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Go Big or Go Home ~ By

DeShawna Smyth

I have never been fond of heights. I love a good thrill, don't get me wrong, but ladders, roof tops, mountains, and bridges (just to name a few) all give me cold chills up my back. I have travels all across this country but never outside of its borders. That is until February 13, 2011.

My husband is from England. He moved here in 2001 and had not seen his mother since then. It is our dream to move over to England one day, but we have yet to be able to do that. We had some money saved up, and tickets already bought, to go on a visit to England. I have never been on a plane, not even in a helicopter, so this would be my first adventure in flying.

Rollercoasters, and any other thrill ride, have always been something my grandfather and I have loved. Flying was something far different to me though. I have seen far too many plane crashes on the news. I never particularly wanted to be in an in closed cabin 30,000 feet or more in the air.

We left for Oklahoma City on Saturday, February 13 for our flight to Atlanta. We arrived the recommended two hours early, checked in, checked our baggage, then went to our gate and waited. I was calm and collected until they finally called our flight for boarding. I all of a sudden developed a cold sweat and became pale. My husband assured me that all would be well and managed to calm me down, not only for my comfort, but for the sake of our two small children flying with us!

The flight to Atlanta was not one that I was looking forward to. I call it a jumper jet, but it was actually a Delta Airlines CRJ 700. This jet can accommodate anywhere from 70 to 96 passengers. This, to me seems so tiny. This first ride turned out to be smooth and comfortable though. There was no passenger in the seat next to me, so I was able to sit



comfortably and enjoy the ride. My true challenge would come later.

We had a two hour layover in Atlanta. This airport is a large international airport with departures at one end and arrivals at the next. We landed after 8p.m. and was set to take off a little after 10p.m. This gave ample time for my two boys to stretch their legs and for my husband and me to grab some much needed coffee! Thank God there was an actual Starbucks!

It was dark outside and the windows of the airport were heavily tinted, so we were not able to fully see the plane as it arrived at our terminal. We were able to see the outline but that really isn't a true indicator of the sheer size of this beautiful aircraft. I was however shocked when boarding our Boeing 767. It had more room than I had originally expected. We realized we were placed in the front row of Coach, and this was a mistake for a family with two small children. No one under the age of 16 is allowed to sit in these seats since they carry responsibilities with them in case of an emergency. The two rows behind us were empty, allowing us much more comfort as well! To our surprise, this flight was only half booked! What luck! I highly recommend a half booked plane and night flying, especially with small children! We stretched out and slept most of the way there!

We woke to the sun rising over the Atlantic Ocean and a wonderful breakfast served to us by our lovely flight attendants on Valentine's Day, February 14, 2011. This just so happens to be my eldest son's birthday. He turned 4 that day. The flight attendant overheard us telling him Happy Birthday and alerted the captain that there was a few first time fliers on board, and one of them was turning 4! Birthdays in the air are awesome! The captain asked that we be the last to disembark and met us at the door singing our son "Happy Birthday" then presented him with a set of wings from his own jacket, and a business card with a personal note and signature all for my 4 year old! It is by far the most memorial birthday, even though the landing had not been so smooth for me.

