

AMELIA

RON BASS  
September 14, 2007

CLOSE on a mud-streaked AIRFIELD in mist and driving RAIN. A Lockheed ELECTRA sits. Sleek, twin-engine, state-of-the-art, its metallic surface battered by the monsoon. Waiting. PULL BACK to see...

...our VIEW down onto the landing strip is from an open-sided, thatched roof BAR high above the airfield. And peering down through the mist and rain...

...a WOMAN in grimy flight clothes gazes at the plane. Slender. Feminine. At first glance, fragile. Then the gray eyes change like the sea, as a stray thought transforms her. Something fierce lives there.

SUPERIMPOSE: LAE, NEW GUINEA - 1937.

FRED (O.S.)

Sure I can't talk you into  
somethin' more adventurous?

She turns. FRED NOONAN is tall and lean, ruggedly handsome in a reckless way. His flight clothes as rumpled and dirt-streaked as her own. He carries his bottle of tequila, and a Coke which he sets down for her.

AMELIA

Adventurous? You've got the wrong  
girl, Mister. You should know that  
by now.

Her eyes study him. Assessing something as he pours himself four fingers.

FRED

Actually. I knew that the moment I  
met ol' George.

He sips his drink. She says nothing.

FRED (CONT'D)

I like how you don't talk about  
him.

AMELIA

That why I get so many chances to  
not do it?

FRED

Well. Natural curiosity.

His charming smile. She's thinking more about the tequila. She reaches to take his bottle and glass. Moves them to her side of the table.

FRED

I mean, why would a guy who needs  
to run the show. Pick the one girl  
he knew could kick his tail?

No response. Just her clear direct gaze.

FRED (CONT'D)

I'll bet he knew that. First time  
he met you.

She looks out to sea.

AMELIA

He thought I hated him. He never  
knew I was fascinated.

2

INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE, NEW YORK - DAY

2

Alone by the window, he gazes at the city. A powerfully  
built man in a perfectly-tailored suit. The face at once  
strong and elegant, capable of every emotion. Yet just now,  
there are none to be seen. Even as...

...a door OPENS. A pretty SECRETARY enters soundlessly, sits  
respectfully. Waits, her pen suspended above her steno pad.  
Does he know she's there?

SUPERIMPOSE: NEW YORK, LATER 1937.

GEORGE

(without turning)

The first time I met her she sat  
in that chair.

The secretary doesn't know whether to write that down. And  
still with his back to her...

GEORGE (CONT'D)

You may as well write it down,  
Mary. Write it all down. Even the  
parts that are confused or  
graceless or boring.

He turns with a soft smile to put her at ease.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

We'll see if I remember how to  
edit.

She smiles back. She likes him, as much as her level of  
being awed by him permits. She begins to write, as...

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 I'd kept her waiting two hours.  
 She hated me on sight, but she  
 thought I couldn't tell.

His gaze drifts to a bookcase crammed with volumes. And one object, oddly out of place. A stuffed CAT, with boots and a green frock coat. It wears a confident ironic smile.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 She was a person who cherished her  
 privacy and was devoting her life  
 to social work. And there I was...

His smile is kind. And honestly self-mocking.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 Self-obsessed. Wallowing in the  
 glory of my authors and celebrity  
 acquaintances. A vain, fast-  
 talking, manipulator. But then I  
 guess you know all that, don't you?

She looks up reproachfully. Nothing of the kind, and you know it.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 Oh, yes. And the kind of man who  
 fishes for compliments.

He's made her laugh.

DISSOLVE TO...

3 INT. RECEPTION AREA - DAY

3

She is younger, dressed conservatively. The calm at the center of a storm. Agents, authors, couriers, peddlers come and go. But she has her legs drawn up beneath her, pouring through a small stack of volumes. As if preparing for an exam.

SUPERIMPOSE: G.P. PUTNAM'S SONS PUBLISHING CO. 1928.

GEORGE (V.O.)  
 The waiting made her furious.  
 She undoubtedly felt I was  
 establishing my dominance and  
 importance.

She doesn't look furious at all. Thumbing through WE by COL. CHARLES LINDBERGH. Photos of Lindy beside the Spirit of St. Louis in Paris.

GEORGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Actually, I hadn't given her a  
 thought. Oblivious as usual.  
 Which, perhaps, was even worse.

Now, SKYWARD by ADM. RICHARD BYRD. Photos of the explorer  
 preparing for his flight over the North Pole. One of Byrd  
 with George himself, displaying considerable gravitas.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
 I figured he'd be pompous.

Her eye travels over the stack of books. Adventurers,  
 explorers, celebrities. On an end table, a framed photo of  
 George with the great Lindbergh.

A pretty SECRETARY comes to summon her. Amelia rises,  
 smooths the wrinkles from her brown suit. They head down  
 the corridor.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 I knew, of course, that he wasn't  
 going to choose me. I had no  
 discernible qualifications  
 whatsoever.

They reach the door, already ajar. It says GEORGE PALMER  
 PUTNAM on a small bronze plate. The secretary gingerly  
 pushes it open...

...revealing George on the phone in crisp shirtsleeves and  
 suspenders. He paces, prowls, trailing the cord behind him,  
 negotiating non-stop even as he flips through a pile of  
 messages. Off again, stalking the room. Dashing, electric,  
 masterful.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
 But to be rejected by this...  
 parasite. A man who had given up  
 any life of his own to flutter near  
 the famous.

He glances up, realizing for the first time that she is  
 there. Sit, please. But she doesn't.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 I didn't know whether to laugh or  
 throw something at the jerk.

He gestures again, more commandingly. Sit. She doesn't  
 move, she doesn't smile. She doesn't take her steady gaze  
 from him. He hangs up the phone.

They stare at each other for a frozen beat. He breaks the  
 moment with a charming smile...

GEORGE  
Miss Earhart?

AMELIA  
Mr. Putnam?

GEORGE (softly)  
I asked you to sit.

AMELIA  
Was that the thing you did with  
your hand? Sadly, I don't speak  
dog.

His smile now only a trace. But more genuine.

GEORGE  
Ah. Well, stand if you like.

Amelia sits.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
I'm told you want to fly the  
Atlantic Ocean.

AMELIA  
I do.

GEORGE  
In the 12 months since Lindbergh,  
55 people in 18 planes have tried.  
Three planes made it. Fourteen  
people have died.

AMELIA  
I'll make it.

GEORGE  
Three women died trying. Two  
others escaped with their lives.  
If you do make it, you'd be the  
first. Which...is the real  
attraction for both of us, I  
suspect.

She nods. No smile.

AMELIA  
Always nice to know what the real  
attraction is.

His smile. Beginning to enjoy this conversation.

GEORGE

The plane was bought from Adm. Byrd by Amy Guest, a socialite who wanted the record for herself. Her family wouldn't tolerate the danger. She has asked for a replacement...

He gestures. Perhaps you.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

...who is American, educated, well-spoken, a flyer, preferably physically attractive...

AMELIA

Why would that matter?

GEORGE

Because she wants the world to pay attention. And pretty girls command more attention.

AMELIA

Was that your advice?

GEORGE

Sure. My role is selling this event to the public. There will be a contract for the girl's story with the New York Times. Also a book to be published over her name.

Understood...?

GEORGE (CONT'D)

But all the money from these will go to Mrs. Guest.

AMELIA

Except for the part that goes to you.

GEORGE

Which will be as great as I can manage, I assure you.

AMELIA

You said she wants a flyer.

GEORGE

Don't get your hopes up. The celebrated Wilmer Stultz will be the pilot. There'll be a male co-pilot and navigator. The woman will be purely a passenger.

He waits for reaction. She keeps her mouth shut.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

That's good for your chances.  
Because your level of flying  
experience wouldn't place you  
anywhere near the group that would  
be considered for this. If the  
woman were to do any flying at all.

No punches pulled. Not his style.

AMELIA

Why would anyone want a book from a  
passenger?

GEORGE

Because the hook is that we're  
making the woman the commander.  
The pilot will sign a contract  
saying he is under her direction  
and control. It's her ship, her  
flight.

AMELIA

Good for my chances, you said.  
What are my chan...

GEORGE

The job's yours.

She blinks. Stunned speechless.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I chose you the moment you walked  
through the door.

He smiles his charming smile. Several phones are RINGING.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Now assuming my awful manners  
haven't soured you on the  
enterprise. May I give you a lift  
to the station?

Amelia rises. Is she pissed at being toyed with?

AMELIA

You're a busy man, Mr. Putnam. I  
can find my way.

The look holds. He shrugs. You probably can.

4 INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - LATER

4

Two figures on the platform. Her train is ready to leave.

GEORGE

I honestly feel an apology is in order.

AMELIA

Fine. What have I done?

She watches his smile.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I didn't mind waiting. Caught up on my reading. Knitted a sweater.

GEORGE

I mean an apology. For what's coming.

His voice softens.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I'm going to be pretty controlling these next few months. How you dress, move, cut your hair. Speak in public. It's all part of the package we're selling.

AMELIA

We.

GEORGE

That's right. If you're not in there selling with me, it won't work.

The smile turns friendly.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

You're the star. I'm no one at all.

AMELIA

Spoken like a gentleman.

She steps up onto the train. Extends her hand like a man. He shakes it firmly. The train begins to move. She watches his cheery wave as she rolls away.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Of course a gentleman. Would have paid for my ticket.

5 INT. TRAIN - LATER

5

Gazing out the window as she rattles toward Boston. She looks down now to a notebook in her lap. As she flips pages, we see it is a collection of hand-written POEMS and thoughts. She writes...

AMELIA (V.O.)

Courage is the price that life exacts  
For granting peace

We SUPERIMPOSE over her image the wall of a little girl's bedroom, filled with treasured NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS about women doctors, officials, bank presidents, women who had established themselves in positions previously thought to be available only to men.

AMELIA (V.O.)

The soul that knows it not  
Knows no release  
From little things

DISSOLVE TO HER  
MEMORY OF...

6 EXT. FIELD, DES MOINES - DAY

6

Two LITTLE GIRLS, maybe 10 years old, walking in a field. Amelia and a girlfriend. They stop, hearing...

The DRONING of an engine, a small red plane APPEARING above the treetops. The pilot seeing two girls alone in the field, SWOOPS down to BUZZ them. Amelia's friend runs for her life. But Amelia stands still, throws her arms WIDE, and the plane...

...DROPS lower, and LOWER, as it CLOSES straight in on the slender girl with her outstretched arms. LOUDER and FASTER, as if intent on winning some impulsive duel of wills. The aircraft SCREAMS past, just above her head.

AMELIA (V.O.)

As the little red airplane passed  
by, it said something to me.

Amelia beams. She fills her lungs, transported.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I don't think I've ever stopped  
listening.

HOLD on her, hair and uniform whipping in the breeze.

SMASH CUT TO...

7 INT. AMELIA'S PLANE - DAY

7

Amelia flying her little yellow Kinner. Feeling the freedom she thrilled to as a child.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
Ten years, 28 jobs and an unspeakable number of crashes later, I hadn't changed my mind.

She LIFTS the nose of the tiny craft. Begins to CLIMB.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I even had my own plane. Bought with my last dime.

At the apex of her climb, she FLIPS into a breathtaking LOOP THE LOOP, as...

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Course in the early days of flying...

...her engine SPUTTERS. Then STALLS. The plane DIPS into a TAIL-SPIN, PLUNGING downward...

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
...crashing was so common, you almost forgot it could kill you...

Amelia STRUGGLING to start the engine, the little plane HURLING toward earth, SPINNING as it goes.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
...until it did.

The engine COUGHS to life and at the last second she SWOOPS harrowingly above the ground to SOAR FREE.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Almost.

8 EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

8

A small HANGAR in a lonely field. See a group of...

...MECHANICS in their grease-stained jumpsuits. Three big guys and one little one working on an engine that's been pulled from Amelia's Kinner. When the little guy comes up for air...

...he isn't a guy at all.

AMELIA  
Got it. I think.

9 INT. DENISON HOUSE, BOSTON - DAY

9

SAM CHAPMAN, a handsome young man is being led down an institutional hallway and out onto the grounds of this venerable settlement house. He finds...

...Amelia sitting cross-legged on the grass. Reading to a group of CHINESE GIRLS, who hang on her every animated word. On the periphery, ADULTS sit, taking in the story. They are of various ethnicities, homeless or handicapped or immigrant. Two are blind. Amelia sees Sam...

AMELIA  
Girls, this is Mr. Samuel Chapman.  
Sam, say hullo to the Octopus Club.

The Octopus Club waves to Sam. The adults wave, too.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
You're just in time. Alice has  
come through the Looking Glass,  
and things are getting, well...

OCTOPUS CLUB  
(on cue)  
REALLY STRANGE!

AMELIA  
They are, actually.

She pats the grass beside her. Sam has no choice but to sit.

10 EXT. GROUNDS - LATER

10

Amelia and Sam walk a wooded path beside the grounds. Through the chain link fence, they watch other social workers playing with groups of children.

SAM  
And it's a secret.

AMELIA  
Has to be. Competition, you know.  
Millionaire heiresses, hot shot  
girl pilots. If George knew I told  
you, he'd have me publicly flogged.

She looks over.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

So long as he could sell tickets.

He's not smiling.

SAM

And no one else knows.

AMELIA

Marion. She's giving me a leave of absence.

SAM

I would think so. Your name will be in all the papers, and not just Boston. Denison House stands to come in for funding, national attention.

AMELIA

Specially if I don't make it.

SAM

Don't joke about that.

She wasn't joking at all.

SAM (CONT'D)

You'll make it. And then you'll have opportunities to work in aviation. Anywhere you want.

She laughs.

AMELIA

Well, I'll have impressive credentials as a long-distance passenger. That's not exactly a career in aviation.

She looks up at his eyes.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I'm not going anywhere, social work is my life. After all the years of false starts, I found the thing I'm meant to do.

Keep walking. She gives him time to say...

SAM

And where does that leave us?

AMELIA  
 You do love to look on the dark  
 side. Whatever did you see in a  
 sunny character like me?

She gives him a sweet playful smile. It doesn't reassure  
 him.

SAM  
 It's not as if I'd been putting  
 pressure on you.

AMELIA  
 What love means to you. What it  
 requires. Is the pressure.

He stops walking.

SAM  
 I love you. Is that such a  
 terrible problem?

She gazes at him. Can he even hear this?

AMELIA  
 The problem is what it's always  
 been. The problem is me.

11 INT. WALDORF ASTORIA HOTEL - DAY

11

MOVIETONE NEWSREEL footage, accompanied by their signature  
 fanfare theme. Hotel conference room jammed with press. A  
 sexy brunette in a sweater that seems to be made of strips of  
 GOLD FOIL steps to a bank of microphones. Flashes start  
 POPPING.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
 The Queen of Diamonds Mabel Boll,  
 about to become the first female to  
 fly the Atlantic in the wake of  
 Lindbergh's historic journey,  
 regales an eager world press...

The sound switches to Mabel at the mikes...

MABEL  
 Okay, boys. I'll take any  
 questions you wanna throw my way.  
 Except about what's behind this  
 sweater.

The boys ROAR. Mabel keeps her smile tight.

MABEL (CONT'D)  
 The story. Behind it. Of course.

As the laughter CONTINUES...

12

INT. HANGAR, EAST BOSTON AIRPORT - NIGHT

12

The heavy door rolls OPEN. George and Amelia enter the brightly-lit hangar to see two men working on the FRIENDSHIP, a sea-plane with golden wings. Its red-orange fuselage stands beside gigantic PONTOONS, each 29 feet long. The pontoons have been opened, and the men are attaching them to the plane.

They turn toward us now. BILL STULTZ is short and wiry with quick eyes. Only 28, he seems weathered by his adventures and the streaks of gray through his hair. He is not necessarily happy to see us.

AMELIA (V.O.)

George had told me Stultz was Adm. Byrd's favorite pilot, fearless, gifted. He drank. But George said it never affected his work.

George waves as we approach. Bill and Amelia seem locked on each other.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

When he said it, I must have had a funny look. So I just said, 'Yeh, I grew up around a guy like that.'

GEORGE

Boys, I'd like to introduce your commander, Miss Amelia Earhart.

AMELIA

We felt 'commander' was less grandiose than, say, 'empress.'

Bill doesn't smile. The other man does...

GEORGE

Say hello to Slim Gordon your navigator.

She is shaking hands in that strong, direct way.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

And Bill Stultz here, simply the most talented pilot working.

She takes Bill's powerful hand. The look between them calm, yet somehow intense. As if each is establishing a tone for their relationship.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 We've got Byrd's pilot, we've got  
 his plane...

AMELIA  
 You mean the Admiral flies on  
 those?

The pontoons. She does not seem admiring.

GEORGE  
 Nope, those are new, personally  
 suggested by the old man himself.

Bill nods on that. Sure were.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 This way, if you're forced down  
 at sea, you can wait for a rescue.

AMELIA  
 Hmmn. What does that do to our  
 fuel?

BILL  
 Costs us at least 400 gallons.  
 Don't bother bringing clothes for  
 Paris, we'll be lucky to hit the  
 nearest beach in Ireland. Real  
 lucky.

GEORGE  
 The Admiral estimates the pontoons  
 only cut our range by 200 miles.

But Amelia looks to Bill. That's not really possible is it?

BILL  
 The Admiral is the Admiral. He  
 gets to estimate any damn thing he  
 wants. All we have to do is figure  
 out how to fly without petrol.

She turns to George with challenging eyes.

BILL (CONT'D)  
 Don't go blaming the bookseller.  
 He's been all through this with  
 Mrs. Guest, but she worships the  
 Admiral. And it's money that puts  
 planes in the air.

AMELIA  
 I wonder if it can keep them up  
 there. Not that I've ever had  
 enough to try.

Bill's small smile. Maybe the girl's all right.

13 EXT. DOCK - LATER

13

George and Amelia approach a waiting motorboat, as the lights of Boston glimmer across the harbor. His head is down. She's watching his profile.

AMELIA

Sorry. I'll try keeping my mouth shut.

GEORGE

What I ought to try. Is listening to you once in awhile.

He meant that. And she seems oddly touched.

AMELIA

Careful. I could get to like it.

No reaction from him. He hops into the boat. Turns, holds out his hand. She hesitates. Clearly doesn't need his help to jump into a boat. Their eyes lock. We are watching her decide. And then...

She reaches to clasp his hand. Hops down beside him.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Thank you, Simpkin. Thank you for everything.

GEORGE

(a smile)  
Simpkin.

AMELIA

It's in a book. Oh, that's right. You read the ones you publish.

Her smile is friendly, not flirtatious. She goes to sit in the bow. He doesn't follow. But he is watching.

14 EXT. ROOF, COPLEY PLAZA HOTEL - DAY

14

Amelia in a flying outfit. Hands on her hips as if posing.

AMELIA (V.O.)

There's a Beatrix Potter story about a cat named Simpkin.

PULL BACK to see the PHOTOGRAPHER, George beside him. They are on a hotel rooftop, precariously high above Boston.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
 He wasn't happy unless he had  
 several mice, each under a  
 different teacup. So he could  
 never become bored.

We see that Amelia's POSE looks exactly the SAME as a photo  
 of CHARLES LINDBERGH in the photographer's hand. It is  
 labeled 'LUCKY LINDY.'

AMELIA (V.O.)  
 The illusion of activity was  
 essential for him to feel at peace.

The photographer now shows George ANOTHER PHOTO of Lindbergh  
 in a different pose.

AMELIA  
 What are you boys doing over there?

GEORGE  
 Trying to make you look like a  
 girl.

George studies the photo, then goes to Amelia and begins  
 moving her body into the new pose. Tilting her head to  
 Lindbergh's angle.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
 I wondered. Was I Mr. Putnam's  
 43rd mouse? Or his 307th.

Now touching her, adjusting her coat, fluffing a bit of her  
 hair, pulling the collar around to frame her face...

GEORGE  
 The more we can make you look  
 like a girl, the better.

AMELIA  
 Oh god, is it worth the effort?

He cocks his head, studies her. Nah, guess not.

GEORGE  
 Wondering who should play you  
 in the film of all this. I'm  
 thinking Chaplin.

AMELIA  
 Valentino's not available?

He shakes his head sadly. Adjusts her collar once more.  
 This time, his hands linger.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Two things. One, Chaplin can't play me because he's perfect for you. And two, you have company.

She glances to where a WOMAN, beautiful and aristocratic, is being helped onto the roof. George's face lights to see her. He rushes over, sweeps her into his arms, kisses her tenderly. Amelia smiles to see this, makes her like them both.

GEORGE

Amelia Earhart, this is Dorothy Binney Putnam.

The women trade smiles. They shake hands, holding eye contact.

DOROTHY

Great to meet you. George talks so much about you.

(a wink)

In fact, lately, you're all he does talk about.

George steps in close, and the photographer SNAPS a three-shot. And another.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Hold those smiles for one more, please.

15 EXT. JEFFREY YACHT CLUB HARBOR, EAST BOSTON - EARLY LIGHT 15

The FRIENDSHIP bobbing on its pontoons. Bill and Slim are off-loading equipment and other gear from the plane to a TUGBOAT filled with support crew and family. The plane's engines REV in the predawn stillness. PULL BACK to see...

16 EXT. YACHT CLUB DOCK - EARLY LIGHT 16

...the yacht club dock. George and Amelia alone at the railing. She's wearing her leather flight jacket and boots. They stare out at the plane, so frail and awkward. From her bag now, she pulls three ENVELOPES...

Puts them in George's hand. Straight, unblinking...

AMELIA

Popping off letters. For my dad, my mom, my sis. You know. In case.

He stares down. Rocked by the weight of this against the simplicity of her words. The top envelope says: DEAREST DAD.

GEORGE  
I'm honored. That you'd leave these with me.

AMELIA  
Who else? If I do pop off, it's your fault.

Said in her sunny way. But she's not kidding. It takes a beat before he can offer...

GEORGE  
I'll call them once you're safely on your way.

AMELIA  
Sam will handle that. They trust him.

That registers.

GEORGE  
I've figured out the Simpkin thing, you know.

AMELIA  
Have you.

GEORGE  
Sure. There are so few books I haven't published, it was easy to find.

Well...?

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Beatrix Potter, the Tailor of Gloucester. He's a cat in a green frock coat.

AMELIA  
But why is he you?

Oh.

GEORGE  
He's brilliant, charismatic...

AMELIA  
So you haven't actually read it. Do you actually read?

GEORGE  
 ...neurotic, compulsive,  
 manipulative. Am I getting warmer?

She sighs.

AMELIA  
 Pray I make it. Or the secret pops  
 off with me.

A held look. A friendly...

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 Well. See ya.

She walks off down the dock toward the Friendship.

He stands watching her go.

DISSOLVE TO...

17 INT. SMALL HOTEL, NEWFOUNDLAND - MORNING 17

Amelia alone, leaving her hotel room in her flight jacket.  
 Locking the door.

SUPERIMPOSE: FIRST STOP: CANADA

AMELIA (V.O.)  
 Our first hop was to Canada, to  
 start from as close as we could get  
 to Ireland. Just in case we  
 couldn't get the thing in the air  
 and had to row.

She walks briskly down the corridor.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
 The fuel was going to be so close,  
 every single mile counted.

Turns a corner. Approaches the dining room door.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
 George told me to keep to my room,  
 just in case there was a reporter  
 or two somewhere.

She enters the hotel dining room. Stops cold. Across the  
 room a disgruntled Bill and a sheepish Slim stare at her from  
 their breakfast, surrounded by 15 REPORTERS and  
 PHOTOGRAPHERS. Holy shit. Half a dozen CAMERAS RISE as one.  
 It is a defining moment. And Amelia...

Cocks her head. Throws an effortless golden smile.

AMELIA  
Hi there, boys. How are the ham  
and eggs?

The FLASHES EXPLODE as one. They keep POPPING as Amelia makes her way to them.

BILL  
Don't blame us, lady. I think  
somebody's starting to sell books.

The reporters are handing her their morning editions. The New York Times front page headline: BOSTON GIRL STARTS FOR ATLANTIC HOP.

There beneath the headline, the glamorous PHOTO we watched being taken on the Copley Hotel roof, Lady Lindy. Next to it, an earlier photo of her as a demure social worker.

Amelia is sifting through the other papers, grinning and shaking her head.

REPORTER  
Say, Amelia. What have you got for  
Mabel Boll to chew on?

AMELIA  
Now why would a famous gal like  
Mabel give a thought to someone  
like me? I don't have a single  
sweater made out of gold.

The boys ROAR, Slim louder than anyone. Even Bill cracks a smile. They're shouting, teasing, YOU CAN'T KID US!

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
Hey, not even silver.

The boys make room. Bill rises to hold Amelia's chair. A friendly murmur...

BILL  
The ham's a little tough,  
Commander. But the bacon's swell.

18 INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL - DAY

18

MOVIETONE NEWSREEL footage, accompanied by their signature fanfare theme. Once more, the hotel conference room jammed with press. Today Mabel wears a luxurious silver fox coat, shimmies up to a bank of microphones at the podium. Flashes start POPPING.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

The Queen of Diamonds Mabel Boll,  
upstaged by upstart social worker,  
seems madder than a rich wet hen.  
Hey Mabel, tell us about your  
rival!

The sound switches to Mabel leaning her sultry voice to the  
mikes...

MABEL

Well, how would any woman feel  
about some tart who steals her man?

Reporters furiously writing, more flashes EXPLODE.

MABEL (CONT'D)

Bill Stultz and I were going to  
make history together, until this  
poor little social worker and her  
sugar daddy, oh excuse me,  
'publisher,' started throwing money  
and I don't know what else at him.

REPORTER

Mabel, are you implying Miss  
Earhart used her feminine charms on  
your pilot?

MABEL

I don't know, Charlie, I never seen  
her. Has she got any?

LAUGHTER, they're all calling out. She shows them a smoky  
smile, but stays on message.

MABEL (CONT'D)

Well, she had to use something on  
somebody to get from nowhere to  
here. You figure it out, or wait  
til George Putnam feeds it to you.

Two dozen questions at once. She's not even listening.

MABEL (CONT'D)

We're going to Canada, waiting for  
some good weather on the Atlantic,  
and then we'll kick Little Miss  
Whoosis in the keester.

REPORTER

What makes you so cocky that she  
won't leave first?

MABEL

Rusty, we can carry enough fuel to go to China. That thing they're flying can't load enough gas to make Yonkers. Tell that to Putnam's girlie. And while you're at it...

She snuggles the gleaming fox fur around her.

MABEL (CONT'D)

Tell her I do wear silver. So I'm two up on her.

19 EXT. HARBOR, TREPASSEY, NEWFOUNDLAND - EARLY MORNING 19

MOVIETONE NEWSREEL CONTINUES. We are looking at foggy, bleak Trepassey Harbor as the Friendship makes an unsuccessful attempt to take off.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Eleven days of failure for plucky Amelia Earhart and her crew. If it isn't storms over the Atlantic, it's the inability of the seaplane's pontoons to lift from the sea.

SERIES OF ANGLES. One failed take-off after another.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Perhaps it's for the best. Remember, no woman has beat the jinx of the Atlantic and three have died trying. Including a princess and the niece of former President Woodrow Wilson.

The plane's engine SPUTTERS and STALLS. It floats on the sea.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Maybe this one's not to be. Hey, Mabel! How's your weather report?

20 INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR, NEWFOUNDLAND - LATE NIGHT 20

Amelia coming down the hotel corridor. She passes a room, and hearing DRUNKEN LAUGHTER from a group of MEN within the room...

She stops. Stares at the door with more concern than anger.

21 INT. ROOM - SAME MOMENT 21

Bill, Slim and three of the REPORTERS are drinking up a storm.

BILL  
EXPLORER, MY ASS. BYRD COULDN'T  
FIND A PUBIC HAIR IN A WHOREHOUSE  
AT RUSH HOUR!

22 INT. HOTEL ROOM, NEWFOUNDLAND - LATER 22

Amelia curled up on her bed with CHARTS of the Atlantic spread everywhere. From next door, the sound of drunken men  
CONTINUE.

Amelia looks down from her charts. Her mind going to...

23 FLASHBACK: EXT. HOUSE, ATCHISON, KANSAS - DAY 23

Seven-year-old KIDS dressed as cowboys and Indians are gathered on the front lawn of a white clapboard home. We CLOSE on a clear-eyed tomboy with war paint and tousled hair, AMELIA at seven, looking up excitedly as a car pulls to the curb.

Her FATHER climbs slowly from the car, WOBBLIES his way across the lawn. The kids part to let him through, the confusion and disappointment on every face. He ignores them all, even Amelia. The front door opens...

...Amelia's MOTHER gazes at him with shame and disdain. As she helps him stagger inside...

24 INT. HOTEL ROOM - EARLY MORNING 24

Amelia in her flight gear, sitting on the edge of her bed, an open TELEGRAM lies beside her. Her elbows rest on her knees. Her hands are locked together. Her profile is stony, determined. TILT DOWN to the telegram...

It reads: WEATHER PERMITTING, MABEL FLIES THIS AFTERNOON.

She grabs her flight bag, leaves the room. She only has to travel as far as the next door. POUNDS on it. Waits. Pounds LOUDER with both fists.

Slim opens the door. Looking bad. Bill sits up in bed, groggy, disoriented.

BILL  
Christ, what time is...

AMELIA  
Time to fly. Get up, get dressed,  
we're going now.

She is calm and angry at once. A powerful combination. Slim pulls his pants off a chair.

BILL  
Where's the weather report?

She goes to his bed. Hands him a slip of paper. He blinks, still waking up. Reads.

BILL (CONT'D)  
It's not good enough.

AMELIA  
Great. Maybe Mabel will think so,  
too. Because if she doesn't, she's  
going to Paris and you're going  
home. Today.

BILL  
It's not good enough.

AMELIA  
It's fine, there's a tail wind all  
the way, we'll off-load to 700  
gallons, which gets us off the  
water and the wind gets us to  
Ireland.

BILL  
We've had better than this and we  
haven't gone.

AMELIA  
But this is the day Mabel's ready,  
so we're going now. The weather  
is going to get better and we'll  
be there to enjoy it.

BILL  
You're serious.

AMELIA  
Just as serious as you're hung  
over.  
(to Slim)  
You go now, get the late weather,  
we'll meet you at the plane.

Go. Now! Slim pulls on his shoes, grabs his jacket, his bag. Looks to Bill, but the pilot is glaring at his commander.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

(quiet)

Slim, get out. I've got this.

A beat. Slim goes, the door shuts quietly. Amelia sits on the edge of Bill's bed.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I've loved one person  
unconditionally, Bill. He is the  
most caring and generous and  
charming and flat-out funny guy  
I'll ever know. He's my father.

Her eyes are burning with this. And Bill keeps quiet.  
Anyone would.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

He's a drunk. And he's let me down  
all my life.

She leans closer.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Now you get out of that bed. And  
you fly that god-damned thing to  
Ireland. Or I swear to you,  
Bill...

Just above a whisper...

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I swear to you I will. Or die  
trying.

You got that? Do you?

AMELIA (CONT'D)

And either way. You're going to be  
living with it.

25

EXT. TREPASSEY HARBOR - LATER

25

It's dark and cold. Bill and Amelia stand at the dock beside their plane. He's drinking coffee as they watch Slim come down the quay with a slip of paper in his hand. Amelia steps forward to take it. Reads with neutral eyes.

AMELIA

Good. Slim, start the engines.

She still hasn't given the paper to Bill. Slim steps onto a pontoon. Starts CRANKING up the propellers. As the engine KICKS to life...

She hands the weather report to Bill. He reads. Looks to her eyes.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

You signed a contract. You've got a direct instruction from me to go. That report indicates some degree of risk and it's a risk I'm taking.

BILL

Have a nice flight.

AMELIA

Thanks.

She motions to Slim, get on board. The navigator grins, starts to climb up, looking back at Bill...

SLIM

Hey, I'm scared shitless of this dame.

She climbs up after him. One look back...

AMELIA

Read tomorrow's papers, Bill. We'll both be in them.

And disappears. Alone on the dock, Bill hears the engines REV. Jesus, God, she's going to do it. He takes a step toward the plane, but her head appears in the hatch...

AMELIA (CONT'D)

So, to take off, you pull back on the thing, right?

Her perfectly straight, innocent face. He BUSTS out laughing. This fucking girl.

Tosses his coffee. Climbs aboard.

26

INT. FRIENDSHIP - MOMENTS LATER

26

WITH Amelia as she locks the hatch. For the first time, we can see the inside of the plane. The cabin is too small for anyone to stand. The plane has been emptied of everything but two huge elliptical FUEL TANKS.

She wedges herself between the gigantic tanks. Bill pulls the throttle and the Fokker Tri-motor LURCHES forward, STRAINING against the surface of the sea in a rattling, throbbing desperately VIBRATING all-out attempt.

Amelia crawls to the tiny window, her face to the glass as chop and spray FLY PAST like shrapnel, and the engines WHINE and PULSE louder...

...twenty seconds, thirty. Still on the surface. Forty seconds, fifty, her eyes shut, her forehead bangs against the glass, come on, sixty seconds, and at 67...

27 EXT. HARBOR - SAME MOMENT 27

...the seaplane LIFTS, struggles, then SOARS FREE.

28 INT. FRIENDSHIP - DAY/NIGHT 28

Amelia kneels at the tiny window. A kid on a rainy day. Only outside this window is impenetrable FOG and a STORM that ROCKS the plane like the shock waves of endless explosions. As she braces herself against the hull...

...water DRIPS onto her from a loose seam. Could this be dangerous? She looks around. Through the opening between the elliptical fuel tanks...

...Bill and Slim at the controls. Bill is banging on something beside the instrument panel. Beneath his seat, she sees the TOOLBOX. The water drips on her faster. She crawls forward toward the boys, arriving to see...

...Bill POUNDING what we can now see is his RADIO. His face is red, angry. She watches for a beat.

AMELIA  
YOU OKAY?

BILL  
BE BETTER IF OUR DAMN RADIO WOULD  
JOIN THE PARTY!

He never turns to her, but she studies him. Is he impaired or simply frustrated? She slips the toolbox from beneath his seat and crawls back to the leak. But as she opens the box...

...there, among the wrench and pliers, a BOTTLE of whiskey. She stares at it as we SNAP TO...

29 FLASHBACK: EXT. AMELIA'S HOUSE, ATCHISON, KANSAS - DAY 29

RAPID SERIES OF ANGLES. War-painted Amelia looking up from the cowboy she's tied to a tree. The car pulling to the curb. Out climbs...

...her FATHER glassy-eyed. Stumbling through the children. Her MOTHER at the door.

ANGLE. Amelia still in war paint enters her parents' room. She knows just where to go. Opens a drawer, digs beneath crisply starched shirts. Finds the BOTTLE.

ANGLE. Amelia in the bathroom, POURING the bottle out into the sink. She looks up in the mirror to see...

...her father in the doorway. She turns straight to him. MEETS his eyes, direct and unafraid.

30

INT. FRIENDSHIP

30

BACK to Amelia with Bill's bottle, as the battered plane lurches every which way in the storm. She lifts it from the toolbox. Hides it in the camera bag, as suddenly the plane DROPS fifty feet, and Amelia is SLAMMED against the ceiling, then crashes back to the floor. Dazed, she sees Bill turned around...

BILL  
HOLD ONTO SOMETHING FOR CHRISAKE!

She GRABS the leg of the navigation table which has been bolted down. Stares out the window, wondering if she'll make it.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
Dearest Dad. Hooray for the last grand adventure. I wish I had won, but it was worthwhile anyway. You know that. I have no faith we'll meet anywhere again, but I wish we might.

HOLD on the gray eyes. DISSOLVE TO...

LATER. Amelia at the window, still opaque with fog. Suddenly, the plane SWOOPS down toward a clearing in the clouds. There to the south, a FREIGHTER running across our path. No land in sight.

Amelia SCRAWLS a note, ties it to an ORANGE from her flight bag, and crawls back to the boys.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
HOW FAR TO LAND?

The boys are studying the freighter.

BILL  
 RADIO'S STILL OUT. NO WAY TO  
 COMPUTE WINDSPEED AND DRIFT IN THE  
 FOG, SO GOD ONLY KNOWS WHERE  
 IRELAND IS.

Checks his watch.

BILL (CONT'D)  
 NINETEEN HOURS PLUS. WE'VE GOT  
 MAYBE AN HOUR OF PETROL LEFT.  
 PROBABLY LESS.

She shows him the note and the orange.

AMELIA  
 WESTERN UNION, SPECIAL DELIVERY.

Bill has to smile. Are you serious? As a heart attack.  
 Okay, he tries to get closer to the ship, but we're jerked  
 and buffeted as we swing past and Amelia...

...DROPS the orange toward the freighter, watching the heavy  
 winds CARRY it two hundred yards WIDE of the mark. Our three  
 stare grimly.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 IF WE LAND NEAR THEM, WE'VE GOT A  
 RESCUE.

Their eyes are locked.

BILL  
 THINK THOSE RIDICULOUS SKIS COULD  
 HOLD US UP IN THIS KIND OF SEA?

She's been wondering the same.

BILL (CONT'D)  
 YOU SAID WE WERE GOING TO MAKE IT.  
 ARE YOU A LIAR?

AMELIA  
 NOT ON THIS OCCASION.

A rare smile...

BILL  
 WELL, THEN.

And SWOOPS back on course. Amelia's hand squeezes his  
 shoulder. DISSOLVE TO...

LATER. Amelia crouched behind Bill's seat. Fog starting to  
 break up.

Her face drawn, she almost seems to be holding her breath. Something down below. As we drop, we hear the engines SPUTTER.

AMELIA  
WHEN'S THAT HOUR OF FUEL RUN OUT?

BILL  
EIGHTEEN MINUTES AGO. WHY?

She glances over to Slim, who is busy unwrapping a sandwich. She can't believe this. He takes a healthy bite.

AMELIA  
THE LONGER I OBSERVE MEN THE MORE  
I AM AWESTRUCK. BY THEIR CAPACITY  
FOR DENIAL.

She crawls back to the navigation table. As she looks out her window, a SANDWICH SAILS past! She WHIPS around...Slim's arms raised in jubilation. Down below...

Land.

31 EXT. SHORE, BURRY PORT, WALES - DAY

31

The little plane sputtering, shuddering, as Bill drops in for a splashdown. We PAN to the shore...

...a rural railroad dock. Deserted except for THREE WORKERS who glance up as the Friendship taxis to a buoy a few hundred yards offshore. Amelia at the hatch, tiny in distance, WAVES a towel...

...one friendly worker takes off his coat and WAVES back. Then all three guys go back to work. SNAP TO...

REVERSE ANGLE. From the Friendship, we watch the workers ignoring us. Bill and Slim HOLLER and jump up and down on the pontoons. Nobody cares. Amelia sits in the doorway, her legs swinging free.

AMELIA  
Out of gas. May have to swim for  
it.

LATER. Amelia alone. Six pages written by her side. Still working, as a rowboat pulls up. Bill stands in the bow. Calls to her...

BILL  
Mr. Putnam phoned. He says there's  
a fella coming from London. Hilton  
Railey.

AMELIA  
 Oh, yeh. Very important man. More  
 important than any of us.

Really? Yep.

BILL  
 He says ya mustn't come ashore til  
 he gets here. No matter what.

Great. She doesn't like it, but there it is. She waves, so  
 long.

BILL (CONT'D)  
 Some kind of royalty, is he?

She nods.

AMELIA  
 Public relations.

Goes back to work. DISSOLVE TO...

LATER. Amelia sits with her papers in her lap, dangling her  
 feet from the hatch. Alone. Hear the BUZZ of...

...a PLANE dropping slowly from the sky, gliding onto the  
 water on its pontoons. She stares at it. Gathers up her  
 things.

LATER. Amelia sitting in a tiny dinghy, behind her the  
 Friendship in distance. She is being rowed to shore. Our  
 VIEW is over the back of the man rowing. Amelia is staring  
 past him, vaguely apprehensive.

REVERSE ANGLE. She's looking at TWO THOUSAND WELSHMEN  
 swarming the docks. You can't even see the sand.

The crowd is silent and staring. No cheers. As if they were  
 staring at an alien or an animal in the zoo. Bill and Slim  
 help pull the dinghy to the rocky shore. But when Amelia  
 jumps out, the crowd...

...begins to soberly APPLAUD, and slowly CLOSES IN around  
 her. At first she seems pleased, trying to shake every hand  
 thrust toward her. She doesn't see that Bill and Slim have  
 been shunted to the back. Suddenly...

...people get BOLDER. CLAPPING her on the back, reaching to  
 TOUCH her, someone SNATCHES her scarf, she looks around  
 frantically for Bill and Slim as...

...a SHERIFF and three DEPUTIES muscle their way to her using  
 billy clubs to push people back. They surround Amelia, begin  
 to escort her to the station...

SHERIFF

Sorry Ma'am. Shoulda brought more men.

AMELIA

No, really, this is very sweet, it's an honor. I'm actually enjoying it.

SHERIFF

That's a good thing.

She looks at him as they are jostled along.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Because you're stuck with it. From here on.

She is brought to a smiling avuncular HILTON RAILEY, standing beside the closest thing Burry Port has to a limo. She throws an affectionate arm around him, kisses his cheek.

AMELIA

Hullo, Hilton.

Railey stands back as FLASHBULBS catch the moment. He's brought photographers with him. And more.

RAILEY

Amelia, say hullo to Allen Raymond of the New York Times.

A hearty handshake. She holds out her sheets of paper.

AMELIA

I believe you've come for these.

Both men regard the pages as if they were gold bullion. Come for these indeed.

32

EXT. SOUTHAMPTON - DAY

32

MOVIETONE FOOTAGE of Amelia being welcomed by a SEA OF PEOPLE on the dock at Southampton. A mob . Folks spilling into the water. Ships circling, fireboats spray, every craft BLARES its horn. Police hold back the screaming throng as FLASHES EXPLODE and NEWSREEL CAMERAS CHURN. Amelia at the center of the storm. Welcomed by AMY GUEST and the lady LORD MAYOR of Southampton.

Throughout, we see SUPERIMPOSED IMAGES of the article she gave Railey, displaying her byline, on the front pages of the London Times, New York Times, the Times of India, Sydney Morning Herald, the Toronto Star, Le Monde, as her story echoes around the world. These IMAGES CONTINUE OVER...

QUICK SERIES OF ANGLES. Amelia cheering animatedly at the races...watching tennis at Wimbledon...front row gallery at the House of Commons, as...

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

A whirlwind week for Boston's Amelia Earhart, our own Lady Lindy. Races at Ascot on Gold Cup day...watching Helen Wills Moody play at Wimbledon...Lady Astor's guest at the House of Commons...

33

INT. HYDE PARK HOTEL, LONDON - DAY

33

MOVIETONE NEWSREEL CONTINUES. The British press are gathered in a huge Victorian parlor. Dark woods, rich leather, a bank of microphones, an electric expectancy...

Bill and Slim stand next to a seated Amy. Amelia steps to the microphones...

AMELIA

I was a passenger on this journey. Just a passenger. Everything that was done to bring us across was done by Wilmer Stultz and Slim Gordon. All the praise...

REPORTER

(calls out)

But you can fly, can't you?

Amelia stares at the man. Conflicting agendas.

AMELIA

This flight was solely to the credit of Bill and Slim. Women should know, however, that I have had 500 hours solo flying and once held the women's altitude record.

REPORTER

So you could have done it yourself!

AMELIA

This particular flight, under these conditions, I wonder if anyone but Bill Stultz could have pulled it off. But certainly, one day a woman will do this. As easily, as skillfully, as professionally as any man.

Such calm self-possession. Such confidence in that.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 Aviation is clear today for the  
 pioneer. And if the pioneer has  
 good ideas nobody will ask whether  
 the pioneer is a man or woman.

Polite applause. Mostly from women. She looks around the  
 room.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 I hear your doubt. That doubt is  
 our challenge. This is where our  
 Atlantic flight, or any other good  
 flight by a woman can help...

She nods. To them, to herself.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 It starts women thinking.

34 EXT. BROADWAY, NEW YORK CITY - DAY 34

Ticker tape PARADE down Broadway, crowds lining the streets,  
 leaning from windows to welcome Amelia home.

SUPERIMPOSE: NEW YORK CITY

Amelia sits in an open car between Bill and Slim, WAVING to  
 everyone. In the front seat, George and Dorothy share the  
 moment.

35 EXT. RECEPTION HALL - DAY 35

Amelia flanked by George and Dorothy, coming out of a  
 reception hall. Amelia glances to George...

AMELIA  
 Guess you can burn those letters.

Dorothy wonders. Letters?

GEORGE  
 I saved them for your book.

One simple shake of Amelia's head. A soft...

AMELIA  
 The book's yours. The letters are  
 mine.

He smiles. Bows in submission.

GEORGE  
 You're the boss.

DOROTHY  
 Hey, that's my job.  
 (to Amelia)  
 Do you think there's enough of him  
 to boss for the two of us?

Amelia still looking at George. Laughs.

AMELIA  
 Barely enough for one.

A battery of reporters and flashbulbs wait by our motorcade.

REPORTER  
 Miss Earhart, can you tell us some-  
 thing about your future plans?

She likes this question. Fixes the man with that clear,  
 honest gaze.

AMELIA  
 Well, being a social worker by  
 trade and passion, I'll be going  
 back to work at Denison House when  
 all this fun is over.

She sends the guy a smile, and a dozen FLASHES catch it.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 ...if I haven't been fired.

George holds the door of their limo. She looks up to him  
 with a mischievous smile. And with no warning...

...Amelia bypasses the limo, climbs into the SIDECAR of a  
 cop's motorcycle, and SMACKS its side. The cop looks up to  
 George, who...

...nods, go for it. And the cop DOES, wheeling out into  
 traffic, opening up the SIREN, as everyone laughs or cheers  
 or darts into the street desperate for a fleeting photo.

George watching her go. Dorothy watching George.

REPORTER  
 Mr. Putnam, sir. How did a social  
 worker like Miss Earhart become  
 comfortable as a celebrity so  
 quickly?

George smiles. His eyes still following Amelia.

GEORGE  
 The truth is, she was a celebrity  
 on smaller stages all her life.  
 (MORE)

GEORGE(cont'd)

This is just when the rest of us  
discovered her.

And Dorothy. Watches this, too.

36

EXT. PUTNAM HOME, RYE, NEW YORK - DAY

36

Amelia in a sunlit garden ringed by trees. She sits at a  
folding table, writing longhand. A large dog lies at her  
feet.

AMELIA (V.O.)

So they took me home with them to  
Rye. And I lived there, while I  
wrote my book.

PULL BACK to see our view has been George's. He sits at an  
antique writing desk, watching her through a picture window.  
He rises slowly. We see that he has been reviewing a  
CONTRACT, which he takes with him.

ANGLE. Amelia writing, looking up to see George coming down  
the back porch steps to the garden.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I thought he'd be a tyrant and that  
I would have to manage him.

He smiles as he approaches. She goes back to work.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Instead he was kind and generous.  
And only picked the fights he  
needed to win.

He drops the contract on her table. She looks at it.

GEORGE

Lucky Strike endorsement. I wrote  
the copy myself.

AMELIA

What does it say? 'I don't smoke  
but you should?'

GEORGE

It says Lucky Strikes were the only  
cigarettes aboard the Friendship.  
That's true.

AMELIA

True and misleading. Why would I  
sign that?

GEORGE

So Bill and Slim get paid.

Oh. His smile simple, comfortable.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 If you're too proud to take tobacco  
 money, donate it to Byrd's  
 expedition, and we get great  
 publicity.

She stares at him with hard eyes. His smile just becomes  
 more relaxed. An easy win, no big deal. She begins to sign  
 the contract. He places a stack of letters in front of her.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 This week's marriage proposals.  
 The top one's the most creative.  
 It's from Sing Sing.

She starts to read. Her eyes widen. Goodness.

AMELIA (reads)  
 '...in the prison yard, so everyone  
 can watch and share in our...'  
 (looks up)  
 Did you write the copy on this one,  
 too?

DOROTHY (O.S., approaching)  
 Have you no shame, George? No  
 sense of the scandal you create?

They look up. She has a tray of lemonade and cookies.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)  
 You make her work for nothing. At  
 least you can feed her.  
 (to Amelia)  
 Are you done yet? If not, make him  
 write the rest, he will anyway.

37 INT. AUDITORIUM, BARNARD COLLEGE, NEW YORK - NIGHT

37

A women's college. The hall is packed.

GEORGE (V.O.)  
 The lecture and publicity schedule  
 was fierce. I was with her pretty  
 much all the time.

Amelia and George alone in the wings.

GEORGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 This was the moment of opportunity.  
 Could we launch her into Lindbergh  
 status as a permanent icon, before  
 her name fell out of the news-  
 papers.

He re-ties her scarf. Checking out the effect.

GEORGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 We had separate agendas. For her,  
 it was the advancement of aviation  
 and of women.

He very slightly rearranges her hair, as if every lock  
 matters.

GEORGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 As for me, I liked to tell myself  
 it was about the money. Though  
 there was never much of that left  
 over.

She stands for inspection, with her trace of a teasing smile.  
 He holds out his hand and she gives him her note cards.

GEORGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Really, it was about the chance  
 to be around her.

He flips through the cards, frowning as he goes.

AMELIA (George imitation)  
 This will never do, A.E., simply  
 unacceptable.

He looks up. She starts pacing around, gesturing as he  
 would...

AMELIA (George imitation)  
 You need more ammunition in these  
 cards, and where's the goddamned  
humor, for Chrissake? By which I  
 mean something actually funny!

He's trying to look annoyed. It isn't easy.

AMELIA (George imitation)  
 And please remember not to turn  
 your pretty little backside to the  
 crowd when you use your pointer,  
 it's your face they're paying to  
 see. Well, most of them.

She WHIPS around. He's deadpan.

AMELIA (George imitation)  
 And another thing. Your hats.  
 Are a menace.

Staring at each other.

GEORGE (softly)  
 Everything about you. Is a menace.

The stare holds. Because this is the moment.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
 I remember the first kiss.

It is only one step. Her hand goes to his chest. Her eyes close, as...

She brings her mouth to his. Tender and strong. And deep. It is an act of decision.

A held look. No one smiles. We hear her name ANNOUNCED from the podium. But she keeps looking at him. And as the APPLAUSE CONTINUES, she finally...

...turns. STRIDES onto the stage, with one graceful wave, she brings the applause to a crescendo.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Of course, I knew all the stories  
 that Dorothy had been having a  
 torrid affair with Fred Upton.  
 Everyone did.

She steps to the microphone. The crowd quiets.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 But I didn't kiss him because I  
 felt sorry for him. Or because  
 it would mean the world to him.

INTERCUT. George in the wings. His heart in his eyes.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 I did it. Because I wanted to.

He looks down. He's still holding her cards.

Hotel corridor. An elevator OPENS and ELINOR SMITH a striking young woman emerges. Looks at a slip of paper. Nervous. Heads down the hallway to a door. As she gathers herself to knock, she looks scared enough to pass out.

George answers the door, looking gracious and suave. They shake hands. Then, Amelia appears, warmly clasping the girl's hand, and Elinor looks as starstruck as a teenager at the Oscars.

AMELIA

It's so good to meet you. I've been following your career with a great deal of admiration.

ELINOR

Um. Thanks, and. You, too.

AMELIA

Feel like a drink?

GEORGE

Amelia! What would her mother say?

AMELIA

Relax, George. I meant a Coke.

As she leads Elinor into the sitting room of their suite, the girl's eye falls on the door to the bedroom. It is slightly ajar, revealing an unmade double bed. Unseen by the others, the kid reacts. Oh, my.

LATER. Tea in the sitting room. Elinor leaning forward, guileless, eager...

ELINOR

They're saying you get \$500 a week on the lecture circuit.

GEORGE

On a bad week.

AMELIA

On a good week.

The girl looks from one to the other.

AMELIA

All depends. On whether you want the sell or the real.

ELINOR

Oh, I don't underestimate the value of selling. It's why I'm here.

GEORGE

A 16-year-old girl sets an altitude record, then makes headlines illegally flying under the four bridges of the East River. You don't seem to need much help selling yourself.

ELINOR

Well, actually Mr. Putnam, I was hoping you could do to me what you've done to her.

Inadvertently, her eyes flick to the bedroom door. Catching this, our couple shares a dry smile. The kid sees that. Uh-oh.

ELINOR (CONT'D)

What I mean is. It's a good thing. That's why I want it.

Now our couple is trying not to laugh.

GEORGE

Just so we're clear, young lady. What is your primary ambition?

ELINOR (straight back)

To take Amelia's place as the number one female pilot.

The honesty, the suddenness, leave George atypically dumbstruck.

AMELIA

Well, good for you! I would have expected nothing less. You want a tip?

ELINOR

I do.

AMELIA

Keep doing what you're doing.

The girl nods, seriously. Okay.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

And don't let anyone turn you around.

39

INT. PUTNAM HOUSE - CHRISTMAS DAY

39

Holiday party in progress. Christmas decorations everywhere. A small crowd around the living room bar where George is telling a story.

Now we see Dorothy standing, drinking, watching George with hard eyes. She turns on her heels and walks OUT into the garden. George sees this, excuses himself, follows her, as we PAN to...

...Amelia standing with a group of guests. She's seen it all.

40

EXT. GARDEN - MOMENTS LATER

40

Here she comes along the roses, still drinking, still fuming. A figure comes up behind her. Falls in step.

GEORGE

Lovely party, huh?

DOROTHY

Depends on your point of view. I've been listening to some idiot brag about his girlfriend.

Still walking. She never looks at him.

GEORGE

Well, in that case, for your information, it is a lovely party indeed. Anything on your mind?

DOROTHY

It's not so much that my husband is having an affair with his meal ticket. It's just a pity we can't have one honest conversation about it.

GEORGE

What's wrong with this one? A promising start, I'd say, in the honesty department.

She finishes her drink. Throws the glass away. From our ANGLE we can now see Amelia in the window, watching them.

DOROTHY

If this is what you call an honest talk, I'd say you need some practice.

GEORGE

Great. Let's try one about you and Fred Upton.

She stops walking. Turns in shock, to see his easy smile.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Well, I'm waiting for our practice conversation. Hoping I'll learn something. About honesty.

She GLARES at him, and storms off. He lets her go. Hear a car engine TURN OVER. Dorothy PEELING OUT. George reflects. As he walks back toward the party, he now sees Amelia in the window. He stops. Their look holds.

41 INT. KITCHEN - LATE NIGHT

41

George at the kitchen table in dim light. It's very late. A HAND places a steaming mug of coffee before him. Followed by a slice of pie. A fork. He smiles. And softly...

GEORGE

Dorothy and I are through.

She sits beside him. Very close.

AMELIA

For a long, long time.

GEORGE

It's different now.

She looks at him. Squints. How?

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Marry me.

Oh. A breath.

AMELIA

I can't do that.

GEORGE

If you give it a chance, you'll learn to love me.

He seems so sunny and strong. What can he be feeling?

AMELIA

I already love you. That's why I can't marry you.

GEORGE (a murmur)

Well, that explains it. For a minute there, I thought you were stuck for an excuse.

She comes close enough to kiss.

AMELIA

I know me. And you don't. Not really.

GEORGE

What if I promise not to learn?

AMELIA

The day will come. When I will run  
away. And when it does...

He stops her with a kiss.

GEORGE

If you love me. I'll take my  
chances.

He stares in her troubled eyes. There is no answer.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Race you to bed.

42 EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY - NEWSREEL

42

Amelia and nearly 20 WOMEN lined up in front of planes.  
Waving, smiling, talking to each other.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Amelia Earhart and a bevy of lovely  
competitors say hello to the press  
announcing the First Women's Air  
Derby, racing from Santa Monica to  
Cleveland. Dubbed by Will Rogers  
'the Powder Puff Derby,' these gals  
certainly know how to capture our  
attention.

The next ANGLE shows Amelia watching some of her colleagues  
bouncing playfully on a see-saw. She smiles tolerantly, but  
maybe there's a little too much cheesecake for her taste.

43 INT. RECEPTION AREA, PUTNAM'S - DAY

43

The crowded waiting room. We CLOSE on a young woman we  
scarcely recognize. It is Elinor. Though less than a year  
has passed, she seems much older. Sophisticated, poised.

ANGLE. A secretary leads Elinor down the corridor to  
George's office. As they enter, George is pacing on the  
phone.

GEORGE (into phone)

Because Amelia invented the Powder  
Puff Derby for female pilots. Then  
the men running the damn race  
suddenly decide every woman has to  
carry a male navigator, and start  
from east of the Rockies so they  
won't crash into the mountains!

Listens, impatient.

GEORGE (into phone)  
 I'll tell you why it's a front page story. Because Amelia pulled every woman out of the race. So the organizers had to roll over and give in, or they'd have lost their shirts. You want me to write your headline?

He glances over. Elinor in the doorway.

GEORGE (into phone)  
 Call you back. I've got a very important guest.

He hangs up, gesturing graciously for her to sit. As she does...

ELINOR  
 Wish I was important enough for you to manage.

GEORGE  
 Well, I've just got one client. And most days she's more than I can manage.

Even Elinor's smile seems older, more capable of subtlety.

ELINOR  
 Get in line behind the boys she smacked around on the Derby.

He grins back. You bet.

ELINOR (CONT'D)  
 Some of the gal flyers had their doubts about her...well, her skill level. But she's everyone's champion now.

GEORGE  
 And both of those things. Are the reasons I called you.

Strange words. He has her attention.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 I think it would be huge for women flyers if Amelia won the Derby. The publicity would put the race, and all of you, up there with the boys.

ELINOR  
I'm not sure she has much of a  
chance, Mr. Putnam.

GEORGE  
Well, the one shot would be putting  
her in a far more powerful plane  
than anything she's flown. We're  
thinking the Lockheed Vega.

The girl's shock. He really means this.

ELINOR  
Sir, I've test piloted the Vega.  
It's way more than she could ever  
handle. It wouldn't be safe, let  
alone successful.

He smiles.

GEORGE  
That's why I'm thinking of you  
flying with her. You could handle  
the cross-country flying, the more  
difficult bits, and I'd pay you \$75  
a week.

Elinor WHISTLES low.

ELINOR  
Well, I think that's the most  
generous opportunity I've ever  
been offered.

He stares at her.

GEORGE  
There's just one thing. Obviously,  
it has to appear that Amelia did  
all the flying. So when pictures  
are taken, you'll stand off to one  
side.

Her eyes narrow. He's completely serious.

ELINOR  
In that case, I'll get my own plane  
and win the race myself.

GEORGE  
You haven't changed.

No smile at all.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 Unfortunately for you, neither  
 have I.

The look in his eye is not to be ignored.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 You can't win if you can't get a  
 plane to enter. Let me predict  
 that you won't.

The voice calm and low and riveting.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 In fact. If you reject my  
 generosity, you may come to regret  
 it. For a long, long time.

ELINOR  
 That's a threat.

GEORGE  
 I'm an intensely loyal person,  
 Elinor. And this is what my  
 loyalty requires.

She's glaring. Reeling. Trapped.

ELINOR  
 She's the one who said I shouldn't  
 let anybody turn me around.

GEORGE  
 She probably meant me.

So honest, the words confuse her.

ELINOR  
 Obviously, she doesn't see me as  
 a threat.

GEORGE  
 Oh, sure she does.

A straight smile...

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 She just doesn't care.

...which silently fades.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 My job. Is to care for her.

DISSOLVE TO...

44 INT. OAK ROOM, PLAZA HOTEL, NEW YORK - NIGHT

44

LONG ANGLE. Sophisticated watering hole. Crowded tonight. PAN to find George alone, waiting. A waiter leads Amelia to the table. George stands, smiling. But the smile is not returned. We CLOSE as they sit...

GEORGE

What's wrong?

AMELIA (clearly furious)

What could be wrong? I had such a lovely afternoon with Elinor Smith.

Oh.

GEORGE

She told you that I shut her out of the Derby. And that's true.

AMELIA

And when were you going to tell me?

GEORGE (calm, straight)

Never. I knew you'd go crazy. And I felt it needed to be done.

She can scarcely believe this.

AMELIA

What? You think I wanted it done, but just let you do the dirty work?

GEORGE

I didn't say that.

AMELIA

Because I'm no angel. Business is competition and competition is rough, and I thank my stars that you're there making this life happen for me, but...

GEORGE

You're making your life hap...

AMELIA

But this is different.

It is.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

If women are going to stab women in the back, then women are going nowhere.

Are you listening?

GEORGE

From here on, I'll just stab men in the back.

AMELIA

You didn't do this for business, anyway.

GEORGE

I did it for fun?

AMELIA

You did it because you love me.

That stops him.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

And when we're married, you mustn't ever...

Now she stops. Because his eyes are wide.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

What's the big shock? I thought you wanted to get married.

Full beat.

GEORGE

I did. I do.

AMELIA

Well, then.

His eyes moving over her face.

GEORGE

What about what you said? The day will come when you run away.

She nods. It will.

AMELIA

You'll be destroyed. And part of me will, too. And I think we both know it.

And yet.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Sometimes things happen that way. You're not better safe than sorry.

Tears stand in his eyes. He is so happy.



AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Please let us not interfere with  
 the other's work or play, nor let  
 the world see our private joys or  
 disagreements.

And then...

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 I must exact a cruel promise. And  
 that is you will let me go in a  
 year if we find no happiness  
 together.

He stops on this. His thoughts unreadable.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 I will try to do my best in every  
 way. And give you that part of me  
 you know and seem to want.

He folds the letter carefully. Places it in his pocket. And  
 smiles.

GEORGE  
 My Amelia. Brutal in her frank-  
 ness. Beautiful in her honesty.

He steps to her. Looks in her eyes. They kiss.

47 INT. PARLOR - LATER 47

LONG ANGLE. The minister reading the vows. The witnesses  
 standing silent. Two black cats rubbing against George's  
 ankles.

DISSOLVE TO...

48 INT. KITCHEN, RYE - MORNING 48

George at the breakfast table. His eggs and toast ignored  
 for the moment, he's reading a magazine article. PAN to  
 Amelia, sipping her coffee. Watching him.

GEORGE (reads aloud)  
 'Why I Believe Women Pilots Can't  
 Fly The Atlantic. An outspoken  
 warning by Lady Heath.'  
 (reading)  
 '...pure suicide for any woman  
 today...it is madness for them to  
 attempt it and...'

He looks up to her.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 '...at least the first dozen will  
 be drowned.' And we're reading  
 this, because...?

AMELIA  
 I might fly to Paris.

Silence.

GEORGE  
 Which is actually across the  
 Atlantic.

AMELIA  
 Hence, the article.

Ah. He nods.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 I'm thinking of doing it solo.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 Would you mind?

He butters his toast.

GEORGE  
 Not at all. When would you like  
 to go?

49 EXT. GARDEN, RYE - DAY

49

CLOSE on Amelia as she kneels, carefully putting new plants  
 into the ground. We see patience, concentration.  
 Contentment. After a moment...

AMELIA  
 I'm surprised you're all right with  
 this...

WIDEN ANGLE. George kneeling beside her. Happily planting  
 his own.

GEORGE  
 Really.

AMELIA  
 Mmm-hmmn. I was braced for the  
 lecture. Five years since  
 Lindbergh, no one's made it solo,  
 so many of them died.

He looks at her work. Reaches over. Starts packing the  
 earth HARDER around her plant. She just watches, then...

GEORGE  
Well, they were only men. This is  
different.

She reaches to his plant and starts LOOSENING the soil...

AMELIA  
I was waiting to hear that I'm only  
doing this because I was just a  
passenger last time, and I'd rather  
die than go on living as a fraud..

No one cracks a smile. It's like Laurel and Hardy in a food  
fight where each lets the other take his best shot. George  
reaches now, starts REPACKING her soil...

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
But you don't think that, do you,  
dear?

GEORGE  
Of course not. But if I did...

She SMACKS his hand. He just keeps working. She finally  
grins, smacks him HARDER. He doesn't seem to notice.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
...all the more reason to say yes.

50 EXT. TEETERBORO AIRPORT - DUSK

50

AERIAL ANGLE. In the sun's last light, two figures walk  
slowly, far below us. The Vega waits.

CLOSE ANGLE. They stand beneath the wing. Her ground crew  
in far distance, giving them their moment. Her look is not  
breezy and cavalier this time, but tender and intimate. She  
knows the fear beneath his easy smile.

He produces a RING, a band of black fibers.

GEORGE  
Elephant hair, I think you wear  
it on your toe. It's good luck.

He puts it in her hand.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Anyway. That's what the elephant  
told me.

Amelia looks at the ring. Turns it in her fingers.

AMELIA  
I think luck has rules. And I try  
to respect them. My favorite is...

She glances up.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
We make our own luck, you and I.  
Remember that.

He will remember that. And more.

GEORGE  
Do you have money?

AMELIA  
No.

He pulls out a twenty dollar bill. Hands it to her.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
All this?

GEORGE  
Sure.

AMELIA  
Thank god, I thought you were going  
to tear it in half.

GEORGE  
I spent our money on ocean liner  
passage to go bring you back. It's  
non-refundable. So try to do your  
part.

She nods. She'll try. He doesn't want to leave her yet.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
So the Simpkin thing. What was all  
that?

AMELIA  
I put it in a letter. Which you'll  
get if I don't make it. So...mixed  
emotions, huh?

He shakes his head.

GEORGE (very soft)  
Either way, something to look  
forward to.

She puts her hands on his face. She doesn't want to leave  
him either.

AMELIA (murmurs)  
Stake up the peonies, huh? They're  
messy when they bloom on the  
ground, and...

And.

AMELIA (a whisper)  
I want to see their heads high.  
When I come home.

She leans up to kiss him. And again. Feeling in her eyes  
that he will never forget.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
See ya.

51 INT. VEGA - NIGHT 51

Amelia alone. Starry night. 12,000 feet below are ICEBERGS.  
A single fishing boat.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
The weather report wasn't perfect.  
But we knew our real chance was to  
take weather that others wouldn't.

Ahead, towering CLOUDS in moonlight. Too high to fly over.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I closed the deal by choosing May  
20, five years to the day from  
Lindbergh's flight. It was too  
good a sell for George to resist.  
What we didn't know...

52 EXT. VEGA - LATER 52

A terrifying STORM BATTERS the plane, which bobs and darts  
and dips like a leaf in a gale.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
...was that my altimeter would conk  
out. Never to return.

53 INT. VEGA - SAME MOMENT 53

Amelia fights for control as the plane is TOSSED and SHAKEN.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
The only way to have any sense of  
altitude, was to keep dropping  
toward the sea.  
(MORE)

AMELIA(cont'd)

When the engines sputtered, that  
was my low-level limit.

A sudden JOLT knocks her OUT of her seat. She scrambles  
back, as we see WHITECAPS A FEW FEET BELOW. She JERKS the  
nose UP, the engine COUGHS...

...and CLIMBS.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I was too busy to grasp how  
impossible the situation had  
become. The joke was...

LATER. Flying in and out of cloud cover.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

All those months flying only with  
instruments, I should have been  
practicing without them.

PAN to the windshield. A small GLOW at the surface of a  
vibrating engine. Amelia hasn't noticed.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I started to wonder if luck was  
paying me back. For thinking I  
knew the rules.

A small BLUE FLAME LICKS out into the night.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Then I smelled burning oil.

She sees it now. The flame coming through a broken weld in  
the manifold ring.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

A bad weld, already a small flame.  
It would be hours back to Canada,  
trying to find an unlit field,  
landing with a heavy fuel load.

She stares at the little flame. Is it growing bigger?

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I told myself, push on. After all,  
if it was a stupid choice...

LATER. Flying in blackness. Rising, as the engines seem  
sluggish.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...no one would ever know.

Suddenly, a FILM of SLUSH on the windscreen.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 With seemingly no warning, there  
 was ice. The controls froze.

And the Vega DIVES into a DIZZYING SPIN.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Through the spin I had one thought,  
 it would be warmer lower, the ice  
 would melt, I just had to regain  
 control...

54 EXT. VEGA - SAME MOMENT 54

The SPINNING plane PLUNGING...

AMELIA (V.O.)  
 ...before I hit the water.

And ARCING at last to SWOOP above the whitecaps. Way close  
 for comfort. SMASH CUT TO...

55 INT. VEGA - SAME MOMENT 55

Amelia REELING in her seat, her fingers FUMBLING in her  
 flight bag, for...

AMELIA (V.O.)  
 ...or passed out.

...SMELLING SALTS, she inhales, again, blinks, starts to  
 climb...

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 The ice happened twice more, and I  
 began to lose heart. Then I  
 remembered Lindbergh's book saying  
 the same thing happened to him.

The sea DISAPPEARS below. Only cloud.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 So I figured, if he's twice as  
 good, I just have to be twice as  
 lucky...

DISSOLVE TO...

HOURS LATER. Amelia seriously fatigued. She breaks through  
 cloud into DAZZLING SUNLIGHT, and blinks, blinded.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 I'd read that part in George's  
 reception room that first day.  
 Bless him for keeping me waiting.

The FUEL GAUGE reads EMPTY. She switches on the RESERVE  
 TANK. And as she DROPS back down into opaque clouds...

...she feels something. Her fingertips go to her left  
 shoulder, and come away...

Wet. Slick.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 The cockpit gauge was defective.  
 There was a steady trickle of fuel  
 down my neck.

She looks around helplessly for a way to stem the dripping.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Toss-up whether the bigger danger  
 was running out of gas or going up  
 in a fireball. I had my answer in  
 less than an hour, when...

DISSOLVE TO...

LATER. Amelia beyond exhaustion. Staring fixedly at some-  
 thing we can't see. Until we PAN through the wind screen to  
 the leak in the manifold weld. The BLUE FLAME is startlingly  
 LARGER, now LICKING its way along the surface of the  
 fuselage...

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 The manifold weld began to  
 separate. I gauged the likelihood  
 of explosion at somewhere between  
 probable and inevitable.

56 INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE - DAY

56

Arms folded, George stares out his window. He hasn't slept  
 or eaten. PAN to his desk. The phone is OFF the hook. The  
 door opens softly...

SECRETARY (O.S.)  
 Mr. Putnam? Line three.

He turns and looks at her. The girl's eyes go down and he  
 BOLTS to the phone, SNATCHES the receiver, SLAMS the  
 button...

GEORGE (into phone)  
 Putnam.

A full beat.

VOICE (O.S.)  
 Sir, this is Douglas McGuire of the  
 Press Association. I'm sorry to  
 tell you that Miss Earhart's plane  
 has crashed in a field, short of  
 Le Bourget airport.

SMASH CUT TO...

57 EXT. SKY - DAY

57

A plane swooping downward through cloud and fog. The SOUND  
 of George's call CONTINUES...

GEORGE (O.S.)  
 Is she all right?

MCGUIRE (O.S.)  
 If the crash is as reported, sir,  
 I'm afraid not. There were  
 terrible flames.

LOWER, it's dropping fast, maybe too fast, WOBBLING in a  
 crosswind, here comes the GROUND, and...

GEORGE (O.S.)  
 Are they completely sure it's her  
 plane?

MCGUIRE (O.S.)  
 Yes sir, absolutely.

...the Vega RIGHTS itself and GLIDES in for as fine a landing  
 as a bumpy meadow could allow. COWS look up as she rolls  
 past, toward...

...one lone astonished FARM WORKER. She cuts her engines,  
 leans from the hatch...

AMELIA  
 Excuse me, sir. Where am I?

A blink. The truth...

MAN  
 In Gallagher's pasture.

One more beat.

MAN (CONT'D)  
 Where are ya supposed to be?

AMELIA  
When I left, I was aiming for  
Paris.

Oh.

MAN (very sad)  
Ya missed, y'know.  
(points)  
It's over there.

58 EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR- DAY

58

MOVIETONE NEWSREEL FOOTAGE of Amelia arriving at New York Harbor to an overwhelming reception.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
Amelia Earhart arrives to a tumultuous New York reception after her whirlwind tour of Europe, in which our Queen of the Skies danced with her royal counterpart the Prince of Wales, before meeting both Benito Mussolini and the Pope.

The MAYOR, the GOVERNOR, every dignitary that could get an invitation is there to greet her.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
The second human to fly the Atlantic solo, she is the only one ever to fly it twice. And she set the record, man or woman, for the fastest crossing. Fourteen hours 54 minutes.

As she waves to the crowd...

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Now it's America's turn to show our girl what we think of her!

DISSOLVE TO...

59 INT. BACKSTAGE, CONSTITUTIONAL HALL, WASHINGTON, D.C. - NIGHT

We are standing in the wings. Through the curtains, we GLIMPSE the eager, packed house in an auditorium. From the stage, a speaker DRONES, but backstage...

...George peeks out at the throng. When he looks back, we see Amelia, her troubled face. The folded newspaper in her hand.

AMELIA (reads)  
 'Only an average flyer, she has pushed herself to the front by following the tactics of the feminists...'

She looks up to him.

GEORGE  
 Well, I'm glad someone besides me finally noticed.

His smile is light. Her eyes watching him. Then...

AMELIA (reads)  
 'Using a man-made perfect machine, tuned by men mechanics, trained by men flyers, on a course laid out by a man. By a lucky break she just managed to make the hop.'

She stares at the paper. His voice comes gently...

GEORGE  
 Why would you even read that garbage?

AMELIA  
 Well, it reminds me how much I owe to the men of this world. Keeps me humble.

GEORGE  
 Good. And remembering how little you owe me keeps me humble.

And softly...

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 He's a crackpot. Let it go.

He points to the packed hall...

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 Cheer up. They're crazy about you.

AMELIA (quiet)  
 Well, they're crazy about something.

She looks down. Self-doubt flickers.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 What have we really done?

GEORGE  
You've made them feel like this.

AMELIA  
That's not enough.

GEORGE  
Most of them are women. And for  
them, it's very much enough.

She shakes her head.

AMELIA  
The World Telegram said, 'a  
magnificent display of useless  
courage.'

GEORGE  
The question is. Can any magnif-  
icent display of courage be use-  
less?

AMELIA  
The point is. Men do it every day.  
And no one throws a parade.

Ah. Well...

GEORGE  
One day closer, then. To the day  
when they won't think to throw one  
for you.

She doesn't turn. She doesn't smile.

AMELIA  
Reasoning with me. A magnificent  
display of useless courage.

He nods to himself.

GEORGE  
And. It's fun.

From the stage...

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. THE  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

HAIL TO THE CHIEF strikes up. We hear the deep applause.  
George begins to straighten Amelia's outfit, touching her  
hair, as he did long ago on the Copley Hotel roof.

PRESIDENT HOOVER (O.S.)  
 THE GOLD MEDAL OF THE NATIONAL GEO-  
 GRAPHIC SOCIETY WAS LAST AWARDED  
 FIVE YEARS AGO TO COL. CHARLES  
 LINDBERGH.

George murmurs close to her ear...

GEORGE  
 If a bomb goes off tonight, the  
 whole government of the United  
 States is out there...

PRESIDENT HOOVER (O.S.)  
 IT HAS NEVER BEEN AWARDED TO A  
 WOMAN...

GEORGE  
 Some dog catcher will have to  
 become President.

She smiles. Just for him.

PRESIDENT HOOVER (O.S.)  
 UNTIL TONIGHT.

GEORGE (a whisper)  
 Boy. Imagine if you'd actually  
 done something.

AMELIA (a whisper)  
 Imagine.

PRESIDENT HOOVER (O.S.)  
 IT IS MY HONOR TO WELCOME TO CONSTI-  
 TUTION HALL, A ROLE MODEL FOR  
 LADIES EVERYWHERE...

AMELIA  
 Ladies.

PRESIDENT HOOVER (O.S.)  
 MISS AMELIA EARHART.

GEORGE  
 Miss.

She's through the curtain, and the crowd CRACKLES with  
 APPLAUSE as...

...George stands in the wings. Proud. And concerned.

60

INT. TRAIN - DAY

60

A train rumbles through countryside. A private compartment finds Amelia staring out the window. George studying her.

GEORGE (V.O.)

The irony is, I'd finally put that wedding day letter out of my mind. Stopped watching every beautiful accomplished man who crossed her path.

REVERSE ANGLE. Through the glass of our compartment door, a crowd stands jouncing against each other. Gazing at their Queen of the Skies.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I had a call from the Byrds. They've asked us to dinner Thursday.

AMELIA

Thursday, I'll be in Boston. Meeting Gene Vidal and Paul Collins.

Said lightly. Not even looking at him. While through the glass, it's become quite a tussle.

GEORGE

Don't tell me Gene wants to resurrect Transcontinental?

AMELIA

No, he's starting a shuttle service. Washington, New York, Boston...

One woman goes flying from view, as a younger one gets her place.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Could be a money maker for us. Get me off the lecture grind.

He stares in her eyes. Almost as if looking for something.

GEORGE

Gene's a dashing guy. He could talk anyone into anything.

Their look holds.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Sounds like a great idea.

DISSOLVE TO...

61 INT. RESTAURANT, BOSTON - NIGHT

61

PAN the dark, elegant restaurant. In a corner by the fireplace, Amelia and her dinner companions are being served lobsters. GENE VIDAL leans to Amelia as he speaks, and she hangs on every word.

GENE  
Transcontinental was too ambitious.  
Too many hops, too tough on the  
ladies. But the shuttle...

A lean athlete's body, easy grace in every movement. Strikingly handsome features that convey not only intellect, but kindness and decency.

GENE (CONT'D)  
Washington, New York, Boston. I  
think it's the future. Will you  
go there with us?

She's trying to crack her lobster, but can't take her eyes off her host.

AMELIA  
What on earth would you need me  
for?

She's making a real mess of the lobster. Gene notices. PAUL COLLINS doesn't...

PAUL  
Hasn't George taught you anything?  
Lady Lindy, the queen of the air,  
the best known woman in the entire  
U.S. of A?

Gene reaches over, as if it were his own plate, and begins cracking her lobster for her. She looks in his eyes and tries to concentrate.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Gene on the poster with you.  
Legendary athlete at West Point,  
two events in the Olympics, a top  
pilot who should be running the  
skies for Roosevelt when he wins...

Gene looks up at Paul, as if to say: Enough. Now he smiles at Amelia. She blinks, what? Don't you want your lobster? Oh. She starts eating...

                  GENE (looking only at Amelia)  
Thanks, Paul. I think you've even  
talked me out of it.

DISSOLVE TO...

LATER. Paul has gone. Gene and Amelia are at the bar, huddled over his beer and her Coke.

                  AMELIA (V.O.)  
Gene had a terrible marriage and  
was separated from his alcoholic  
adulterous wife. But he was too  
kind to humiliate her with a  
divorce...

Gene drains the last of his beer.

                  AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
As a result, he was basically a  
single parent to their young son,  
Gore.

He glances at his watch. Wow.

                  GENE  
I'm rattling on here, and you've  
got a morning train.

But she's just staring in his eyes. This could be her last chance to ask...

                  AMELIA  
How's Nina doing?

                  GENE  
Oh, fine.

Really? He smiles, gently.

                  GENE (CONT'D)  
Actually, she hasn't been feeling  
her best. She'll probably summer  
in Newport. So my kid's stuck with  
Dad again.

                  AMELIA  
If you two get bored, I could tag  
along sometimes.

GENE  
You suggesting you're less boring  
than I am?

AMELIA  
Well, yeh.

He smiles first. Hers is slower, but here it comes.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
Any given meal, I can eat a lobster  
and have you boys in stitches.

A full beat. He's deciding.

GENE  
Gore would love that. He has a  
little crush, I'm afraid.

AMELIA  
At seven?

GENE  
He's eight.

Well, then. He breaks the look. Fishes out some cash for  
the bar tab.

GENE (CONT'D)  
Listen, Paul and I would be  
thrilled to rope you into our  
shuttle.

AMELIA  
Are you kidding, it's a godsend.  
No matter how hard George and I  
work, how many lectures we cram in,  
there's never enough money for the  
next adventure.

He looks at her. Lets the silence sit there. His eyes seem  
to convey a depth of understanding.

GENE  
The next adventure. What is it?

She shrugs. No idea.

GENE (CONT'D)  
Because we're running out of  
oceans.

AMELIA  
Wish you'd do something about that.

GENE  
I'm serious, Amelia.

Her soft smile.

AMELIA  
I know. Always.

GENE  
The only way you can stay where you  
are. And be who you are...

Serious indeed.

GENE (CONT'D)  
Is to keep feeding the beast.

She can't smile anymore. Because this is the very fear she  
lives with.

GENE (CONT'D)  
And the beast always needs  
something larger, greater, more  
daring...

AMELIA (quiet)  
He costs money, too.

GENE  
The price of fame, literally. Do  
you and George talk about this?

Silence.

AMELIA  
We don't have to.

GENE  
With all respect. Yes, you do.

62 INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - LATER

62

Walking together down the hallway of her hotel. No one  
speaks. Their thoughts are their own. She reaches her room,  
finds her key. Opens the door, and...

...turns to him. A brief, direct look. She reaches one hand  
gently behind his head. Leans up.

Kisses his mouth.

AMELIA (a whisper)  
Thank you.

His eyes question.

AMELIA  
For understanding.

There is no smile. Without a word, she goes into her room.  
CLOSES the door behind her.

He stands alone. Do I knock on that door? Then, smiles to himself, and simply...

Walks away.

DISSOLVE TO...

63

INT. BANQUET HALL, WASHINGTON - NIGHT

63

Crowded hall, each table ringed by diners in formal dress.  
At a table of honor, George sits next to Elinor Smith,  
chatting comfortably. PAN to the head table...

GEORGE (V.O.)  
After Roosevelt won, his wife  
Eleanor brought the advancement of  
women to national attention with  
stunning success.

CLOSE on ELEANOR ROOSEVELT, eating heartily, chatting,  
laughing with a companion we don't see until...

GEORGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
A gutsy gal who rode a bobsled in  
the Winter Olympics, spent hours  
each morning on horseback, and  
carried a pistol on car trips.  
She possessed boundless energy, a  
towering intellect...

...we reveal Amelia in a formal satin dress at her side,  
dishing with the First Lady like the closest of girlfriends.

GEORGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
...and was Amelia's idol. As it  
happened, she was obsessed with  
flying, making Amelia her absolute  
heroine.

AMELIA  
So he hasn't actually forbidden  
you.

ELEANOR  
Franklin doesn't forbid. He just  
feels it's a waste of my valuable  
time to learn. Since I can't  
afford to buy a plane.

They share a look of such mutual understanding, neither has to smile.

AMELIA

The wrong Roosevelt got elected.

ELEANOR

And it will take at least four years to correct the mistake.

Keeps eating.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

I did ask about aviation, but he hasn't decided on the structure yet. It might be under the Bureau of Commerce.

AMELIA

I think the structure may be less important than the man chosen to run it.

Said casually, looking at her plate.

ELEANOR

My hearing is failing. I missed the words 'or woman,' which you undoubtedly added after, or perhaps before, the word 'man.'

AMELIA

This could be one of those rare instances. When the most accomplished candidate. Turns out to be male.

Glances up for the reaction.

ELEANOR

How exciting. I love finding the exception that proves the rule. Is it a name I know?

Amelia's straight gaze. Her small smile.

AMELIA

How do you feel about flying at night?

Eleanor's eyes register the change of topic. Rolling with it...

ELEANOR

I've never done it. Franklin finds it dangerous.

AMELIA  
Outstanding.

64 INT. CONDOR AIRLINER - LATER 64

Raucous party in the small cabin, hosted by George and fueled by champagne. PAN slowly to...

...the cockpit. Amelia at the controls in her evening dress and formal gloves. Eleanor in the co-pilot's seat, awestruck by the brilliant starry night. Amelia glances over, moved by her friend's almost childlike wonder.

AMELIA (softly)  
Put your hands on the wheel.

Eleanor looks over. Are you serious?

AMELIA  
It's dual controls. No one will ever know.

Hesitation.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
Don't you trust me?

And slowly, Eleanor's fingers close on her wheel. Amelia's hands come away from hers.

ELEANOR  
Dear God.

The Condor purrs along through the night air. The moon bobs slightly off to one side. Eleanor's eyes are swimming with the thrill of this.

AMELIA  
I feel like a Coke. Can I get you something?

And stands up. Only the trace of her smile as the pilot's eyes WIDEN in absolute shock.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
Do try not to hit the ground.

DISSOLVE TO...

65 INT. WHITE HOUSE PRESS ROOM - DAY 65

A sea of press, quiet, poised, attentive. REVERSE ANGLE to...

...CLOSE on a seated Roosevelt before a bank of microphones.

ROOSEVELT

Today, we proudly announce an appointment critical to America's commerce, and to its role as technology's leader in the Twentieth Century.

PAN to Gene at his side. Sober. Distinguished. Proud.

ROOSEVELT (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Gene Vidal is an obvious and perfect choice as our first Director of Commerce's Aeronautics Branch. His extraordinary credentials include...

DISSOLVE TO...

66 EXT. PUTNAM HOME, RYE - EVENING

66

A taxi slowly pulls up to the home we know. Warmly lit, music playing from within. Gene climbs from the cab, as yard lights go ON.

As Gene starts up the path, the front door opens and Amelia BURSTS into the night, RUNNING to Gene, JUMPING INTO his arms, HUGGING him in her delight. We PULL BACK to...

George watching it all from the doorway. His easy smile seems comfortably in place, as...

...Amelia walks Gene up the path, her arm around his waist, talking excitedly, flushed as a schoolgirl. As they reach the door...

George is the picture of calm and dignity. He beams and CLASPS Gene's hand. Throws an arm around his shoulder as Amelia leads them inside.

The door closes. We hear laughter.

67 EXT. GARDEN, RYE - DAY

67

Amelia on her knees, tending to her garden. She seems happy and filled with energy. George comes and kneels beside her. Starts weeding.

AMELIA

Have I told you what a perfect job you did on the peonies? They're miraculous.

GEORGE (working)  
You have, actually. Twice.

AMELIA  
Sorry.

GEORGE  
It's all right. You've been  
distracted lately.

No spin on that. If anything, the tone is kind.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Listen, I've put together a month  
in Europe. Close some foreign  
licensing deals, open new  
markets...

She doesn't look up.

AMELIA  
When are you leaving?

GEORGE  
Thing is. I'd like you to come.

She stiffens only slightly. Can he sense it?

AMELIA  
I don't really see how I can.

GEORGE  
I've talked to the promoters,  
they'll switch some lecture dates  
for us.

Now he's looking at her profile. Saddened, if not surprised,  
by what he sees.

AMELIA  
Well, it's not just that. There's  
my work on the shuttle, we're at a  
critical stage, and...I've just  
started as Gene's consultant at the  
Aeronautics Branch...

She knows he's watching. Shakes her head. Keeps on working.

GEORGE  
Normally, I'd be worried about  
leaving you here alone. But I  
suppose that won't be a problem,  
will it?

She stops now. Looks up at him. If he wants a direct  
conversation, he can have it.

AMELIA  
What are you trying to say?

GEORGE  
I think I've just said it.

A long held look. Neither backing away. Sadness on both sides.

GEORGE (softly)  
Is there anything you want to say?

She sighs. Her fingers reach out, rub his hand with affection.

AMELIA  
I can't think of anything helpful.

He nods. Well, then. Rises slowly...

Walks back toward the house, his garden tools forgotten. She stares after him.

He disappears into the house. She's still staring.

DISSOLVE TO...

68 EXT. LOS ANGELES COLISEUM - DAY

68

MOVIETONE NEWSREEL FOOTAGE introduced by its theme. A stadium in brilliant sunlight, filled with more than 100,000 people.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
Los Angeles, California. The Tenth Olympics of the modern era kick off, as movie stars mingle with ordinary Joes.

On the track, WOMEN RUN the 100 meter high hurdles as every throat CHEERS.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Here's the gold medal run of the world's best woman athlete, Babe Didrickson. Cheered on by the most celebrated woman of today...

TIGHT INSERT of Amelia with Gene and 8-year-old GORE, all applauding excitedly.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 ...that's right, Amelia Earhart.  
 Hollywood glamor, American winners,  
 and wait til our boys warm up for  
 their action.

The camera lingers as Amelia says something to Gore. They look like a family.

69

INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE, NEW YORK - DUSK

69

CLOSE on George alone in his office. He goes to the door, LOCKS it. His face is drawn, grim.

GEORGE (V.O.)  
 By this time, I had a side job as  
 chairman of the editorial board of  
 Paramount Pictures. So Amelia and  
 I bought a little place in Los  
 Angeles.

He goes slowly back to his desk. On it, sits a large cardboard CARTON.

GEORGE (V.O.)  
 She was out there, preparing for a  
 flight, when our home in Rye burned  
 to the ground.

We SEE that the contents of the box, papers, small objects, have been SINGED or CHARRED. He stares into it.

GEORGE (V.O.)  
 We both cried when I called to tell  
 her. She asked to come be with me.  
 But I insisted she stay there, to  
 keep on schedule for her flight.

He reaches into the box...

GEORGE (V.O.)  
 So many treasures lost. Letters  
 and poems she'd written. I poured  
 through the rubble...

70

INT. LOS ANGELES HOME - DAY

70

Amelia curled up on the sofa of a cozy, pleasant little home. The doors are open to the patio and yard. Winter is different here. Tropical flowers, fruit trees in bloom. The phone RINGS and she picks it up quickly, knowing it's George.

AMELIA (softly)  
 Hi.  
 (beat)  
 Yeh. What's today been like? You  
 still okay?

INTERCUT George at his office. He's standing at the window, phone in one hand, single sheet of paper in the other. Like the other objects in the box, it is partially singed.

GEORGE  
 I found something you'd written.

Draws a breath. Reads...

GEORGE (reading)  
 'To touch your hand or see your  
 face today is joy. Your casual  
 presence in a room recalls the  
 stars that watched us as we lay.

BACK to Amelia. Tears fill her eyes.

GEORGE (reading)  
 I mark you in the moving crowd  
 And see again those stars a warm  
 night lent us long ago. We loved  
 so then. We love so now.

INTERCUT George. His eyes are dry.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 Thank you for writing that.

A beat. His voice still softer...

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 Even though I'd never seen it.

HOLD on him. The pain of what that must mean. And...

71 BACK TO LOS ANGELES

71

Her lips are parted. She's searching for words.

AMELIA  
 I suppose I thought. It was too  
 revealing.

WIDEN ANGLE. Gene enters the room with a drink in his hand and sits down next to her, concerned by her obvious distress.

AMELIA (into the phone)  
 I'm so glad you have it now.  
 (listens)  
 (MORE)

AMELIA(cont'd)

Of course. Me, too. I'll call  
you later.

She hangs up slowly. The tears begin to fall. She looks at  
Gene helplessly. Then stands without a word.

Walks out into the yard.

DISSOLVE TO...

72

EXT. NEWARK AIRPORT - NEWSREEL FOOTAGE - NIGHT

72

Spectators at Newark Airport. A plane CIRCLES the field as  
FLOOD LIGHTS FLASH ON, and the crowd begins to CHEER. Arcing  
in now for a landing. Smooth trajectory.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

The odyssey began in Honolulu when  
she became the first person, man  
or woman, to fly solo over half the  
Pacific to California.

Touching down, the cheering CROWD held back by police. As  
Amelia taxis to a stop, the crowd BREAKS THROUGH police  
lines and SURGES toward the plane.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Then, the first human to solo from  
California to Mexico City. Followed  
by her daring solo across the Gulf.  
As she passed over Washington,  
D.C., she eclipsed the time of a  
certain previous flight, from 27  
hours to 13 hours.

Amelia hops down from the plane, grinning and waving. She is  
surrounded by adoring fans.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

The pilot of that previous flight?  
Some guy named Lindbergh.

The JOSTLING of the crowd gets out of control, the police  
can't protect her as she is SWEPT ALONG by the mob, beaming,  
laughing, enjoying it all.

73

INT. MAYFLOWER HOTEL BAR, WASHINGTON, D.C. - NIGHT

73

Dark little piano bar. They sit in a quiet corner, com-  
fortable in silence. Gene with his martini, Amelia with her  
Coke. She's shelling peanuts from a bowl, popping some in  
her mouth, passing a few over to him.

GENE

If you don't drink, why do you come to bars?

AMELIA

Must be the ambience. And the nuts.

GENE

What worries me is, in some of these bars the nuts are the ambience. Specially when they make a pass at you.

She chews, staring at him.

AMELIA

Any guy would have to be nuts to do that. I'm considerable trouble, if you haven't noticed.

GENE

You keep advertising that, but I'm still waiting to see it.

She looks down at her fingers as they shell. Barely audible...

AMELIA

You'll see it.

GENE

Well, here's your chance. I'm taking Gore to the conference in Bermuda. He wants you to come.

AMELIA

Gore, huh?

GENE

Sure. I'm completely indifferent.

AMELIA

I wish.

Do you?

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Would make life simpler.

She throws a peanut which BOINKS off his face. He smiles a suddenly goofy, very non-elegant smile.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Actually, I'll be in Indiana. Edward Elliot of Purdue wants  
(MORE)

AMELIA(cont'd)

me to build a women's careers  
department there.

Really? He likes that.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I'll be back and forth. When I'm  
there, I've asked to stay in the  
dorm with the girls.

GENE

That's a wonderful idea.  
Especially now.

Something in the way he said that.

AMELIA

What's special about now?

GENE

A good time for some positive press  
about you as a role model.

Her eyes harden. Whatever do you mean?

GENE (CONT'D)

You don't read the papers?

AMELIA

Not unless someone makes me.

GENE

Well, someone should. Because  
they're all saying you took  
recklessly dangerous solo flights  
for no earthly purpose except  
publicity. Meaning, money.

Dead. Silence.

GENE (CONT'D)

They also harp on a growing list  
of products that you commercially  
endorse.

AMELIA

How thoughtless of me to be doing  
all this in a society where no one  
else is interested in making money.  
Present company included.

He's not afraid of her.

GENE

Look, George had you taking money from the sugar cartel for the Hawaii flight, the Mexican Government for theirs, he's selling commemorative stamps which you carried on the flights...

AMELIA

If this is about George, just say so. Because we made those calls, and we includes me.

GENE

I'm sorry I said it that way. This is actually about you, because I'm picking a fight, apparently a useless one, for the benefit of someone I care about.

AMELIA

And what's your point? Women are held to some higher standard? Bankers and industrialists are admired for succeeding, but women are just considered selfish and grasping?

GENE (quietly)

Of course they are.

AMELIA

Well, let's change that, shall we? Or would you just prefer to adopt it, since groveling would be easier.

Staring at each other.

GENE

If you want to make money, my guess is that people viewing you as Lady Lindy, America's Sweetheart of the Skies, the wife/mother/daughter they all wished they had. Would be helpful.

AMELIA

Thanks for the tip.

GENE

Thanks for not being defensive.

Full beat.

AMELIA  
Well, I'm an open-minded girl. And  
to prove it, I'm hereby resigning  
as your consultant at the  
Aeronautics Branch.

She throws some money on the table for the drinks.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
The public linking of our names  
does more harm to that image of  
mine than everything else put  
together.

She stands up.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
Next time you read the papers. Try  
reading between the lines.

Walks out. Gene makes no move to follow. He's said his  
piece.

DISSOLVE TO...

74

EXT. ROSE GARDEN, WHITE HOUSE - DAY

74

MOVIETONE NEWSREEL FOOTAGE introduced by its theme. Against  
a backdrop of flowerbeds, Amelia is flanked by four WOMEN  
with conservative hats and middle-aged gravitas. The  
photographers edge closer.

AMELIA  
I came to Washington today with the  
National Women's Party, to ask the  
President for his aid in passing  
the Lucretia Mott Amendment for  
equal rights.

She waits for the press to quiet.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
And that's because I haven't needed  
it.

The winsome smile.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
I'm the lucky one. Our Department  
of Commerce shows no prejudice in  
issuing licenses to fly. A pilot  
is a pilot.

And now it fades.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 How about giving the rest of our  
 women. The ones who can be  
 productive for their families and  
 for our nation an equal break?

She is not defiant. Gentle and strong.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 They are your sisters and your  
 daughters. They are your wives.  
 And fellas...

The smallest shake of her head.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 You've no excuse. And you know it.

75

INT. WOMEN'S DORMITORY, PURDUE UNIVERSITY - NIGHT

75

Co-Eds gathered in the common room in robes and nightgowns.  
 They fill the old couches, the mismatched easy chairs, curl  
 up in blankets on the floor. PAN TO...

...Amelia in flannel pajamas, sitting on the grand piano,  
 pointing to the next question among the many raised hands.

CO-ED  
 Okay, it's all well and good to  
 tell us to study whatever we want,  
 and work at whatever we want, and  
 not give a darn about what the  
 world of men think...

AMELIA  
 ...including them wanting us to say  
 darn instead of damn.

Laughter. The girl flushes a little, her point is a crucial  
 one...

CO-ED  
 But what about those of us who are  
 getting married when we graduate?  
 What advice do you have for us?

AMELIA  
 Don't.

She meant that. And no one is laughing now.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 Build your career first. And,  
 surprisingly, that's the best thing  
 you can do for your eventual  
 marriage.

So many eager faces, so many disturbed ones.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 Look. It starts with a strong  
 sexual attraction, that the  
 woman assumes must be love.

Some heads are nodding. Some eyes suspicious.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 Everything works until the first  
 financial crisis jars the man's  
 confidence and threatens the  
 woman's security. Why...?

She looks from one to the next.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 Because she can't help. All she  
 can be is dependent. Because that  
 is what she's been trained to be.

A phone RINGS. One of the girls snatches it up to cut off  
 the interruption.

CO-ED #2 (hushed)  
 Common room. Oh. Sure.  
 (hand over phone, to  
 Amelia)  
 He says he's the man in your life.

Amelia hops off the piano. There are plenty of curious  
 faces.

AMELIA  
 Trust me. Only a husband talks  
 like that.

In their laughter, she goes to the phone. EVERYBODY hangs on  
 every word of...

AMELIA (into the phone)  
 Yes? Yes. Yes...  
 (hand over phone, to the  
 girls)  
 They love when we say 'yes.'

Laughter.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 I'm flying in Tuesday. Yes, of course, I'll make time.  
 (beat)  
 Me, too.  
 (beat)  
 Me, too. Thanks for the roses.

She hangs up. Turns to her adoring pupils, and drops a curtsy. Ta-da! They APPLAUD. She stares at them. As if deciding whether to say...

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 Can you women keep a secret?

They can. And boy, do they want to hear one.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 Well, it's no secret that I'm a bit driven, some might say obsessive, about my little flying adventures...

They are nodding, wide-eyed, go on.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 I've decided to embark on easily the most exciting, possibly craziest, ever...

They hold their breath.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 I'm going to fly. Around the world.

A frozen beat for them to even absorb this. They BURST into WILD APPLAUSE, Amelia beaming, as we DISSOLVE TO...

76

EXT. PARK AVENUE, NEW YORK - NIGHT

76

Amelia and George, bundled against the cold, walking Park Avenue hand in hand. Christmas decorations, bright lights. A good mood prevails.

AMELIA  
 Are you going to tell me your surprise, or do I have to get physical?

GEORGE  
 Boy, that is the last thing I'd want.

Well, then?

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I only thought that if you're serious about this around-the-world nonsense. It might be handy to have a plane to fly in.

AMELIA

Except it would have to be an Electra, and they cost...

GEORGE

...\$36,000. After a generous discount from Lockheed.

AMELIA

May as well be a billion.

GEORGE

...not to mention at least another 36 to get it modified and ready.

She glances at him. He looks awfully smug.

AMELIA

And your surprise is, you robbed a bank.

GEORGE

Actually. A university.

They stop. What on earth...?

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I've sort of persuaded Ed Elliot to create an Amelia Earhart Fund for Aeronautical Research at Purdue. And suggested a budget item of...

He shrugs.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

...oh, eighty grand. For a suitable 'flying laboratory.'

Her eyes just bug out. No! He nods, slowly. Uh-huh. And she...

...THROWS her arms around his neck, KISSING him hard enough to startle passersby. It only makes him chuckle.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

As I said, I've sort of persuaded Ed. There are a bunch of trustees and donors, tho. We have to get them on board.

AMELIA  
Think I could help?

He looks in her eyes.

GEORGE  
Nah.

She grins.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
By the way. That's not the  
surprise.

It's not? Uh-uh. And he glances to...

...the window of the GALLERY they've stopped at. She sees a  
magnificently carved CHEST. On a crest in the front: AE.  
We PAN the surface, to see planes, oceans, a shamrock for the  
Londonderry landing, dozens more symbols of her triumphs, and  
in a bottom corner, looking up at all of this in wonder...

...a small cat. In a long frock coat.

GEORGE (a whisper)  
Merry Christmas.

Her tears just come. She's standing on Park Avenue and she  
can't do anything about it. He reaches a tender hand...

...and strokes her hair. He is her hero. See it in her  
eyes.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Can't wait to see what you got me.

She sniffles.

AMELIA  
Cat food. A whole case.

77 INT. HOME, RYE - DAY

77

Amelia at her writing desk. Determined, focused. She begins  
to write...

AMELIA (O.S.)  
Dear Mr. President: Some time ago  
I told you and Mrs. Roosevelt about  
my confidential plans for a world  
flight. The chief problem is the  
jump westward from Honolulu...

As she writes, DISSOLVE TO...

78

INT. DINING ROOM, PURDUE UNIVERSITY - NIGHT

78

A glittering table surrounded by high rollers. George and President Elliot sit on either side of Amelia, who has risen to speak.

AMELIA

As President Elliot has said, it would be a shining adventure, beckoning with new experiences. Making me more useful to the program here at Purdue.

She looks into the eyes of each in turn...

AMELIA (CONT'D)

It is much more. I believe that women should do for themselves what men have done - and occasionally what men have not.

Yes?

AMELIA (CONT'D)

This might encourage other women toward greater independence of thought and action. And I know how deeply you gentlemen desire that.

There is gentle laughter. Amelia reacts in mock surprise.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I know, of course, from my chats earlier in the evening. With each of your wives.

More laughter. Applause from a wife, then the others, then all.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

In that spirit, I want each of you to reach for your checkbooks...

She regards their amusement. And losing none of the warmth of her own smile...

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I mean that quite literally. This is an opportunity for me to exhibit the quality my husband admires most.

George and Amelia gaze at each other.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
The capacity. To be relentless.

79 INT. HANGAR - DAY

79

The LOCKHEED ELECTRA, a sleek state-of-the-art aircraft with its gleaming metallic surface, nose up in the center of a huge space. Its engines are on hoists, being worked on by a team of MECHANICS.

Eight-year-old Gore gazes up, as if he has never seen anything quite so wondrous. Amelia and Gene watch, with barely suppressed smiles. He's in a suit. She's in grease-stained overalls from working with the mechanics.

GORE  
So you'd be the first one, right?  
You always like that.

First one?

GORE (CONT'D)  
To fly around the world.

AMELIA  
Well, there's Magellan, 400 years ago. Actually, he didn't make it. And he died. And he used a boat.

GORE  
So it's almost the same, except it's completely different.

AMELIA  
Pretty much.

He glowers at her. She glowers back.

GENE  
There are men who say they flew around the world, but they didn't fly around all of it.

GORE  
Because at higher latitudes, it's a short trip. At the North Pole, you just spin in a circle and you've gone around the world.

AMELIA  
So why are you asking? Just to show how smart you are?

GORE  
Pretty much.

Now he's grinning. She just glowers harder.

GORE (CONT'D)

The only way to really fly around the world is to fly the entire circumference of 27,000 miles. Like at the equator.

AMELIA

No one's tried it. You think I should?

No answer.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Dare me.

GORE

Okay.

AMELIA

Okay.

Is she serious? She seems to be.

GENE

Ask her about the Pacific. The maximum range of the Electra is 4000 miles. And the closest land west of Honolulu is farther than that.

Gore looks to her. Well?

AMELIA

I'll have to refuel.

GORE

Where?

AMELIA

In the air. One plane to another.

The boy is staring at her now. Staring.

GORE

You're really going to do all this, aren't you?

AMELIA

Well, don't you think I can?

A beat.

GORE

I guess we'll find out.

Another.

AMELIA  
Pretty much.

HOLD on Gene. He smiles at his kid...

GENE  
Go out to the car and get Sara.  
Ask if she'll take you for an ice  
cream. Okay?

The boy knows he's being dismissed. Looks from his dad to Amelia, who steps forward to give him a hug and a kiss.

AMELIA  
We'll play some cards before you  
leave.

Okay, then. He waves. One more glance at dad, and Gore goes. Gene gestures for Amelia to come with him, away from the mechanics. What's up? But he's already walking to...

...a little folding table, off in a corner. She follows. Sits. Well...?

GENE  
You can't refuel in the air.

Just like that.

AMELIA  
Is that an opinion or an order?

His rueful smile.

GENE  
The only good thing about losing  
our former relationship is I feel a  
little freer to tell you when  
you're being completely crazy.

AMELIA  
Oh, I bet there are more advantages  
than just that.

No one's backing down on this.

GENE  
You're not a good enough pilot to  
do mid-air refueling. You will  
not be able to control the Electra  
for that docking maneuver for that  
amount of time.

AMELIA  
I've taken bigger risks.

GENE  
I've noticed. Don't be so proud  
of it.

He reaches into a pocket. Pulls out a folded sheet of paper. It opens to reveal a MAP of the Pacific. A dot is CIRCLED in red.

GENE (CONT'D)  
This is Howland Island. It's half-way between Honolulu and New Guinea. It has no elevation, no trees, it's a mile wide and a mile and a half long. Hardly anyone knows or cares that it exists.

AMELIA  
It's your vacation home.

GENE  
We're colonizing it, because when the Japanese make their move, we're going to need a refueling strip there.

She blinks. The Japanese.

GENE (CONT'D)  
Try reading the newspapers between the lines. We haven't started building the runways yet. Maybe if someone I knew could get the President's attention...

She stares at the map. The dot.

GENE (CONT'D)  
It's really tiny, a grain of sand in the middle of a thousand miles of nowhere.

Her eyes are clicking through a calculus of their own.

GENE (CONT'D)  
You'd need a first-class navigator for that leg. Which means the trip can't be entirely solo.

And softly...

GENE (CONT'D)  
Can you handle that?

No answer. He waits without saying a word.

AMELIA (softly back)  
Don't rush me. I'm thinking.

80

EXT. COAST GUARD STATION, LOS ANGELES - MORNING

80

A Coast Guard station overlooking the Pacific. A lone woman leans on a railing. From the station, a MAN emerges, he has...

...a thermos and two large mugs. He pours steaming coffee into each, and brings them to the woman at the rail. She has turned to study him as he approaches.

AMELIA  
Hullo, Fred. It's good to meet you.

She holds out her hand. He juggles the mugs, so he can shake it. Strong look in each other's eyes. Hands her a mug...

FRED  
I hear you like your coffee black.

AMELIA  
This time of day, I like it with bacon and eggs.

His slight grin. A handsome guy.

FRED  
Be right back.

AMELIA  
Over easy on the eggs. Your job could depend on it.

Silence between them. Comfortable smiles.

FRED  
Are we sizing me up?

And, of course, this is exactly what she's doing.

AMELIA  
I'm told that mid-air refueling would be beyond my abilities.

FRED  
Maybe, maybe not. 20% it works. 20% you crash. 60% you don't get the fuel, so you're cooked anyway.

AMELIA  
Better odds of hitting that island?

FRED  
How do you feel about 100%?

Watching his eyes as he says that. Evaluating.

AMELIA  
Even with cloud cover?

FRED  
I've crossed the Pacific by air 18 times. Pan Am told you I'm the best celestial navigator they've ever seen.

AMELIA  
They did.

FRED  
Someone else told you I have a drinking problem. Which is a big part of why we're here, yes?

No answer.

FRED (CONT'D)  
Pan Am will tell you. Everyone I ever worked for will tell you. Nothing's interfered with my performance. Not once.

AMELIA  
My dad drank. He lied all the time. Rest his soul.

FRED  
You trusted Bill Stultz. That worked out. Rest his soul.

AMELIA  
Bill just had to find Europe. We're looking for something less than two miles long, with nothing higher on it than 18 feet.

He shakes his head.

FRED  
That's what you're looking for. I'm looking for coordinates on a map. And if it doesn't work...

He spreads his large hands...

FRED (CONT'D)  
 Money-back guarantee.

She holds the look.

AMELIA (softly)  
 Hey. How can I lose?

81 INT. BARCLAY HOTEL, NEW YORK - DAY

81

Amelia at a bank of microphones, smiling, modest, comfortable. George and Fred stand back to one side. FLASHBULBS go crazy, NEWSREEL cameras churn.

AMELIA  
 Did I pressure the navy to build a  
 landing strip at Howland Island?  
 How exactly would I do that?  
 Threaten not to enlist?

Laughter in the room. More flashes.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 The airstrip has been planned for a  
 long time. I was thrilled to learn  
 it will be ready in time for my  
 flight. The navy has been  
 wonderful, as always.

REPORTER #1  
 Amelia, what do you say to the  
 charges that your husband is  
 pulling the strings, pressuring you  
 into this around-the-world flight  
 to make a financial killing?

George BOLTS forward to the microphones, looks at his wife with astonishment...

GEORGE  
 Wait a minute, you're flying around  
 the world? Don't you know a  
 woman's place is in the home??

The press ROARS with laughter.

REPORTER #2  
 George, why don't you go along this  
 time? Watch over the little woman.

GEORGE  
 I begged to go. But it seems that  
 between 185 pounds of husband and  
 185 pounds of fuel, I lost out.

Gazes at his wife.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

At least, I think that's what all  
the laughter meant.

He gives her a kiss. Thirty FLASHES record it. As he steps  
back...

REPORTER #3

Experts are saying that this  
'flying laboratory' is a sham.  
There's nothing to be learned for  
aviation, and you're just in this  
for the money.

The place gets really quiet.

AMELIA

Who am I to argue with 'experts?'  
I'll just give you my plain old  
common-sense thinking on this...

Pens come up, cameras jockey for position. This is what  
they're waiting for. She holds up one finger. First...

AMELIA (CONT'D)

We may not learn much about the  
plane, but we will about the pilot.  
Endurance over a month's journey,  
flying nearly every day. Response  
to stress, crises. I think that  
will make a contribution.

Holds up a second finger. Two...

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I'm a working stiff like all of  
you. I don't apologize for the  
fact that I need money to live.  
And to keep financing my flying,  
which is what I love. I think  
that's a positive example for  
women.

Third finger. Three...

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I'm not doing this as a scientist.  
I'm a flyer, boys, pursuing my  
passion. For the fun of it. The  
fun of it. Something I recommend  
as a healthy motive for women.

A wink. A shrug...

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 ...and maybe even some men.

82 EXT. LUKE FIELD, HONOLULU - SUNRISE

82

The Electra ready to go in first light, engines humming.  
 Amelia walking alone toward the plane.

SUPERIMPOSE: LUKE FIELD, HONOLULU. MARCH 20, 1937.

She waves goodbye to crew and press. Climbs the steps to be  
 welcomed by Fred's hand gently pulling her aboard. The door  
 CLOSES. We see Amelia and Fred in the cockpit. He checks a  
 gauge.

FRED  
 Lovely. We've got so much fuel we  
 can't possibly get off the ground.  
 Much safer than flying.

AMELIA  
 Well, we need enough for a third  
 pass at Howland. After you miss it  
 the first couple times around.

Ah.

FRED  
 Good thinking.

The runway lights go ON, and...

GEORGE (V.O.)  
 We were, all of us, fearful about  
 that landing. No one guessed...

Amelia ROARS OFF, gathering SPEED.

GEORGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 ...it would be the take-off.

The Electra SUDDENLY VEERS TO THE RIGHT, and we SMASH CUT  
 TO...

83 INT. ELECTRA

83

Amelia THROTTLING DOWN the left engine. The plane SWINGING  
 WILDLY to the left, as...

84 EXT./INT. ELECTRA

84

...the RIGHT WHEEL COLLAPSES, the plane SPINS TO THE LEFT and we INTERCUT between the cockpit and the runway as the Electra...

...CAREENS MADLY for a thousand feet, Amelia CUTTING THE SWITCHES to the engines, fighting for control, PROPELLERS SMASHED by the concrete runway, SPARKS FLYING IN EVERY DIRECTION...

INTERCUT. Oakland Airport. George and his retinue waiting. A phone RINGING. Someone takes the call, his face freezes, he looks wildly around to...

...George, who's there, SNATCHING the receiver.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Have you heard? They crashed, the ship's in flames.

SMASH CUT to the cockpit, the Electra SPINNING crazily on its belly, SPARKS EVERYWHERE, the plane suddenly comes...

...to a BONE-JARRING STOP. The right MOTOR is pushed up INTO its wing, which itself has BUCKLED, the stabilizer BENT, the left wing extends UPWARD from scraping the runway, the landing gear no longer exists.

SIRENS SCREAM as fire trucks and ambulances race toward them. Amelia is ashen, disbelieving. Next to her, a gentle...

FRED  
Good reaction, cutting the switch.  
You saved our ass.

She doesn't even hear, THROWING open the cockpit, WAVING to signal they're all right, we SMASH CUT TO...

85 EXT. OAKLAND AIRPORT - DAY

85

George wandering numbly on the airfield, as someone RUNS LIKE CRAZY from the office, shouting...

MAN  
NO FIRE! NO FIRE, FALSE REPORT!  
NO ONE HURT!

George alone on the tarmac. Stops in his tracks. Now he can cry.

86

EXT. GARDEN, LOS ANGELES HOME - ALMOST SUNRISE

86

Two figures in a garden, walking in light so spare they are silhouettes. Her head is down. His hands are in his pockets. We CLOSE on them as she fingers a blossom, we now see she is miserable, fighting absolute despair.

GEORGE

Three weeks, she'll be good as new.  
It's a remarkable crew. The best  
that...

He stops. Realizing where he was going. She never looks up.

AMELIA

...the best that money can buy. I  
just can't believe I've done this  
to us. All the money wasted that's  
never coming back.

GEORGE

You cut the engines. It would have  
cost a bundle more to replace a  
burned-up plane. Not to mention  
pilot.

She shakes her head. No.

AMELIA

I overreacted. The plane was too  
heavy, I should have used the  
rudder pedal instead of the  
throttle.

Tears stand in her eyes. She is so ashamed and remorseful.  
He lets it stay silent as they walk. Then...

GEORGE

It's only money, we'll figure it  
out. We always do.

AMELIA

I'll make it back and more, I  
promise. The book sales, the  
lectures, this flight will keep us  
going another three years.

GEORGE

Maybe. Or...

AMELIA

No, it will. Our prices, our  
sales, are going to double.

(MORE)

AMELIA(cont'd)

This showed them how dangerous it  
all is, they were taking it for  
granted...

(sniffles)

They thought I was competent.

GEORGE (softly)

I meant. Or maybe we can quit.

She looks over. Not sure if...

AMELIA

You mean after.

GEORGE

Or. Even now.

A strong smile. He nods. We could.

AMELIA

So my exit would be a stupid crash.  
And withdrawing from a world-  
publicized attempt to finally do  
something no man had done before.

GEORGE

Yeh. That. And it would be fine  
with me.

Her eyes overwhelmed by his offer. Her voice soft with...

AMELIA

But that's because you're an idiot.

GEORGE

Lucky for you.

A held beat.

AMELIA

And what if it's not something I  
have to show the world?

Hmmn?

AMELIA

What if it's something I have to  
show me.

He has no answer for that. Takes her hand. They head toward  
the house.

Massive enclosed space. The rebuilt Electra in pieces at  
various work stations, being perfected by teams of mechanics.

The whirr and clang of tools. Amelia and George confer with one foreman, as George sees something. He touches her arm, points in our direction. REVERSE ANGLE as she sees...

...Gene has entered the hangar. Stands by the folding table we've seen before.

GEORGE

Have fun.

AMELIA

Who let you off the hook on this?

She takes his hand firmly and together they cross the hangar toward Gene. He smiles, unfolds a third chair. As they arrive, Amelia steps forward...

...kisses Gene on the cheek. George shakes his hand.

GENE

Thanks for letting me come.

As they sit, Gene looks from one to the other.

GENE (CONT'D)

I guess I'm already outvoted.

GEORGE

She'd outvote you all by herself.  
She does it to me every day.

Gene's smile can't mask the concern in his eyes.

AMELIA

I don't have a choice. I have to reverse my route and fly east. If I go west now, I'm risking hurricanes in the Caribbean and monsoons in Africa...

GENE

But you're flying Howland last, when you're exhausted.

She knows this. In the silence...

GEORGE

Gene, this way our first leg is Oakland to Miami. It's a shakedown to make sure the plane is right. That's crucial.

Gene nods, slowly. His eyes still locked on her.

GENE

Maybe I'm obsessing on Howland because it was my bright idea, and I'd feel responsible if...

AMELIA

Well, if I do pop off, I'll try to make it somewhere that's not your fault.

GENE

I'd appreciate that.

Draws a breath.

GENE (CONT'D)

You miss that island. You'll be out of fuel, with 2000 miles to go.

AMELIA

But I'll have Fred so I won't miss. In fact, I'm taking Fred along for this whole trip.

Surprisingly, he doesn't seem to like this. She smiles.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Giving up my little arrogance about solo. Safety first, yes?

But he's still unhappy. She waits for him to say.

GENE

You and Fred alone for a month...

AMELIA

If you're worried about his drinking, I'll deal with it.

Straight look.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I can handle Fred.

And now we get a sense of exactly what does worry him. He glances to George...

GENE

How do you feel?

GEORGE

Tip-top. Every little girl needs a man around. Even strong girls like ours, hmmm?

A very direct gaze. Words neither said nor needed.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 She can handle us. She can handle  
 Fred.

A full beat. The look holds between the men.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 And thanks for being here. You've  
 always had Amelia's best interests  
 at heart.

The look still unbroken.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 And, for that. I'm grateful.

88 EXT. MIAMI AIRPORT - DAY - NEWSREEL FOOTAGE

88

Amelia and George crossing the tarmac from the Electra,  
 waving to the crowd.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
 The legendary Amelia Earhart lands  
 in Miami, completing the first and  
 easiest leg of her around-the-world  
 equatorial flight. A feat no man  
 has ever attempted. That's hubby  
 George with her, he gets off here.

Behind them, coat slung casually across his shoulder, is  
 Fred. Waving like he belongs.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 That handsome guy behind them isn't  
 a movie star. Nope, it's navigator  
 Fred Noonan, who will be Amelia's  
 sole companion on the exotic  
 odyssey...

CLOSE on the rugged smile.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Hey, where does a guy go to apply  
 for a job like that?

89 EXT. BEACH, MIAMI - DUSK

89

The pastel sky has darkened along the row of legendary  
 hotels. At first, we can barely find them at the water's  
 edge. CLOSE to see her sitting where the surf can't quite  
 reach her toes. He's lying back, hands cradling his head.  
 Watching the stars come out. Nothing said. Then...

AMELIA  
I'll be flying sky no one's ever  
been in. You made that happen.

She looks down to his easy smile.

GEORGE  
Hate to think where you'd be  
without me.

She smiles back. Tenderness we don't always see.

AMELIA  
I'll try to make you proud.

GEORGE  
You did that long, long ago. Only  
one person left to prove yourself  
to. Just make sure you do it.

A beat. The doubt comes.

AMELIA  
And then what?

GEORGE  
Then the best part. The future.

She stares in his eyes. Leans to him.

AMELIA (a whisper)  
Oh yeh. That.

She brings her hands to his face. Her mouth to his. Deep.  
Longing. Her body sinks into him.

LONG ANGLE. Two alone. Only each other.

90

EXT. MIAMI AIRPORT - DAY

90

LONG ANGLE. From the open door of a hangar we see Amelia and  
George facing reporters in front of the idling Electra. She  
sits on the wing, he's just beneath her.

GEORGE (V.O.)  
The radio problems crept up on us  
over time.

SUPERIMPOSE: MIAMI AIRPORT. JUNE 1.

GEORGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
The marine 500 kilocycle radio was  
left in Oakland. Amelia said she  
(MORE)

GEORGE(cont'd)

and Fred were both amateurs at Morse Code, so the radio wasn't worth what it weighed.

Amelia has made the boys laugh. George laughs with them.

GEORGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The 250 foot trailing auxiliary antenna, she would leave behind in Miami. Too heavy, not important.

FLASHES now. And plenty of them. She reaches down to take George's hand and HOPS down from the wing. More FLASHES...

GEORGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Then, suddenly our remaining radio couldn't reach its designated frequencies. Pan Am hurriedly replaced the main antennae. And we thought all was well.

Amelia and George coming toward us now, hand in hand, leaving the press behind. Into...

The hangar. In shadow here. The world far away, she takes his hands. A silence.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Race you to California. I'll go west. Five bucks?

AMELIA

If you'll fly the plane. Make it twenty.

And then...

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Simpkin keeps many mice at one time. Each under a different teacup.

Wow. He's finally going to hear this.

GEORGE

We're saying he's cruel?

AMELIA

No.

GEORGE

Controlling?

AMELIA

Insecure.

Ah. The light begins to dawn.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
He needs the illusion of activity  
to feel comfortable. That he's  
preparing for all contingencies.

George has to grin.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
That he has more irons in the  
fire than anyone knows.

GEORGE  
Especially the mice.

AMELIA  
Exactly. Each poor mouse thinks  
it's all about her.

Staring at each other.

GEORGE  
And one of them. Is right.

AMELIA (a murmur)  
She knows.

And then...

GEORGE  
I want you to give me something.

He's never sounded quite like this before.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Tell me this is your last flight.

Her eyes flicker. Look down. A whispered...

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Promise.

And when the eyes come up.

AMELIA  
Don't you know I couldn't? Even if  
part of me wanted to. Very, very  
much.

The look holds.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
How can we be anything. But what  
we are?

There is no answer. She leans up into a slow kiss.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
I do love you.

Something in her serious face makes him smile.

GEORGE  
Well, I love you back.

AMELIA  
Thanks.

Takes a step back toward the hangar door. One hand slightly up, stay here. Then, the smile he's waited for.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
See ya.

He smiles back. She turns and heads out toward the idling plane. She seems small, even fragile, alone on the tarmac.

STAY with George. Watching her go.

SLOW DISSOLVE  
TO...

91

EXT./INT. MONTAGE

91

SERIES OF ANGLES, CROSSFADES, DISSOLVES, INCLUDING...

IMAGES FROM THE ELECTRA:

- VIEW down onto an endless sea of triple-canopy RAINFOREST.
- VIEW of Brazilian CITY from ABOVE.
- VIEW onto the ocean and African coast.
- VIEW of ANIMALS running beneath us.
- VIEW of the SAHARA'S sands

SUPERIMPOSE: IMAGES FROM STOPS:

- Children surrounding Amelia at an African airfield
- Amelia sleeping in the open desert
- being welcomed by turbaned dignitaries
- Amelia on a camel, suddenly kicks it into a gallop

SUPERIMPOSE: IMAGES FROM TRAVEL MAP

- its RED LINE tracing our journey from Miami to San Juan to Venezuela, to Brazil
- The RED LINE moving across the Atlantic, to French West Africa and North to the Sudan
- The RED LINE moves from The Nile River across the tip of Arabian Peninsula, through Persia, Afghanistan and finally to Calcutta.

SUPERIMPOSE: IMAGES FROM AMELIA'S ARTICLES

- HEADLINES from various installments of her daily ARTICLE in the Herald Tribune, with her BYLINE.

DISSOLVE FROM  
MONTAGE TO...

92 EXT. AIRPORT, CALCUTTA - EVENING

92

Driving RAINSTORM as Amelia carries her gear toward the Electra. Fred waits. The umbrellas aren't keeping them dry.

SUPERIMPOSE: DUMDUM AIRDROME, CALCUTTA

The buildings have thatched roofs. There are oxcarts by the runway, abandoned to the downpour. Fred has to shout over the storm...

FRED  
YOU'RE NOT REALLY TAKING OFF!

AMELIA  
IT'S GOING TO GET HEAVIER AND  
WE COULD BE STUCK HERE FOR DAYS.  
EVEN WEEKS.

He just glares at her. Rain POUNDING all around them.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
ONLY 700 MILES TO BANGKOK, IT'S  
LIGHTER THERE.

He doesn't move.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
Stay if you like.

And she climbs into the plane. He just stands in the rain and glowers.

93 EXT. AIRSTRIP - MOMENTS LATER 93

The Electra ROARING down the runway. It's all alone, no one else crazy enough to be out there. At last the plane...

...LIFTS INTO the rain. Wobbles just a beat. And begins to CLIMB.

94 EXT. ELECTRA - LATER 94

A wrenching battle, plane versus monsoon. The storm is heavier, deafening, actually STRIPPING PAINT from the Electra's wings.

95 INT. ELECTRA - SAME MOMENT 95

Amelia beyond exhaustion, but focused, fighting it. We think she's flying alone. Until...

...Fred drops into the seat beside her. No words as he watches her struggle. Our plane is all over the sky. The DIN is ungodly.

AMELIA  
YOU THINK WE SHOULD TURN BACK, HUH?

FRED  
NOPE. I THINK WE SHOULDN'T HAVE  
COME.

An AIR POCKET DROPS them 200 feet.

AMELIA  
HARD TO IMAGINE LANDING IN THIS.

FRED  
I'VE GOT AN IDEA. LET'S NEVER COME  
DOWN.

She glances over. For once, she's scared.

AMELIA  
HOW COULD YOU FIND OUR WAY BACK?

FRED  
SINCE I FORGOT TO DROP BREAD  
CRUMBS, WE'LL HAVE TO USE DEAD  
RECKONING.

Beat.

AMELIA  
THAT'S IT? JUST A GUESS?

FRED  
 US NAVIGATORS PREFER THE TERM 'WILD-  
 ASS GUESS.'

Held look.

AMELIA  
 That's more like it.

She starts to TURN the plane around.

96 INT. ELECTRA - DAY

96

Amelia flying down through heavy turbulence, though it is no longer raining. Her features tense. We see the accumulated strain of the adventure.

Fred appears from the catwalk, slips into the seat beside her. He's worried. Points, and we see...

...CALCUTTA below, sprawling and endless. Between us and the ground, a huge gathering of FLYING SHAPES.

FRED  
 Black eagles. If one of those  
 clips a propeller. Or flies into  
 the engine...

Her tired features form a smile.

AMELIA  
 I've got an idea. Let's never  
 land. Better safe than sorry.

He takes her point. She turns back to work...

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 I'll wake you when the coffee's  
 ready.

And with cold-blooded nerve, she SWOOPS down, down, THROUGH the flock of eagles, scattering them as we arc in for a perfect landing. She never turns to...

...Fred, who is still white-knuckling, trying to get his heart started. He can't believe what she's just done. Rolling, rolling...

FRED  
 Cream, no sugar.

97 EXT. GOVERNOR'S HOUSE, CALCUTTA - TWILIGHT 97

Establishing shot of a graceful pillar of the Raj. Night falling.

98 EXT. COURTYARD, GOVERNOR'S HOUSE - SAME MOMENT 98

A fountain in an ornate courtyard. There is a RECEPTION, as every evening for Amelia, attended by local DIGNITARIES. Fred, already a little drunk, leads Amelia to a massive teak-wood table. He breaks off the corner of a cracker, sets it down in the center of the table.

FRED  
Howland Island.

He strikes a match. SNUFFS the flame. Puts the burned-out match head just by the scrap of cracker.

FRED (CONT'D)  
Black smoke from the Navy ship that could help us get a fix.

Points way across the marble courtyard.

FRED (CONT'D)  
Now stand over there. That's what it's going to look like, if the weather's good.

SERVANT (O.S.)  
Mrs. Earhart?

She glances up. He beckons respectfully.

ANGLE. Alcove still with a VIEW of Fred and the courtyard. She lifts a telephone...

99 INTERCUT: INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE - DAY 99

CLOSE on a WALL MAP. We realize that George has been following her odyssey on a map of his own. We PULL BACK to reveal...

GEORGE  
Mrs. Earhart? Mr. Earhart, here.

He looks elegant in crisp suit and tie.

INTERCUT: Amelia's eyes WIDE. She seems truly thrilled. INTERCUT BETWEEN THEM now throughout...

AMELIA  
Oh, my goodness. Simpkin, is it  
really you?

George makes a PURRING sound. A sharp MEOW.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
This is insane. It's so  
extravagant.

GEORGE  
It gets worse, I bought a brand-new  
suit and tie. Got a date with my  
wife.

AMELIA  
We can't possibly afford this.

GEORGE  
Sure, we can. It's Tuesday's call  
to Lae that we can't afford.

AMELIA (delighted)  
You hang up the phone this minute.  
You'll bankrupt us and I'll have  
to walk home.

GEORGE  
Reasoning with me. A magnificent  
display of useless courage.

Her eyes remember. A soft...

AMELIA  
...and it's fun.

HOLD on her face. And MATCH DISSOLVE TO...

100 EXT. BAR, LAE - NIGHT

100

...Amelia's FACE, as we left it in the first scene. The  
STORM PELTING all around the open-sided bar. Fred studying  
her across the table.

FRED  
A touching love story, really.

He's been drinking, we can hear it in his voice. SEE the  
bottle now. Nearly gone.

AMELIA  
An honest one. It's what you  
wanted.

He nods. That's right.

FRED  
I wonder if it's honest enough for  
George. If it's what he wanted.  
You know.

AMELIA  
If you mean Gene, we're not  
together anymore. In that way.  
Not for a long time.

FRED  
Whose choice was that?

She doesn't like his tone. Shifts in her seat.

AMELIA  
It was mine.

FRED  
Well, isn't it always? You choose  
in, you choose out. Makes things  
easy.

AMELIA  
Anything but easy. Are you  
disapproving of the way I live?

FRED  
Hell, no. It's just like me. In  
fact, it's like most guys I know.

His smile.

FRED (CONT'D)  
Actually, I'd like a piece of it  
myself. Right about now.

Her eyes harden.

AMELIA  
If you have a point, Fred. Make  
it.

FRED  
Oh, I believe I have.

She rises slowly. Zips her flight jacket. Takes her slicker  
from the back of her chair.

AMELIA  
Allow me to cut you a deal, my  
friend.

Steel in the spine of that.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 You show up tomorrow morning.  
 You show up sober and you get  
 me to Howland Island.

Okay?

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
 And I'll forget you ever said that.

She WHEELS around and holding her slicker over her head, goes  
 OFF into the POUNDING RAIN.

Fred's smile is gone. He stares after her.

DISSOLVE TO...

101 EXT. RADIO HUT, LAE - LATER 101

Amelia down the path in her slicker toward a small hut. She  
 knocks. Opens the door to reveal...

102 INT. RADIO HUT - NIGHT 102

...the radio receiver and transmitter. The operator BALFOUR  
 is a wiry Scot. He nods respectfully.

BALFOUR  
 Ready, Mum.

He stands and she takes his seat. He shows her the key to  
 press, then steps back toward the window. But she makes no  
 move to the radio. Just stares at him. He doesn't  
 understand.

AMELIA (gently)  
 Feel like stepping out for a  
 smoke...?

BALFOUR  
 I don't smoke.

AMELIA  
 ...or something?

Oh. The monsoon beats down.

BALFOUR  
 If you need help, I'll be right  
 outside. In the rain.

AMELIA  
 Thank you. I'll only be a moment.

He puts on his slicker. OPENS an umbrella. Leaves.

She looks back to the radio. FLIPS the switch.

AMELIA (soft)  
Earhart here.

103 INTERCUT: COAST GUARD STATION, LOS ANGELES - DAY 103

George at a window, looking west. Over the Pacific. She's there somewhere.

GEORGE  
You should be sleeping.

He smiles to keep his voice up. The eyes aren't smiling. We INTERCUT their conversation throughout...

AMELIA  
You should be working.

GEORGE  
I'm running a big adventure here,  
I'm a very important fellow.

AMELIA  
You told me I was the star. And  
you were no one at all.

GEORGE (soft)  
I thought I was lying. Guess the  
joke's on me.

Silence.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
How's Fred?

AMELIA  
I'm mad at him. I'll be in  
Honolulu on the 3rd, and with you  
in Oakland for Fourth of July.  
Okay?

GEORGE  
Don't keep me waiting.

AMELIA  
I won't dare. You're a very  
important feline. Uh, fellow.

GEORGE  
Talk to me about Fred.

AMELIA  
 Fred is fine. He's calculating  
 head-wind speed versus fuel as we  
 speak.

CLOSE on his face.

GEORGE  
 You wouldn't sell a salesman would  
 you?

AMELIA  
 He's fine.

GEORGE  
 So what's that I hear in your  
 voice?

A beat.

GEORGE  
 Is he drinking?

AMELIA (soft)  
 I can handle it.

GEORGE  
 Call it off. Right now. I mean  
 it.

AMELIA  
 I can handle it.

And then...

AMELIA  
 I love you.

Silence.

GEORGE  
 After the Fourth. We're going  
 home.

AMELIA  
 Where's that?

GEORGE  
 For me? Anywhere you are.

She begins to cry. Both hands fly to her mouth and she looks  
 away. She swallows hard.

AMELIA  
 I'm going to like it there.

And then...

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
I'd better. Since this is my last  
flight.

A long silence.

GEORGE  
Well. If you insist.

She nods. She does.

AMELIA  
It's late here. Guess I'll go  
curl up under a teacup.

GEORGE  
I'll go tell the world you're on  
your way.

Neither wants to let go. We feel it so strong.

GEORGE (a whisper)  
Sweet dreams.

A beat.

AMELIA (whispers back)  
See ya.

And he's gone. She stares at the radio.

104 INT. AMELIA'S HUT - LATER 104

FLICKER of a kerosene lamp. Amelia writing at a tiny desk.  
Thinks now. Thinks.

Lost in it.

105 EXT. AIRFIELD, LAE - DAWN 105

A sober, contrite Fred comes down the runway in early light.  
As he reaches the Electra, he sees a pile of discarded  
OBJECTS on the tarmac...

...metal containers, carton of oranges, parachutes.  
Bedrolls, cold weather gear. Souvenirs from their stops:  
flags, a metal plaque, native crafts, a Welcome Miss Amelia  
Earhart banner. As he studies the pile...

...a COFFEE POT comes FLYING out of the plane to roll at his  
feet. Suddenly, a 10 pound coffee tin SAILS PAST, as he  
DUCKS. Amelia appears at the hatch, sees him.

FRED  
You're finding the range. But it  
might be easier to just shoot me.

She stares at him for a moment. A subdued voice...

AMELIA  
Traveling light, that's all.

She sits on the lip of the hatch. Her legs dangling. Her  
eyes down.

FRED  
Got room for 190 pounds of asshole?

No answer. She's still looking down. He's never seen her  
like this.

FRED (CONT'D)  
Ma'am, I am so sor...

AMELIA  
It's fine.

Her eyes come up.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
Everything is.

He doesn't understand, but he's glad to be forgiven. She  
takes a LETTER from her pocket. Runs her finger over the  
envelope.

FRED  
I can run into town before we go.  
Get that in the post for you.

She shakes her head slowly.

AMELIA  
It's for my husband. I'm going to  
hand it to him. So I can watch his  
face as he reads it.

She snuffles slightly.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
It's our tradition.

106 EXT. RUNWAY, LAE AIRFIELD - MORNING

106

A RUNWAY that ends in a drop-off at the waters of Huon Gulf.  
The Electra, engines REVVING. Ready to go for it. Our ANGLE  
CLOSES on the belly of the plane. The ANTENNA MAST  
supporting a trailing WIRE ANTENNA.

GEORGE (V.O.)  
 Ten A.M., Friday July 2. They  
 lined up on the thousand-yard  
 runway. One thousand gallons of  
 fuel, enough for 20 to 21 hours of  
 flying.

LONG ANGLE. Crew and onlookers watch as the plane STARTS its  
 run, gathering speed, BOUNCING over uneven ground...

CLOSE now on the jouncing undercarriage, a momentary PUFF of  
 DUST, and as the plane moves PAST, we may notice that the  
 belly antenna mast seems to be GONE.

DOWN the runway it RUMBLES, still earthbound, only 200 yards  
 to go. Then 100. Then FIFTY, then at the water's edge, the  
 Electra RISES and...

...DROPS out of sight below the land, as we SMASH CUT to...

ANGLE. The Electra has FALLEN to SIX FEET above the surface  
 of the Gulf. The engines THROB at max, the propellers  
 THROWING SPRAY. The overloaded plane...

...RISING. Slowly, then faster, then...

...SOARING free.

PULL BACK to a VIEW from down the runway. The Electra in  
 distance. RACK FOCUS to see something long and slender  
 GLINTING on the ground. Could it be a length of WIRE?

107

INT. COAST GUARD STATION, LOS ANGELES - SUNSET

107

Through the glass, the sun is disappearing toward Amelia.  
 PULL BACK to George, staring at a CABLE in his hands. We  
 HEAR...

BALFOUR (O.S.)  
 Mr. Putnam. Their headwinds are  
 stronger than they knew when they  
 took off.

Then...

BALFOUR (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 I recalculated their fuel. It will  
 cost them 9%.

George staring off. Assessing the consequences. PULL BACK  
 to see an ENSIGN standing, waiting for instruction.

BALFOUR (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 I can't raise them, sir. I tried  
 voice, and Morse Code...

George looks up. Calmly.

GEORGE

Wire back. Tell him to forget the Morse Code. They didn't bring the receiver.

The young man looks concerned.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Just tell him to stay with voice. He'll get them.

108 EXT. HOWLAND ISLAND - DAY

108

AERIAL ANGLE. A tiny, flat, nearly invisible speck adrift in the endless Pacific. Howland Island. PAN to see just offshore...

GEORGE (V.O.)

The U.S. Coast Guard cutter Itasca had been anchored off Howland just for us.

CLOSE on the ITASCA now...

GEORGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Its radio would be her lifeline. Its black plume of smoke would reach for miles. More visible than the island itself.

DISSOLVE TO NIGHT. The island visible only by its slender LIGHTHOUSE. The ship illuminated in the darkness.

CLOSE now on a path by the sea. A lone figure with a FLASHLIGHT approaches a SHACK. Enters...

109 INT. RADIO HUT - NIGHT

109

...a room filled with radio equipment. He is FRANK CIPRIANI, in crisp naval uniform, relieving a SEAMAN who has been on duty. As Cipriani sits at his station, he notices...

CIPRIANI

The direction finder. How long has this been on?

The seaman turns back at the door. What?

110 EXT. ITASCA

110

CLOSE on the ship, illuminated. PUSH IN...

111 INT. RADIO ROOM, ITASCA - NIGHT

111

The room is 9 x 20 with bare walls. At the transmitter, LEO BELLARTS the chief radio man. Short and square, an unflappable air of quiet expertise. With him, his assistant WILLIAM DALTEN, lean and young with dark serious eyes. At a typewriter sits THOMAS O'HARE, barely twenty, headphones across his shock of rust-colored hair, telegraph at the ready.

SUPERIMPOSE: 2:45 A.M.

Dalten adjusting the receiver which is suddenly spitting STATIC. Threading through the noise, what could be a human voice. Bellarts calls to O'Hare...

BELLARTS  
That's her on 3105. She said  
'cloudy and overcast.'

O'Hare looks at him. Are you serious? Bellarts mimes typing with his fingers. O'Hare starts typing into the log.  
DISSOLVE TO...

SUPERIMPOSE: 3:45 A.M.

Radio CRACKLES. All eyes turn.

AMELIA (O.S.)  
Itasca from Earhart. Overcast.

Static. Dalten leans to the mic...

DALTEN (into mic)  
We are receiving your signal.  
Please acknowledge ours. What is  
your position? When do you expect  
to arrive Howland?

No answer. Light static.

BELLARTS  
Commander estimated 7:00. If she's  
having trouble on voice  
transmission, stay with Morse.

And begins to carefully pack his pipe. Dalten begins to transmit Morse Code. DISSOLVE TO...

SUPERIMPOSE: 6:45 A.M.

The radio. The static. The sudden voice...

AMELIA (O.S.)  
 Please take bearing on us and  
 report in half hour. I will make  
 noise in microphone. We are about  
 100 miles out.

The transmission cuts out. Dalten answers in Morse Code. No response.

DALTEN  
 She's got to stay on longer.

Bellarts dictating as O'Hare types...

BELLARTS  
 Earhart signal strength 4, but on  
 air so briefly bearings impossible.

DISSOLVE TO...

SUPERIMPOSE: 7:18 A.M.

DALTEN (to Bellarts)  
 Maybe her Morse receiver is out.  
 (into mic)  
 Can't take bearing on 3105. Please  
 send on 500 or do you want to take  
 bearing on us? Go ahead, please.

Silence. O'Hare typing: NO ANSWER.

SUPERIMPOSE: 7:30 A.M.

DALTEN (into mic)  
 Please acknowledge our signals on  
 key. Please acknowledge.

CRACKLE. O'Hare typing: UNANSWERED.

BELLARTS  
 Tommy, intercom top deck, double  
 check the smoke stack...

INTERCUT: AERIAL ANGLE high above the ship. BLACK SMOKE  
 PLUMES into clear sky...

BELLARTS (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 They should be able to see it for  
 twenty miles, at least.

TILT ANGLE. In far distance, thirty to forty miles, a gray  
 STORM.

112 INT. RADIO ROOM - MORNING

112

A few others enter now. Civilians, sailors, they hang back silently, watching as...

SUPERIMPOSE: 7:42 A.M.

AMELIA (O.S.)  
KHAQQ calling Itasca. We must be  
on you but cannot see you...

Glances are traded. It is the first moment of visible concern. STATIC interrupts. Then...

AMELIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Gas is running low. Been unable to  
reach you by radio. We are flying  
at altitude 1000 feet.

DALTEN (into mic)  
You are reaching us. We are  
sending on 3105 and 500 constantly.  
Please acknowledge.

Massive BURST of static. Dalten frantically CLICKING a message in Morse Code. DISSOLVE TO...

SUPERIMPOSE: 7:58 A.M.

The room has nearly filled. COMMANDER THOMPSON stands at Bellart's shoulder. All eyes fixed on the radio...

EARHART (O.S.)  
We are circling but cannot hear  
you. Go ahead on 7500.

BELLARTS (into mic)  
Itasca to KHAQQ. Your signal is  
strong. Are you receiving this?

A breathless moment. A sharp CRACKLE.

EARHART (O.S.)  
KHAQQ calling Itasca. We received  
your signal, but unable to get a  
minimum. Please take bearing on  
us and answer 3105 with voice.

BELLARTS (into mic)  
Your signal received okay. It is  
impractical to take a bearing on  
3105 on your voice. Give us a  
longer signal, please. Go ahead.

Silence. Feet are shifting. No one speaks.

BELLARTS (softly to Dalton)  
Keep us at 7500, that's her only  
acknowledgment.

THOMPSON  
You've got her signal, dammit.  
What about the direction finder?

BELLARTS  
Cipriani reports the battery's  
dead, sir. It was left on all  
night.

Full beat.

THOMPSON (low)  
I don't believe this is happening.

DISSOLVE TO:

SUPERIMPOSE: 8:12 A.M.

BELLARTS (into mic)  
Itasca to Earhart. Did you get  
transmission on 7500? Go ahead on  
500 so that we can take a bearing  
on you, it's impossible on 3105.  
Please acknowledge.

DISSOLVE TO:

SUPERIMPOSE: 8:33 A.M.

No breath in this room. No one moves.

BELLARTS (into mic)  
Will you please come in and answer  
on 500? We are transmitting  
constantly on 7500 and we do not  
hear you on 500. Please answer on  
500. Go ahead.

DISSOLVE TO:

SUPERIMPOSE: 8:44 A.M.

Suddenly, a thin and anxious VOICE cuts through a burst of  
static...

AMELIA (O.S.)  
We are on the line of position 157-  
337, will repeat this message on  
6210 kilocycles. Wait, listening  
on 6210 kilocycles. We are running  
north and south.

BELLARTS (into mic)  
We hear you. We hear you. Can you  
receive this...?

Silence. Silence. Silence.

COMMANDER (softly)  
Mr. Bellarts. When did she say she  
was low on fuel?

All eyes shift to Tommy. He scans the log. Stares.

O'HARE  
Um. An hour. And two minutes,  
sir.

HOLD on this room. DISSOLVE TO...

AERIAL ANGLE. The ship in clear daylight. The BLACK PLUME  
of smoke stretching to heaven.

SLOW DISSOLVE  
TO...

113 INT. COAST GUARD STATION, LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

113

The tiny room we've come to know. It is filled with people  
who stand motionless, staring somberly at one man. In turn,  
he stares at a telephone...

Which RINGS. Mary reaches, but his hand goes UP and she  
pulls back. He lets it ring three times, four, gathering  
himself. Lifting it...

GEORGE (into phone)  
Yes.

There are no other words. His eyes tear up. He nods numbly  
at the phone.

GEORGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Looking back, the questions were  
obvious. Why would anyone try to  
find such a tiny target in a vast  
ocean, with barely an hour's lee-  
way in fuel?

He draws a breath.

GEORGE (into phone)  
Well, we're most grateful. With  
such an effort, of course they'll  
be found.

CLOSE on him now. As he listens, as he responds graciously,  
MOS...

GEORGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
So I tortured myself. Why hadn't  
I killed this plan on day one?  
And then I realized...

DISSOLVE SLOWLY  
TO...

114 EXT. GARDEN, LOS ANGELES - LATER

114

Alone. In a moonlit garden.

GEORGE (V.O.)  
If I tried to count the insane and  
reckless chances she took from the  
first moment I met her. I wouldn't  
know where to begin.

Slowly to his knees. By the plants they had tended together.

GEORGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
It was the most tragic of endings.  
The most cruel and senseless and  
wasteful. And yet...

And yet.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
It's hard to imagine another.

SMASH CUT TO...

115 EXT. BRILLIANT SKY, THE PACIFIC - DAY

115

Sun and cloud. The sea below.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
My Simpkin.

We POINT toward the water.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I want to be married to you. The  
way you've been married to me.

It begins to draw CLOSER.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
As you read this. I am watching  
your face.

And CLOSER.

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I am hoping to see. That you know  
how much I mean each word.

Gaining SPEED now...

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
All the things I never said, for  
so very long...

HURLING TOWARD the surface...

AMELIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Look up. They're in my eyes.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

Hold.

ROLL END CREDITS.