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Flight 232: A Story of Disaster and Survival

Laurence Gonzales

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Flight 232: A Story of Disaster and Survival Laurence Gonzales

“A richly detailed story that is equal parts heartbreaking, inspiring . . . and full of fascinating science . . . masterful.”?*San Francisco Chronicle*

As hundreds of rescue workers waited on the ground, United Airlines Flight 232 wallowed drunkenly over the bluffs northwest of Sioux City. The plane slammed onto the runway and burst into a vast fireball. The rescuers didn't move at first: nobody could possibly survive that crash. And then people began emerging from the summer corn that lined the runways. Miraculously, 184 of 296 passengers lived.

No one has ever attempted the complete reconstruction of a crash of this magnitude. Drawing on interviews with hundreds of survivors, crew, and airport and rescue personnel, Laurence Gonzales, a commercial pilot himself, captures, minute by minute, the harrowing journey of pilots flying a plane with no controls and flight attendants keeping their calm in the face of certain death. He plumbs the hearts and minds of passengers as they pray, bargain with God, plot their strategies for survival, and sacrifice themselves to save others.

Ultimately he takes us, step by step, through the gripping scientific detective work in super-secret labs to dive into the heart of a flaw smaller than a grain of rice that shows what brought the aircraft down.

An unforgettable drama of the triumph of heroism over tragedy and human ingenuity over technological breakdown, *Flight 232* is a masterpiece in the tradition of the greatest aviation stories ever told.

8 pages of illustrations

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