

What Would You Do...

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. SKY - LATE AFTERNOON

A twin-engine Cessna airplane flies low over a rural vista. Acres and acres of cornfields and dilapidated farmhouses.

INT. CESSNA AIRPLANE

In the cockpit JOHN AVERY, 55, gripped by convulsive coughs that wrack his entire body.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)
The CDC fears a new and virulent,
potentially deadly strain of flu is
responsible for unprecedented
numbers presenting to Emergency
Departments across the nation...

INT. FARM HOUSE - LOUNGE ROOM - DAY

That same news report plays on an ancient tube-TV.

MAYNARD, 21, pale, pimply, blank eyed, sits on a crochet-covered lounge-chair, engrossed in the television report.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)
In other news, the pilot of a
Cessna twin-engine plane carrying
three passengers is feared missing
after a Mayday call and all
communications were lost...

The sound of an aircraft overhead, its engine whining. Maynard rushes to a closed window, cranes his head to get a better view of the sky.

MAYNARD (V.O.)
When I was little my brother and I
used to play a game. It was called:
'What would you do, if...?'

Maynard hurries down the

HALLWAY

And into the

BATHROOM

On the counter-top, hospital-grade bleach and an industrial size bottle of hand sanitizer. Maynard bends over the sink, vigorously scrubbing his hands until they bleed -

MAYNARD (V.O.)

My brother, Henry, was as brave as his name suggests, like the scholars and kings and generals that came before him.

- a ritual of soap, water, bleach, followed by sanitizer.

MAYNARD (V.O.)

When Henry died it was just me. Maynard: name for comedians, dullards and phobics.

Maynard slathers liberal amounts of sanitizer onto his hands, forearms and upper arms.

LOUNGE ROOM - MINUTES LATER

He looks a sight in a zippered Hazmat-like suit complete with gas-mask and surgical gloves.

MAYNARD (V.O.)

Henry once asked me: If I were to drug you into a deep sleep and drag you out into the fields, what would you do?

Maynard reaches for a paper-towel, turns the front door knob. He hesitates...

MAYNARD (V.O.)

I dunno, I said. I'd panic, wouldn't I!

EXT. SKY -

The Cessna banks sharply, to the left, to the right -

The Pilot desperately trying to pull out of a dive.

INT. CESSNA AIRPLANE - COCKPIT

Gripped by another coughing fit, the Pilot grapples with the yoke-control lever as blood seeps from his nose and ears. The plane's losing altitude fast, spinning out of control.

Screams can be heard from the back of the plane.

EXT. FIELDS -

Maynard runs through the fields, corn-stalks slapping at his legs and whipping at his face.

MAYNARD (V.O.)
What would you do, Henry asked...

INT. CESSNA AIRPLANE - COCKPIT

The Pilot now blinded by blood pooling in his eyes.

EXT. FIELDS -

Maynard continues to run.

MAYNARD (V.O.)
... If someone needed your help. If
you were the difference between
life and death.

Maynard hyperventilates, he clutches his chest.

INT. CESSNA AIRPLANE

The plane lurches wildly. Loud screams.

EXT. FIELDS

Maynard looks up at the plane falling from the sky.

The airplane's at five hundred feet in descent, an intermittent loud whine from the engine, then -

No sound.

Surreal and graceful in its final gliding descent.

SOUND UP, as the port-wing snags a tree, shearing it completely off.

The plane pitches nose-first, slams into the ground. The final impact a loud grind of metal and shattering glass.

Maynard holds his breath, counts to twenty.

MAYNARD (V.O.)

Everyone gets scared, Henry said.
The idea is... I know, I know! You
have to *Feel the fear and do it*
anyway. I'd tried that, I said.
And, I'm sorry, but I'm scared!

Maynard continues running. What's left of the aircraft looms up ahead.

The sound of Maynard's breaths rising and falling inside the gas-mask.

AIRPLANE CRASH SITE

Maynard scrambles up onto the aircraft's remaining wing, he falls back, hefts himself up again, wipes the condensation from the window, peers into the plane.

INT. CESSNA AIRPLANE

The Pilot is slumped at the wheel, eyes dead as a fish. In the passenger seats, a MAN, 30, and WOMAN, 25, hemorrhaging from nose, ears and mouth.

In death their arms clasped in the forward position to shield A BABY, strapped in a capsule.

Maynard oblivious at first, then -

The sound of the baby's cry.

HENRY (V.O.)

What if it was just you... Maynard?

Maynard's gloved hands lift the baby from the capsule. He holds it away from his body, the baby's feet jiggling mid-air as it gurgles and coos.

HENRY (V.O.)

What if... you were the difference between someone living and someone dying. What if you were hardy, brave and strong just as your name suggests. Imagine that.

The baby starts to fuss.

Maynard attempts soothing noises but the mask and the sight of him muffles any attempt at reassurance.

He climbs out of the airplane, baby tucked under his arm.

The baby gurgles with delight once more.

Maynard looks up at the fading blue of the sky and squints into the setting sun. Triumphant smile beneath the mask.

INT. FARM HOUSE - LOUNGE ROOM - LATER

Maynard sits in an armchair still decked out in his Hazmat suit. The toddler sits opposite, wide-eyed, staring back.

Quite suddenly the baby's body is wracked by a fit of coughs.

The baby sneezes. A projectile of phlegm lands on one of Maynard's acrylic eye-goggles.

The baby sneezes again.

Maynard's eyes widen in terror, recoiling.

He jolts out of his chair reaches for a bottle of hand-sanitizer on the table.

FADE OUT.

FADE UP:

EXT. AIRPLANE CRASH SITE - LATER

Maynard scrambles up onto the wing, baby under his arm.

MAYNARD (V.O.)

Henry would often ask: What's the worst that could happen, Maynard?

INT. CESSNA AIRPLANE

Maynard places the baby back in the capsule. Averts his eyes from the staring lifeless eyes of its dead mother and father.

FINAL FADE OUT.