

“Oh my God, how long have we been sleeping?” Sue Lee tried to shake Jane awake.

She discovered that somehow Jane had managed to turn on the autopilot. After pulling her away from the controls, she felt the effects of the drug but fought it as she had during her kidnapping. Sue Lee shoved her finger down her throat, gagging, until she vomited into a towel they used as a cleaning cloth.

There was another thermos of water, but she was unsure of its contents. Where the hell are we? All Sue Lee could see was an ocean below through the clouds. She checked their fuel gauge—it was low. The altimeter was the same altitude; airspeed was unchanged along with the heading indicator. She checked her watch, indicating they had been in the air for two hours, without correction at this speed. They would be out to sea, but how far? Sue Lee tried the calculation in her head, but her concentration was off because of the drug. She used the back of their check pad to jot down her figures and then took over the controls turning to 180 degrees, heading back the way they’d come until she could get a dead reckoning position on the radio, which was nothing but static at the moment. She began broadcasting a call for help to determine their position. Sue Lee wasn’t sure of Jane’s condition, changing it to a Mayday call for medical assistance, trying a marine frequency to raise a ship.

“If my calculations are correct, we’ll run out of fuel in forty-five minutes flying into this headwind. God, those clouds ahead look dark. We don’t have the choice to avoid them, Jane.” Sue Lee was talking loud. She hoped Jane would respond to her voice. Reaching over, she touched Jan’s neck, checking her pulse. It was slow, the same with her breathing. Her complexion looked gray. “Come around, old thing. I need your expertise.”

She continued her radio call for help, scanning the horizon for the sight of land. “Any port in a storm, my friend.” She kept talking to ward off her feeling of drowsiness. “I hope my reaction time is okay if we need to land Niu—wait! What’s that?” She banked to see a small island. At the same time, her radio came alive.

“NZ 440, this is radio station ZLC on Chatham Island. What is your emergency? Over.”

“I have a person needing medical assistance. We’re low on fuel. Currently, we’re circling a small island, flying a Catalina PBY. I see a cove below. I need to set us down soon. Over.”

“Pilot, please stand by. We’re calling rescue pilot. A merchant ship called in your location. It’s the South Island. The cove is sheltered from the wind with deep anchorage. Over.”

Sue Lee circled, dropping altitude to have a better look at how the seas were running, checking for currents. The mouth of the cove was to her right.

She reached over to tighten Jane’s seat belt. “Our fuel is low, old girl. Seas are running fast. It’s going to be bumpy. If you want to wake up to holler at me, do. Please do yell as loud as you can!”

The radio came alive on her approach. “Pilot, air rescue will be there in twenty minutes. They have medical personnel aboard. Over.”

“Roger, I’m on my approach. Over.”

“Easy now into the wind flaps down. Watch your altitude. Nose up.”

The windshield was blurred over as Sue Lee hit the first wave, skimming across to the next before settling down into the trough between the waves, rocking as they taxied into the mouth of the cove.

“The old gentleman on the radio was right, Jane. It’s a hell of a lot calmer in here. Look. Over there is a small beach. The tide must be out. Let’s see how I am at parking Niu. Hang on, girl.” After securing a line to a large rock, Sue Lee climbed back aboard to check on Jane again. She was apprehensive. Jane’s pulse was slower than before. Sue Lee reached for the radio to check on the ETA of the rescue plane, when she heard the sound of engines from a larger PBY entered the cove.

