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The High and the Mighty

By Ernest K. Gann

Hey, fella.

Ain't you Dan Roman?

Yeah.

I heard you whistling
and I said to myself,
only one guy does that just so.

I'd know that
ugly face of yours anywhere.

But you don't remember me, I bet you.

Sure I do. Ben Sneed.

I thought you'd be milking cows
somewheres on your own...

I mean, I thought you'd quit flying.

I thought you'd stay away
from these things.

They're only a hunk of metal.

They don't go no place in particular.

I guess I just haven't got
much willpower, Ben.

- What are you up to?

- Crew chiefing with Far East.

It's a good job.

I gotta go, Dan.

- I just thought I'd say hello.

- Sure. Good luck.

- Either one of you know that man?

- Sure looks old for a copilot.

- Didn't know we were so hard up.

- He weren't always a copilot.

We used to call him "Whistling Dan. "

One of the finest men you'd ever know.

And the most miserable. He was
down in Colombia same time I was.

He's taking off one night
with a full load

and one of them South American
line squalls

decided to hit the field at the same time.

The wind shifts too late for him to stop
and he don't quite make it over
a little hill at the end of the field.

I remember that one.

Right after the war, right?

Yeah. Dan hits flap,

but the ship breaks in half
and there's nothing but fire
in 10 seconds.

Dan gets tossed
through the cockpit window
and only gets a few scratches
plus that game leg of his.
Which leaves him alive to blame
himself. Everybody else gets killed.
Sounds to me like he was pretty lucky.
It don't work out quite that way.
I knew two of the passengers.
They were off to the coast for a holiday.
Blonde girl, name of Mary
and a little boy, name of Tony.
Everybody thought
they were wonderful people,
including Dan Roman.
Mary was Dan's wife
and little Tony was his only kid.
Yup.

Dan is the only guy I ever knew who
had guts enough not to commit suicide.
Flight 21 now arriving,
Gate 1, from Los Angeles.
Miss Betty Emsley,
please report to the information desk.
Nice to have you with us, Mr Flaherty.
Please check with immigration now.
You'll board in about 30 minutes.
This is Miss Spalding, your stewardess.

- I'll be in the bar.
- We'll call you, Mr Flaherty.

Trouble.

- Mr and Mrs Joseph?
- Yes, sirree.

The Waikiki kids. Just put us down
as a float for the Rose Bowl parade.

- Your age, Mr Joseph?
- Today?

No, I'm 38, so help me.

- Birthplace?
- Passaic, New Jersey.

That's the Garden State.

Motto. Liberty and prosperity.

Bounded on the north by New York,
on the south by...

- And Mrs Joseph?

- Shall I tell him? I'm 33,
and I was born in Ogden, Utah.

Thank you, immensely.

Aloha.

- Hey, look. Remember?

- Yeah.

My name is Sally McKee.

I'm 30 years old.

I was born in Riverside, California.

- You're still a United States citizen?

- Yes, of course.

Thank you, Miss McKee.

Please check with immigration.

Your flight will be announced.

She may be put together

with paste and flour,

but that woman has something.

What would you say it was?

Practise. Plenty of practise.

- Aren't you...

- Yes, I'm Gustave Pardee.

I've enjoyed your New York shows
very much.

Good. Delighted.

Here are our tickets.

I'm 47 and I was born in New York City.

Mrs Pardee?

I'm 30,

and I was born in Owosso, Michigan.

- How will the weather be?

- Fine, Mr Pardee.

You should have a very pleasant trip.

He looks like a tired walrus on a rock.

She looks like she's done all right

for a slender redhead from Owosso.

- Ken Childs, 53. Born in Philadelphia.

- Yes, Mr Childs.

I don't know where my luggage is. The

Royal was supposed to send it down.

We'll check right into it, sir.

May I introduce your stewardess,
Miss Spalding.

Hello, sister. New here, aren't you?
Four months now with the company,
Mr Childs.

Good. I don't know where they get
some of the girls
but things are improving.

One of the few men who has ever made
any real money out of aviation.

He's one of our stockholders.

Treat him accordingly.

If you please.

- Dorothy Chen?

- Yes.

- Born in Antung, Manchuria?

- Yes, but I am Korean.

You have your passport handy,
of course.

Please take it to immigration.

It's just over there.

It's a real pleasure
to have you with us, Miss Chen.

Thank you, sir.

- That face.

- A moon and a willow tree.

West Airlines,
Flight 7 from San Francisco,
now arriving, Gate 11.

I'm sorry I'm late, Skipper. I got hung up
buying a present for my wife.

Susie will sure be excited
when she sees this.

Yeah.

I already been up to Weather.

The winds aren't too bad.

Let's try 9,000 for a change.

I'll have a flight plan
in 15 minutes, Skipper.

I hope Susie likes this tray.

3,050 gallons be all right
for takeoff, Captain?

Sounds all right,

let's see what Leonard says.

It looks about 12 hours and 16 minutes,
if these winds
are anywhere near correct.

Okay, 30-50 takeoff.

West Airlines,
Flight 7 from San Francisco
now arriving, Gate 11.

Say, Skipper, how old would you say
Dan Roman is?

He was flying planes before I was born.
Look at it yourself.

He flew the airmail
in the open-cockpit days.

I think he learned to fly
in the first World War.

And endurance flights, racing,
old-time barnstorming.

Ten or 15 years with Transworld.

In the second World War, he flew
a bomber in the Ploiesti oilfield raid.

He took his cracks at Germany
in B-17 s,
finally wound up with a B-29 squad
into Okinawa.

I'll just lay you a bet
he's got better than 20,000 hours.

- It sure is embarrassing.

- What's embarrassing?

He's got so much time and all.

They must've been out of their heads
to hire an old fire-horse like him.

Why not let him graze in the pasture?

- All ready, Lennie?

- All set to sign, Skipper.

- All ready, Lennie?

- All set to sign, Skipper.

Attention, please.

Mrs Helen Bell,
please report to the ticket office.

Me, too.

Twenty-one souls onboard.

The rest, cargo.

73,000 pounds gross.

I said it to Orville, I said it to Wilbur,

and I say it to you,
the thing will never leave the ground.
You may rely on Miss Spalding to take
good care of your son, Mr Fields.
He's not the first young man
to cross the ocean alone.
It will be quite an adventure for him.
He's, unfortunately,
quite an experienced traveller.
His mother will meet him
in San Francisco.
She's brunette, and quite beautiful.
If you'll wait at Gate 4, Mr Fields,
you may put Tobey aboard yourself.
Thank you.
Come on, Tobey, let's go.
Flight 1-4 from Los Angeles
arriving, Gate 11.
What are you looking at?
Attention, please.
You suppose it'll ever happen to me?
I'm sorry to bother you again,
but where can I send a cable?
Just across from the souvenir stand.
You're sure about our connecting
with that New York plane?
You'll make it with time to spare,
Mr Rice.
We'll make it with time to spare.
That little lady had a grandfather
who left her both brains and riches.
She bought her husband
an advertising agency not long ago
because he wanted a new toy.
How do you know these things?
I used to be a night clerk
in a Nevada hotel.
Flight 7 for San Francisco now loading.
- Mr Locota?
- Yeah, that's me.
I'm a fisherman.
My family should be in fishermen
for a couple of hundred years,
maybe more, I don't know.

The fish, they don't school up here,
like on the coast of California.
So, I'm gonna go back
to San Francisco now.
Thank you, Mr Locota.
Your plane will be announced
in a few minutes.
Don't you want us
to check that through for you?
But I got in here my things
for to eat for the trip.
You've hurt my feelings, Mr Locota.
Did you think you wouldn't eat my lunch,
or the steak we're gonna have
for dinner?
Ma'am, miss,
I don't know about these things.
I never fly before. I don't want to make
no trouble for nobody.
Serving you will be a pleasure,
Mr Locota.
Thank you.
Just a minute, Mr Locota.
There you are.
Thank you. Excuse me very much.
You didn't know all about that little man.
The ticketing sheet had nothing on him
except statistics.
I'm afraid he falls into
the "nobody" category.
He's gonna be more
than a statistic to me. I like him.
Oh, brother.
Will I be glad to get on that plane.
Didn't you enjoy Honolulu?
Listen, honey, I always enjoy myself.
But this place,
Coney Island with coconuts.
As far as I'm concerned,
you can take all the Hawaiian Islands...
Tobey, will you tell your mother
something for me?
Tell your mother that there shouldn't be
an ocean between us.

Tell her I wish
she'd come with you next time.

- Can you remember all that, Tobey?

- Yes, Daddy.

I got him, Daddy. I got him.

- Everything okay, Dan?

- Yeah. Everything's fine.

3,050 aboard.

There's a slight oil leak, Number 4.

Nothing to worry about.

How long does it look like?

Lennie says 12 hours
and 15 minutes, about.

Twelve hours and 16 minutes exactly.

Flight 7 for San Francisco now loading.
San Francisco.

I must go to San Francisco.

Sorry, sir, we're departing very shortly.
You're not on the list.

Mr Kenneth Childs is on your plane,
isn't he?

Why, yes. Mr Childs...

Then you must have room.

I insist. I must go.

Very well, sir. Fortunately
we have space available today

- if you're an American citizen.

- I am. I am for sure.

My name is Humphrey Agnew.

I'm the founder of Agnew Aids.
Right here in Honolulu.

Perhaps you've heard?

Yes. Do you have a travel card,
Mr Agnew?

I pay cash for everything.

If you'll just step across the lobby
and check with immigration,
then come right back here,
we'll have your ticket ready, sir.

Now, there goes a real quack.

He's made a fortune
selling Agnew's aids to better living.

What have you got?

Asthma, arthritis, ague, biliousness,

sticky liver?

Agnew has got a curing pill
for all of them.

- So long, Alsop. Have fun.

- I'll weep at your wedding, Spalding.

May I take your coat, Mrs Pardee?

- You all right, Mr Locota?

- Yes.

- We going to fly very high?

-7,000 or 9,000 feet, sir,
depends on our clearance.

Wouldn't you like to sit
next to the window, Mr Briscoe?

You know something, miss? This is
as far as the old carcass would go.

I'd rather look at you
than what's outside, anyhow.
Your seat belt isn't fastened.

Shame on you.

My arm just won't bend around
the way it should.

- Holes in my bones, or so they tell me.

- I don't see any holes.

You know something, miss?

Neither do I.

Would you like me to take your leis,
put them in a cool place?

They'll keep better.

Now, that's just about the smartest idea
anybody ever had.

Gotta keep them as long as we can.

Gotta get back
to the old salt mines tomorrow.

Get the nose to the grindstone.

That's Hawaiian for "thank you. "

Let me tell you something.

If we get into any trouble,
any serious trouble

that the pilot can't handle,
you just come to old Ed Joseph.

I'll be glad to go up there and help him
if he needs me.

- Got it?

- Got it.

All right, young man,
it's time to get you buckled down now.
Just make you nice and comfy here.
And the next thing you know
we'll be in the air, all right?
- Mind if I sit next to you during takeoff?
- I would be so pleased.
I am so happy
you wish to sit next to me,
because I have been watching you
walk down the aisle
and have the desire
to say a thing to you.
It is that you are
the first real, alive American girl
I have ever greeted in person.
You are so very beautiful.
I fear I shall feel terribly the ugly one
if all the girls in America
are so beautiful and kind.
I don't think you're going to
have to worry about a thing.
Off.
- Wing flaps.
- Fifteen degrees.
- Mixture.
- Auto rich.
V1 and V2 speeds?
112, 116, that about does it.
- Check the radios, Dan?
- Yeah.
420 ready for takeoff.
Okay, Lennie, let's deliver your tray.
When you have time, I wish you'd come
back and talk to one of my passengers.
All right.
He's a Mr Pardee,
big rumpiled-looking man,
sitting halfway back on the right side.
Alsop said he had something to do
with the New York theatre.
I suppose he wants to put you
on the stage.
Call me

if you need your honour defended.
And jump from the frying pan
into the fire?
He's the original frightened Freddie.
Every time you bank or change
propeller pitch, he goes all white.
Grabs on his seat
like it was an electric chair.
Okay.
I thought you were
going to quit smoking.
I did. I haven't smoked
in three hours and 20 minutes.
Go ahead, stain your teeth.
Come see me when you grow up, junior.
What in the world are you
bawling about?
Have I done something to bring this on?
- Nell, cut it out.
- I'm trying to.
I just can't.
It's just, it's all over.
What's over?
Our honeymoon.
Doesn't that mean anything to you?
Of course it does. It's not over
for another 12 hours or so.
And it never has to be
as far as I'm concerned.
Oh, Milo.
I'm scared.
I'm just plain scared.
What are you scared of? We've got
the whole world in front of us.
It's just that we're so young.
And just like you said,
we've got that whole big world
down there.
- And you know what?
- What?
We've got to face it.
I thought you had confidence in me.
Of course I do.
It's just that

all the rest of the people in the world
don't know you like I do.

Supposing I was going to have a baby
and you didn't have a job?

- You're not supposed...

- Suppose I was?

All right.

You're going to have a baby
and I haven't got a job,
there's no food in the apartment,
it's snowing outside,
and the sheriff's knocking on the door...

Look, I didn't mean it that way.

- Are you?

- Am I what?

Are you...

You know.

- Me?

- You.

Oh, Milo. No.

Whatever gave you such an idea?

I don't know.

Prof. Flaherty. Welcome.

Are we to believe
you are at last resolved
to abandon the arts
and return to science?

If so, we rejoice.

We have sorely missed your help
and advice.

You're doing all right.

You'll find out how to blow up the world
all by your little selves.

It won't be long now and blooie.

Congratulations.

Professor, we all appreciate the fact
that you've been under enormous strain.

We deeply regret
that a man of your calibre
no longer sees fit to cooperate with us.
Cooperate?

I had a seat on a nice little campus
even if I wasn't making much money,
or my students didn't know

what I was talking about.
And I played pretty good golf
and I slept nights.
I was happy because I figured
it was still God's business
to monkey around with the universe.
He can fix a star
so it'll burn for a billion years.
Keep going and you'll find out
how to burn one up in a minute.
Did any of you ever bother
to look at the lagoon out there?
It's beautiful and blue,
and the people around it
are brown and kind
and they did know
how to laugh and sing.
Only now all the fishes
in the lagoon are dead.
And the people are scared forever.
They don't sing anymore.
You found a way to blow out a window
65 miles away from the impact point.
Only, suppose there's a mother
standing in that window
with a baby in her arms?
Professor,
I suggest you go to your tent
and rest for a while.
I'll arrange transport back to the States
for you at the earliest possible moment.
Yeah, do that.
I want to find a shepherd in the hills
or a mountain in the mist,
and paint their picture
before it's too late.
So, you'll please forgive me
another question, Captain.
Aren't you sometimes a little afraid?
I've made almost 200 flights
across here
and I feel a lot safer
than if I were driving my car.
I've got a lovely wife and two kids,

another on the way.
I wouldn't be doing this
if I didn't think it was safe.
You hedged, Captain.
You didn't answer my question.
Come now,
be a good honest fellow
and tell me exactly what frightened you?
They were technical incidents. I don't
think you'd understand, Mr Pardee.
I understand perfectly.
For some reason,
you were afraid you wouldn't reach
your Biblical span of life.
Which is precisely what's bothering me
at the moment.
I'm convinced I couldn't swim
from here to the nearest shore.
You won't have to swim, Mr Pardee.
Suppose one of your motors
ceases to function?
We'd just go back to Honolulu. These
ships fly beautifully on three engines.
If it should happen
beyond our point of no return
we'd simply continue
on to San Francisco.
Suppose two of your motors
became uninterested in further toil?
Each engine is entirely independent
of the other.
The chances of two quitting during the
same flight are one in several million.
Even if that should happen,
we could still fly,
lower and much slower,
but we'd get there.
You are very reassuring.
Why is it I read about so many crashes?
The newspapers always exaggerate
the importance of an air accident.
It would be very important to me
if I were in one.
You won't be, Mr Pardee.

Just relax. Enjoy your flight.
Please, Captain. I'd like to talk to you
for just a minute.
It can only be a minute,
then I'll have to go back to work.
I'm afraid I'm going to embarrass you.
I used to work in reservations
for Pan American.
That's fine. I'm glad you decided
to try a flight with us.
Aren't there two exits to this plane?
One up forward,
where you
and the rest of the crew leave?
Yes.
Could I leave the plane that way?
With you and the crew?
Please, it's very important to me.
It's not what you're thinking.
I am going to be met in San Francisco,
but not by the police or anybody else
who could get you into trouble.
It just wouldn't work.
Confused, Captain?
Why, no. That's you.
It was me, eight years ago.
A fellow in the States saw that picture.
He wrote me.
I was lonely, so I answered.
There were a lot of letters,
beautiful letters.
And then last month,
I agreed to marry him.
I never got around to telling him
the picture was eight years old.
I don't want to bore you
with my troubles,
but that dream kept me sane
for a long time.
I know I'm a
mess.
I'm so much older than he thinks I am.
But
if I could just see him

and then leave without meeting him.
Please understand, Captain.
What you're asking
is not exactly in my line.
Let me think it over. I'll let you know.

- Newspaper?
- No, thanks.
- How's AT&T?
- It's up a point.

I hope you don't mind,
I couldn't help watching you.
You remind me so much of a man
I once knew.
My name is Ken Childs
and I don't mind at all.
Fourteen minutes behind
on the last fix, Skipper.
So?
We should make it up.
The wind seems to be shifting around.
Good.
You know it's nice having
a guy like Dan Roman up here.
For a change,
I don't feel like a grandfather.
I was just saying to my wife
the other day,
I never had it so good.
Easy job, no strain,
and I'm pretty lucky in having
a girl like Susie.
It makes all the difference in the world
what kind of a wife a guy has.
Don't you think so, Skipper?
Now, you take a girl like my Susie.
I guess a lot of people
do think it's funny,
because I do the dishes
and the cooking, too,
but they forget
how much younger Susie is than I am.
And as for an extra martini
once in a while...
And so you'll please forgive me

another question, Captain.
Aren't you sometimes a little afraid?
...it's spirit.
You know, she once called me...
Are you?
Are you now, for no reason at all...
You wait till you see what she does
with that hardwood tray I bought her.
...after almost 2 million miles...
...maybe beside the little bar
she bought...
...afraid?
...to keep herself company
while I'm away.
She'll show it to everyone
who drops in
to keep her company when I'm away.
But it's there.
It's like a heavy bundle in your belly.
You can almost touch it.
She spent most of her time
riding around in it
so she wouldn't get too lonesome.
Guess she drove a little too fast...
It's come like it has to so many others
for no reason at all...
And besides...
...except maybe the wear and tear
of those 2 million miles.
...because they look like they're going
faster than they really are.
Like what the bartender told me
last December
when she was picked up
for being drunk in and about...
They'll give you a certificate
for those 2 million miles
to hang on a wall at home.
Only, the certificate doesn't add up
to the wear and tear.
...but the wrong word.
It's spirit she's got.
Dan knows about it.
All the old timers say

it's only temporary,
like growing pains.
Like this note she left me
on my last trip.
And now, it's here for no reason at all,
and you've got to fight it,
all alone.

"Welcome home, fatso.

"Got sleepy and couldn't wait
so you take a taxi.

"Don't make any racket when you come
home banging around the kitchen,

"and don't wake me up
in the morning. Love, Susie. "

What a sense of humour.

Someday, they're going to invent
a stool for navigators
that'll come somewhere near
fitting the human frame.

Ask Hobie if he can't synchronise
the props a little better.

I don't know
whether it's Number 1 or Number 3,
but one of them keeps slipping out.
It's getting on my nerves.

Okay.

Skipper says,

"What's the matter with you?

"Can't you keep the props together?"

They are together.

Skipper says they're out of phase.

One and 2 are as smooth as silk.

- So are 3 and 4.

- So be it.

The boys say the props
couldn't be smoother.

Yeah?

Well, there's something haywire.

Are you all right, Mr Briscoe?

All right?

Little girl,

I'm getting along like \$10 million.

Can I get you something?

Perhaps a cup of tea

would taste good to you.

- What was that?

- It's 5:

- You mean it chimes?

- You heard it.

Funny thing. It happens to be
the last possession

I haven't signed over to someone else.

I wish it would chime again.

What a wonderful way

to keep track of the time.

If I had a watch like this, I couldn't wait
for the next hour to come,
and then the next one.

You know something?

I used to feel the same way.

But right now I'm in no hurry
for the hours to pass.

No, the watch is yours.

I want you to have it.

- I couldn't think of accepting it.

- Please.

A watch is the last thing
I'm going to need.

I'd like to think of it
marking the kind of hours
only a young girl can have,
exciting hours.

You'll make me very happy
if you'll accept it.

Well, if you put it that way.

I can't thank you.

I've never met anyone like you,
yet I shall remember you
for the rest of my life.

I'd rather you remember
it's only a possession
and so, not worth very much.

I will, always.

We can hear it chime together again,
it needs setting, you know.

- It's 7:

- Sure. I forgot.

Is it really 7:

As far as this aeroplane is concerned.

Then you know something?

I don't want tea or coffee.

- A glass of water?

- Water is for bathing,
but if you can put some Scotch in it,
I'll feel cleaner.

Yes, sir.

- It's way past my cocktail time.

- Right now.

How about my friend over there?

Will you join me for a drink, mister?

Yes, thank you very much.

That's awful nice music.

We picked up four minutes, Skipper.

Looks like that wind
is finally swinging around now.

Good.

I may pass a miracle
and hit San Francisco right on time.

- Have a Lifesaver, Skipper?

- No, thanks.

Let me know, will you, when we pass
the point of no return?

Naturally.

Lydia, if you're through pouting,
maybe we could try talking things over
in a reasonable manner.

We have nothing to talk over.

Anyone who would sell
a New York advertising agency

- for a broken-down mine in Canada...

- It isn't broken.

...just to make yourself feel important,
the big operator.

Operating on my money.

I just want to get up with the feeling
that anything I accomplish that day
is due to my own efforts.

Not because my wife happened
to inherit a business.

In three years I should be able
to pay you back. Every penny.
Three years in the wilderness
and I'd be a genuine country bumpkin
with my skirts around my ankles
when they ought to be around my knees
or the other way around.
For the last time, Lydia,
I'm asking you to come with me.
I'm glad it's the last time you're going
to make that insane request
so I won't have to say no again.
I'm getting a divorce as fast as I can.
You're out of your head.
What am I supposed to do
while you clump around
in your boots and lumberjack shirt?
Have cocktails with the chipmunks?
Play bridge with the Eskimos?
Go on off to your primeval forest.
Play Daniel Boone,
get up with the pigeons or whatever
kind of birds they have up there.
Get calluses on your hands.
Be a great
dirt-under-the-fingernails boy.
Make fire by friction. Eat out of cans.
Take a bath Saturday nights
and go to an Eskimo hoedown.
Teach them to samba, for all I care.
Do just as you please
if it will make you feel like a man.
Only don't ask me to share
your juvenile adventures.
It's bad enough having to pay for them.
- Is that your last word?
- No.
I've always felt your brain
would fit nicely in a demitasse.
Hey, fella.
You got nothing but trouble, right?
- I assure you...
- I know what you're going to say,
everything with you is hunky-dory.

That's the first thing a fella
in trouble always says.

The booby hatches are full of people
that keep things to themselves,
either because they're scared
to tell them the truth,
thinking they'll make a monkey
out of themselves,
or they figure no one else can
appreciate the situation they're in.
Okay?

Well, the Good Neighbours
believe that ain't so.

- And just who...

- A club I belong to back home.

It's like the Alcoholics Anonymous.

Their luncheons are a riot.

Over the speaker's desk,
they've got a great big towel
with the letters "For Crying Out Loud"
embroidered on it.

And every member
has his own crying towel, get it?

When they bring in a bad case,
a couple of the Good Neighbours
hold the towel for the fella
so he can concentrate on weeping,
and then don't have to exert himself
in any other way.

It turns out to be a good
old-fashioned revival meeting
and the fella who has
no particular worries at the time,
he sort of feels left out of things.

And if this fella don't actually wind up
laughing at himself,
at least he feels better.

The main thing is, everybody does,
because nine times out of 10,
they think they're better off
than the other fella.

What do you sing at the end
of your meetings?

Pack Up Your Troubles

in Your Old Kit Bag?
How'd you guess?
When a fella comes in
with real trouble,
like he can't pay his income taxes,
or his wife just smashed up the car,
or his new house
shows cracks along the foundation,
they've got an organ that plays
real sad music.
It's a kick.
I can see how it might be.
Of course, a fella never comes in
with real troubles.
You know, like,
the guy's wife dying,
or his business really going broke.
They just confess little problems,
like who are they gonna get
to mow the lawn,
or will they ever break 100
on the golf course?
It's all relative, see.
You get the habit of laughing
at little problems
when they come along,
and then you don't blow your top
when the genuine,
serious things happen. Get it?
Yes, I'm beginning to follow you, Mr...
Ed Joseph. I sell furniture.
Getting back to your case,
maybe it'd make you feel better
if I cried some.
Then you'd understand
what the Good Neighbour means.
Imagine yourself with a towel.
Ready?
The wife and I scrimped
for over four years
to take a trip to Hawaii.
You know, palm trees, sunshine, sand,
things we ain't got at home.
We dreamed of the day

that we were to leave.
So, the wife persuades a woman
to take care of our children
for \$10 a day,
which is more than I made
the first five years we were married.
We got all unpacked
and were really living,
but the ship don't sail.
Strike or something.
But all right, we're lucky. We get
the last two tickets on an aeroplane,
and although we can't take
all our luggage,
we're in the land of our dreams.
At the little hotel that fits our budget,
there's a mix-up in the reservations.
Another couple named Joseph
from Milwaukee.
So we figure
maybe they've had a dream, too.
So we don't start any arguments.
We finally wind up at a hotel
which is way beyond our budget.
So we have to cut our trip short.
Okay? Comes evening,
the wife gets into the one evening dress
she could bring along
and I get into a tux
I haven't had on in 10 years.
Mommy!
We were ready for the light fantastic.
The wife was wearing new shoes
with heels much higher
than she was used to and...
My back.
The house doctor says the wife
has twisted her sacroiliac,
which ends the dancing for the trip.
So everything passes.
In a couple of days the wife is well
enough to hobble down to the beach.
It rains bullfrogs for three straight days.
All we got to do is sit around

and write postcards back home
about what a wonderful time
we're having.
Three days we got left,
then we meet the Wilsons.
One of the pleasures of any trip
should be the people you meet, right?
The Wilsons had their own ideas
of what was fun.
He thought my wife was his dish,
and she thought I was Clark Gable.
The wife can't run very fast
on account of her sacroiliac.
I'm having my own track meet.
Fella, you have never lived
until you've been chased around
the palm tree by that guy's wife.
So we spend the rest of our dream trip
eating away from the hotel
so we don't run into these people
and have to play post office all the time.
But the last day the sun comes out.
Whoever heard of coming home
from a dream trip without a tan?
We're desperate, see?
We really soaked up that sun, all day.
The wife has a third-degree burn
on her shoulders.
I don't dare put any weight on my back.
I'm gonna have to borrow money
from the bank
to pay next month's food bill,
if we ever do get home.
If you still think you got troubles,
mister...
Wonder if you and Mrs Joseph
would care to join me in a drink?
You can have your towel back now.
Take a breather, Dan.
I'll turn the knobs awhile.
Good, I could use a little shuteye.
Funny thing how a fella can sleep with
four big engines hollering in his ears,
only wake up when they stop hollering.

Imagine silence
waking you up at home?
No human being should have to put up
with such an arrangement.
San Francisco tollsman, 2930.
I don't care if you did build
that radio yourself.
It's against the law.
Throw it overboard before I do.
But I like to listen to the aeroplanes.
I spent a long time building that set.
You touch my set and I'll kill you.
I might do it anyway.
Just to have something happen
on this rust bucket.
You're going off your rocker.
You need six months ashore.
Being shipmates with you is enough
to drive anybody off their rocker.
Get out of here.
Don't say I didn't warn you.
The FCC will jerk your licence
in a minute
if you send anything on that pile of junk.
Get out of here.
Hello, Honolulu.
This is 420 with a position report.
Come on, Honolulu. Wake up.
Answer him.
420, this is San Francisco,
Honolulu unable to read you
on account of poor conditions.
Go ahead with your report.
Okay, San Francisco. Copy, Honolulu.
Position at 0557.
Latitude 34/30 north.
Longitude 140 west, 9,000 feet.
1,500 gallons remaining.
From the window at my side,
sometimes I can see the stars.
America is all around me in every way.
Do you understand a funny thing?
In Honolulu, I must be inspected
by the American customs

and immigration persons.
And not one soldier to guard things.
I look everywhere for soldiers
with guns and...
Would you like your dinner now,
Miss Chen?
Yes. Please, I am so stupid.
Here is a letter to my brother in English
and I cannot remember this word.
It is that thing soldiers wear
at the end of their guns,
like a sword?
- Bayonet?
- Yes.
I am so very stupid. Thank you.
I am embarrassed.
Anyone who can write and read
more than one language
should never be embarrassed.
Being the original dumb-bunny,
I can barely write my own.
"Dumb-bunny"?
That's slang for mentally-retarded
American girls like me.
Dumb-bunny.
How delightful.
I must tell my brother of this.
You tell him you met the number one
stupid rabbit.
If he knows any American girls,
he'll understand.
Now I'll get your dinner.
Dumb-bunny.
There's something very wrong
back there. The tray...
- I know.
- A whole tray jumped.
- I burned myself.
- I swear it's that Number 1 engine.
It was running perfectly. They all are.
Maybe it's in the tail. If our little girl got
burned, maybe it's worse back there.
Dan, take your flashlight,
have a look through the tail.

- Report to me as soon as you can.

- Right.

Leonard, take a fast fix,

let me know our position now

and every 10 minutes from now.

Spalding, get back to your passengers.

If this thing lets go again,

they'll start wondering.

Hobie, tell San Francisco

we're experiencing

some unusual vibration

and to stand by until further advised.

Do you want to declare an emergency?

No, not yet.

- Is everything all right?

- We're still in one piece.

I was just starting to serve

the passengers. Should I go ahead?

You might as well.

Sometimes these things

never do get explained.

Say, hang up a minute, will you?

Tell me what's wrong

with this aeroplane.

- Is there something wrong with it?

- Cut it out.

Something popped so hard a while ago,

it spilled my drink.

Order another. We're not stingy.

You won't talk?

I would if there was anything to say.

I'll make you a bet right now,

we're late getting into San Francisco.

Could be.

- Did you find anything?

- Nope.

- What do you suppose it could it be?

- Beats me. Where are we?

I'll let you know in a couple of minutes.

Nothing wrong with the tail.

The Number 1 head temperature has

gone up five degrees in the past hour.

San Francisco wants to know

the nature of our trouble.

Tell them if we knew,
we'd have told them.
No, don't say that. Tell them...
Just say we still don't know
and to keep standing by.
I got news for you guys.
We just passed the point of no return.
- Have you lost something, Mr Agnew?
- My lighter is out of fluid.
Maybe he thinks he's aboard ship
and is trying to work up an appetite
for dinner.
I seen a crazy man act like that once.
It ain't so nice.
He's looking for trouble.
You're Kenneth Childs, aren't you?
Well, isn't that your name?
Yeah. Why?
I don't think we've met before.
No. We've not met
because no one wanted us to.
What can I do for you?
My name is Humphrey Agnew.
Well, does that mean anything to you?
- Agnew. You're Martha's husband.
- I am.
I didn't hear you say
you were pleased to meet me.
- Of course...
- Of course not!
Look, Mr Agnew, this lady and I
are having a quiet drink together.
You seem to be disturbed
about something.
Perhaps we can talk later.
If you'll excuse...
No, you don't just snap your fingers
and send me on my way.
Mr Agnew, I don't know what's
eating you, and frankly, I don't care.
Why don't you go back
wherever you came from and sit down.
- Now, honey.
- This man's a nuisance.

I've no doubt I'm a nuisance.
I must have been
an even greater nuisance
when you and my wife were scheming
to avoid me in Honolulu,
- so you could be alone.
- You're right out of your head.
I took your wife to lunch twice
because she was a very nice girl.
And a long time ago
she happened to work for me.
The worst crime she is guilty of
is shaking my hand.
Now stop insulting her
and making a fool of yourself. Beat it.
I knew you'd have
some fancy explanation.
But I'm not such a fool
as you and my wife think I am.
I'm going to let you wonder
what I'm going to do.
Wonder and think and think,
as I've been doing.
I've heard about you for years
and I'm sick of the sound of your name.
You're quite a conqueror
with the ladies, aren't you?
That should interest you, madam.
- I've had enough of this.
- What's the matter with you guys?
- Hey, what's this all about?
- Easy, break it up.
He's crazy, he's got a gun.
We're on fire!
- Pull the bottle on it.
- Hobie, pull the bottle quick!
- Get on the radio. Tell San Francisco.
- San Francisco 420.
The prop! The whole prop is gone.
Yes, and you may lose your engine, too.
- She's off her mountings.
- Pull the other bottle, Dan.
- I'm starting for the water.
- San Francisco 420.

Thank you, sweet Lord.
I don't think she's gonna burn any more.
I can't raise San Francisco. Static.
- Try the secondary frequency.
- I've tried both.
Use emergency.
Give them a mayday call.
- Are we going into the water?
- No.
She flies lousy
with that engine hanging down,
but I think we can stay in the air.
- How long to the coast?
- Six hours, about.
But at regular cruising speed. I've not
figured it out for this sort of thing.
Figure it!
...mayday 420.
Mayday 420, anybody.
I got somebody. A ship.
This is the Cristobal Trader calling 420.
I can hear you very clearly.
You passed right over me
about 20 minutes ago.
Do you want me to relay
all your messages? Over.
Roger. Advise San Francisco
we've lost Number 1 propeller.
Fire started but is now out.
We are now at 5,000, but sinking.
Request they clear
all altitudes below us. Over.
Will do. Stand by.
This is Cristobal Trader
calling San Francisco.
Clear sea rescue from Oakland Control.
Right.
Warm up the ready plane. Intercept.
San Francisco wants to know
if you are going to ditch. Over.
Negative for now.
What's the state of the sea
about you, just in case. Over.
Heavy northwest swells.

We are rolling about 30 degrees.
It's very rough.
Keep that ship in the air if you can, boy.
It's wet down here. Over.
Thank you, Cristobal Trader. We'll try.
Attaboy, papa.
Some of these days, I'm gonna
get smart and go back to buttons.
- What's the poop?
- Eastbound lost a prop.
Had a fire but that's out.
Looks like he's headed for the drink.
- How far out is he?
-1,000 miles maybe.
My aching eyes!
This might well be my last show
and not a laugh in it.
I shouldn't have screamed,
but I was so scared.
My own heart is just returning
from the ceiling.
Troubles? Wait till I tell
the Good Neighbours about this.
I was almost asleep when someone
pulled the champagne cork.
This could become interesting.
Things were pretty interesting
before this happened.
Two apes were trying to kill each other.
Why don't you be a good boy
and go back and sit down.
I'm sure everything will be all right.
They'll come back from the flight deck
and explain in a minute.
I'm just gonna keep this for you
till we make San Francisco.
You can get in plenty trouble
with them things.
I'll get coffee for everyone.
Did you know space guns don't kill you?
No.
They just make you stiff.
You know, the funny part of all this,
is that for the first time

in my whole life, I'm innocent.

What I told him was the truth,

so help me.

This is gonna cost the taxpayers
a lot of money.

What would you have them do?

Swim home?

No Alameda, this is the Coast Guard
Rescue Coordination Centre.

- New position, Skipper!

- Name it!

To the coast, 5 hours, 47 minutes,
if we can hold this air speed.

- How's our fuel?

- Enough. Just.

We'll only need about 1,150 gallons,
we've 1,300 according to my graph.

- It's pinching things close...

- You can throw your graph away.

- Because we haven't got 1,300 gallons.

- How do you figure that?

The Number 1 tank. It read 200 gallons
when we lost our prop.

My guess is that when the prop left us,
it kicked holes in the wing.

Ruptured the tank.

We just can't make it this way.

I'll figure it up again, but the winds,

- maybe they'll change some.

- We're going into the drink.

It's just a question of when and where.

We've got plenty of time. Let's not rush
off into the heat of the day about this.

Let's hold on a while

and see what the wind does.

- We'll be closer to the coast.

- Water will be colder there.

And probably rougher, but I still think we
should stretch it out as long as we can.

I'll go along with you on that.

It'll give us more time

to get squared away.

I want you up here with me

when we really start down.

Meantime get everything
you can overboard.
Thousand pounds or so
will make a difference in our speed.
You want me to tell them
they're going into the drink?
Use your own judgement.
I guess I don't have to tell you people
that we've had a little trouble.
Maybe if I explain
exactly what has happened,
you'll feel better all around.
I'm not gonna minimise it,
nor will I make it any tougher
than it really is.
We've lost our Number 1 propeller.
This is just one of those things
that never happens but does
once in a billion flying miles.
We've extinguished the fire
with the carbon dioxide,
so there's no further danger from that.
But our speed has been considerably
slowed down
because the Number 1 motor
is partially twisted in its mountings,
causing a severe drag,
sort of like dragging your feet
in a rowboat.
I can't blame you
if you are a little scared, I am, too.
I've been flying since 1917
and I don't like this sort of thing
any better than you do.
However, with all that flying,
you'll notice that
I'm still very much alive.
Now comes the hard part.
- Can you take it?
- Please, tell us everything.
I think we all want to know.
We're really very lucky.
That propeller could have done
a great deal more damage.

Anyway, there are several holes in the wing, that's where our fuel is stored. Which means that we can't quite make the California coast. Can't we go back to Honolulu? We'd already past the point of no return when it happened. We will probably have to ditch this plane in the sea. We'll all be killed. There's just a chance that you'll only be in the water a few minutes. There's a rescue plane already on its way to intercept us. Before we actually have to go in there'll probably be several more. Some of which can land on water. And surface vessels will be directed toward us. Aeroplanes have gone into the water before and no one received the slightest injury, except maybe a little dampening. Casualties come from panic. So you must not hurry. Miss Spalding and our second officer, Mr Wheeler, will be back here with you. Do exactly as they tell you. Aeroplanes have been known to float for so long that they became a menace to navigation and had to be sunk by gunfire. They've been known to sink in a few minutes, too. This is an inflatable life raft. It's really a wonderful gadget. It's got everything in it but T-bone steaks. It will hold all of you very comfortably. Mr Wheeler, our second officer, will be in charge. He will tell you when to take off your shoes. We don't want anybody kicking holes

in this raft.
Miss Spalding will show you
where the emergency rations are,
when you get hungry.
How're we gonna get hungry if we're
only gonna be in the raft a few minutes?
Aren't you giving us a lot of malarkey?
Maybe a little,
but we just don't want bad things said
about the service
and cuisine on this airline.
No doubt there'll be caviar.
It would be most arduous
if there were no caviar.
I'll speak to the emergency chef.
I don't think
this is anything to joke about.
You're wrong.
The more jokes, the better.
When you get in that raft,
you might even try singing.
I was once a fair-to-middling bass.
I can't carry a tune in a basket,
but I'm sure loud.
Now, this is very important.
When we actually go in,
there will be two shocks.
If you know about them in advance,
they won't frighten you.
The first will be hardly noticeable,
like a normal landing.
But the second may be quite severe,
so brace yourselves.
Soon after that, the lights will go out,
but Miss Spalding and Mr Wheeler
both have flashlights.
So unfasten your seat belts
and wait for his call.
And keep calm.
Now, is there anything
you don't understand?
Could we send a radio message
to our families?
They were gonna meet us at the airport.

They will be standing.
I'm sorry, our radio is extremely busy
giving our position
and contacting the rescue plane.
I've some important papers
in my briefcase, many years of work.
Can I take them with me?
Not unless you can stuff them
in your pockets.
No baggage of any kind.
Come to think about it,
the bottom of the sea
is the best place for them.
And one thing more.
Now, don't get your hopes up.
There is one chance in a thousand
that we can make the coast.
This isn't possible unless there is
a marked change in the wind.
And according to our forecast,
it just couldn't happen.
But it could. And the one thing
we can do right now to help matters
is to lighten ship.
That way we'll use slightly less fuel.
If any of you gentlemen have ever had
an urge to throw things out of windows,
this is your chance of a lifetime.
What about us girls?
I love to throw things.
Good, go back and help Miss Spalding.
I'd better stick with the wife. She's
awfully worried about our children.
Please, let me help.
I'll sue the airline for this,
I'm not supposed to exert myself.
- The doctor says my heart...
- Your heart is breaking my heart.
We can get rid of some of this baggage
if you gentlemen will come with me,
and the rest of you
form a line clear back to the door.
My new Mainbocher frock is in here.
The insurance company

isn't gonna like this.
What a wonderful excuse
to get a new wardrobe.
Be kind of nice
if he came through all this
and didn't know a thing about it.
I need a big man.
Interested?
- Fascinated.
- Grab me around the waist.
All right, start kicking things out,
but be careful.
Keep behind me,
it's lonesome out there.
That does it.
Now all we have to do is wait.
Excuse me.
My kids, they like to hear me play this.
- Aren't you coming back to our seat?
- I'm staying here.
I can't stand that crying towel.
Hobie, give me 2,250 rpm.
Crack the cowl flaps.
Watch those head temperatures.
Give me another inch of boost!
Look at the fuel, Skipper,
the flow meters, we're pouring it in.
I can't help it. This turbulence is slowing
us down and we can't climb out of it!
Have a cup of coffee.
- I'm plenty hot enough now.
- Then it will cool you off.
Of course you're worried, Mrs Joseph.
But I'm quite certain
we'll get out of this all right.
By tomorrow we can look back on it
as an interesting experience.
By the by, how old are your children?
Jennifer is six and Edward is four.
Jennifer is such a delightful name,
Mrs Joseph. How fortunate you are.
Jennifer has always brought to me
the suggestion of the Scottish moor,
heather, great peace,

and visions of little villages
nestled against the hills.

That sort of thing.

Is your Jennifer anything like that?

I don't know exactly what you mean,
but she's always been a quiet child.

Precisely.

Somehow I knew your Jennifer
would be like that.

And Edward, I've no doubt, is growing
so fast you can't buy shoes for him.

Every three weeks.

Why don't you try to rest now?

Later I'd like to hear
a great deal more about your children.

I thought you hated
the mere mention of children.

I do.

But that poor woman is terrified.

I think I helped her.

For 10 years you've said that
love was a word in the dictionary
and children were monsters.

And you would never go two inches
out of your way to help anybody.

What goes, Gustave?

I've never seen you this way.

You've forgotten yourself
for a whole hour.

You've been magnificent.

Exaggeration is a foolish indulgence.

You told that woman
we'd get out of this all right.

- Do you really believe that?

- No.

In spite of what that pilot said, I think
we're batting at a very sticky wicket.

- And yet you're not afraid?

- Yes and no.

I'm not sure just how I feel.

If I were openly afraid now,
some of the others might become so.

I was guilty of the cheapest theatrics
right after the fire

and now it seems, I'm stuck with it.
I just want to know one thing.
What happened to the biggest baby
in the world?
The child-man who was afraid to sleep
with the lights off.
You used to burst into tears
if the laundry put starch in your shirts,
or the crepe suzette was underdone.
I don't understand you, Gustave.
I guess I never will.
Maybe it isn't important
to understand you
like the other women
you've always managed to keep around.
I've tried to tell myself I made a bargain
with a throwback, a Roman emperor.
You bought me on the market, Gustave,
paid for me,
like you might pay for a play
which you thought might turn out well.
For 10 years I've lived with that thought
and hated it.
Now it'll never bother me again.
Gustave, there is something
I'd like to tell you.
And if we don't get out of this,
I'd like you to know it even more.
I've never said it before
and probably you'll never want me
to say it again.
What else is on your twisted little mind?
I'm in love with you, Gustave.
I guess I always have been.
And then you tie the ribbons like this.
These preservers are not inflated now.
If you jerk this cord on either side,
carbon dioxide will be released
from the capsules
and the vest will inflate immediately.
That's all there is to it.
- Any calls for me?
- Take your pick.
Boyd, public relations.

No, Tommy.

We've not lost an aeroplane.

I'm standing right here in Operations
and our plane is still in the air.

Yeah, we had a little trouble. No,
I don't know the passengers' names.

Yeah, okay.

Where's Garfield? This jerk newspaper
wants a statement from the manager.

He's on his way.

He'll be here any minute.

Boyd, public relations.

Listen, Oswald, this airline has flown
over 30 million passenger miles
without ever scratching a passenger.

Sure we want to cooperate.

You'll get the straight dope,
just give me time to get organised.

Goodbye.

Mr Garfield, can you give me a minute?

Just about. What's your trouble?

The papers are on my neck already.

What will I tell them?

How about "drop dead" for an opener?

- You know I can't do that.

- I know.

- How long can you stall them?

- I don't know, maybe an hour.

They're crying about morning editions.

An hour might be enough.

We've got real trouble.

Does it look that bad?

It don't look good.

Is everything all right with you two?

I don't know when I've felt better
in the last five years.

I've just elected Miss Chen as the girl I
would most like to be on a life raft with.

Of course, now,

she may prefer a younger man.

There is in my family a very old saying.

I will try to translate it for you.

"The youth of man will never die

"unless he murders it. "

I plead not guilty.
I just want to show you
how to use your life vest.
My neck won't stand any weight,
and my bones are only held together
by my imagination.
A burial at sea will save my heirs
a lot of money.
- I'm ashamed of you for talking like that.
- Why do that?
You just look more comfortable
that way, Mr Briscoe.
You impress me
as the open-collar type anyway.
Rugged, you know.
- Outdoorsy, you mean?
- Yes.
You behave yourself.
I'll be coming back to make sure
you're being nice to Miss Chen.
It's a rough assignment
for an outdoor man without his horse,
but I'll do my best.
Would you like
to put your vests on now?
Investigation will undoubtedly prove this
aeroplane was ready for the junk heap.
And we're in the hands of incompetents.
I don't want to make no trouble,
but why don't you shut up?
You hate me, don't you?
All of you hate me
because I tried to do what was right.
Do like the little lady says.
Don't touch me, please.
You're giving me a very bad time,
Mr Agnew. I'm only trying to help you.
I have a perfect right...
You got no rights at all
for some time to come.
Do like she says or no life vest
is gonna keep you from drowning
because I'm gonna hold your head
under till you stop wiggling.

If we should happen to go down,
I'll give you plenty of warning.

Cross your arms like this
right in front of your face.

Brace your hands
on the seat just ahead.

Bend your head down
between your arms,
and keep them there
until we've stopped completely.

Remember to remove your shoes.

You men should loosen
your collar and tie.

Why?

According to the ditching instructions,
there is less possibility
of breaking your neck.

Anything from 420?

Not a sound out of them, sir.

Those people,
if they have to ditch tonight

with the way that wind's

kicking up that sea,

they don't stand much of a chance,

I'm thinking.

Cristobal Trader from San Francisco.

We can work the aircraft clearly now.

Thanks for your help. Over.

Good. Muchas gracias.

Cristobal Trader over and out.

How about letting me take over

for a while? Save yourself for later.

- We'll need you.

- All right.

Hey, Skipper, it will be almost dry tanks.

Maybe 20 or 30 gallons left. But if the
winds are right we can make it.

We picked up four minutes

in the past hour. I figured it all out.

If we can pick up a total of 11 minutes,
we're safe.

Hey, Skipper,

the interceptor is calling us.

We estimate our position

at 145 miles east of you.
Expect interception
in approximately 20 minutes.
Get a bearing on him.
We will transmit every three minutes
from now on.
When your needle begins to
fluctuate rapidly, advise us immediately.
We will then be very close to you.
You should have a bearing by now.
How about it?
We're gonna make it.
Five degrees north of our course.
We're awful glad to know you're around.
We know what you mean.
Say, can you guys climb any higher?
Out of this stuff
interception would be a lot easier.
Negative. We can climb, but we don't
want to use the fuel to do it.
Every gallon's a mile nearer shore
for us.
Okay. We'll find you anyway.
- Are you still afraid?
- No, my darling.
I don't mean the aeroplane.
I mean us, our future.
I'm not afraid of anything now.
I can't hear you.
How could I ever be afraid
when you hold me like this?
- I love you.
- Darling.
No.
Just think where we are.
I'm thinking how awful it would be
if this was the last time
I could hold you so.
- We'll have years, all our lives.
- If this aeroplane makes it.
Careful, darling.
Howard.
I thought you weren't speaking to me.
Would you be sorry if I drowned?

- Don't be ridiculous.
- I have to know.
I'd be more than sorry.
You could go off to your North woods.
It's occurred to me
that trying to make a go at that mine
might turn out to be a bad dream.
But it is a dream, Howard, your dream.
It was.
I could switch things back.
I suppose that would please you.
I'd only lose you.
A few hours ago,
you insisted on getting rid of me.
At times I'm a very stupid
and selfish woman.
I think you should go up to your mine.
That's you.
And you might take me along for laughs.
I'm hearing things.
You'd be miserable.
No doubt.
But I want you.
The guy I had sense enough to marry.
If I choke on hotcakes, or try to put
evening gowns on the natives,
or have cocktails with the sled dogs,
you'll just have to be patient with me.
You don't have to, but I wish you would.
Mush! That's what you say
to a sled dog, isn't it?
I want to start practising.
Makes them turn left,
if you yell it loud enough.
You're very good.
- Can you get that through to Sullivan?
- I can try.
- Everything else buttoned up?
- Yes, sir.
- Any improvement in the local weather?
- I'm afraid not.
- Radar, anything yet?
- No target, sir.
Navigator, how's our position

for interception?
Dead on. Just got a loran fix.
We should be joining now,
if their navigator is anywhere near right.
- Radar?
- No target, sir.
- Somebody's wrong.
- We should be right on top of them.
We can easily miss this guy.
No target, sir.
That navigator's wacky.
We're already seven minutes overdue.
Radar?
Target, Skipper. Strong blip.
Four degrees left, eight miles.
Looks like he's 500 feet below us.
Made a mistake, didn't you, fatso?
What happened to the 11 minutes
you were counting on?
What happened to them, fatso?
You never could make them up,
you just thought you could.
- Lennie, what about it?
- Hang on, Skipper. I'm still checking.
Time's wasting, fatso. Stop shaking.
Find the minutes,
and you can come back to me.
Minutes.
Who's got the minutes?
Your Susie's got them, right here.
Come on, Lennie.
What's holding things up?
The Coast Guard says
your position's wrong.
I'll be right with you, Skipper.
Skipper?
I got bad news.
The Coast Guard was right.
I made a dumb kid's mistake.
We're not as close to the coast
as I thought we were.
I was figuring in knots instead of miles.
I guess I was just scared.
What about those 11 minutes?

They can make the difference
between the water and your own bed.
They aren't there.
They never were there.
I'm sorry, Skipper.
I hope this will float.
I am so excited about your arrival,
Sally.
Tomorrow, I'll leave these mountains
and pines, which will be your home, too,
and go down to the city
for my first visit in over a year.
I want to get there
a few days before you arrive,
because there are some things
this cabin needs
to make it more comfortable for a girl.
I'm still scared you won't like it up here,
unless you're nuts about
the sound of a mountain stream,
or love to watch the sun seem to turn
a mountain peak around very slow.
Hey, Henry.
One of our neighbours
just came by to say hello.
A little fawn I call Henry.
He seems to ask,
"Where is Sally? Where is your wife?"
So hurry, girl!
So you'll be sure to recognise me
at the airport,
I'll be wearing a bright green tie.
P.S. I was just thinking how lucky I am.
I happened to pick up
an old torn magazine
and there is your picture,
smacking me right between the eyes.
And only a short time later,
that very wonderful-looking little girl
is coming to share my life.
Remarkable.
What's so remarkable?
Is it faith or just habit
that compels a woman

to put on fresh makeup
before boarding a life raft?
Aren't you jumping the gun?
You're being a fatalist
about this business then?
I'm not sure I even know
what a fatalist is.
I'm not sure I even know
what a fatalist is.
How can you sit there so calmly then,
when a little while ago
you were terrified?
I sat down here with you because
I thought I might be able to help you.
But I'm not needed.
If you came over to give me help,
it was partly because
you needed help yourself,
very badly.
Don't worry about me.
I've just stopped worrying
about losing something
I never had a chance to get
in the first place.
Would the thing be a man?
Or am I getting too personal?
You are.
I don't care anymore.
I've been kidding myself long enough.
I'm not gonna run away anymore.
What are you hiding from?
Myself.
He's a kind, clean, wonderful man.
He has a right to know
what kind of a person I am.
I'm going to tell him
that I'm a different kind of person
than he thinks I am.
I'm not wonderful,
not kind, I'm not clean.
Telling you these things is easy,
because you're a stranger
and I'll never see you again.
Telling him is...

It's going to be one of the hardest things
I've ever done in my life,
'cause in my heart,
I'll always see him
even when he turns his back
and walks away.
Look at my face.
Wouldn't you walk away?
I'm so much older
than my years have made me.
Look at my face carefully, as he'll do.
You'll see how very old I am.
I'm beat.
I'll make a swell-looking bride.
A beat bride.
But I'm not afraid anymore.
Now that I know what's going to happen,
I'm almost happy.
So, I wasn't making up my face
a few minutes ago.
I was looking in the mirror, at me.
Does that answer your question,
mister?
I was mistaken.
You aren't a fatalist.
You're a very courageous young lady.
Maybe some of it will brush off on me
if I keep sitting here.
Maybe I can throw a few things
out of my own life.
- Cigarette?
- No, thanks. I don't use them things.
- Do you have to do that?
- Yeah.
Could I have my property back now?
- Why?
- It would mean a great deal to me.
Take away this feeling
of being constantly watched.
I'm all right, now. Quite calm.
You can trust me.
Sit down.
You got lots to think about,
and maybe not so much time for to do it.

Holy Mary, mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.
Our Father, who art in Heaven,
hallowed be thy name.

Thy Kingdom come...

Sparks, get on the horn.

Advised interception completed at 56.

Okay, Dan. I'll take over.

Go back now. Take the Gibson girl,
get the passengers all set.

You'll have plenty of time.

Turn on the seat belt sign 10 minutes
before we start for the water.

Good luck, you guys.

- Anything new with the wind, Lennie?

- No.

We're not very fat, then?

- If we only had 11 minutes more of fuel.

- Eleven minutes? Is that all you need?

- Are you sure?

- I know exactly where we are now.

Eleven minutes more of fuel

would see us through.

What increase in wind velocity would
we need to arrange that little thing?

Twenty knots in the next hour.

- That's asking a lot.

- Yeah.

It couldn't happen so I'm not asking.

But if the wind swung around

a little more in the tail

it could be.

I guess they'll pick us up

before we get too damp.

Susie will sure be worried.

She'll lay down the law.

Probably insist I quit flying.

Will you?

No.

- Everything's here. I just hope it works.

- It will.

Wouldn't you rather

not have to depend on it?

- What do you mean?
- Suppose we didn't ditch.
You've got to.
Lennie says all we need
is 11 extra flying minutes to make land.
Sullivan's the captain. He says we ditch.
Would you think I was wrong
if I tried to talk him out of it?
Maybe try a little luck?
Luck?
That's has-been thinking.
Wanna run out of fuel,
right over San Francisco?
Wipe out a few bridges
or apartment houses?
Sullivan's been over this ocean
lots of times. He knows his business.
I've seen men act like this before.
Sometimes because of one thing
or another,
fella stops thinking straight temporarily.
I've been flying a long time, Hobie.
Only, you're not the captain.
Maybe because your so-called luck
ran out on you once
down in South America.
This is no luck operation.
You better go back to
your helmet and goggles.
Maybe.
Here it is, Lennie.
Colour may not become you
- but it'll suffice you.
- Thanks, for nothing.
About that 11 minutes,
are you absolutely sure?
Absolutely.
Lennie says if we can pick up
11 minutes, we can make it.
He could be right.
It'll be rough down there.
If we hit wrong, we've had it.
Maybe we ought to ease off a little on
the power and save a few drops of fuel.

Any objections if I try it?
This won't work.
She's going to stall on me.
That's no good.
We'll blow another engine.
What's the difference?
We'll blow them all if we ditch.
Put those controls back
where they belong.
- Put those props back.
- Nothing doing, Skipper.
That's an order!
Hang on, chum. You can do it.
Now fly and let me pray.
We'll run out of gas,
right over San Francisco.
Let's try out this way for a while.
Don't be so anxious to go for a swim!
- She's starting to shake again.
- Let her shake!
Let her mush down a few feet if you
have to. We're saving fuel this way.
Hang on and fly!
Did you call Sullivan's wife?
Yes, sir. She's on her way to the airport.
- You didn't alarm her?
- No.
I just told her, her husband was on
his way, and that you wanted to see her.
Then she knows something's happened.
Probably. But her voice was quite calm.
How about the others?
Wheeler lives with another pilot,
Dupree. There was no answer.
The same for Wilby.
I called his home
and then a bar I know about.
His wife had been there,
but she left about an hour ago,
drunk.
- The stewardess?
- No, Spalding's mother isn't well.
Her father is out of town on business.
I wish I could tell them all together.

I think maybe they could
help each other.

There isn't anybody listed on there
for Dan Roman.

- Do you know any person close to him?

- Yeah.

But I don't think you could reach her.

Dan lives alone.

- Is everything all right?

- Just great, junior.

This is a stunning garment.

I feel like a catcher for the Dodgers.

It's a frowsy looking shroud,
if you ask me.

Baby.

I went through the first World War
and the Blitz in London.

I was scared, but not like this.

I want to show you something cute.

Want to see something cute?

I must be slipping.

No reaction, even from a man like you,
who should appreciate such things.

Keep talking. Please. Keep talking.

I'm frightened.

Talking. Honey, you don't know
what you're asking.

I'll tell you a good joke on me.

You know, I always dreaded
the idea of becoming an old woman,
and from the way things look now,
I won't have to worry about it anymore.

You know, I haven't been whistled at
in years.

And the idea of growing roses
for the rest of my life
was really beginning to haunt me.

There ought to be a home
for dames like me.

We should have organised.

You know, a house somewhere
with no mirror in it.

Far away, where we'd never have
to look at a young girl.

They have homes
for unmarried mothers.
But everybody forgets
about the girls who
never quite managed
to make things legal.
I think I could start one.
I can call it the "May Holst Home
for Broken-down Broads. "
I kind of like that, don't you?
Well, they're as ready now
as they'll ever be.
Can you take something else
in your stride?
I can try.
Good.
I want you to do me a favour.
Look, when I tell you, sit down there
with your back against that seat,
stay there,
no matter what else is going on.
Don't try to be a heroine
because in those last few moments,
there isn't anything in the world
you can do to help anybody.
You know, your face
can improve any landscape.
I want you to keep it that way.
So the favour for me is this pillow.
Hold it tightly over your face,
for yourself and for me.
With the wind and the sea
neither God nor Sullivan
can set this thing down tonight
like an egg crate.
We might just as well slam
into a mountain. Dan knows it. I know it.
And so does Sullivan.
Wilby, check your final position.
I'm going to take her down.
- Wait a few more minutes.
- Do as I say.
- But it looks like...
- Do as I say.

Give him a few more minutes.
I've already waited too long.
Here we go.
No, we don't. Get a hold of yourself,
you yellow...
420 is losing altitude, sir.
420, from Coast Guard.
Radar reports you're descending.
Are you going to ditch?
You are now below the minimum legal
altitude for approaching the coast.
Time's wasting.
You better climb or settle for the drink.
We're right with you. We'll follow you
down. Advise immediately.
420 to Coast Guard.
We've been too busy to answer.
Stand by.
We may have a change in plans.
Thirty minutes of fuel left.
Cross-feed problem.
Throw the rule book away.
Highest obstruction, 1,950 feet,
so 2,200 will be safe.
Leonard, stand by electric altimeter,
call out readings.
Nose tipped down, ship fly faster.
More efficient use of fuel against time.
Study approach book.
Air Traffic Control to clear area.
Direction finders on range station.
Start right now.
Dan?
Yeah?
Thanks.
Thanks for knocking some sense
into my head.
- Someday I'll explain.
- You don't have to.
We're not going to ditch.
We'll make San Francisco the hard way.
Any change in the wind, Lennie?
We picked up three of those
11 minutes.

Bring me the approach chart
for San Francisco.
Whistle me a tune, Dan.
I like music while I work.
- Can I get you something, Mr Briscoe?
- Yes. A ham sandwich.
I can't. Everything went overboard.
Now you put on that vest.
Great service.
You throw all the food to the sharks,
so you won't have to serve it.
Tell you what. Proposition.
I think Miss Chen will let me
buy her a steak in San Francisco,
if you come along, too.
If you'll accept, I'll put on the vest.
Mr Briscoe, you have yourself a deal.
- Take a breather, Dan.
- Okay.
The Farallon Islands, any minute now.
- Don't go any lower.
- No. I'll hold this altitude.
Get back and call out our altitude
on the radio altimeter.
We'll make straight for the
northwest leg of San Francisco range.
The area's been cleared
and we're practically on the ground.
I like the way you said that.
Twenty-eight miles to go.
He's made first base.
But if that guy runs out of fuel
between here and the airport,
I don't know where he'll put
that thing down
except in the middle of Market Street.
Shut that thing off.
Well?
I'm going over to the terminal.
If needed, I'll be in the control tower.
This is it. Ten minutes.
Come on, let's make a final check.
Inflate your vest, please.
- We're going down?

- Yeah, but you'll be all right.
Take your time coming back to the door.
Wait until I yell.
- Coast Guard plane still with us?
- Right off our wing. He'll stick with us.
Put out your cigarette, please.
Inflate your vest, Mr Childs.
You too, Miss Holst.
- Some brassiere.
- Don't smoke from now on. Good luck.
I really ought to take my briefcase.
Sorry, nothing doing.
Inflate your vest, please.
I can't.
I'm terrified.
I can't seem to move.
Don't worry. Good luck.
- All set, you two?
- We're still hungry.
Our steak date is postponed.
Inflate your vest, please.
Maybe you should keep this.
I'd loved thinking it was mine,
even if it was just for a few hours.
Nonsense.
You can keep it as dry as I can.
If it's still working tomorrow night

at 7:

take a cab to Ernie's restaurant
on Montgomery street.
If it isn't working, come anyway.
Thanks.
We got them all to blow up, see?
Good work. Remember take your time
coming back to the door.
You want?
No, thanks. Thanks just the same.
If anything happens to me,
get in touch with my wife in Honolulu.
- Tell her I loved her. I was mistaken.
- You tell her yourself, mister.
You'll be all right. I'm not worrying and
I'll be the last guy off this aeroplane.

- Do you have to be?
- That's what I get paid for.
- Seat belt tight?
- I think so.
This is for real, isn't it?
I'm afraid so. Inflate your vest, please.
Well, even I might float.
Inflate your vest, please.
I don't want to die.
Ed, don't let me die. My babies, Ed.
Give her two of these when you can.
They'll quiet her.
Stand by for anything. Sullivan is gonna
try and make San Francisco.
- Can we?
- I don't see how.
Technically, we're out of fuel right now.
We've bought it.
550 feet, Skipper.
The coast hills must be coming up.
- Watch it!
-400, a little less.
Hang on!
Ground's coming up fast!
200, Skipper. This ain't good.
420, from Coast Guard.
Twin Peaks coming up on your left
in a minute or so.
Remember those radio towers.
Stay on course.
Don't descend anymore.
Thanks. We're trying not to.
150 feet, Skipper!
300 feet, Skipper.
We must be past the hills.
500. We're living!
420, this is San Francisco Towers.
Special weather.
Ceiling, 300 feet. Visibility, one mile.
Wind, west northwest.
Twenty to 25. Over.
Okay, San Francisco Tower.
We'll make an ILS approach.
Turn the runway lights up full blast.

- Cone of silence.
- Right with you, chum.
- We're cleared straight on down.
- This is going to be a fast one.
Stand by, check me with flaps and gear.
Get the outer marker, Dan.
Outer marker identified.
But we're way below our glide path,
so watch it, chum.
There's a 690-foot radio tower
around here someplace.
Has to be behind us,
we're right on the approach leg.
Let me know it when they're clear.
Feather it, Dan! Quick!
No time to fool with it.
Give me full power on the other two.
- You see anything?
- Not yet.
- Contact yet?
- No.
- This is a sweater.
- You're doing fine.
When we pass the inner marker,
I'm shoving her down regardless.
Yeah.
Approach lights dead ahead.
Maybe a mile.
Give her the gear.
Three green lights and pressure.
We can only stay in the air
another 30 seconds.
- Full flaps.
- Full flaps.
Now I lay me down to sleep.
Did you get hurt?
Was anyone hurt at all?
Two more coming down now.
There's Mr Pardee,
the famous producer.
He'll give us some information.
- You're Gustave Pardee, aren't you?
- I was. I'm not so sure now.
Please leave us alone. We're very tired.

Give us a few words about your flight.

I couldn't tell you.

Not in a million words.

- What will your next production be?
- It will take a little longer than usual.
- Next year, I hope.
- Next year?

Now, please let us pass.

Sally!

Who are you?

Miss, just one statement.

- Tell us who you are.
- What's your name?
- Why, it's a boy!
- Little boy.

He'll sure have a story
to tell his grandkids.

- Daddy wants you to come and see him.
- I will, darling. I will!

Look at my space material.

- Here he is. Who's that?
- Give us a statement.

Where's the nearest telephone?

I have to call Honolulu, my wife.

- Over there.
- Thanks.

No questions, please.

What happened?

Here she is.

Hold it right there. Thank you.

She must be in show business.

She's in show business, all right.

She's the star of the Follies!

Tell us your story.

Just one.

Papa!

Just a moment.

Listen, boys. I'm just a fisherman.

I want to see my kids.

Thirty gallons, Mr Garfield.

That's all there was left in all the tanks.

Too little to really measure.

Tell this man we must have
reservations on the plane,

first thing tomorrow morning.
We'll miss Elvira's party.
It's important to you.
What's Elvira's party
got to do with sled dogs?
Really, darling. Don't be tiresome.
We might as well play safe until you find
out how things are going to turn out.
All right, Lydia.
Hello, Pete.
Meet us out front.
We're going for our steaks.
Ten minutes, Mr Briscoe,
I'll be there for sure.
- Hi.
- Hi, Mr Garfield.
- I think your wife's waiting for you.
- Yeah.
I don't want to keep her
standing too long. We're expecting.
When you get rested, call me.
We'll have a talk.
Yeah, sure.
Good night.
Good night.
Good night, Mr Garfield.
- Souvenir?
- For my wife.
I guess the rain won't hurt it,
better get it home though.
Susie will be waiting. Good night.
Well, I guess I better get going.
Little past my bedtime.
You had 30 gallons left.
Yeah.
Good night. We'll get together soon.
Sure, chum.
So long.
So long, you ancient pelican.