thick Scottish accent, spoke on the radio next. "We'll make them regret ever crossing the channel."

Wilson's voice was next. "Ready yourself men."

Greg then asked, "why did you get the call sign Dog Meat anyways?"

Rex replied, "something to do with how dangerous my flying is."

Wilson's voice, sounding louder, yelled, "bogeys at twelve o'clock!"

Rex squinted his eyes. In the distance where many planes flying towards them. There were about seven large German bombers painted a bluish green. They were escorted by three fighters. The smaller fighters were sleek looking planes with a large Swastika painted on the nose.

Greg's voice spoke over the radio. "These krouts are about to meet their maker."

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Rex then pushed the throttle to full and his plane began to pass and fly away from his squadron. As he approached the enemy, Wilson's voice barked over the radio, "stay in bloody formation!"

Rex replied, "listen, I'll take care of the fighter's and keep them busy while you take out the bombers."

There was a moment of silence when Wilson's voice then said, "OK, do your best."

The enemy must have noticed Rex's squadron since the fighter's began to move away from the bombers and were flying towards Rex's plane. Once they were close, the German fighter's fired. The glowing tracer's from the cannons of the fighters blazed past Rex's cockpit. He then fired his cannons and then his bullets tore through the cockpits of two of the enemy fighters. Rex and the last remaining fighter flew right past each other as the two other fighter's spiraled down as flames engulfed the planes.

The rest of Rex's squadron were engaging the bombers as Rex and the remaining fighter battled. Richard's voice spoke through Rex's radio.

"Damn fine flying mate."

Rex's Spitfire down was being chased by the remaining fighter as it was on his tail. Rex banked quickly left as the enemy plane fired, both planes seemed to be turning tightly as gunfire blazed past Rex's plane. Rex then turned faster as he could feel the g forces begin to push the blood down through his body and he was almost on the verge of blacking out. But then the enemy fighter behind him, also turning quickly, stalled and went into a spin. The entire squadron watched as the last fighter spiraled down then crashed into a huge plume of flame. Rex then straightened out his plane then flew towards the remaining three bombers after his squadron had downed the rest.

Richard's voice spoke over the radio. "Damn, you took out three fighters."

Rex said, "I'm not finished yet."

Rex's plane flew towards the last three bombers from behind. Once he was only a few dozen meters from them, he opened fire. The bullets tore through the wing of one of the bombers and it exploded. He then fired at the other bomber as his bullets went right through the cockpit. The bomber then lost altitude then crashed into a grassy field. Rex then fired at the last bomber and it was shot into pieces. When the gunfire reduced the last bomber to wreckage which then fell out of the sky, Rex took his finger off the trigger of his flight stick.

Richard, sounding impressed, said over the radio, "you just shot down five planes on your first mission. That qualifies you as an ace mate."

Rex smiled. "I think I'm going to get used to this."

Wilson's voice spoke from the radio next. "OK men, let's go home."

It was after dusk when Rex's squadron landed at Churchill Airbase. The Luftwaffe

had begun a large bombing campaign. Royal Air Force had done their best to fight off the attack but reports were coming in that indicated the German's had caused a lot of destruction. The Battle of Britain had begun.

Richard, Greg and Wilson had gotten out from their planes and now waited for Rex to land. His silver Spitfire then descended from the sky and landed. It came to a rolling stop near the rest of his squadron. He opened up his cockpit's canopy then jumped down from his plane.

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Richard stepped towards him and extended his hand. "Just wanted to shake the hand of a real ace."

Rex was smiling. He said, "I thought that would have been harder."

Wilson then rushed towards Rex, grabbed him by the collar of his flight suit and forced his back against the silver Spitfire. Greg and Richard watched and did not intervene.

Wilson shouted, "you disobeyed orders and went off on your own! You could lose your wings for this!"

Richard said, "come on Wilson, he just shot down five planes."

Wilson snorted, "I don't care how many planes he shot down. He left formation with direct orders." He then looked coldly into Rex's eyes. "Tremblay, pull a stunt like that again and you'll be going home with a dishonorable discharge."

Wilson then let go of Rex and walked away. Richard and Greg then approached Rex and they laughed.

Richard said, "you may have a death wish Dog Meat, but damn if you aren't a great pilot."

Then the three members of the squadron walked off as they talked and laughed.

Several months later. Rex and his squadron had spent the past weeks fighting the Luftwaffe as bombers tried to level London into rubble. It was an late autumn night as Rex, Richard and Greg where in the mess hall, a large square building to one side of the air base.

Rex and the other pilots from his squadron sat at a table and ate as they talked. As they talked, they where unaware that a pilot from another squadron was approaching them.

Greg laughed as he spoke. "The bagpipes are the greatest musical instrument without question."

Richard replied, "come on, I heard Allied Head Command is using bagpipes as a form of torture."

Greg smirked and said, "What do you know you English twit."

The pilot standing their then spoke. "Tremblay, can I talk with you?"

They where all silent as Rex looked at the man.

Rex asked, "what do you want?"

"I'm Eli Forest," the guy said, "I was told you shot down over twelve enemy planes."

Richard laughed. "Dog Meat has given the Luftwaffe a real good beating."

Eli seemed to be upset and was shaking. Richard looked at the nervous man and asked, "is something wrong mate?"

Eli seemed saddened as he explained. "Last week, my squadron where scrambled to engage some bombers. I was the only one to come back, the rest of my squad is dead."

Greg asked, "what happened?"

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Eli replied, "we were flying just outside of London on night. The whole sky was lit up with anti-aircraft fire. Then we came upon a lone German fighter, but the oddest thing, the plane was painted entirely black. We thought it would be easy, four against one. But that black plane shot down my entire squadron. The German flying that plane was the greatest and deadliest pilot I've ever seen."

Greg nodded. "I've heard from some other pilots who came across that black plane. That German has shot down twenty men in the past month alone. Guys in the RAF are calling him the Black Baron."

Rex looked at Eli and asked, "what do you want to talk to me about?"

Eli frowned and said, "they say you are the best pilot at this base. If you ever see that Black Plane, avenge my squadron and send that bastard to hell."

Rex nodded. "If I see that plane, I'll make him pay."

Then Eli walked away as the three men continued to talk.

author's note: the rest of the story will be available with the next week.

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