

# The Dark Man on Flight 1225

by Zalman Velvel

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I watched him enter the plane. Passenger's heads turned as he walked up the aisle. I could tell by the way he looked there was going to be trouble.

A dark black hat fit squarely on his head, and a dark beard grew under it. A long, black coat hung from his shoulders, atop black pants and black shoes. He smiled when he saw me staring. I turned away, avoiding his gaze, and cursed my luck when he sat across the aisle from me.

There was a thumping noise over the loudspeakers. "Good morning, and Merry Christmas!" The pilot's voice was warm and cheerful. "This is Captain Robert Furlong. On behalf of the crew, let me welcome you to Flight 1225 leaving Miami International Airport for New York. During your flight today, the crew and I will be doing everything we can to make your trip comfortable. It's now 9:20 AM, and we will be taking off shortly. By the way, the weather in New York is cloudy and 28 degrees."

I shuddered, anticipating how the 40 degree drop in temperature would feel. Then I felt a thud when something below, probably a cargo door, was slammed shut. A few seconds later, the plane jerked backward from the terminal. It was about a third full with perhaps 50 passengers; each of us had a row of seats to ourselves.

"Ladies and gentlemen, please make sure your seat belts are fastened at this time, your tray tables are up, and your seat backs are in the straight, upright position." The pretty blonde stewardess stood at the front of the plane holding a microphone. She gave us the standard airline instructions as we taxied out to the runway.

"This is Captain Furlong again. We expect clearance for take-off momentarily. We anticipate a calm and pleasant flight, arriving at Kennedy International at approximately 12:15 PM. We should all be sitting down to Christmas dinner with our families before the day is out."

I thought of going home and the empty apartment that awaited me. There would be no dinner with my loved ones - they were all gone. I had just buried Rebecca, my wife of 48 years, in a Miami cemetery, next to her aunt and uncle. We never had children. The Nazi experiments saw to that. Our children should have filled up our apartment with their children. I thought of the souls taken from us and my fist clenched.

Suddenly I felt a jolt in my nostrils. The memory that marched through my mind was so strong I could smell the ether again. I grabbed the armrest, fighting the vision of the white haired Nazi doctor holding a bloody scalpel.

*"Think nothing ... think nothing ... blank your mind..."* I told myself.

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