

SEVEN SISTERS
PILOT - EPISODE 1

Written by

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AUGUST 1995 - PEARSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - TORONTO

INTERIOR - WAITING AREA - GATE 30

Sitting in the waiting area is Mary Brennan. She is 77 years old, originally from the United Kingdom. Her hair is gray, styled beautifully, she is still agile on her own with the assistance of a cane. She is neatly dressed in a comfortable pant suit with her brocade purse sitting on her lap and her ticket in hand. She is traveling alone and she is slightly nervous. Nobody is engaging her but she is just fine with that and is politely observing the people around her, the parents, the kids, all chatting happily.

VOICE OVER INTERCOM:

British Airways flight 1127 with non-stop service to Heathrow airport will be boarding momentarily at gate 30. Those needing a little extra assistance please see a representative at the gate. We will be boarding all other rows after pre-boarding.

ONE OF THE BRITISH AIRWAYS GATE PERSONAL WALKS OVER TO MARY

BA REP

Excuse me ma'm, would you need a little extra time to board the plane?

MARY BRENNAN

(Looks directly at her confidently but not rude)

I'm sorry dear don't let the walking stick fool you. My daughter Mona insists that I use it...you know, just in case?

*

(She waves her hand in the air)

Quite a bother actually.

BRITISH AIRWAYS REP STILL NOT REALLY GETTING AN ANSWER,
WAITING AND STILL LOOKING AT MARY.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Oh it's alright I'll be fine. It's just been a few years since I've flown a plane...I mean flown..

(Smiles and she looks out the big window and the imposing plane, clutching her ticket)

(MORE)

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)

...in a plane.

CUT TO MARY ENTERING THE PLANE

From her viewpoint we see two British Airways employees greeting people as they enter. One is a male flight attendant, roughly 30 years old. The other is a female pilot in her late 40's. They all smile. Mary stops just before entering the plane. She runs her left hand on the exterior of the fuselage as though she is calming a pet.

Mary steps forward and the male attendant greets her.

BA - MALE ATTENDANT

Good day ma'am welcome aboard. Do you need assistance with your seating?

Mary smiles. We see the woman pilot as she glances down at the insignia button on Mary's blazer (close up of the "ATA" metal button). The pilot quietly salutes Mary and the male attendant looks at the pilot quizzically.

BA - PILOT

It is an honor to have you on board ma'am.

Mary returns a casual salute, smiles and enters the plane.

She is not in coach but business class and sits down in the window seat. There is an empty seat next to Mary. She sits patiently glancing at the people as they pass by on their way to their seats. *

MEETING AT THE SEATS

A young British woman, Marion Gordon, 5ft 6, shoulder length red hair steps forward and sits next to Mary. Mary nods to her and smiles and the young lady says hello.

MARION GORDON

(Leans a bit over to Mary)

Since we'll be together for the journey my name is Marion, Marion Gordon.

MARY BRENNAN

Very nice to meet you Marion. My name is Mary Brennan.

MARION GORDON
(Hearing the British accent)

You heading back home to see
family?

MARY BRENNAN
Yes and some old friends. It's been
awhile.

We hear the rumble of the plane as the engines start to rev up. Mary turns to look out the window and the taxiing has begun. It is getting louder now and we see Mary's hand holding the rolled ticket a little tighter and Marion notices as well..

As we hear the full roar and the plane lifting we see Mary's hand move the rolled ticket towards herself as if she is moving the stick backwards to lift the plane up. Marion notices this as well and smiles. Marion leans in a bit and breaks Mary's concentration.

MARION GORDON
My husband does the same thing when
he flies.

MARY BRENNAN
(Mary does not seem to know what
she is talking about)

I'm sorry?

MARION GORDON
(Smiling)

My husband's a pilot with the RAF
and when he first started flying
the Hawk back in training he would
unknowingly be doing things with
his hands like he was flying.

Mary seems a bit embarrassed and smiles back at Marion.

MARION GORDON (CONT'D)
I see your insignia badge. Was your
husband a pilot?

MARY BRENNAN
(Looks down and touches the badge,
then looks at Marion)

Well yes dear he did but I did as
well during the second world war.

MARION GORDON
(Embarrassed at her assumption)

Oh I'm so sorry Mary. I didn't mean to assume...

MARY BRENNAN
(Smiling)

Oh that's alright my dear there was a lot of assumption even back then. We were told us women didn't really even have the intelligence to scrub the floor of a hospital properly.

*
*

They both laugh at this.

MARION GORDON
I know my husband Daniel gets that way sometimes but I will remind him that it is me that keeps the house running like a well oiled machine AND work a full time job.

MARY BRENNAN
Ahhh men they can be silly buggers but we can't help loving them now can we?

MARION GORDON
I apologize but what does the initials on the badge stand for?

MARY BRENNAN
It stands for Air Transport Auxiliary...or as some of us girls would say...

(SMILING)

...Always Terrified Airmen.

They both laugh a bit

MARION GORDON
Is that where you met your husband?

MARY BRENNAN
Well actually no I met him up in Blackpool, at the Tower Ballroom. You know Blackpool?

MARION GORDON

Oh my dear yes! Blackpool Rock
Candy! My Pop would bring it home
to us when he travel for business.

*
*

MARY BRENNAN

Such a treat right? I plan to bring
a bucketload back with me. Be
damned my dentist!

Laughs

MARION GORDON

So he swept you off your feet in
Blackpool?

MARY BRENNAN

Well...I think it was mutual in
this case.

(with a sly but demure
look)

MARION GORDON

Oh my really?? Now that sounds like
a interesting tale.

They appear to transform into teenage girls sharing a secret.

Mary smiles.

MARY BRENNAN

I think we'll need a cocktail for
this don't you?

Marion pushes the button above her for the flight attendant.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Well it was February of 1941 and I
went to the ballroom with a couple
of my friends. It was some silly
Valentine's Day dance but we didn't
have dates and really didn't care.
We came to dance and well...

(Smiling)

...yes chat a bit with the boys.

FLASHBACK - CUT TO

*

EXTERIOR OF BLACKPOOL BALLROOM - 1941

We see young women and men, both local and military all coming and leaving the ballroom. Some are hanging about outside the entrances, laughing and having a smoke and also sneaking a little booze from the hidden flasks.

Coming towards us along the sidewalk in front of the entrance to the ballroom are three young ladies, arm in arm, laughing and chatting.

In the middle is a young **Mary Brennan**, 21 years old, from an Irish / British heritage. She is 5ft 7 with shoulder length dark red hair and is always smiling. When she walks into a room she is the "life". If you hear a lot of laughter she will be at the center of it all.

On Mary's left is longtime friend **Kathleen Johnson** who has shared so much together, both good and bad. Kathleen is 20 years old, 5ft 5, dark wavy hair.

*

On her right is a newer friend, **Betty Bradley** who works with both of them at the Stanley Park Aerodrome for the Vickers-Armstrong shadow airplane factory. She is 22 years old, 5ft 9, blonde curly hair.

*

Betty is looking around at the scene and casually spits on the ground while roughly trying to adjust he skirt.

*

*

Kathleen furrows her brow at this.

*

KATHLEEN JOHNSON

*

Really Bet? Spitting here? This is not the machine shop.

*

*

Betty gives her a look and still is adjusting her skirt.

*

BETTY BRADLEY

*

Damn this skirt. I can't see why I couldn't have just worn my pants.

*

*

MARY BRENNAN

*

'Cause the boys like to see our gams.

*

*

BETTY BRADLEY

*

Oh phooey! Will ya look at these randy buggers.

*

*

KATHLEEN JOHNSON

Well at least they got dates. We
got nothing. We're just three...

MARY BRENNAN

(Stopping the three of
them with out stretched
arms, she raises her
right arm up like holding
a sword)

...Three Musketeers! One for all
and all for...wait!...if I find me
a fine handsome lad I'm taking him
for myself!

They all laugh

We follow behind them as they enter the ballroom. Kathleen and Betty open the doors, Mary walks in and we follow them (tracking shot) into this stunningly gorgeous ornate ballroom with a very high ceiling. It is illuminated in reds and golds reflecting off the walls and the giant chandeliers suspended over highly polished wooden dance floor. There is approximately 100 people dancing comfortably on this large dance floor. On stage the big band orchestra is playing "Love Walked In".

Everyone is milling around drinking, chatting and dancing. Because it is Valentine's Day it is mostly couples but there is a fair number of young military men and women on their own like Mary, Betty and Kathleen.

While the music is playing we see various clips of the action inside the ballroom. People laughing and drinking, joking and having a good time.

We come back to the girls at the counter of the concession stand ordering beer and chips.

KATHLEEN JOHNSON

(Looking into her change
purse)

I'm a bit short. Any of you two
have a half a crown?

BETTY BRADLEY

See if we waited we could have one
of these nice fellas take care of
this for us.

MARY BRENNAN

Most of these fine gentlemen have a fine gentle lady so I think we'll be on our own tonight.

(She pokes into her small hand purse)

Here ya go Kath, I got it...

(Reaches over to give Kath the change but pulls her arm back slightly)

...but you will owe me...a dance!

(They all laugh)

They carry their drinks to a table along side the perimeter that is affixed to the wall. No chairs, they stand there.

They are chatting amongst themselves while the music is playing. Kathleen sees something and leans in to Mary and Betty.

KATHLEEN JOHNSON

Oh no...don't look now but a small squadron of flyboys at 2 O'clock coming in fast and hot.

They all casually turn to see three men in khaki heading their way. They walk with confidence in their step. On the left side is **Harvey Turnbull**, 22 years old, 5ft 7, stocky, dark curly hair. *

On the right is **Archie Patterson**, 24 years old, 6ft 2, well built, strong, short brown cropped hair. *

In the middle is **David Craig**, 23 years old, 5ft 10, handsome, well groomed but not vain. Short black hair. A stellar RAF pilot he is the youngest in his squadron but the most respected for his leadership and courage. He's a member of the 63rd RAF squadron based at Squire's Gate - Bomber Squad flying the Fairey Battle Light Bomber.

Harvey breaks out and steps up to the girls.

HARVEY TURNBULL/SPUD

Pardon me would you ladies be missing a handsome trio of men by chance?

BETTY BRADLEY

Why yes we are...

(MORE)

BETTY BRADLEY (CONT'D)
(Exaggeratedly looking around them
to other parts of the room)

...have you found them?

Archie punches Harvey in the top of his arm and because of
his strength knocks Harvey off balance a bit.

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER
Ahhhh she knows yer tune eh Spud!

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA
(Stepping in front of the
other two)

Pardon these hooligans ladies, they
were just released from the looney
bin...but don't worry they won't
bite.

MARY BRENNAN
(To David Craig)

And who are you?...the Head Loon?

They all laugh and Harvey then punches Archie in the arm and
it's like nothing happened. It doesn't even phase Archie. *

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER
Ooooh blimey...I think she knows
yer tune as well Cap'ain!

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA
(Looking and smirking at
Archie)

I think so Fitter.

(Turning to the girls)

Ladies may we start again before
your impression of us goes out the
window?

The girls all smile to each other. You can tell that they are
liking what they have seen so far.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA (CONT'D)

I'm David Craig.

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER
(All proud like)

That'd be Captain David Craig sir.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA
Yes Fitter, thank you but we won't
be so formal here. It's Valentine's
Day and we should be treating these
lovely ladies to something more.
Would you ladies care for a shandy?

BETTY BRADLEY
See ladies we're in the presence of
some right fine gentlemen I tell
ya. Now some may fancy a shandy but
I'd prefer a little something with
a kick in the flask I'm sure you're
carrying.

Archie nudges Harvey again.

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER
Oooh mate she must have seen the
bulge in your pocket.

They all chuckle.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA
And this fine tall oak tree of a
gentleman is Archie Patterson and
next to him is our George Formby of
the Blackpool Aerodrome, Harvey
Turnbull.

KATHLEEN JOHNSON
Wait... 'ang on I thought you called
him Spud!?

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA
Ahhh yes, his nickname is Spud. He
got that moniker from all of the
potatoes he had to peel one time
when he...well got into a wee bit
of trouble with the Flight
Sergeant.

BETTY BRADLEY
(Indicating to Archie)

And you called him Fitter?

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Well Archie...I mean Fitter...well he is the genie of the gears. You have anything mechanical, he can fix it. You end up in a dicey-doo situation, you want him in your corner.

MARY BRENNAN

Well your mates have nicknames...do you?

HARVEY TURNBULL/SPUD

(Steps up and addresses the ladies)

Ladies this handsome bloke would be Pukka.

MARY BRENNAN

Pukka??

HARVEY TURNBULL/SPUD

Yes ma'am Pukka. It's some special Hindi word for honest and truthful. Ladies Cap'ain Craig is one of the most straight-up chaps you can ever meet..

MARY BRENNAN

Oh he is, is he?

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER

Yes ma'am he's not only one of the best pilots I know but also has had Spud's and I's back on a few occasions.

MARY BRENNAN

Well I'm Mary Brennan. We don't have stellar nicknames like you lot but that is Kathleen Johnson and Betty Bradley. Kath and I have been best friends since we were little girls. Betty...well we met at the factory and she...like your Fitter is our wizard of the wrench.

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER

(Enthusiastically)

Really???

Harvey elbows him in the gut and now Archie reacts...a little less enthusiastic.

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER (CONT'D)
(A little more subdued)

Betty which type of spanner do you use? Some like those Yankee Snap-On ones but if I need to git a Whitworth bolt loose I will always use my King Dick spanner.

There is some snickering of the use of the word "Dick".

But Betty is taken by Archie and their obvious mechanic connection.

*

HARVEY TURNBULL/SPUD
(Slapping Archie's arm
with the back of his
hand)

Awww com'on Fitter these ladies don't want to hear about your grease monkey life, they want to hear me sing...

*"I'd rather play naughts and crosses with you
Than go to the pictures or the zoo
I'm very daft at dancing, at moonlight or romancing
I'd rather play naughts and crosses with you."*

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA
(Puts his hand up to
Harvey's mouth)

Ok Spud that's enough mate. These ladies didn't come to hear you sing either.

KATHLEEN JOHNSON
(With raised eyebrows) Ooooh I think it's cute.

*

Harvey pumps his chest and smiles.

HARVEY TURNBULL/SPUD
See Pukka, she thinks I'm cute and lovable.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA
(Shaking his head)

Ooooo Spud, I don't think she went
that far.

They are all laughing and giggling now and then...

Suddenly the band breaks into playing "Diga Diga Doo" (Artie Shaw song) and the crowd hoots and many couples head to the dance floor and commence swing dancing.

HARVEY TURNBULL/SPUD
(Reaching out his hand to
Kathleen)

Hot diga diga doo, I want to dance
with you!!

Kathleen gets a big smile on her face and grabs his hand and out they go.

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER
Ahhh com'on Betty let's not have
them hog the dance floor.

BETTY BRADLEY
We ain't gettin' any younger, let's
move it!

And off they go on the dance floor and join Harvey and Kathleen.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA
(Looking over at Mary)

Well I don't want to be a
wallflower..whatta say Mary?

MARY BRENNAN
Stop flappin' your gums and let's
get flappin' our feet...come on!

And out goes Mary and David to join the rest of them. *

CUT TO DANCE FLOOR

Everyone is dancing. The beat is infectious and they are swinging.

Here will be a series of clips featuring each of our couples dancing with each other for the entire song (2:24). Spud & Kathleen are around the same height and have locked into a great rhythm and they are laughing and hooting.

Betty and Fitter are of course taller but they are just as smooth on the dance floor. Then we come to Mary and David and it is just like Fred Astaire and Ginger Rodgers. We see them dancing and it's like they have been dancing for years. They are all dancing with such enthusiasm caught up in the beat!

*

We cut back and forth between the big band that is so in the moment, swinging and swaying and all of the dancers and of course our 6 new friends. It's a frenzied mass of rhythm and they don't want it to end.

The song ends however and the band are all trying to catch their breath. We cut to the bandstand and the band leader.

*

BIG BAND LEADER

Right folks! It appears you liked that one and may need a pint. Some and the boys will take a short break and be back in a bit.

Everybody claps again and disperse to wherever they have their pints and jackets.

We see our six coming back to the table we started at against the wall. Kath & Spud, Betty & Fitter all laughing and happy.

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER

Well I have to say if this was a competition dance night I would say that Betty and I would be walking home with the trophy.

Harvey shakes his head and crosses his eyes.

HARVEY TURNBULL/SPUD

Ahhhh yer daft mate. If id be any of us id be Kath and I for sure. Hollywood will be calling us soon.

KATHLEEN JOHNSON

(Winking to Betty)

And we're the best looking as well!

Mary and David step into frame.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Wait, wait! is Spud saying he's good lookin'?

Spud & Fitter are eyeing each other.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA (CONT'D)

...everyone here knows who's the better looking of this lot right?

(LOOKS AT SPUD & FITTER)

It's meeeee...me mate, Fitter!

Archie looks his way and smiles and has a little bit of a smug face on and puffs up his chest with a big inhale. He can't hold it back and breaks out laughing. *

Our attention goes to Mary and David while their friends talk amongst themselves.

MARY BRENNAN

Well Captain if you fly half as you do dance I think the Gerrys are in trouble and maybe this bloody war will be over soon.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

We're not on the base Mary, it's just David please. Thank you regarding my big feet but yes those Gerrys are truly persistent...like angry wasps in a shaken jar. *

MARY BRENNAN

Are you and your mates on a leave or something?

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Ahh just a short one while they get us ready for the next adventure. I'm with the 63rd over at Squire's Gate. Fitter...well he's the only Spanner monkey I trust to get things flight ready but I told him he needed a pint tonight. And Spud...we'll he's been my mate for years. You got to have Spud with you, he makes the world around him smile.

The band returns and start playing "Pennies From Heaven", a ballad.

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER

Hey Pukka, let's get one more dance in before they think we're AWOL!

HARVEY TURNBULL/SPUD

Ahhh look at 'em Cap'an he's
thinking he's our mum or sum'in.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Ok, you two...but Fitter's right we
need to get back.

(David turns to Mary and
extends his hand)

Mary, may I?

MARY BRENNAN

Welllllll, if you insist.

Now on the dance floor once again Mary & David look like they
have been dancing with each other for years.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

So Mary what does Mr. Churchill
have you doing over there at
Vickers-Armstrong for the effort?

MARY BRENNAN

Oh David Mr. Churchill told us
loose lips sink ships.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Sorry??

MARY BRENNAN

Oh it's actually kind of boring.
I'm one of the gang that keeps
inventory of all of the parts
needed to build the kites you lads
smash up!

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Hey, hey...I've not smashed up one
bird yet.

MARY BRENNAN

Ok, then just some of you lot then.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Yes, I'm no sprog in a spamcan
thank you very much.

They smile at each other and you get the feeling that the
attraction is growing in this short period of time.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Say Mary...would you like to see one tomorrow? Fitter just finished up fixing one today and I need to take her up for a test.

MARY BRENNAN

REALLY? Are you sure it will be alright?

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Ahhh sure. We'll throw a flight suit on you with the headgear and nobody will be the wiser.

MARY BRENNAN

Well...alright, if you think it will be ok. When?

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

0:600. The weather is going to be ok so we'll get the morning light.

CUT TO NEXT DAY - 6AM - SQUIRE'S GATE AERODROME

We see the backs of David Craig and Fitter watching as Mary rides up on her carrier bike. She is dressed in wool slacks, flannel shirt and jacket. Mary leans the bike against the building wall and greets them.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA (CONT'D)

Mornin' Mary. Look Fitter she's got dressed properly for flying.

Mary flattens and prims.

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER

Good thing you put some trousers on Mary. It can get a bit nippy up there.

Archie hands her the khaki one-piece sidcot flight suit.

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER (CONT'D)

But you might want to put this on over that to make sure you're warm enough.

MARY BRENNAN

Oh I'm not too knowledgable about all this flying, temperatures and stuff. I just thought it is wise while on a bike.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA
Right...very good, walk this way
Mary and I'll introduce you to
Maggie.

MARY BRENNAN
Maggie?

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER
It's actual name is Miles Magister
but we nickname her Maggie. Ain't
she pretty?

MARY BRENNAN
Ahhh you chaps and your girlfriends
that have wings.

They laugh and continue to the Maggie.

Now at the Maggie, Fitter is securing over Mary's shoulder a
parachute.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)
What's all this then. You don't
have faith in ol Pukka there
Fitter?

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER
Ahhh ma'am oh I do but it's
regulation...just in case.

David is putting his on as well.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA
Now Mary, Maggie here is what we
call a trainer. There are two
cockpits and in each one they have
the same gear. So you can fly it
from either one. Let's see how
things go and maybe...maybe I can
teach you a bit and you may fly
today!

Fitter smiles at Mary, extends his arm to give her a boost up
into the rear cockpit and gets her all buckled in as David
does the same.

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Now Mary, you see the tube next you on the left side? That's called a Gosport tube, it's our only way of talking to each other once we're up there because it gets kind of loud. But just speak into the tube and I will hear you.

Wide shot of Fitter giving David a signal and David starts the single Merlin engine. Fitter then pulls away the blocks under each wheel, steps aside and give David the thumbs up and David returns the signal.

Footage of the Maggie with Mary & David on board rising up over the lush green landscape.

David takes the Gosport tube and calls back to Mary.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA (CONT'D)

Can you hear me ok Mary?

Mary brings the Gosport tube closer to her mouth / ear.

MARY BRENNAN

Yes, no problem. Aye aye Cap'an

David laughs.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Ahhh we don't use "aye aye" we're not on a navy ship you know.

Footage of them smiling and flying around the scenery.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA (CONT'D)

You see the stick moving when the we go up and down? That is the device I use to steer the Maggie. Put your hands on it.

She does and it moves back and forth according to the wings.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA (CONT'D)

See?

MARY BRENNAN

Yes, yes.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Ok move your hands and I'll show you something else.

David has a devilish look on his face and he takes the controls and pulls back and the Maggie rises very quickly upward.

*

CU of Mary not frightened but has a look of concern.

As it reaches the top of an invisible hill David puts the Maggie into a roll.

Cut back to Mary spinning with her looking about to the scenery. She doesn't seem to be phased by this stunt.

David levels out.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA (CONT'D)
You ok back there Mary?

There is silence and David seems concerned.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA (CONT'D)
Mary?

MARY BRENNAN
Oh David that was fun wasn't it!

David has a bewildered look. That stunt should have gotten a rise out of her.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA
Oh...you liked that???

MARY BRENNAN
YES! What fun. It looked easy to do.

David gets a look of determination and immediately starts another routine to try to scare her.

Cut to Mary not phased a bit but smiling.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA
How was that? Did that look easy??

MARY BRENNAN
Well not really but if you were to do this it might impress me.

Mary suddenly takes the controls and begins to make maneuvers that David reacts to in a confused, perplexed and a little fearful.

She spins the Maggie, does a roll and then begins a deep dive.

POV from David's viewpoint as we see the base rising fast to meet them.

CUT TO GROUND - AIR BASE

We see the base personnel members are watching the Maggie doing these amazing maneuvers.

The C.O. (Commanding Officer) has just arrived and is stepping out of his car and immediately looks up. His eyes open wide and anger is rising. He steps quickly to the group of maintenance crew that are looking up including Fitter.

C.O.

WHO THE HELL IS THAT UP THERE!!!

They all look at each and they look to Fitter.

C.O. (CONT'D)

PATTERSON!! Is that Craig up there!!??

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER

Well sir I just finished fixin' da Maggie up and the captain insisted he needed to check out how it maneuvers.

C.O.

MANEUVER!!! I'll maneuver him right off this base!!!

CUT BACK TO THE INTERIOR OF THE PLANE WITH MARY AT THE CONTROLS.

She has a big smile on her face doing all of these amazing flying maneuvers. David is dumfounded and confused.

CUT BACK TO THE GROUND

The C.O.'s face is turning red and he has his hands on his hips.

CUT BACK TO THE PLANE INTERIOR

Mary comes out of the dive and turns the Maggie upside down and proceeds to fly over the base and over the crowd gathered.

Reaction shots of Mary / David upside down as they fly over the C.O., Fitter and the crew staring back at them.

CUT TO SEEING THE PLANE NOW LANDED

We see the Maggie with David & Mary taxiing up to the area they started but now they have many joining them and an angry C.O.

They get out, David is shaking his head at Mary. The C.O. does not move with his hands firmly on his hips and a red face scowl.

C.O. (CONT'D)
CAPTAIN CRAIG!!! What in blue blazes were you doing up there, wasting fuel, being dangerous and against every command and...

The C.O. looks over now noticing Mary.

C.O. (CONT'D)
And who the blue blazes is this with you! A WOMAN!! A woman you took joy riding?! Did she put you up to this for Jimmy-Nee Cricket's sake!?

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA
Sir, I'm sorry but I meant no trouble. See Archie just fixed the Maggie, I needed to make sure she's good and well...ummm..., sir...oh this is Mary Brennan and well...

MARY BRENNAN
Well I'm sorry sir Fitter...I mean Archie needed this one part to fix the Maggie and I managed to locate the part so he could get it runnin' again, sir, sorry sir.

C.O.
WAIT! How in the blue blazes do you have a part or found a part for a Miles Magister!!!??

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA
Sir, Mary works in the inventory division for Vickers-Armstrong and went above and beyond to help us find it and she came out of her way to bring it to us sir. So I thought because she helped out I'd take her for a test ride, sir.

The C.O. has started to loosen a bit.

C.O.
Is that right young lady?

MARY BRENNAN
Yes sir, yes.

C.O.
Well thank you miss for all your help getting the Maggie...

The C.O. turns and looks at David and his voice rises again.

C.O. (CONT'D)
BUT THAT! does not make an excuse to fly recklessly. You young man have a responsibility and a position to uphold and taking a civilian up there and putting lives in danger?! And what the blue blazes what was that loop-dee-loop deep dive and flying upside down so dangerously close to the ground!

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA
Well sir I was trying to see...

Mary jumps into the conversation

MARY BRENNAN
So sorry sir but that was me.

The C.O. Is sort of not listening to Mary and then it hits him and he turns in her direction.

C.O.
What the blue blazes did you say!???

MARY BRENNAN
Sorry sir that was me doing that reckless and dangerous stunt and I'm truly sorry.

The C.O. Is dumfounded. He looks at David then back to Mary.

C.O.
WAIT! Just a dip-dockerty minute...you were flying!? Flying like that?

The C.O. moves his arm in a loop and upside down.

MARY BRENNAN
Yes sir and again I'm sorry...

C.O.

Where the blue blazes did you learn to fly like that!? How long have you been flying? How many hours...

MARY BRENNAN

Well sir I'm not quite sure but I've done hundreds of miles in the Tiger Moth my dad taught me to fly in.

C.O.

Well miss how would you like to earn a bit of a living flying like that? Well not the crazy dang foolery way but like a good pilot you obviously are.

MARY BRENNAN

Well sir I'm a woman and I don't think the RAF allow women to fly.

C.O.

Oh no! That's not what I'm talking about. There's a new organization adjunct to the RAF that is asking for civilians and women pilots to help fly needed aircraft from factories or an aerodrome to where they are needed.

MARY BRENNAN

Oh you're daft...oops, sorry sir. They want female pilots??

C.O.

(The C.O. smiles with Mary's casual tone) YES! And my friend from Air Training is helping out. If you're interested...and you should be...I will call and put in a good word in with my contact.

CUT TO 1995 - INTERIOR - BRITISH AIRWAYS JET - MARY & MARION

They are like two school girls leaning into each other in a conspiratorial manner.

MARION GORDON

Oh my, he had no idea what hit him did he?

There is grinning and small laugh.

MARY BRENNAN

Well it wasn't like he asked if I could fly or not.

MARION GORDON

Oh Mary I like your style but he was sweet on you and...

MARY BRENNAN

I know, I know it was fun. Oh you should have seen the look on his face after the C.O. left? But, all was fine later. David, Fitter and I were joined by Spud and went to the base canteen for tea later.

CUT TO 1941 - JUST AFTER THE MAGGIE FLIGHT - AERODROME CANTEEN.

Mary sits across from David and Fitter across from Spud. All have a mug of tea in front of them and Spud is rolling a cigarette.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Well Mary you're a quick learner.

Fitter almost does a spit take with a mouthful of tea and puts his hand in front of his mouth to hold back the laughter.

Mary looks at Fitter then to David then she breaks out laughing.

MARY BRENNAN

Oh David, I didn't mean to...you know...

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER

...show him up?!

David looks at Fitter and Fitter tries to hide another wave of laughter.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Laugh it up you tin basher!

Fitter looks at Mary and then looks down to his mug of tea.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA (CONT'D)

Mary, I obviously had no idea that you could fly and well...as well as you did. I'm not embarrassed but my ego is a little bruised.

MARY BRENNAN
No hard feelings then?

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA
Hardly!...but you need to show me
that last upside-down dive thing
you did.

The table is relaxed now, enjoying the tea and a smoke.

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER
Ahhhh Spud, you should have seen
Mary flying upside down RIGHT past
the C.O. Oh the look on his face!

Fitter pointing to Spud's leather tobacco pouch.

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER (CONT'D)
Let me roll one Spud.

Spud slides the pouch and the box of wooden matches across
the table.

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER (CONT'D)
But Spud the C.O. was so impressed
with our Mary, he's going to
recommend her to fly for this new
outfit, the ATA.

HARVEY TURNBULL/SPUD
ATA what? Some lady pilot thing?

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER
No some bloke named Gerard
d'Erlanger from the British
Overseas Air Corporation has got
the ok to organize civilian and WW1
pilots to ferry supplies and planes
from factories to bases so the RAF
pilots can just fly like they
should.

HARVEY TURNBULL/SPUD
And they have lady pilots?

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA
Yes Spud but just a few right now
but I think Mary would be a great
asset for them.

Mary turns and smiles at David and he returns.

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER

You're gonna do it right Mary? Of course you should.

MARY BRENNAN

Well it would be wonderful to help out but I got the good job here and my dad's here right and...well he needs me 'round the house and well...

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Ahhh Mary you've got to do this. It's a wonderful chance and I'm sure you have an understanding father and he would agree that you should do this right?

*

CUT TO EXTERIOR - LATE AFTERNOON - A SEMI-DETACHED VICTORIAN BRICK HOME

We see Mary getting off her bike and walking it into the yard and wheeling it to the backyard. Her pace is a little more than usual filled with enthusiasm. She wheels it to the backyard and leans it against a back wall.

Mary looking for her father opens the back door slightly and calls in.

MARY BRENNAN

Dad!...Dad!?

We hear a voice, Mary's dad, Stuart Brennan, calling from the work shed at the end of the backyard.

He calls back loudly.

STUART BRENNAN

I'm back here Maisie!

Mary turns her direction to the shed and walks back.

CUT TO INTERIOR OF BRENNAN BACK WORK SHED. IT IS OLD BUT MAINTAINED. THERE ARE A FEW WINDOWS BUT EVEN IN THE DAYLIGHT HE NEEDS TO TURN ON A COUPLE LAMPS THAT ILLUMINATE STUART'S WORK TABLE.

Stuart's POV. We see Mary enter the shed.

MARY BRENNAN

Hi Dad!

*

Mary's POV - Stuart turns to meet his daughter Mary. He is 5ft 10, mid 40's, lean with a weathered face more than his years, dark hair combed back with just a touch of grey around his temples. There is wooden cane leaned against the bench that he uses to assist his walking. *

STUART BRENNAN

Were ya over at Kath's?

MARY BRENNAN

Well yes right after I got hired to fly for the RAF.

Stuart who had returned his attention to a task on the work bench turns with a furrowed brow and a perplexed look.

STUART BRENNAN

Excuse me? You what!!!??

MARY BRENNAN

Well not really the RAF but an organization that works with the RAF. They're called the ATA, Air Transport Auxiliary.

STUART BRENNAN

Wait a minute...and you're what...flying with them? You'll be doing what?

MARY BRENNAN

Well see this ATA is made up of civilians pilots and some from World War 1. They want to keep the fighter pilots fighting so they get us women and veterans ferrying the planes all over the UK.

Stuart is of course interested but has a look of concern as well.

STUART BRENNAN

Now Maisie what about your job? You've got a good job at Vickers and it certainly is safer work. *

MARY BRENNAN

Dad, they will be paying me more than Vickers actually I have been told.

STUART BRENNAN

So you'll be working here at the local RAF base?

MARY BRENNAN

Well no...there will be the required training but it won't be that far, I'm sure, and I can see you on the weekends.

Stuart ponders the weight of all of this and of course while saddened that she may leave he wants to be supportive.

STUART BRENNAN

Are you sure you want to do this Maisie? This is not going up just for fun with your uncle and I. This is serious. It's wartime Maisie, I really don't think this is a good idea at all.

*
*
*
*
*

Mary turns to her father with the most sincere face he has ever seen.

MARY BRENNAN

Dad. ..you have always taught me to help others whenever and however I can. You have been my inspiration and it can't have been easy doing that on your own after Mum passed. And it's you and Uncle Johnny that gave me the confidence in flying and taught me everything I know!

*
*
*

Stuart's face registers the acknowledgement.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Don't get me wrong, I so appreciate having a good job and having the best father a girl could have. But for us girls, the lines are pretty well drawn. From what I've been told this ATA will give me a chance to be right there alongside the stodgy men (a little chuckle) to help out and fly. I don't think I should pass up this chance to help with Hitler and his Nazis sitting right at our back door.

*
*

There is a silence and from the look on Stuart's face. He is concerned.

*
*

CUT TO EXTERIOR - BRENNAN HOME - FRONT- SAME TIME

We see Kath, Betty, Spud, Fitter and David coming up to the front gate all chatty and laughing. Kath opens the gate and they all walk in.

Calling out loudly.

KATHLEEN JOHNSON
Mary!! Oh Mary!! Oh sweetie pie!

They all laugh together walking up to the front door.

CUT TO BACK SHED WHERE MARY AND HER FATHER IS STILL INSIDE.

Mary turns her head hearing Kath.

MARY BRENNAN
Oh there's my trouble-maker mate.

Turns to her father.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)
I better go get her before...

Stuart motions with his hand for her to go. *

STUART BRENNAN
Ya better go then.

Mary exits the back shed and calls out to Kath.

MARY BRENNAN
I'm back here you troublemaker!!

They all come around the corner of the hedge and Mary is pleasantly surprised to see David again.

Mary in a warm tone in her voice looking at David.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)
Well hello there Pukka...long time
no see?

He smiles and she returns the smile while Spud and Fitter are slightly mocking them being all google eyed at each other.

Betty looking over to Spud and Fitter.

BETTY BRADLEY
Ok, you two hooligans knock it off
before I knock your blocks off!

HARVEY TURNBULL/SPUD
Cor' blimey Fitter help me!, help
me! Protect me from this...this
scary...

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER
Watch it mate...watch it mate.

MARY BRENNAN

Ok you lot, what are you doing here?

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

They have a big sortie for me and my crew Sunday so we all thought we'd have a pint tonight...ok?

*

Quietly with a smile and looking into his eyes.

MARY BRENNAN

Ok.

(Beat) And Mary see her father walking out of the shed with his cane.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)

David? I want you to meet my Dad.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Well if he's the man that taught you that fancy flying I'd be delighted!

Mary turns to her father, reaches for his arm without the cane and walks over to David.

MARY BRENNAN

Dad, I want you to meet Captain David Craig of the 63rd over at Squire's Gate.

*

David reaches to shake his hand and Stuart raises his arm to salute so David pulls back and up to a salute.

Stuart smiles pulls down and reaches over to shake and so does David.

STUART BRENNAN

63rd eh?...Bomber Squad?

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Yes sir. I understand from Mary you a pilot as well and served in the Great War?

Stuart's look turns a little exhausted.

STUART BRENNAN

Yes the one that was to end all wars and look where we are.

(MORE)

STUART BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Bloody history repeating and some other maniacal tyrant stirring the pot of discord and world domination yet again.

There is a somber silence that enters the air and over the group of them. They all exchange looks with each other.

Stuart tries to change the mood.

STUART BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Ok enough of this ol cranky flyboy. Are you all off to (smiling) ummmm...choir practice?

They all look at each other with a puzzled look and then Stuart breaks out laughing and (beat) they all break out laughing.

HARVEY TURNBULL/SPUD

Wait a min-it how'd your dad know I have a golden voice?

MARY BRENNAN

Ahhh...Dad, this is Harvey Turnbull also known as Spud and there is a vicious rumor that ol Spud is quite the singer. Like George Formby I've been told.

*
*
*

Spud smacks Fitter in the arm and looks all smug to him in reaction to what Mary said.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)

And Dad this is Archie Patterson and his moniker is Fitter he is the best...

STUART BRENNAN

...mechanic and can pretty well fix anything that anybody puts in front of him.

They all look at Fitter and then back at Stuart.

MARY BRENNAN

Ummm?...how did you know about Fitter?

STUART BRENNAN

Ahhh Maisie...just because yer ol man is not in the cockpit doesn't mean I'm not in the know.

A couple more looks at each other.

STUART BRENNAN (CONT'D)

The C.O. over at Squire's Gate is an old mate of mine and he told me how good this young man is with a wrench.

Now Fitter looks smug at Spud and smacks him in the arm but of course Spud feels the force and his opposite hand comes over and rubs where Fitter hit him.

STUART BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Ok you lot...clear out of here. I've got to fix the leg on the kitchen table. I'm tired of my dinner plate sliding away from me when I'm trying to eat.

Everyone laughs, turn and then...

CUT TO THE MITRE PUB, ONE OF BLACKPOOL'S OLDEST PUBS AND FREQUENTED BY FLYBOYS. VERY TRADITIONAL OLD SCHOOL PUB WITH LOTS OF WARM WOOD AND DECORATIONS OF FOOTBALL CLUBS AND BRIT HUMOR ITEMS.

INTERIOR - MITRE PUB - NIGHT

All six of our new friends are gathered together at one table. Pints all around. There is quite a number of people there but not loud enough that we can't hear their conversations.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

So Mary are you all set? You're going to go off to the ATA right?

*
*

MARY BRENNAN

Oh guys I really want to really I do. I don't think my Dad is not sure it's a good idea. I would be proud to join. We ladies have been obligated to sit in the back seat while the guys are driving. With this we'd be equal, with this we can show the world we're not just pot washers. With this we might influence the next generation of lady pilots (Beat) and besides that if I'm lucky I will be flying a Spitfire soon...Captain Pukka!

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There's chuckles all around and David quietly gives Mary a quick salute.

Betty looks around the table.

BETTY BRADLEY

Here, here Mary...and I've got a
20inch wrench if someone doesn't
agree.

They all smile at each other.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

You're father is one fine
gentleman. I'm sure he will agree
joining is a good thing.

*
*

Mary smiles at David

MARY BRENNAN

Yes indeed but I do have that
feeling of sadness about leaving
here and him but...well you heard
him...he's one solid...

David interrupts her.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Mary, Mary, he'll be fine. It would
appear to me if you join you may
have an adopted brother the way
your father was talking about our
Fitter over there. I have a feeling
he won't mind popping by for
tea...won't you Fitter?

*

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER

Not at all Cap'ain I have a feeling
I'd be able to learn a thing or two
along the way!

David turns to Spud.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

We all set for tomorrow Spud?

HARVEY TURNBULL/SPUD

Yes sir...all tacked up and tied
down.

There is a reaction on Kathleen's face.

KATHLEEN JOHNSON

WAIT!...Spud's going with you
tomorrow??

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA
Yes it appears the C.O. has taken
Spud out of the dog house...

Both David and Fitter look at each other and say together.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA & ARCHIE / FITTER
AGAIN!

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA
...and he put him on my crew. But I
think that's so I will be
responsible for da bloke.

Kath turns to Spud and punches him in the arm. Same arm
Fitter hits him on.

KATHLEEN JOHNSON
You be smart and listen to David
and get back here in one piece.

Spud's rubbing his arm.

HARVEY TURNBULL/SPUD
(Fluttering his eyes) Ahhh my
lovely. As soon as we're done I'll
come right come back to you. *

In the background we see an elderly gentleman as he sits down
and starts noodling on the upright piano.

Spud turns his head and looks excited.

HARVEY TURNBULL/SPUD (CONT'D)
'Scuse me a moment ladies and
germs.

Spud gets up, walks over to the piano player, leans in and
asks him something, the piano player nods and does an
arpeggio on the piano.

The gang now all turn their attention to see Spud standing
next to the piano. Spud looks at Kath and starts to sing.

ROMANTIC BALLAD (To be chosen)

He sings so well and heartfelt everyone is watching.

We see looks/reactions from various people including our
gang.

Spud looks over at Kath - CU of Kath's reaction to his
singing for her.

The song ends and everyone in the place applauds and Spud winks at Kath.

Spud returns to the table. They all pat him on the back and smile.

David stands and puts his arm around Spud's shoulder.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

And that ladies and gentlemen is
how we will win the war! Spud's
dulcet tones will make them swoon
and surrender!

They all laugh. *

CUT TO NEXT DAY - BRENNAN HOME - MID MORNING.

It is raining quite heavily and Mary and her father Stuart are in the kitchen having morning tea and toast.

Stuart is standing looking out the window and watching the rain. *

STUART BRENNAN

I don't reckon I'll be gettin' much
done in the garden today Maisie. *

MARY BRENNAN

No, it seems like the heavens have
opened up good today. *

He turns away a bit and without a word pulls open a drawer next to him, pulls out a rough wooden hewn box, places it on the kitchen table, opens it, reaches in and pulls something out and is holding it in his hand. *

STUART BRENNAN

Maisie you know I'm not the best
with emotions and such and the
words will sometimes get stuck but
I am so proud of the woman you have
become. Your Mum would be so proud
too. I want you to have this. *

He takes her hand and places the small object in her hand. She looks down and then up to his face. (CU of a medal) *

MARY BRENNAN

But Dad this is your Distinguished
Flying Cross medal from the Great
War. I can't take this. *

*

STUART BRENNAN

Please take it with you as a good
luck charm or whatnot but mostly to
remind you I will always be with
you . Wherever you fly.

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Mary gets up and gives him a big hug. Stuart is slow to
reciprocate but then his arms rise up to embrace her. CU of
her face with eyes closed like she is taking in everything of
that moment she can. CU of Stuart. His eyes are open and
there is just enough moisture in his eyes and a tear escapes.

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There is a banging on the back door and they both turn
towards the sound of the knocking. Stuart wipes the tears
from his eyes.

*
*

STUART BRENNAN (CONT'D)

You expecting Kath so early?

Mary rises to go to the back door.

MARY BRENNAN

No, she's got her aunt in from
Larkhall and...

Mary opens the door and there standing in the rain is David.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)

David! What are you doin' here, I
thought you were prepped and ready
to go...

David is getting soaked as she keeps talking but he doesn't
come in.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)

...and, I'm sorry you're getting
soaked to the bone. Come in, come
in!

David come in and greets Stuart.

STUART BRENNAN

Get in here young man. I'll get you
a cuppa to warm you up.

David takes off the hat and jacket, hangs them on a peg by
the door and sits. More tea is poured.

MARY BRENNAN

I thought things were set for the
mission.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Scrubbed for today. The weather all around is just too dicey so it looks like tomorrow. So in light of that I thought I'd take you out for a Sunday picnic out by the pond.

We hear the heavy rain outside and Stuart and Mary look at each other confused then look back at David. He looks at them both and he breaks out laughing and they join in.

STUART BRENNAN

Well two's comfy but three's a menace so I'll let you two young pilots discuss picnic plans and I'll get a few things done in the back.

Stuart grabs his mack and hat and heads to the door leaving Mary and David in the kitchen. There is an awkward moment of silence.

We just hear the sound of the rain as they sit there without a word.

David breaks the silence.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Sorry if I just barged in when you were spending time with your father.

Mary looks up and over and then down into her tea cup. (Beat)

MARY BRENNAN

Look what he just gave me.

Mary slides the Distinguished Flying Cross across the table.

David looks at it and then up at Mary.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)

He says he wants me to keep it with me to remind me that he is always with me when I fly.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

You mean?

MARY BRENNAN

Yes he is ok with me joining the ATA.

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DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Oh Mary this is wonderful. You will be a great asset to the ATA I just know it.

*
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*
*

MARY BRENNAN

Normally I have always been strong willed and in control but this is tough for me. On one hand I know I am doing the right thing by joining the ATA and doing my part but on the other hand I feel bad leaving him here all alone.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

But Mary you know it will...

Mary interrupts David's thought.

MARY BRENNAN

Wait David...yes I know signing up is for the good of our country and the world and my Dad knows it as well with his service, it's just...it's just well...you!

*
*

David looks and there is a sense of seriousness and unknown.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)

You David, I know everything is so up in the air and I just met you but there is something there...something I feel...

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Mary, I know I felt it right away. I know that's insane and even more crazier at this time with everything going on outside these walls. I didn't want to...you know...be all pushy and...

MARY BRENNAN

Oh yes I know, I know but I felt that as well and I was...

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Scared?

Mary's eyes go back to into the cup.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA (CONT'D)

Oh Mary I'm scared as well and I have truly never been that scared before. I was scared when I woke up and the thought of not seeing you before the mission and then finding out it was scrubbed I couldn't wait to get here to see you again.

Mary looks up and there is a sense of the connecting force of love.

MARY BRENNAN

And I was sad as well to be leaving here without...seeing you as well. But what can we do?

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA

Well how about we pack it in and just tell 'em we're not going and we run off and join the circus!

Mary smiles and she reaches over and smacks him on the arm. But as she tries to pull back her arm David holds on to it and his hand slides down to her hand and they grasp each other's hand and look at each other.

David then gets up and still holding her hand and Mary rises at the same time and they embrace and kiss, a kiss that is both tender and sad at the same time.

They pull away just a bit and David sees some tears forming in her eyes.

DAVID CRAIG / PUKKA (CONT'D)

Mary? You alright? Did I say...

Mary looks at him and...

MARY BRENNAN

Shhhhhh...

And Mary pulls him in again and they kiss again.

CUT TO NEXT DAY - BLACKPOOL AIRPORT - EXTERIOR - LATE MORNING

One Anson taxi plane in the background with maintenance crew working on refueling it.

A car pulls up with Stuart driving bringing Mary and to see her off.

They exit the car, Mary gets her bag and they walk together to the Anson.

STUART BRENNAN

Ok, Maisie...you got everything you need?

MARY BRENNAN

I got it all Dad. I'll be ok, you just take care of yourself.

STUART BRENNAN

Yeah, yeah, get on wit you then.

He smiles and is standing somewhat awkwardly. She sees it and grabs him in a big hug.

STUART BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Oooo, alright...don't break my bones!

Mary pulls back and gives him a smirky look. Then she leans in to his ear in a close-up and we see her whisper.

MARY BRENNAN

I love you so much Dad. *

She pulls back, gets her bag and walks towards the taxi plane.

Suddenly we hear two female voices calling her name and Mary turns to see Kath and Betty walking quickly to her.

They reach her and need to talk a bit louder because they are starting up the engines.

BETTY BRADLEY

We got you something!

Kath pulls out a flight suit with her name on it.

KATHLEEN JOHNSON

Look it's got your name on it, all embroidered and it's extra thick in case it's cold.

Mary gives them both a hug.

MARY BRENNAN

I'll miss you buggers but I'll be back.

BETTY BRADLEY

Oh we know and don't worry we'll
check in with your father.

KATHLEEN JOHNSON

Ya, after all he's kinda like my
father too!

The male pilot, Captain Edward Alexander, middle age - 5ft 8 -
balding calls over to get on board.

MARY BRENNAN

Ok you girls I gotta go. I'll see
you soon.

Off Mary goes and just as she is going to climb into the open
door a male voice calls from behind. It is Fitter and he is
running up to get to her before she gets in.

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER

Mary!, David asked me to give you
this for your flight to White
Waltham. He gave it to me before he
took off this morning.

He hands her a sealed envelope.

MARY BRENNAN

Thanks Fitter. You take care ok?

ARCHIE PATTERSON / FITTER

Aye, now go and make us proud Mary.

Mary smiles, gives Fitter a hug and climbs into the plane.

CUT TO INTERIOR - ANSON TAXI PLANE

Inside are two other female pilots / recruits heading to
White Waltham.

One is Canadian Shirley Wilson, wavy sandy brown hair. The
other is Chilean, Carolina Ortiz who has dark black bobbed
hair.

Shirley smiles at Mary and reaches out to shake her hand.

SHIRLEY WILSON

Hi I'm Shirley, Shirley Wilson

MARY BRENNAN

Nice to meet you Shirley, I'm Mary
Brennan.

Mary looks over at the Chilean, Carolina Ortiz.

Shirley looks over to Carolina.

SHIRLEY WILSON

This is Carolina Ortiz, she's from Chile and we just got here from Belfast. Her English is not so good but she really is trying.

MARY BRENNAN

Nice to meet you Carolina.

CAROLINA ORTIZ

(In halted English) It is buena to meet you.

They smile at each other.

MARY BRENNAN

(To Shirley) You're not from Belfast?

SHIRLEY WILSON

Oh no eh, I'm from Canada. Province of Ontario. I'm from a small town called Niagara-On-The-Lake, Ontario, it's near Niagara Falls.

CAROLINA ORTIZ

It is nice.

They look at Carolina and Mary turns to Carolina.

MARY BRENNAN

Yes Carolina I would think it is nice there..

CAROLINA ORTIZ

No, I should have say so NICE to meet you not BUENA.

They all chuckle and are enjoying each other's company.

The pilot, Captain Edward Alexander, calls back from the cockpit.

CAPTAIN EDWARD ALEXANDER

You ladies all buckled up? 'Cause here we go!

With that the taxi Anson takes off. Imagery of the plane in-flight.

CUT BACK - INTERIOR OF TAXI ANSON - IN FLIGHT

SHIRLEY WILSON

(To Mary) Are you from around here Mary?

MARY BRENNAN

Yes right from here in Blackpool. Actually just down the road over there (pointing out the window)

SHIRLEY WILSON

Carolina and I were chatting earlier...we both grew up on farms. Carolina's dad has vineyards and cattle.

CAROLINA ORTIZ

My padre...I mean foder, makes wine. Our family has do it for...um...generaciones...(thinking)
) GENERA...TIONS?

SHIRLEY WILSON

Yes, generations!

They all smile in the efforts to help translate. Shirley sees Mary clutching the envelope that Fitter gave Mary.

SHIRLEY WILSON (CONT'D)

(Pointing to the envelope that Mary is holding) Were we supposed to bring some documents? Oh gee, I hope not, I hope I don't get in trouble.

Mary re-focuses to the envelope. Looks down.

MARY BRENNAN

Oh no, no, no this...well this is from...oh I don't know what to call him? We just recently met but...

SHIRLEY WILSON

Oh I'm so sorry for prying. I didn't mean to be a Nosey Nellie.

MARY BRENNAN

Oh that's ok Shirley. I met this bomber pilot and well...well things took off but of course with the world in this...

SHIRLEY WILSON

I know Mary, I've been dating this guy back home but he signed up and he's somewhere over here. Well I wasn't going to sit and wait for him. I wanted to do my part just like my father did in WW1. So I signed up for the ATA.

CAROLINA ORTIZ

I come help but I think I meet a H-english wit mustache and kissy.

Shirley and Mary both look at Carolina and burst out laughing.

CU OF THE ENVELOPE IN MARY'S HANDS

*

She opens up the envelope and takes the letter out. We read the note over her shoulder.

"Dear Mary,

By the time you read this I'll be somewhere I can't tell you, going somewhere you can't know. But with every mile you are with me and every mile I think of holding you again. Time and circumstances have separated us but what I believe is in your heart is my heart as well and will bring us back together.

Once this is over we'll be back together but until then I will tell you this. After the last shot is fired I will come for you and take you where the streets are paved with gold.

Yours,

Pukka"

Mary fold the letter up, places it back in the envelope and looks out the window.

Then suddenly the plane jiggles like in turbulence but also starts to dive!

Mary yells up to the pilot.

MARY BRENNAN

Is everything ok up there Captain Alexander!???

No answer and the angle of the dive is getting worse. Shirley and Carolina are wild with fear.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Captain ALEXANDER!!

And Mr. Alexander's torso slumps to the side and out of the chair. Something's happened to him.

Mary unbuckles her belts and slides down the aisle. She grabs the steering mechanism and attempts to pull them out of their dive. She needs to get him out of the seat.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)
HELP! Help me get him out of the seat!

Carolina and Shirley both unbuckle and step in to help.

While Mary reduces the power and pulls them out of the dive Carolina and Shirley unbuckle and get Mr. Alexander out of the seat and on to the floor. It appears that he has had a stroke or heart attack.

Mary slides into the cockpit seat and looking around at all of the controls she tries to figure out how to fly this plane. She's quite adept but this is a new aircraft she doesn't know and it is a little more complicated.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)
Is he breathing?

SHIRLEY WILSON
I can hear his heart beating but something's not right.

CAROLINA ORTIZ
I git jack-ited for undur head.

They tend to the pilot and cut back to Mary looking for something on the control panel that looks familiar. At least they are leveled off and not diving.

MARY BRENNAN
We're straight and stable but we don't have all the fuel in the world so I need to get us down somehow.

Then there is a crackling sound coming from somewhere on the floor. Mary looks around with a worried face. Hears it again and looks down to see a radio head set. It must have fell off Captain Edward when he toppled over.

Mary reaches over and puts it on over her ears and we hear the crackling noises.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)
Hello?!, Hello?!

There is nothing just crackling noise.

Carolina sees Mary and the head set and calls out to her.

CAROLINA ORTIZ
Pusha da budden, pusha da budden.

Mary lifts the head set up.

MARY BRENNAN
What?

CAROLINA ORTIZ
Pusha da buddon to talk to peeble.

MARY BRENNAN
Button?

Carolina reaches over and pushes the button on the head set.

CAROLINA ORTIZ
Pussh hear'd

And Mary reaches for the button and pushes it in.

MARY BRENNAN
Hello! Hello! Help! Anybody there?
Anyone?

More crackling noise so Mary tries again.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)
Hello! Help! Anybody!

Suddenly a voice comes into Mary's ears and is surprised.

A woman's voice calls out to Mary.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE
Hello!, Who's this!? Hello!

MARY BRENNAN
This is Mary Brennan, I'm a new ATA
pilot going to White Whaltham.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE
This is White Waltham control. Is
this Edward's transport from
Blackpool?

MARY BRENNAN

Yes it is but Captain Edward has had a seizure of some kind and collapsed. I managed to get us out of the dive and stable but I've never flown this kind of plane before and there are things I don't know and I'm afraid I don't know how to land it.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

Copy that Mary, not to worry we're here and we'll talk you down. How is Edward? What is his current condition?

MARY BRENNAN

Well the other two of us, Carolina and Shirley, say he's breathing but out cold.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

Ok, copy that. Now Mary how many hours have you logged?

MARY BRENNAN

Oh I'd say about 500 hours?

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

Good, then you know what to do for the most part but let us walk you through the Anson's controls and I'm sure you'll do just fine.

Mary pushes the head set button again but she is a bit nervous.

MARY BRENNAN

Ok, thank you...I'm sorry what is your name?

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

I'm Diana, now let's get you down Mary.

Mary calls out to Carolina and Shirley

MARY BRENNAN

I have White Waltham control on the radio and they are going to talk me through and get us down.

Shirley smiles and gives her a thumbs up.

Mary pushes the button in and continues to talk to White Waltham.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Ok, Diana I'm ready when you are.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

Ok Mary, the good thing is that we had a visual on you but as you gained control you went out of sight and we lost you in some kind of weather we're having here. Mary, which cockpit seat are you in?

MARY BRENNAN

I'm on the left.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

Do you see the compass in the middle?

MARY BRENNAN

Yes.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

First off we need to get you below the clouds ok? Now because this can be a little tricky let's cut back on the speed a bit and gradually bring you down.

MARY BRENNAN

Ok, got it. Bringing speed down to 1200 and doing a 5% descent.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

Now Mary there are some hills and structures so be cautious as you come out of the clouds. If you of course see anything pull up!

MARY BRENNAN

Oh trust me I will.

They start to descend slowly and as they break through a white church steeple suddenly appears in front of them and Mary quickly pulls up.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

How you doing Mary?

Silence as Mary gets her breath.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE (CONT'D)

Mary?, Mary?

MARY BRENNAN

Sorry as we came out of the clouds
there was a white church steeple
and I needed to pull up.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

Oh good! I mean good that you did
and good because I know where you
are now. That was St. James and
you're about 8 miles south of us.
Ok, let's do this again. Turn
around and head North, North-East.
When you have that locked in let me
know.

Mary takes a deep breath.

MARY BRENNAN

Got it. Turning now.

Mary turns and we see the compass coming around to N-NE.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Ok, I'm heading N-NE.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

Now for the most part that steeple
and our base are the highest
structures. Everything else is low
and farms. So let's start another
slight descent now.

Mary pushes the steering wheel forward slowly and the Anson
descends. They pass through the cloud and Mary sees low hills
and green farms and farm houses.

MARY BRENNAN

Ok Diana I'm through and just see
farms and houses. There's one
painted a bright blue to my right
up ahead.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

Oh ha ha ha, that's Percy Manning's
place! Good, I know exactly where
you are. Stay on that course and
keep Percy's place on your right.

MARY BRENNAN

Ok, got. Thank you Percy.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

Now Mary in about a couple minutes you should see our runway on the west side our buildings. You'll need to start bringing it down a bit more and bring down the landing gear. To bring that down look to your right and you will see a switch with "LG" above it. Pull down the switch and you will hear the motors bringing down the landing gear.

Mary reaches over and brings down the switch. We hear the loud humming of the gear coming down and then suddenly there is a loud bang!

MARY BRENNAN

Diana, I did what you told me and it sounded ok but there was a big bang sound.

Silence on the other end.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

Ok, Mary not sure what that was but someone has just stepped out with binoculars to check on the gear.

MARY BRENNAN

Ok. I can see the runway straight ahead.

Mary looks back at Carolina and Shirley.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)

You guys ok back there?

CAROLINA ORTIZ

Okeee dokeee, Edwards stills slept.

White Waltham comes back on the radio to Mary.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

Mary, it appears your landing gear is only partially down. Can you flip up the switch back up to reset and then back down?

MARY BRENNAN

Ok got it.

Mary reaches over and engages the switch up again. We hear the loud humming but with an added high pitch noise on top and a grinding noise. She flips it down again, we hear the humming, high pitch and then a bang again.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)
Diana, how are we doing?

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE
(Beat) Well Mary we still have a situation. It's only halfway down again. Mary I need you to circle around so we can get an idea what options we have.

Shirley calls up to Mary.

SHIRLEY WILSON
What's wrong Mary? What was that noise?

MARY BRENNAN
Well ladies it appears our landing gear is not wanting to be our friend today.

Shirley and Carolina look at each other with obvious concern.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)
They want me to take us around again and they are getting a plan together.

Mary brings them around again and again we see the airbase and open field runway out in front.

Mary talking to Diana and White Waltham control.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)
Diana, we're around again. What do you think?

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE
Well Mary there's only one option. You'll need to land with the gear partially down. The good thing is that it's a grass runway and should cushion things a bit.

MARY BRENNAN
And the bad thing?

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

The bad thing is that because of the position of the props and the landing gear partially down that the props could catch the ground and you could flip over.

MARY BRENNAN

(Beat) Well we need to take a chance. Let's do this.

Mary turns to Carolina and Shirley.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Ok you guys I need you to strap Captain Edward in to a seat tightly and the same with you two as well. We're going to land with the landing gear only partially down and there is a chance we could flip over.

Carolina and Shirley eyes open wider and they get into action strapping in.

MARY BRENNAN (CONT'D)

Ok, Diana we're all strapped in. Bring us in.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

Ok Mary I think it would be best if you come in land on a westerly direction, to give you more area to play with and as you touch down try to keep the nose up as long as possible. Got that?

MARY BRENNAN

Got it Diana. We're coming in and Diana?

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

Yes?

MARY BRENNAN

If this works out ok I'm buying you a pint.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

No Mary...I'm buying.

The Anson with Mary at the controls starts its descent. It's a bit windy with crosswinds so it's a bit wobbly.

We see Carolina and Shirley looking at each other and holding on. Captain Edward is strapped in and still out cold.

We watch from ground viewpoint the Anson approaching. We see the landing gear part way down and jammed. 200ft, 150ft, 100ft.

CUT BACK TO INTERIOR OF PLANE WITH MARY AND LOOKING OUT FROM THE COCKPIT.

Getting closer to the ground Mary is pulling up the nose a bit more. She cuts the power down more just before they touch the ground.

They land and we see the props dig into the ground with grass and dirt flying up and hitting the cockpit.

Inside Mary is holding on and trying to keep control. She reaches quickly over and kills the power. The sounds of creaking and grinding and more mud and grass flying up.

Suddenly they stop and we see the tail of the plane rising up as if to flip over but it stops straight up vertically with the view from the cockpit facing the ground and the Anson stuck in the mud and grass like an arrow.

We hear sirens from outside.

Mary hanging face down in the seat calls back.

MARY BRENNAN
You alright back there?!!

CUT BACK TO SHIRLEY AND CAROLINA FACING DOWNWARDS AND CAPTAIN EDWARD IN THE SAME POSITION.

SHIRLEY WILSON
We're ok Mary, we're ok.

CAROLINA ORTIZ
Okeee dokeee Mary!

Then from the seat with Captain Edward we hear groaning and he becomes cognizant.

EDWARD ALEXANDER
Oooooh...what happened? Why the hell am I strapped in back hear...LOOKING DOWN!?!?

We hear noises from the exterior and voices and then a face peers up and in at Mary in the cockpit.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE

Mary? You ok?

It is Diana. We now see the faceless voice on the White Waltham Control radio. She has short blonde hair, 22 years old, petite and 5ft 6.

Mary looks down and puts her thumb up relieved that it is over.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE (CONT'D)

Ok, we're going to get you out of there don't move.

MARY BRENNAN

(With a smile) Oh don't worry I'm not going anywhere.

*

CUT TO EXTERIOR OF THE WHITE WALTHAM ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.

Medium shot: Carolina and Shirley have blankets wrapped around them as does Mary with the addition of a mug of tea. She is sipping on it with Diana next to her.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE/DIANA

I'm not sure I could have done any better then what you did so well done.

MARY BRENNAN

Well at least we're all standing to tell the tale.

Then passing by is Captain Edward being carried by on a stretcher.

EDWARD ALEXANDER

YOU!...Ace! That was some fancy flying. Thank you for saving me...us! I'll fly with you anytime!

And they carry him off to the waiting ambulance.

Then a voice calls for Mary from behind. It is Pauline Gower the woman that started the women's division of the ATA.

PAULINE GOWER

Mary Brennan?

Mary turns to Pauline.

WHITE WALTHAM VOICE/DIANA
Mary, this is Pauline Gower, the
one responsible for bringing all of
us ladies together in the ATA.

Mary reaches out and they shake hands.

PAULINE GOWER
Mary, that landing took nerve,
tenacity and skill. Good job and
thank you.

MARY BRENNAN
(Humbly) Sorry I planted the Anson
like a daffodil.

They smile at each other and Pauline hands her a small 4 X 6
big ringed notebook.

PAULINE GOWER
Here, this is something you will
need with the many types of planes
you'll be flying. (Beat) It's good
to have you here. Ground school at
0:900 tomorrow. And Mary?

MARY BRENNAN
Yes ma'm.

PAULINE GOWER
Welcome to the ATA.

Pauline turns and departs.

Close up of Mary and then down to the big ringed book in her
hands. We see the cover.

"FERRY PILOTS NOTES"

Fade to black

End of Episode 1

CRAIG M. RENWICK