



Chapter One

Philsie Goes for an Airplane Ride

Being curious and adventurous, I wanted to go for an airplane ride. On a clear-blue Sunday morning in the early spring, my mother and father drove me to a small airport in the wide-open countryside.

We were greeted by Bankstall Smith, an off-duty airline captain, who tipped his cap and shook my hand. Before long, I was buckled into the cockpit of a delightful yellow Piper Cub.

The steady engine purred and the two-seat airplane began to roll across the flat meadow, slowly rising into the calm sky. I peered out of the window and realized that only the wing moving through the air kept us aloft.

“Philsie, take the controls,” the captain instructed me.

I wrapped my right hand around the control stick and placed my feet over the rudder pedals. I followed the commands of the captain. Together we climbed, glided, and turned the neat little Cub in the sky. I fell in love with flying. I had discovered a new kind of freedom. My joy was apparent from the smile on my face.

When the flight ended, I thanked the captain for the most wonderful time of my life. He responded with another tip of the cap.

At the start of the drive home, I thought about the great aviators who pioneered the sky. Overwhelmed by the day’s excitement, I soon dozed off in the backseat of the family car. Soundly asleep, I conjured up images of history’s heroic and inspiring flyers. I was having a dream of pilots.