

ICE

Based on a true story

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TITLE: THIS IS BASED ON A TRUE STORY AND ACTUAL EVENTS

EXT. HIGH DESERT - DAY

A desert rabbit sits alert on a rocky mound. The SILENCE gives way to a mounting DRONE of an engine. The rabbit looks off in alarm.

EXT. HIGH SESERT - DAY

A small 1930's open-cockpit plane comes over the horizon on the deck. It screams past the rabbit, which bolts off. A WOMAN'S SCREAM blends with the engine noise.

EXT. SMALL PLANE -DAY (SERIES OF SHOTS)

VICTORIA, 25, and TONY, 30, are euphoric... she waves her arms as he performs daring maneuvers, showing off for her. She squeals with delight, which inspires him to careen the aircraft over cars on the highway.

VICTORIA

I could do that. Give me a chance... Pleeease!...

He smiles, puts the craft into a steep, almost vertical climb.

TONY

...Only if you give *ME* a chance first. Marry me!!

EXT. SMALL TOWN MAIN STREET, PALMDALE CA - DAY

It's 1934. Shops, cars and people on the street are dressed in southern California desert-style for the time. Three PEDESTRIANS stop and look off -- As a ROARING ENGINE sound gets louder.

Tony's plane swoops down at the end of the street...flips upside down... and roars down the street at treetop level, as he YELLS...

TONY

SHE'S GOING TO MARRY ME!

Victoria's *SCREAMS* of excitement fade into the distance.

EXT. SMALL TOWN MAIN STREET - DAY

Victoria walks her bike across the street. A GIRL walks past.

GIRL

I think it's peachy, Vicky. You are sooo lucky.

VICTORIA

Thanks Mary Jo. You're sweet.

She continues on to a store where she parks her bike. A MIDDLE AGED MAN comes out.

MAN

Hello, Victoria. I guess I should say congratulations... The town approves.

She smiles demurely, embarrassed.

VICTORIA

Thank you Mr. Mayor. I'm... sorry about the noise.

MAN

Yes -- I'll have to speak to Tony about that stunt.

But he is smiling as he walks off, then he turns...

MAN (CONT'D)

You two were meant for each other. You have my blessing.

EXT. POST-OFFICE - DAY

Victoria comes out with GRAMPS, 78. She is opening a manila envelope with a postmark "Seattle, Dec. 6, 1934"

VICTORIA

Gramps, if this is what I think it is...

GRAMPS

Lotta stamps on that...

She sits down on the steps and reads it -- Amazement. She leaps for joy as...

VICTORIA

Oh my gosh! This is wonderful!
Gramps, remember I told you about a
ship that does research in Alaska?
This is it -- It's real... and I
could go. Gosh, it's the bees
knees.

GRAMPS

Vicky, you really want to...? It's
pretty cold there isn't it?...

A NEIGHBOR passes by and smiles.

NEIGHBOR

I'm very happy for you, Victoria.

Neighbor continues on without stopping. Victoria waves to her
as...

VICTORIA

I don't mind cold. It's an
adventure.

Another WOMAN walks by without stopping...

WOMAN 2

It's wonderful my dear...
Congratulations.

Victoria doesn't hear -- She's hugging Gramps. She kisses him
on the cheek in happiness.

In the background, HALF A DOZEN PEOPLE are coming nearer...
gathering around them as...

VICTORIA

It's a chance to do something I've
always wanted to do.

GRAMPS

What is it you want to do, dear?

VICTORIA

Something... anything!

GRAMPS

Maybe it's time I started worrying
about you...

VICTORIA

Maybe it's time *you stopped*
worrying about me.

GRAMPS
I'll miss you. I will.

She smiles, full of caring...

VICTORIA
And I'll miss --

She is interrupted by the crowd of a dozen people who start clapping, and calling out, "When's the wedding?"... "Congratulations"... "you're getting married."

Victoria turns to acknowledge them...grateful... with love in her eyes.

INT. TONY'S BARN - DAY

It looks like a hospital for airplanes, with parts strewn all over and a half-built plane in the center.

Victoria enters -- excited. She shoves the papers at Tony.

VICTORIA
Isn't this fabulous! It's a huge ship and it sails through ice. I would be almost a scientist...

He glances at it, then ignores it and picks up a different tool.

TONY
It's a crazy idea. Victoria...
It's just crazy.

She is startled. Speechless --

TONY (CONT'D)
You see yourself as an arctic explorer? Where did that come from?

VICTORIA
I could be -- You think I'm just a small-town country girl...helpless?

Tony stops what he is doing.

TONY
No darling. I love you. I want to marry you. Stay here. Don't go off to some other country -- It's dangerous. I forbid it.

She kisses him on the cheek as...

VICTORIA
You forbid it... It's still the
 United States.

She picks up a tool from the ground.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
 There's something you should
 know... I'm capable of doing things
 on my own -- just like any boy.

TONY
 That's fine. Did you hear what I
 said?

VICTORIA
 (mocking him)
 ...forbid it.

TONY
 ...DANGEROUS.

VICTORIA
 Dangerous! Look who's talking...
 You're dangerous -- you're a FLIER
 for god's sake!... Your ex-wife
 thought you were too dangerous. She
 wanted to stop you from flying,
 didn't she?

No Answer.

VICTORIA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 I think she tried to...

TONY
 Never mind all that --

VICTORIA
 -- I don't try and do that to you.
 Who gave you the right to change
 who I am?

TONY
 You're trying to be someone You're
 not. You want to be just like
 Amelia don't you?

VICTORIA
 You're jealous of her. I could fly
 like her if you teach me,

He spits (or something) in disdain at the thought and moves to another part of the workshop.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

A woman is accomplishing feats of flying that you can only dream of. You think you're so great -- and you got kicked out of the Flying Corps.

TONY

I was only 17 for god's sake.

VICTORIA

And your dream of being the youngest ace of the Great War... What happened to that? It was washed up -- for doing a stupid stunt.

He is deeply hurt by this old wound.

TONY

Don't! It wasn't stupid. No one had done it before.

VICTORIA

What I'm doing isn't as bad as what you did... So don't tell me what to do... And I can go if I want.

She storms out -- angry. He slams his fist into the side of the plane. He's deflated -- disappointed... drops his head down on the greasy engine block.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Victoria rides her bicycle slowly. The envelope drops in the dirt and she stops... crying -- upset by his attitude...

She leaves it in the road... turns around and starts back the way she came...

She stops, undecided... looks up and watches a hawk soar gracefully through the air. Then she turns around again, picks up the envelope and continues home.

INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM - DUSK

She is packing clothes, sweaters, etc. She stops, looks up at the wall over her desk.

A NEWSPAPER STORY AND 1931 VANITY FAIR ARTICLE are tacked to the wall with PICTURES OF AMELIA EARHART, along with a SNAPSHOT OF TONY standing by a plane.

VICTORIA

Amelia, what would you do?

She looks long and hard at Tony's photo. She sits heavily on the bed with shoulders slumped.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Tony pulls up on his motorcycle. GRAMPS is sitting on the porch.

GRAMPS

Howdy Tony...I don't think she'll see you.

TONY

Gramps, I really need to tell her something.

GRAMPS

Last night might of been better. See... I think she's a little spooked by your wedding plans.

TONY

--But we haven't made any plans.

GRAMPS

She's on the 10:05, ya see.

Tony is stunned, jumps on the bike and roars off.

EXT. PALMDALE TRAIN STATION - DAY

Victoria lugs a small suitcase up the train steps... comes back for a carpetbag. She looks around one last time... searching... then gets aboard.

The train powers up in a burst of steam and noise and starts chugging.

EXT PALMDALE TRAIN STATION (HER POV) - DAY

Her last view of home recedes in the distance.

EXT PALMDALE TRAIN STATION - DAY

On the opposite side of the station building, Tony screeches to a stop, sees the train in the distance. He stares at it in pain.

EXT. TRAIN STATION, DOCKS - MONTAGE - DAY

Victoria steps off the train in Vancouver... she is awed by her new world... She struggles to keep her wits and luggage. The noise of a train whistle and ship klaxon startle her.

She has to jump out of the way of cargo trams... drops one of her bags.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE DOCK - DAY

A man in the shadow of a pile of cargo is staring at Victoria in the distance. His face profile is huge in the foreground. He watches a man stop and help her with her bags.

DRAKE is thin, wiry, sinewy, 50's. He takes a step in Victoria's direction... into the sunlight. Now we see his dark eyes and a peculiar, UGLY FACE DEFORMITY. He locks on to the sight of Victoria and his eyes narrow. He oozes menace... moves to follow her.

EXT. VANCOUVER DOCKS - DAY

Drake follows Victoria down the dock.

She continues on toward the ship at the end... pauses to get a grip on her bag -- She looks behind her and sees...

Drake staring as he approaches.

WOW! Here comes the reason never to talk to strangers. Her fear rising -- she hurries on... moves through a crowd... detours around a truck and hides in a doorway.

She flattens against the wall... shuts her eyes... holds her breath. In the distance Drake passes by and is gone.

EXT. RESEARCH SHIP NORTHWIND - DAY

Victoria walks up the gangplank of the research ship "Northwind"

INT. NORTHWIND SMALL CABIN -DAY

The STEWARD shows Victoria in the door of a very small cabin.

STEWARD

This is your cabin, miss.

Victoria can't believe how "cozy" it is -- a little disappointed.

STEWARD (CONT'D)

It's not often we get women on the vessel, so it's difficult to make separate space for you. You understand.

VICTORIA

Oh, yes, certainly -- I hope I'm not a bother.

STEWARD

So do I, miss -- I mean, I hope this is adequate for your needs. You wouldn't like the crew quarters.

Victoria takes a deep breath, resigned to it.

VICTORIA

This will do just fine.

STEWARD

Very good. Chow is at six in the mess.

He leaves abruptly and efficiently.

She sits on the hard cot and looks around the bleak room.

VICTORIA

Oh dear...

INT. NORTHWIND CREW QUARTERS - DAY

Drake moves through the area. He passes a few other SAILORS unpacking their possessions on their bunks. They all step aside as he comes by.

Suddenly he stops. Up ahead, he sees a sailor pick up something off the floor and look at it. Its an OLD BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO.

An angry expression crosses his face as he moves up behind the SAILOR AIDE, who bends over and places the photo on the bunk.

Drake grabs the back of the man's neck and grips it tightly.

DRAKE

(hisses)

Don't you ever touch my kit -- or
I'll slice you!

SAILOR AIDE

Ahhh!... No, no. It was lying on
the floor -- I just picked it up,
that's all... Just an old photo...

Drake releases him, picks up the PHOTO of an old woman from the cot... pulls an ugly looking knife from his belt and shows it to the man.

SAILOR AIDE (CONT'D)

I didn't know it was yours. It was
on the floor --

DRAKE

-- I mean it!! You get me?

The Aide moves down the aisle to his bunk. Another SAILOR leans in to him...

SAILOR 2

Don't let him get to ya. He's an
ass!

SAILOR AIDE

Just an old photo. Someday I'll...

SAILOR 2

I'm sure it ain't a lady friend --
Not him.

SAILOR AIDE

An old lady... His mother maybe?

SAILOR

(laughs)

He never had a mother.

EXT. ALASKA COAST - DAY

The ship plows through the sea, passing ice floes and magnificent glaciers.

EXT NORTHWIND DECK - DAY

Victoria enjoys her first ship voyage... looks in wonder at the icy world of Alaska...MAGNIFICENT...and breathes it all in.

A man joins her at the rail.

WEATHER MAN
You like this weather?

VICTORIA
It's wonderful! Not at all like home...

WEATHER MAN
Where's that?

VICTORIA
Palmdale, in California.

WEATHER MAN
First time to Alaska... Well watch it -- Just when you think it's pretty it'll kill you. First timers don't last long.

VICTORIA
Um... yes, thank you... I'll be careful.

WEATHER MAN
I'm a meteorologist -- weather man. I know what the weather can do.

VICTORIA
Oh, that's nice. Maybe I'll be working with you.

WEATHER MAN
-- You're not getting off at the whaling station?

VICTORIA
Ha! Hunt Whales?
(proudly)
I'm a research assistant.

WEATHER MAN
Hmm... Don't stay out here too long.

He walks off.

She frowns in annoyance and walks to the other side of the deck. She passes a burly deckhand.

DECKHAND
Cold enough for ye, cherry?

VICTORIA
Yes, quite cold...

DECKHAND
What are ye doin' here, sweetie?

VICTORIA
I'm working here... just like you.
What do you do, exactly?

DECKHAND
Oh, sweet lord. One of them
searchers?... You best stay below.
This voyage ain't no picnic.

VICTORIA
I don't expect it to be.... I plan
to learn what I need to.

DECKHAND
You'll have to learn to take care
'a yerself too.

She stiffens... *What makes everyone so unfriendly?* She walks off. He whistles a little ditty.

EXT. NORTHWIND DECK - DAY

The weather is rough -- wind and foaming waves. The ship strikes more ice in the sea. Dozens of people line the rail, nervous at the weather. Victoria is unafraid... enjoying the adventure.

MAN
I think it's too late in the year.
We may get caught -- Ice is
building.

WOMAN
Don't say that. We're very close
to Kivalina station.

A violent wind hits the ship, driving ice floes against the hull.

The ship sounds its HORN in distress, scaring everyone.

INT. NORTHWIND PASSAGEWAY - DAY

Victoria comes off the deck... enters the hallway outside the bridge and overhears...

DRAKE (O.S.)
-- I'm in charge of the crew...

JENSEN (O.S.)
I'm tellin' you -- until we drop the passengers at Kivalina, all hands will be on duty shift.

DRAKE (O.S.)
My men's not lifeguards, they're seamen.

CAMERA MOVES from the hallway, through the door way, into the bridge -- revealing the men arguing. CAPTAIN JENSEN is a very large, burly, bearded bear of a man... busy with navigation instruments -- and Drake is in his face. The helmsman is on the wheel...

JENSEN
The crew is responsible for passenger safety. 80 extras on board, even temporary, means extra work -- for us all.

DRAKE
Ahh, bull crap!! This ain't Cunard Lines.

JENSEN
-- And not one of your tramp steamers either, Drake. You're in the arctic now, where everything will be done With polar precautions... If this is a typhoon, it'll get worse.

Victoria listens outside the open doorway with her back against the wall -- she hears everything -- BUT ONLY WE SEE THE MEN IN THE ROOM BEHIND HER...

DRAKE
Cap'n we're landing passengers tomorrow. What harm can they get into in such a short time? This voyage ain't gonna be easy. I'm tellin' ya. You gotta save the men for the real work.

JENSEN

I wouldn't challenge my authority
If I were you, Drake --

DRAKE

-- Oh no, cap'n. You know I'd
never do that.

JENSEN

Go now! Off the bridge. Its up to
you and your men to prevent panic.
I'm sending out a wireless call for
the ice-breaker ship just to be
safe.

A SAILOR rushes past Victoria and into the bridge...

SAILOR

Cap'n there's ice pack forming
around the screw. We're close to
ice bound.

DRAKE

If you get her stuck, you'll blow
us to the North Pole.

Victoria is shocked, demoralized. As she walks down the hall
she passes the radio room.

RADIO MAN

Ship in distress. Anchorage
station, we are 10 miles offshore
of Kivalina. Wind is taking us
into the northern current. Ice
pack is forming. We can't
maneuver. Requesting the ice
breaker at once -- Urgent.

INT. ANCHORAGE COAST GUARD STATION - DAY

A radio operator is listening to a distress call.

RADIO VOICE (O.S.)

Anchorage station, this is research
vessel Northwind. We have an
urgent need for the ice-breaker.
We are locked, ice bound and
drifting north. This is an urgent
first priority message.

ANCHORAGE RADIO OP
 Northwind, the ice-breaker is in
 repair dock. I will forward your
 request to the Aleutian station.
 The Dreadnaught is there.

EXT. ALEUTIANS COAST GUARD STATION - DAY

The massive engines of the ice-breaking vessel "Dreadnaught"
 rev up and the ship steams away at full speed.

INT. NORTHWIND MESS HALL - DAY

Everyone on board assembles in the mess -- 90 men who are
 researchers, scientists and crew; 10 women passengers, one
 with an infant - and two children.

Victoria enters, passes by the kids and gives them an
 encouraging look.

Jensen commands everyone's attention...

JENSEN
 We are in an ice storm, and it will
 pass. At the moment we cannot
 maneuver. The ice has us locked
 in. I want you...

CRIES of dismay from the crowd; "Not frozen in ice," "Are we
 moving at all?" "Will we drift to land?"

JENSEN (CONT'D)
 Please, listen!! We are still
 moving. We can ride this out...
 Wind is blowing us --

MORE CRIES; "Are we moving toward land?" "Are we drifting
 north!"

JENSEN (CONT'D)
 We are! We are drifting farther
 north!

Stunned silence in the room as the gravity of their plight
 hits home.

JENSEN (CONT'D)
 We are only ten miles from Kivalina
 whaling station. I have radioed
 for the ice breaker. It will be
 able to clear a path to port.
 (MORE)

JENSEN (CONT'D)
 Don't be worried, *There'll be no losses aboard my ship.*

INT. NORTHWIND HALLWAY - DAY

People are dispersing as Victoria moves through the passageway in thought.

The deckhand she met before comes down the hall and blocks her way.

DECKHAND
 Hello again, cherry. Y' enjoyin' your voyage? If you get cold now... you look me up -- Will ya do that?

How can "so friendly" be so intimidating?

VICTORIA
 Thank you... I have a warm coat...

DECKHAND
 It's what's under the coat that counts... wouldn't you say?

VICTORIA
 If you let me pass, I'll be very grateful...

DECKHAND
 (mocking)
 It would give me great delight to make you grateful.

Captain Jensen comes down the hall.

JENSEN
 Simpson, you shouldn't be here.

DECKHAND
 Just here for the assembly, sir like you asked.

JENSEN
 Then get along... Don't bother anyone, and get back to your duties.

He walks swiftly away.

VICTORIA
 Captain Jensen. Thank you for your words. I am relieved.

JENSEN
 Yes, miss. Has anyone assigned you a task yet?

VICTORIA
 Mr. Halland was about to make assignments, but he was interrupted...

JENSEN
 The scientists! They measure. They record. They observe. But they don't know... *what the arctic can really do*. Please be mindful of that.

He starts to move off as...

VICTORIA
 Captain, uh. Is the ship, I mean -- is it going to be all right.

He notices her trembling hand as she brushes her hair back.

JENSEN
 I have never lost a ship. They'll send help - likely by tomorrow.

A HORRIBLE GRINDING NOISE echoes through the ship as a shudder shakes the hallway.

JENSEN (CONT'D)
 Excuse me.

He strides off. She continues down the hall. She notices her feet making splashing noises, looks down and sees a trickle of water running down the floor.

EXT. TONY'S BARN - DAY

Tony is packing parts and supplies into a Consolidated FLEETSTER; an open-cockpit, twin-engine biplane that is used as a transport.

NICK, 30s, his sidekick and best friend with a buoyant attitude and tousled hair comes out of the barn

They are sweating profusely in the desert heat.

NICK

You want the fur gloves too? Reno can get cold sometimes.

Tony wipes away sweat.

TONY

Naw. I'd love a little chill. It keeps me alert.

Nick throws the fur-lined gloves in the rucksack anyway.

NICK

Look, Tone. I'll finalize your entry and set up our pit, so take your time.

Nick climbs into the cockpit.

NICK (CONT'D)

I got ya covered from this end.

TONY

Thanks, buddy. 'preciate it

Tony snaps a salute. Nick powers away across the field.

EXT. TONY'S PLANE - DAY

He loads a case into his sleek race plane. He pats the fuselage.

TONY

Here we go, baby. You can do it.

At that moment Nick swoops directly overhead in a simulated strafing run right past the barn. Tony just shakes his head.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Tony flies on the deck past yucca trees and cactus, and then streaks up into the clouds

INT. NORTHWIND PASSENGER AREA - DAY

Victoria huddles with some of the women passengers, afraid. She sits next to TWO LARGE MIDDLE-AGED WOMEN.

VICTORIA

Are you cold? I can get you a blanket.

LARGE WOMAN 1
Ah, one more blanket won't help.

Victoria, miserable, just nods.

VICTORIA
I never expected this.

LARGE WOMAN 2
What did you expect, sweetie pie?

Victoria is silent, unsure.

LARGE WOMAN 2 (CONT'D)
Expect the worst in Alaska. It always happens that way. Ever since my husband took the job at the Kivalina station, I have to make the trip twice a year. This is the last time, I swear.

LARGE WOMAN 1
You may get your wish.
(to Victoria)
Why are you here? You a tourist?

VICTORIA
I'm not a passenger. I am part of the research team.

LARGE WOMAN 1
(surprised)
Oh, what do you do? What's your job? You're a scientist?

VICTORIA
Well, I don't exactly know yet.

Large Woman 2 smirks.

LARGE WOMAN 2
Oh, I bet you don't. You'll find out soon enough - on a ship full of men.

Victoria's look shows she is stung by the remark.

LARGE WOMAN 1
You mean you aren't getting off in port?

VICTORIA

I wish I were now. No, I'm stuck here. So I hope to help out some way.

LARGE WOMAN 1

If we get to -- **when** we get to port, you must get off this ship. I'm telling you. This ship is doomed.

VICTORIA

Don't be afraid. I talked to the captain, and he told me we'll receive help very soon.

LARGE WOMAN 1

Mercy, child. I hope you're right.

EXT. BOW OF THE DREADNAUGHT - DAY

Ice floes are large, slamming into the bow

COAST GUARD MAN

(shouts in megaphone)

Reduce speed. The ice is too thick.

INT. DREADNAUGHT RADIO ROOM - NIGHT

The radio operator makes a call.

RADIO OP

Anchorage station, this is the Dreadnaught. We are not able to proceed. Visibility zero. We have encountered pack ice and ridges. We will keep trying.

INT. NORTHWIND CAPTAIN'S CABIN - NIGHT

JACK, the quartermaster is in conference with captain Jensen.

JACK

Captain, the expedition stores are in port lockers. The passenger stores are aft and the emergency stores are in the forward hold. In the event...we won't have time to collect them all *unless we prepare for the worst.*

JENSEN

Jack, pick a few men you trust. It must be done only at night. No one else is to know about this.

INT. NORTHWIND DEEP STORAGE - NIGHT

Five crewmen come urgently down the passageway. One of them opens storage compartments.

CREWMAN

Pull out all the food, fuel and materials first. And no noise.

He goes to another storage cabinet, while two men start pulling out supplies, sorting them and piling them

CREWMAN (CONT'D)

You two. Empty it. Sort it into piles. Its going to go on deck.

CREWMAN 2

Whatever for? There's tons here?

CREWMAN

Jensen's orders. And no one else can know what we're doing.

CREWMAN 2

Emptying the ship...?

CREWMAN

Tomorrow night we do the emergency stores in the forward compartments.

Crewman 2 is stunned at the thought of what that means.

INT. NORTHWIND DINING AREA - DAY

Twenty-five people at a time can be seated. Victoria is seated with a few of the passengers at a long table. A MOTHER and eight year-old BOY are next to her.

VICTORIA

This food isn't as good as your mother makes, is it?

EIGHT YEAR-OLD

I don't know what it is. And I don't like it.

VICTORIA
 Me too. But it's better than
 nothing, eh?

The boy smiles.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
 Have you ever been on a ship
 before?

EIGHT YEAR-OLD
 No. I don't like them. I like
 airplanes. They make noise.

VICTORIA
 I do too. I had a ride in one. My
 friend is a pilot. They are
 wonderful.

Large Woman 2 sits down across the table.

LARGE WOMAN 2
 You're not sitting at the table
 with your men friends?

VICTORIA
 Those men are your friends too. You
 should have faith they will get us
 rescued.

LARGE WOMAN 2
 (softens, nods)
 I hope so.

Victoria gets up and moves to the science team table. The
 weather man is seated with four of the team who are looking
 over a map and notes.

WEATHER MAN
 Everyone, you know Victoria.

They nod and acknowledge her, then go back to their
 conversation.

VICTORIA
 What are they working on?

WEATHER MAN
 Comparing the temperature readings
 to the historical trend. This
 blizzard is a historic low.

VICTORIA

I would like to be doing something to help.

WEATHER MAN

Not much to do. Jensen only allows one of us on deck at a time in these conditions. We can't take water temp readings because there is no water. Only air temp. So we are doing half-hour shifts to record air temps and be on lookout.

VICTORIA

A lookout. For what?

WEATHER MAN

Dog teams, I suppose. It's the only way over the ice.

VICTORIA

I can volunteer. I will take a shift.

WEATHER MAN

You don't know what it's like.

VICTORIA

I want to do something.

WEATHER MAN

I advise you not to. This is not a good time. Things may turn worse.

Victoria puts on a charming smile.

VICTORIA

Oh, please, gentlemen...let me prove myself to you. Let me do something to help with the work. I'm sure you wouldn't stand in the way of me learning. I hope to learn from you all.

Their looks reveal that she has struck a chord in them.

SCIENTIST

She can take my turn on deck.

A crewman shouts from the doorway.

CREWMAN

A ship! A ship is sighted!

Instant pandemonium. Everyone rushes out in excitement.

EXT. ON DECK NORTHWIND - TWILIGHT

Night and day merge together into an arctic twilight of gloom. Around them, as far as they can see, massive shapes surge and crash as the ice shifts in the wind and sea.

The lookout yells "Ship ahoy to starboard."

EXT. ICE FIELD AND HORIZON - TWILIGHT

A tiny silhouette with masts can be seen far off in the distance.

EXT. ON DECK NORTHWIND (CONTINUOUS)- TWILIGHT

Everyone rushes to the rail to see... Excitement, anticipation.... tension in their faces, straining to see.

EXT. ICE FIELD AND HORIZON - TWILIGHT

It's a ship! But god, what a nightmare. It's 50 years old, with rigging and masts and tattered sails encased in ice. As it moves past they see the corpses - frozen in place - still waiting for rescue.

EXT. ON DECK NORTHWIND (CONTINUOUS) - TWILIGHT

Everyone is horrified. Screams and yells erupt.

Victoria shudders in horror. *Can this land be so full of grim death? Are we lost too?*

The man behind her begins to laugh. Her horror rises to a new level as she recognizes Drake, the repulsive man who followed her.

DRAKE

They'll never be rescued. Sailors at sea forever. And here we are to join em. Together with the dead we are.

Victoria rushes below deck in despair. He watches her go, leering.

EXT NORTHWIND DECK - DAY

The wind is blowing savagely. A blizzard starts blowing snow and ice.

Victoria is bundled in furs and walking the deck, on lookout. She tries to read the thermometer, but it's frozen over.

She tries to open the metal door to go inside, but it's frozen solid with a layer of ice. She pounds on a porthole, but her hands sting with pain.

CLOSE ON VICTORIA

She is freezing, weakened by the intense cold and in pain. She closes her eyes, trembling, and sinks to the deck, hallucinating.

EXT CALIFORNIA DESERT - DAY (DREAM)

Matching CLOSEUP on Victoria's face, sweaty and sun-drenched. She luxuriates, lying on a blanket, enjoying the warmth.

Tony leans in and covers her mouth with a passionate kiss. He moves her up into a sitting position and a drop of sweat drips down her cleavage. He passionately buries his lips in her neck. She looks up into the sky with erotic pleasure.

EXT CALIFORNIA DESERT - DAY

Tony's race plane roars overhead, seen from her POV.

EXT NORTHWIND DECK - DAY

A man swings an axe and chops the ice away from the door, carries her inside.

INT. VICTORIA'S CABIN - DAY

Victoria lying on the bunk, shivering. She sips hot tea.

Weather Man enters and just stares at her. She is bewildered at his look.

WEATHER MAN

I told you. I told you not to.

VICTORIA

Iiit's not myyy fffault!

WEATHER MAN
Whose is it then?

VICTORIA
Please...don't blame me.

WEATHER MAN
You're done.

VICTORIA
It could have happened to anyone.

WEATHER MAN
The team decided. You're done.

He exits abruptly.

She screams in anger and lies back, exhausted.

EXT. RENO AIR STADIUM - DAY

Tony wins the air race with blazing speed. Crowds cheer and surge around him as he rolls to a stop on the field next to Nick's Fleetster. He gets out of the cockpit and moves to the victory stand.

Nick fights his way through the crowd and reporters.

REPORTER 1
Tony, how does it feel to win a big race in your own creation?

TONY
It feels like it's about time -- No, honestly, my buddy, Nick Chandler had so much to do with it...I couldn't have done it without him.

REPORTER 2
What are your plans now, Any transcontinental flights in your future?

TONY
Not yet. My next big plan is...I'm getting married.

REPORTER 2
Hey, congratulations. My readers want to know when. My female readers will be disappointed.

TONY

Just as soon as a ship can steam
back from the North Slope of
Alaska.

At that moment Nick elbows his way through the crowd and
whispers urgently in Tony's ear.

Reporter #1 looks horrified.

REPORTER 1

She's not on the weather ship is
she? Haven't you heard the news?

But Tony doesn't hear. He almost turns white as Nick tells
him the horrible news.

Without a word he walks off the platform and leaves the
celebration.

Hushed whispers ripple through the crowd.

EXT. RENO AIR STADIUM FIELD - DAY

Tony and Nick hustle toward Tony's plane.

TONY

What else did the navy say?

NICK

The ice-breaker hasn't been able to
reach them for two weeks. It keeps
getting turned back by ice buildup.
They can't punch through.

TONY

For God's sake, Nick -- Air rescue
is the only answer.

NICK

You ever tried flying in an arctic
blizzard?

TONY

Never got around to it yet. But it
looks like a damn good time to try.

NICK

Please tell me your kidding.

Tony stops abruptly as...

TONY

Damned if I'm going to leave this to some wet-nosed desk jocks who need a higher-up to tell them what to do. You know Coast Guard and Navy pilots don't have our experience.

He grabs a jacket from the cockpit and puts on his leather gloves.

TONY (CONT'D)

See ya later, buddy. Don't wait up. Wish me luck.

NICK

Whoa! Hold on Buck Rogers. You can't take your rig.

TONY

Why the hell not. It's the fastest way to get to the search area.

NICK

You got no room in it. You got no spares, no tools, no room for people even if you can find em.

TONY

Nick. I've got to find them

Tony starts to climb into his plane.

TONY (CONT'D)

It's what I've got. I'll deal with it in Alaska.

Nick grabs him by the collar and yanks him to the ground. Tony springs up with fire in his eyes.

TONY (CONT'D)

What the hell are you doing?

NICK

Don't be a sap. Take the Fleetster. It's got all the room you need - and it's fueled.

Tony relaxes and realizes the sense of it.

TONY

You've always got my back.

He climbs into Nick's larger plane, starts the engine with a roar.

NICK
(shouting)
They're drifting. The ice is
moving. You'll never find them.

Tony revs up. Nick plants a kiss with his hand on the side of the plane.

NICK (CONT'D)
Go Baby.

EXT. CHEERING CROWD - DAY

The crowd breaks into wild cheering as they realize the heroic thing he is doing.

EXT. NORTHWIND - DAY

A solid wave of ice thirty feet high advances toward the ship with AN EARTH-SHAKING ROAR.

It crashes into the side of the ship. The ship shudders and rolls over almost on its side.

INT/EXT NORTHWIND - SERIES OF SHOTS

Jensen commands the crew and passengers --

JENSEN
(shouting)
Abandon ship. Everyone on the ice.

People rush to the low side rail and throw over suitcases and bags.

People hang from the rail and drop to the ice.

The ice starts crushing the hull. The prop is broken off.

Some passengers panic and scream. Bedlam starts to take hold. But Jensen quells it with his commanding presence.

Drake and the crewmen start unloading the ship's stores; food, tents, lumber, crates, tools.

EXT. NORTHWIND - DAY

Jensen hurries from place to place, directing everything.

JENSEN

Drake, get the stores stowed on the ice. Move them away from the ship.

DRAKE

Ayesir. She'll blow when the boilers go.

Drake goes over the side and shouts orders.

Victoria comes on deck *stunned by the overwhelming turmoil*. She looks over the rail and sees Drake hit a young sailor twice, knocking him to the ice, berating him.

Suddenly, Jensen is at her side.

JENSEN

Miss, would you lend a hand? There's much to be done.

Victoria points at Drake.

VICTORIA

He's an awful man. I don't trust him.

Jensen looks out at the men on the ice.

JENSEN

It's his knowledge and experience I rely on. Not his personality.

VICTORIA

He's horrible. I'm afraid of what he might do.

JENSEN

He'll do nothing. I command him. He knows my rules. Now listen to me. I need your help.

She is troubled, unsure, distracted.

JENSEN (CONT'D)

Are you with me?

VICTORIA

Eh... yes Captain.

JENSEN

Help the women gather their things,
The women and children must get off
safely. And the baby.

VICTORIA

Not to the ice -- They'll freeze!

JENSEN

The ship is lost. That's all we
can do. Every soul must abandon the
ship.

Tears come to her eyes. It feels like she is a small child,
beseeching her father.

VICTORIA

How will we survive?

JENSEN

We have plenty of supplies to last.

VICTORIA

You said they would find us.

Her plea cuts him to the core -- but he doesn't weaken. He
touches her face -- brushes a tear away from her cheek.

EXT. NORTHWIND - ARCTIC TWILIGHT

The evacuation efforts are still underway. Every once in a
while metallic SCREECHING GROANS comes from the ship as it
shakes under the strain of ice pressure.

Fighting the terror she feels, Victoria is helping the last
of the women on to the ice pack. She takes the baby from its
mother's arms and carries it to safety.

Large piles of cargo and supplies are everywhere, as men
carry them away from the lights and into the twilight.

Scores of people sit shivering on the ice in misery, with
numb faces, blue lips and iced beards, staring at the ship.
Even the parkas and blankets don't keep them from shivering
in -30 degrees.

INT. BRIDGE OF THE NORTHWIND - DAY

Jensen opens cabinets and takes out his charts, maps and the
log book. He starts to leave, then suddenly turns back, opens
another cabinet and grabs his sextant. He looks around the
cabin

JENSEN

Bye, old girl. I won't be back.
Sorry.

INT. BOWELS OF THE NORTHWIND -DAY

Drake climbs down stairs and along a passageway. A sailor rushes by him.

DRAKE

What the hell ya doin here? Get
overboard.

Drake kicks him and he runs away. Drake stops at his bunk and opens a small wall cabinet. He takes out his deadly-looking knife, stuffs it in his belt. He looks at the photo of his mother.

EXT. MAINE FISHING VILLAGE (FLASHBACK)- DAY

Fifteen year-old Drake is standing with his mother on a hill overlooking the harbor. His face deformity is fresh and prominent.

DRAKE'S MOTHER

You should go down to the sea. Its
where you belong.

Young Drake is overcome with sorrow. *His mother doesn't want him.* He looks forlornly up at her, and she nods decisively to emphasize her words.

Young Drake turns and walks away, looks back once.

Drake's mother waves goodbye.

INT. (BACK TO SCENE)BOWELS OF THE NORTHWIND -DAY

DRAKE

Yer doin me no good this time.

He stuffs the photo in his jacket pocket and hurries off.

EXT. NORTHWIND - NIGHT

Jensen stands at the rail. The Sailor Aide gives him the personnel manifest. He checks it over.

JENSEN

Everyone accounted for?

Sailor Aide nods as Drake passes behind them.

DRAKE

All hands are overboard, Cap'n.

JENSEN

(to his aide)

Thank you, Howard. Go ahead.

The Sailor Aide climbs to the ice. Jensen glances around, then leaves the ship last.

Suddenly the lights dim and flicker off. Sounds of surprise and disappointment from the crowd.

Two sailors light storm lanterns.

A PIERCING WHISTLE sound erupts from the ship in a rising crescendo. The ship is being crushed.

SHIP ENGINEER

Get back, the boilers are going!

Everyone scrambles to back up, falling over each other. They run in total confusion 50 yards back to the supply piles. Sudden panic sets in after the hours of waiting and watching.

Suddenly a HUGE EXPLOSION rocks them, followed by a fireball reaching skyward that lights up the eerie terrain. A second EXPLOSION makes them cower in terror.

The ship catches fire and grows in intensity, bathing everyone in an orange glow. They can feel the welcome heat.

A man runs with open arms toward the ship, screaming "Warm, no more COLD!" Drake runs after him and tackles him to the ice.

DRAKE

(whispers to him)

We're better off here.

EXT.ICE FIELD - NIGHT (2 HOURS LATER)

Everyone is still staring at the ship in silent shock.

Drake looks over and watches Victoria's face in the flickering firelight. He steps from a shadow into the firelight. The flickering glow gives him a ghastly look.

Victoria moves next to Jensen. She sees him choke back a sob and close his eyes as the ship starts sinking. She lays her hand gently on his arm. Their eyes meet.

JENSEN

Miss, Be brave. This is just the beginning.

Women scream as the ship sinks. Men weep openly and drop to their knees. The rest stare in shock as the fire goes out and the arctic night descends.

A sailor, sitting on a pile of lumber, takes a sip from a bottle and toasts the ship --

SAILOR

-- Wish you were here, ma.

EXT/INT TONY'S PLANE

Tony is bundled up in his cockpit, freezing. He flies from sun into clouds and gets colder. The wind whistling through the cockpit feels like needles. Steely determination is in his eyes..*He doesn't see the clouds or fog, but only her face in front of him.*

He goeses the throttle a little more.

EXT. NAVY POST, ANCHORAGE - DAY

Tony has landed and talks with a Navy man on the tarmac who points him to the HQ building, and watches him in disbelief.

INT. NAVY OFFICE ANCHORAGE - DAY

An enlisted man DESK-JOCKEY sits at a desk. Through the open door to the next room can be seen the uniformed COMMANDER.

Tony trudges in with frost on his face, head covering and clothes. He rips off his gloves.

The desk-jockey looks at him in disbelief.

DESK JOCKEY

Where in hell did you come from?

TONY

California.

INT.COMMANDER'S OFFICE, ANCHORAGE - DAY

The commander is standing behind his desk, looking down on Tony who is seated in front of him, drinking a steaming cup of coffee.

COMMANDER

That's hard to believe. You made it this far in a Fleetster?

TONY

Yessir.

COMMANDER

Well, I doubt if anybody can get through this weather. Helluva try, son. But a good pilot knows when he's licked.

Tony leans forward with a determined look.

TONY

I know what I'm doing, commander. I have to do this. My fiance is aboard the Northwind. Do you understand?

Commander is silent, sits down, looking at Tony intently.

TONY (CONT'D)

All I'm asking is weather and navigational info for their last reported position.

Silence.

COMMANDER

Stevie! Bring more coffee...

Desk Jockey enters, refills Tony's mug.

COMMANDER (CONT'D)

...and the Northwind position charts from Nome.

(to Tony)

You **will wait** for good weather.

TONY

How long will that be? Look, it's my plane. It's my risk. It's my skin. Rescue that comes too late is no rescue at all. Don't you agree?

COMMANDER

There are two FF1 Grumann's in Alaska. What can you do that they can't? They're equipped to fly in the arctic - You aren't. They are both at the Nome station.

(MORE)

COMMANDER (CONT'D)

When the weather improves, they
will search for survivors and drop
supplies.

The desk jockey comes back in, coffee pot in one hand and
charts in the other. He hands Tony the charts. Tony holds out
his cup for more. More is poured.

Tony takes a last gulp. Nods at them, and walks out.

EXT/INT TONY'S PLANE - DAY

He flies through weather and wind, fighting on. He takes off
his leather gloves and puts on the fur gloves that Nick threw
in.

TONY

Thanks, once again, buddy.

EXT. NAVY AIR STATION, NOME - DAY

Tony is on the tarmac talking with a GROUND CREWMAN in front
of two small quonset huts and a little admin building.

GROUND CREWMAN

You're a rescue plane? In that?

TONY

I'm it, and I'd like to get going.

GROUND CREWMAN

Sir, do you have any kind of
authorization for this flight?

TONY

Would I come up here if I didn't?

GROUND CREWMAN

But you're a civilian.

TONY

Exactly. That's why I was given the
charts - I'm authorized by the
commander at Anchorage. Go ahead
and re-fuel.

EXT. NAVY AIR STATION, NOME- DAY

Tony gets re-fueled by the ground crew.

Tony waves and flies off into the weather. The two ground crew just shake their heads as he disappears into clouds.

EXT. ICE FIELD - DAY

101 people are strewn around the ice field in confusion, amidst random piles of crates and supplies. Some are wandering aimlessly trying to get out of the wind.

Jensen assembles the crew.

JENSEN
CREW OF THE NORTHWIND! MUSTER HERE
NOW!

Between 15 and 20 men of the ship crew gather round.

JENSEN (CONT'D)
Quickly, build shelters. Use the
crates. Get your tools. Make tents
from canvas and rope.

EXT. ICE FIELD (SERIES OF SHOTS) - DAY

The wind howls and fights against them. Men curse as the wind slashes their faces with whipping ropes.

Some forget that touching metal tools without a glove means a hand will stick to it -- and burn.

Passengers and scientists huddle together and helplessly watch the crew.

Victoria watches in frozen shock. *How could this happen.* She stands and grabs a rope, helps two men tie it down. She helps others carrying supplies, moving cans and boxes.

Captain Jensen is everywhere -- directing, giving orders, moving people into tents as they are built.

He passes Victoria coming out of a tent.

JENSEN
Thank you, girl. Good for you.

VICTORIA
I'd rather keep moving than freeze.
I'm sorry about your ship...

EXT.ANOTHER PART OF ICE CAMP - DAY

Several men watch Victoria working and decide to pitch in. One BEARDED MAN shuffles past several men huddling against a crate.

BEARDED MAN

Get off your butts or I'll wallop
ya lazy bastards.

FIRST COLD MAN

It's too cold to move. I won't.

The second man just closes his eyes in misery. Bearded man moves on, sees another man sitting huddled with a blanket.

BEARDED MAN

You, lend a hand.

SECOND COLD MAN

Please, no. Leave me be.

He unwraps the blanket revealing his wife and infant huddled for warmth.

EXT.ICE FIELD CAMP-DAY

A camp takes shape - a wooden hut from lumber and crates for the ten women, crude tents out of canvas for the men.

A radio antenna is raised, and the transmitter is set up in the largest tent.

INT. LARGE TENT -DAY

People cram in, upset, anxious, cold and ornery.

BEARDED MAN

How are we going to survive? No one
can live this way.

WEATHER MAN

We should probably trek overland to
safety before we drift further
away.

TALL MAN

We're all dead...if we stay on this
ice.

Drake listens pensively -- *his agile brain working.*

There are shouts from others. Some are confused, and everybody starts talking at once.

Jensen is to one side, huddled with DEWEY THE RADIO OPERATOR, finalizing the hookup and operation.

Jensen stands to his full height. He is the largest in the room, and towers over the rest. He just scans the crowd silently, as the arguments rise in volume.

Victoria is standing near the back with Large Woman 1. They are the only women there. Large Woman 1 tugs on Victoria's sleeve and motions to her. Victoria looks drained. The woman slips out of the tent, leaving Victoria behind.

Jensen gazes calmly at the uproar. Then...

JENSEN
(roars)
NOOOOOO MORE. Quiet!!

Everyone is silenced, stunned. Jensen looks invincible..

JENSEN (CONT'D)
Now If anyone has something
constructive to say. I'll listen.

TALL MAN
We have to go... leave here. No
one can find us.

BEARDED MAN
If we're drifting, the dogs won't
reach us. Nobody will reach us.

A small voice is heard from the back wall as...

VICTORIA
(timidly)
They haven't given up on us...
(more firmly)
We can't give up hope. They will
come for us.
(strongly)
Brave men are risking their lives
at this moment to find us.

INT. NAVAL STATION, ANCHORAGE -DAY

Several DUTY OFFICERS are a picture of inactivity, lounging with their hot coffee in the ops center.

ENSIGN
Refill lieutenant?

LIEUTENANT GEORGE
No thanks, Jimmy. Good here.

LIEUTENANT CARROLL
When the weather clears, we could
launch two more cutters.

LIEUTENANT GEORGE
We'd have to get another
positioning to know the range. Fuel
is a factor in the ice.

ENSIGN
Mr. Carroll there's a blimp at
Seattle. Its got range.

LIEUTENANT GEORGE
Hmmm. Maybe. I wonder what kind of
capacity it has.

LIEUTENANT CARROLL
I don't think it can handle the
winds.

LIEUTENANT GEORGE
Dogsleds...

ENSIGN
-- Yeah, maybe.

LIEUTENANT CARROLL
We have to hope the Dreadnaught can
get through.

The others nod in agreement and sip coffee.

EXT. JENSEN'S TENT -DAY

The TWO CHILDREN, 8 and 10, walk by and throw a chunk of ice
at the tent.

Jensen's head pops out, sees the kids with a half smile and
he growls at them. They laugh and run away.

INT. JENSEN'S TENT - DAY

He comes back in and stands in the cramped space.

JENSEN

I hope the idea of leaving camp is forgotten. I must keep them busy, somehow.

REVEAL Victoria sitting opposite.

VICTORIA

I hope so. When people are desperate and afraid...

JENSEN

You did a bold thing. You shamed them...without the hurt. With no fear... Haven't you sense enough to fear the unknown? What made you want this?

VICTORIA

This...!(sighs ruefully) I was looking for far off adventure. Its not what it seemed then to me.

He sits down across from her.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I guess newspaper stories brought me here. Reading those stories made me dream of flying to far away places.

JENSEN

All by yourself?

VICTORIA

Me and Amelia. She does such...wonderful things, and has such freedom. That was the first time I fell in love -- with her life. And then after that, along came a real flyer. He showed me that marvelous freedom first hand. Soaring above the world.

JENSEN

(smiles)
Like being on the open sea.

VICTORIA

It makes you feel like you can accomplish anything. Captain, there's something --

JENSEN

-- In here miss Victoria, I'm not captain - its Frederick.

VICTORIA

Alright... You see, my fiance is a flyer too. He is such a good flyer, almost like Amelia. I guess I love them both. I should have known this would turn out awful. We argued badly when I left home. I may have ruined our relationship. He knew I shouldn't have come...

JENSEN

Some things aren't what they seem at first. You only know about the Earhart woman from the papers?

She nods.

JENSEN (CONT'D)

She is not exactly what she seems.

Victoria looks at him in anxiety.

JENSEN (CONT'D)

If I had newspapers write about me, even I wouldn't be what I seem.

VICTORIA

But, she does amazing things, her flights, her records.

JENSEN

Ays...I'll give her that... And what have you done?

VICTORIA

I suppose...nothing.

JENSEN

I think you have done more than Earhart. You helped save some life yesterday. Believe in yourself -- in you. ... Don't put too much stock in a symbol like her, because a symbol especially deep down is not what it seems.

She is deeply affected... gets up to leave. As she turns to go...

JENSEN (CONT'D)

Miss Victoria, I never want my crew to hear this.

She turns and stands near him.

JENSEN (CONT'D)

Once I was a lad. Long ago. And I asked my father what he thought about the sea. He was against it, going to sea. I went anyway, and felt a guilt for years -- going against his wishes. We lost three years not speaking, me for guilt an' him for anger.

VICTORIA

What a shame... Wasted time...

JENSEN

When I went to hospital after a gangplank slipped, he was the first one to help. That's when I knew -- He was not disappointed. He hoped to save me the hardship of the life at sea. It was always for me that he prayed for good fortune...It was my first captain who set me right -- I was a cabin boy on the Archimedes-- He told me, "Be a captain that never lost a ship. You'll not feel guilt again, no matter how many mistakes you make."

VICTORIA

I'm sure your father was proud.

JENSEN

Ehh...until now. After 28 Years at sea I've let down both men I respected.

VICTORIA

There was nothing anyone could have done...

JENSEN

Aye. But I trapped us in the worst sea of all -- *A sea of ice.*

EXT. ICE FIELD CAMP - DAY

Drake passes by some of the crew who are trying to repair the radio antenna.

CREWMAN

We'll never get this up to stay.
I'm starving to death.

CREWMAN 2

Hold it in place, blast ya. You think you're the only one? Drake, how long you think the stores will last us?

DRAKE

None 'o yer damn business. It's not yer place to know -- or complain.

CREWMAN

We're gettin' shit rations. We can't work in this cold without enough food.

DRAKE

And no man questions the plan. It comes from me. And before me from the captain. We won't really be starvin' til we run out...but then it'll be the captain's fault won't it?

The two men stop and look at Drake, puzzled.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Specially if he's favoring someone over us, like that young piece of fluff - givin her more food.

The doubt is sown in their minds.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Drake pulls out tins of food and a blanket from under his bedroll, stashes them in a tote bag.

EXT. ICE FIELD -NIGHT

Drake sneaks out of camp and across the ice field to the primeval chaos of ice ridges and fantastic ice masses -- looking like they have stood for centuries -- at the edge of camp.

EXT. ICE CAVE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

He climbs over ice boulders, passing dark masses that look like petrified monsters against the starry sky.

He enters a small ice cave, empties his tote bag contents and places them with a stash of other things he has already collected.

EXT. ICE FIELD CAMP - DAY

Drake and Bearded Man are huddled near a small storehouse.

DRAKE

If you do this, I won't stand in yer way. But Jensen will. Be ready.

BEARDED MAN

We'll make it to land. But food, How much will we need...? Are you coming?

DRAKE

The captain can't keep you prisoner, y'know. But he can keep me. I'll stay for now, see if he lasts.

Bearded man moves off. Drake watches him go, then reaches into the cache and takes two tins of meat.

A small group of men are gathered, talking among themselves. They start to gather up food and supplies as though going on a trip.

INT. COOK TENT -DAY

Victoria is working with three women preparing food.

1ST WOMAN

What kind of experience do you have in the kitchen?

VICTORIA

As much as the next person, I suppose.

1ST WOMAN

Do you like to bake?

VICTORIA
I haven't done much of that.

1ST WOMAN
We'll be doin lots of that here.
Bread and such. So you better
learn if you plan to help.

2ND WOMAN
Just hope we don't come to cooking
seal and walrus.

VICTORIA
I make that all the time.

A man enters, grabs his wife and pulls her outside.

Victoria, concerned, follows them.

EXT.ICE FIELD CAMP - DAY

The man brings his wife and joins up with a group of men who
are preparing to leave. Victoria follows in consternation.

Others see what's happening and gather around.

BEARDED MAN
If you want to live, come with us.

BEARDED MAN 2
We're going south to land.

Voices in the group echo enthusiasm.

Jensen strides over, towering over all of them.

JENSEN
If there was any chance of
succeeding, I would have done this
a week ago. It's a fool's goal. I
beg you not to...

BEARDED MAN 2
Yes, for a hundred people and
babies. But we're a strong dozen.

BEARDED MAN
(shouts)
Come on, able bodied men, join us.

Half of the sailors on the crew move to join them.

JENSEN

Its ninety miles of moving ice,
ridges and fissures. You don't
know the ice, with its thin crusts
and deadly, freezing water beneath.
Arctic wind can kill by freezing
flesh. The night is worse -- with
no landmarks and no direction. A
fog alone will lead to
starvation... Stay here in camp!
There is shelter and food.

BEARDED MAN

For how long?

Voices in the group echo the sentiment. *They have heard
enough.* Two dozen strong, they start to shuffle out of camp.

Jensen hesitates to call them back as...

VICTORIA

What about the women? You wish to
kill your wives?

One of the two women in the group turns to Victoria

MARRIED WOMAN

I go with my man.

The second woman looks at Victoria with fear in her eyes.

VICTORIA

Yes, every woman needs her man to
help her through. And every child
needs help to live. And each man
needs another.

Jensen watches her... soaking in her words and confidence.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

No man can survive this on his own.
What about old ones, who are
helpless without us, and the infant
child? Should they die and not you?
You all would abandon everyone but
yourselves.

Drake watches her with interest from a distance.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

If we are together - ALL TOGETHER -
we have a chance!

Jensen's resolve is strengthened, but...

BEARDED MAN 2

What makes you think you know
anything of us, woman?

Jensen pulls out his gun and moves forward.

JENSEN

I will not permit anyone to leave
our camp. If you do this, you will
condemn some of you as mutineers.
Even if you survive this, your
lives will be forever punished.

A few men lose their resolve and desert the party.

BEARDED MAN

You will never shoot your own
passengers and crew, captain.

Jensen puts his gun away, steps up to the Bearded Man and
crushes him in a bear hug and a neck grip. The man gasps for
breath.

JENSEN

I remind you we are still on the
ocean. I am still in command, my
authority is supreme. And that's
the end of it.

He drops the limp man to the ground, turns to face everyone.
There are no more takers.

EXT.ICE FIELD - THE NEXT DAY

Victoria wanders away from camp out on to the ice field by
herself. She trips, stumbles nearly falls. She examines the
ice and snow, kicks at it and looks up at the sky mournfully.
On her knees she digs away a little snow revealing the hard
ice beneath.

Drake appears, looming over her. She looks up, startled.

VICTORIA

Why are you here?...What Do you
want?

He is silent, staring for a tense moment.

DRAKE

I can save you.

He walks off, away from camp. A shudder goes through her.

INT. LARGE TENT - DAY

The radio crackles to life and Dewey is startled. He commands one of the men in the tent

DEWEY
Quick get the captain.

The man runs outside, yelling

MAN (O.S.)
The wireless got through. We have wireless contact!

People start crowding into the tent. Dewey screams for quiet.

DEWEY
QUIET!... Please Send help, send ships, send anything. Anchorage, Nome, anyone, come in...

Static is broken by voice fragments:

RADIO VOICE
"zero visibility...prolonged whiteout conditions...determine what your position is..."

The tent flaps wildly and starts to lift up with a gust of wind.

Men start to grab at it, but -- WHOOSH -- it suddenly flies over their heads, carrying two men with it.

EXT. ICE FIELD - DAY

The tent blows across the ice, dragging one man. The tangled mass collides with Victoria, knocking her to the ground, brutally.

EXT. REMAINS OF RADIO TENT - DAY

Dewey still sits at his console screaming into the wind.

DEWEY
WE'RE FREEZING TO DEATH, FOR GOD'S SAKE!

Then the antenna is blown away.

EXT. ICE CAMP - DAY

A MAN is wandering aimlessly through camp, looking delirious.

Victoria and 1st Woman are carrying a tray of rolls through camp, giving them out. He comes toward them without seeing them, looking off into the distance. He bumps into them knocking the rolls to the ice.

1st Woman starts retrieving the rolls. Victoria is confused and watches the man.

He shouts at the wilderness, and ambles away into the ice field.

Victoria follows after him, grabs his sleeve.

VICTORIA

Where are you going? Come back.

CRAZED MAN

My family needs me. They are out there... so cold.

She stands in front of him and sees the crazed desperation in his face. She tries to stop him, and he struggles violently.

VICTORIA

Please. Stop. You don't know what you're doing.

CRAZED MAN

I'll find them. They're so cold. Get away from me.

EXT. JENSEN'S TENT -DAY

Jensen is sitting outside his tent with his compass and sextant. 1st Woman runs up to him

1ST WOMAN

Captain Jensen, someone is trying to leave. Quick.

Jensen rushes out to the two struggling figures.

EXT. ICE FIELD - DAY

The man babbles that his family is out there, cold, and he must find them.

Jensen wrestles the man away from Victoria and all three of them slip, clutching onto each other, and fall on the ice in exhaustion.

VICTORIA
Oh, the poor soul...

JENSEN
Perhaps the merciful thing is to
let him go.

Victoria and Jensen lie side by side on the ice, holding the man as he lies there whimpering.

VICTORIA
No one else came to help.

JENSEN
Their spirit is weakening. They
know supplies won't last. We must
get meat soon.

VICTORIA
If only someone from the outside
could reach us.

JENSEN
Only a bird makes it this far.

VICTORIA
A plane might find us.

He doesn't think so.

JENSEN
Who would fly in this climate? No
famous flyers are looking for us.

VICTORIA
Not her...But I think there's one
plane searching. In my daydreams he
comes... to get me out of here - if
he knew where I was.

JENSEN
It's a beautiful dream...

VICTORIA
He could swoop down out of those
clouds one day and save me...if he
could land.

Jensen looks deep into her eyes, desperately needing to believe - and kisses her. She breaks down in his arms.

EXT. ICE CAMP - DAY

Drake and two sailors go from tent to tent, ordering everyone to assemble. Drake is harsh and kicks the men who don't move fast enough. Everyone is stiff from the cold.

The crowd assembles in front of the large tent.

EXT/INT -WOODEN SHACK - DAY

The women's quarters. Victoria goes in to summon the women.

VICTORIA

We are all being summoned to a meeting.

LARGE WOMAN 2

Look who it is. The captain's pet.

VICTORIA

Please come to the large tent right away.

ANOTHER WOMAN

And who says so? It's too cold to go out. Haven't you noticed, or is your blood too hot?

VICTORIA

This concerns all of you. But if you have better things to do, you can rot.

Victoria leaves the shack. Soon some of the women file out and join the large crowd.

EXT.CENTRAL ICE CAMP - DAY

Jensen stands on a few crates above the crowd.

JENSEN

We've prayed for rescue. We've called Nome on wireless. We're told a ship can not get through the ice, week after week - for a month. Not til the ice starts to melt. Dog sleds might reach us, but they can never carry 100 people.

The crowd is shivering in the cold.

VOICE FROM THE CROWD
What's left? Is there no hope?

JENSEN
There is something else I now have
come to believe...is possible. How
many of you have seen that movie at
the picture show - King Kong?

Twenty people gesture affirmative.

JENSEN (CONT'D)
What saved New York might save us --
the airplanes.

People have various reactions - from laughs, to skepticism to
disgust.

DRAKE
Cap'n I know about ships, not much
about air-ships. But how's one of
them gonna zoom by, and snatch us
up?

JENSEN
We are the ones able to make it
happen. We are going to build a
runway for planes to land on the
ice!

Their faces are full of skepticism and astonishment.
Victoria's face lights up in joy..

EXT. RUNWAY - (SERIES OF SHOTS)- DAY

Dozens of men and some women are toiling away in the ice --
digging the snow away. They crush and haul away tons of ice
blocks, making a level area.

When shovels break, they make tools. When those break, they
use their gloved hands. When gloves wear out, they wrap
their hands in cloths.

Exhaustion overcomes some. They have to be carried back to
their tents.

**TITLE: "THE GRUELING WORK CONTINUED DAY AFTER DAY, STRETCHING
INTO A WEEK -- THAT STRETCHED INTO THE NEXT AND THE NEXT."**

EXT. TONY'S PLANE - DAY

Tony flies over frozen wasteland in freezing weather. He taps his fuel gauge. Its frozen up.

EXT. NAVY AIR STATION NOME - DAY

He lands and the ground crew checks the plane..

GROUND CREWMAN

Hey. Are you crazy. Your fuel tank!

TONY

What?

GROUND CREWMAN

Its bone dry! You're damn lucky.

Tony shrugs and enters the ops office.

INT. FLIGHT OPS, NOME - DAY

The duty officer is looking over maps of the area, and reads a dispatch. Tony is sprawled in a chair with a cup of coffee.

DUTY OFFICER

The Dreadnaught is in ice 15 feet thick off of Wales. They're making almost no headway.

Tony listens, exhausted.

DUTY OFFICER (CONT'D)

Our best estimate indicates the Northwind party is drifting north at 4 miles a day.

Tony chugs his coffee, stumbles out of his chair, dons his heavy clothes again and leaves.

EXT. NAVY AIR STATION NOME - DAY

Tony exits the building with a reporter tagging along, asking him questions and making notes. As Tony gets to his plane, the reporter puts his note pad away and grabs the camera around his neck, snaps a photo of Tony.

Tony gets in his refueled plane. The ground crew pulls the chocks.

TONY
Thanks, fellas. See ya around.

TWO NAVY PILOTS come out of the ops center and watch him.

PILOT 1
Damn good pilot.

PILOT 2
(shakes his head)
He's not gonna make it.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY SIDEWALK - DAY

At a news stand, people are buying the New York Times.
Several other people are reading the New York Times:
NEW YORK TIMES HEADLINE: **One Man Doing What U.S. Govt Can't**

INT. NOME AIR STATION HANGAR - DAY

The two navy Pilots read the article and toss the paper down.
They start to suit up and open the hangar doors.

EXT. NAVY AIR STATION NOME - DAY

The two navy planes taxi out and take off. They are not as
smooth as Tony, bouncing and wobbling.

EXT. NAVY AIR STATION NOME - DUSK

One of the navy planes comes in for a landing and bobbles in
the wind. It lands hard and skids to one side ending up in a
mound of snow and a ditch.

Two officers rush over with the ground crew and see the bent
landing gear. The pilot falls out of the cockpit into the
snow bank.

EXT. ICE FIELD RUNWAY SITE - SERIES OF SHOTS - DAY

Jensen becomes obsessed with the task, forcing everyone to
work on the runway...

He is now a tyrant, driving men on to labor hard, shouting
orders...

He directs groups of men to different parts of the runway...

He points out rough spots that need work. And he works just
as hard as everyone...

EXT. RUNWAY - DUSK

The runway is almost built. It stretches hundreds of feet, smooth and level.

Several men have completed work for the day, look back and admire it.

FIRST WORKER

Damn!! It looks good.

SECOND WORKER

After all this -- They don't come there'll be hell to pay.

The wind blows across the icy runway field...

EXT. RUNWAY -DAY

Jensen is using his immense strength, carrying a block of ice. Suddenly he loses his footing, stumbles and falls. The ice breaks in a thin spot and he slips into an icy pool of water.

SERIES OF SHOTS - (SLOW-MO)

Men shout and run to him...

Jensen struggles in the icy water...

Men barely pull him out in time... Hypothermia.

They wrap him in blankets and carry him to his tent...

INT.JENSEN'S TENT: The ship's doctor says "Its Pneumonia."

Jensen lies on a cot in terrible shape. His body and spirit are broken.

Victoria and a woman tend to him with hot liquids...

Fearful, despairing faces peek out of tent flaps at the camp...

The runway stands empty with snow blowing across it..

EXT. RUNWAY - DAWN

Several men are inspecting the ice. Victoria watches them and walks out to the runway. As she approaches, she sees them flop down on the ice, strangely.

Then she sees -- the ice has shifted into jumbled blocks and bulging ridges. All their work is ruined. The runway is unusable.

She wanders in disbelief and despair. *All her hope and will is drained.* She sinks to her knees in complete despair.

EXT. TONY'S PLANE - SERIES OF SHOTS - DAY

Tony makes multiple flights, going through fog, wind and icy conditions.

Each time he lands, the two navy pilots are watching.

INT. CALIFORNIA AIRDROME FLIGHT OFFICE - DAY

Nick reads the New York Times headline: "**one man doing what the US govt can't.**"

He slaps the paper down on the desk with a big laugh and hurries out.

EXT. AIRDROME -DAY

NICK walks over to a mechanic, SERGEI, working on a plane.

NICK

Hey Sergei. What kind of plane are you messin with?

SERGEI

Is Polykarpov.

NICK

What?

SERGEI

Is Polykarpov R-5. Best Russian airplane to fly mail.

NICK

What kind of shape is it in?

SERGEI

Is good. I make good condition.

NICK

Sergei...Tony's in trouble.

SERGEI

Oh no. He crack up?

NICK

Not yet. But he will if he keeps going. He's gone to Alaska. He's searching for that ship.

SERGEI

People must be frozen dead now.

NICK

Look, Sergei. You're a good pilot. Help me find some more planes.

SERGEI

(proudly)

Russians are best pilots. Very tough...yes, Sergei is glad to help you. I have friend, Voronin. He has R5 also.

NICK

Good. We need four or five more. Is Marty still around here?

Sergei points to an open-cockpit biplane approaching the field.

EXT. AIRDROME HANGAR -DAY

MARTY, 40s, a small, wiry, fast-talker, climbs out of his Russian U-2 two-seater open-cockpit biplane.

MARTY

Hey, Nick. How do you like my U-2? Got it off a Romanian circus for a song.

NICK

Yeah, beautiful -- Russian, right? You've got Sergei drooling at least.

They start walking through the airdrome to the office.

NICK (CONT'D)

Listen Marty I'm putting together an op. I need a few planes. Are your movie flyers around?

MARTY

Naw, they're in Hollywood on a Warner's picture.

NICK

Yeah, but they've got planes,
right?

MARTY

Sure. One of 'em plays the villain
in his weird looking Ant 4 and the
other one is the hero in his Curtis
Condor. Its a picture called Murder
in the Clouds. Can you believe it?

NICK

Look. I need 'em. You've got to
get them for me.

MARTY

No chance. That's big money
they're into.

NICK

Marty. This is bigger -- Much
bigger.

Marty stops cold.

INT. NAVY OFFICE ANCHORAGE -DAY

The commander is on the phone to Washington DC and looks
rattled.

COMMANDER

Yes, admiral...I realize it makes
us look bad. He's Anthony Cameron.
He served a short time in the
Flying Corps...Yes, sir I'll call
up his record. He has a relative
on board the ship. That's all I
know....

He waves to the desk jockey, covers the mouthpiece

COMMANDER (CONT'D)

(to desk jockey)

Get me Nome station on the other
wire right now.

(into the phone)

Sir, we have to remember - it's a
hundred people out there. It could
look worse if we lose them...Yes,
sir -- Weather permitting. I'll
make sure Nome is aware of the risk
to our planes.

He hangs up, dejected.

INT. NAVY OFFICE ANCHORAGE - DAY

A teletype machine is spitting out an official service record of Anthony Cameron. The desk jockey tears it off and walks it into the commander.

Commander looks at it hard.

COMMANDER

Damn! Get me Nome on the horn.

INT. NAVY AIR STATION NOME -DAY

The station commander has a junior officer and the two pilots in front of him.

NOME COMMANDER

Washington brass take a dim view of your wrecking the Grumann FF1, Bartho. Admiral wants to know who-the-hell gave orders.

The pilot he addresses looks sheepish.

NOME COMMANDER (CONT'D)

I'm in the goddam hot seat. Hell, the whole damn world is watching. And I'm accountable. You're grounded - til the weather clears.

1ST PILOT

Sir, what about...our problem?

NOME COMMANDER

Our guest pilot? He's given us a black eye in Washington. But he's just a barnstormer. The Flying Corps booted him for recklessness. He's gonna get himself killed if he keeps it up. I'm not gonna let that happen. He's not gonna take us down with him.

INT. NOME AIR STATION HANGAR

1st Pilot and ground crewman are working on the landing gear of the Grumann FF1.

Tony enters and the wind slams the door behind him. He pauses,

No reaction from the navy men. They keep on working, ignoring him.

TONY

So you got a bad taste in your mouth. A crackup you walk away from is OK -- You learn real fast that way.

1ST PILOT

Thanks, I've had enough of your methods.

TONY

Don't blame me, lieutenant. I'd be happy to give you some pointers.

The navy pilot slams down his tool -- comes up in his face.

1ST PILOT

What you are doing is irresponsible and dangerous - not to mention just plain stupid. The Flying Corps sure got it right when they pulled your ticket.

Tony is stunned at mention of his past mistake.

TONY

You don't get it, do you. Over a hundred people are going to die - They are going to die --if we sit here and wait it out.

1ST PILOT

Who in hell made you god?

The pilot goes back to the landing gear,

1ST PILOT (CONT'D)

We're off the op. We're grounded.

Tony can't believe it. He fumes.

TONY

I'm not! All I need is a short tow out of the drift. Then I'm on my own. How about it sergeant?

GROUND CREWMAN
I'm sorry, sir. It can't be done.

TONY
Please...please. Give me a break.

1ST PILOT
(shouts)
Don't push it! You did it to all of us.

TONY
(screams)
You should be doing what I'm doing!!... Why am I begging from you useless bums? At least give me a goddamn shovel. Can you manage that?

EXT. NOME FLIGHT LINE - DAY

Tony walks empty-handed to his plane covered in snow. He kicks at the snow -- kneels down and digs frantically with his hands. The wind and cold soon sap his strength and his hands go numb. He falls exhausted to the snow.

EXT. NAVY AIR STATION, NOME - DAY

A FORMATION OF SIX BRIGHTLY COLORED PLANES screams over the station. It's his sidekick Nick, who arrives with an elite group of test pilots, stunt pilots and circus barnstormers.

EXT. NOME FLIGHT LINE - DAY

Nick and six heroic pilots march in SLOW MOTION unison down the frozen tarmac toward Tony, who stares in amazement beside his plane.

NICK
Your squadron is formed, Tony.
Awaiting orders.

Nick and the others salute. Tony grabs Nick in a big hug.

INT. JENSEN'S TENT IN ICE CAMP -DAY

Victoria enters and relieves the other woman nurse at Jensen's bedside.

NURSE
He's much better today.

VICTORIA
Thank god. Without him --

Victoria looks down at him in thought. She pulls the blanket higher and sits at the bedside with hot soup.

He opens his eyes and smiles wanly.

JENSEN
Whooh. Hit me hard. You're an angel. Never expected to be laid low enough to be nursed.

VICTORIA
None of us would make it without you.

JENSEN
Never had such tender care.

VICTORIA
It's high time. You can't take on the load for everyone, Frederick.

JENSEN
Lost my ship. Now I almost lost my life. What kind of captain does that make me?... Now, only one thing is left that might redeem me from failure on this voyage... My solemn vow -- *I will not lose a single person in my charge. I swear it.* No one will be lost...especially you.

Her look is filled with appreciation and tenderness as...

VICTORIA
I believe you. Have some soup, Frederick...

He smiles weakly... but with new determination in his face.

EXT. ICE FIELD - NIGHT

The masses of ice are slowly churning, compressing, grinding.

A huge dark shape moves among the ice mounds. It comes closer, approaching the camp.

EXT. ICE FIELD CAMP - NIGHT

A man on lookout is terror stricken by the unknown shape. He runs to the crew tent and whispers urgently inside.

MAN ON LOOKOUT

There's something out there. It's
a monster.

INT. WOMEN'S SHACK -NIGHT

Victoria lies on her cot listening to the SOUNDS OF ICE CRACKING & GRINDING in a gruesome noise. Soon another sound is repeated, getting louder and nearer - a RUMBLING GROWL

Her fear makes it impossible to lie still -- as she sits up.

EXT. WOMEN'S SHACK -NIGHT

One of the married men is visiting his wife outside the shelter. A huge POLAR BEAR looms from behind the shack.

The man and woman both scream, startling the bear, which backs away.

Instantly more men rush up and the bear growls defensively. It lunges at the nearest man.

Men bring torches and lunge back at it. A snarling fight erupts.

The bear charges through camp in fear and anger. Spectators dive out of its way, narrowly escaping its claws.

Men with torches try to drive it away, but it circles back just as Victoria and another woman come out of the shack.

The bear heads straight for them, charging full speed. A man with a torch tries to fend it off, but it swipes at him, sending him to the ground, writhing as he drops the torch.

Victoria, on the ground, picks up the torch and shoves it at the bear. But it is not afraid, and comes at her. Suddenly a deafening GUN BLAST echoes and the bear falls dead.

Jensen holds his smoking rifle.

EXT. ICE CAMP (THE NEXT DAY) - DAWN

LARGE BOOTS TREAD HEAVILY IN THE SNOW as...

Jensen walks up to the bear carcass, followed by several of the crew.

JENSEN

Cookie, there's your meat. Feed the men.

The ship's cook looks at the giant beast and makes a comical expression. The job is beyond his comprehension.

The men are pleased and happy for the first time.

BEARDED MAN 2

Captain, it's so good to see you recovered.

JENSEN

Men, I've something I must do.

He walks with slow, measured steps out to the runway -- with a shovel slung on his shoulder. The men watch in silence.

Jensen starts digging at the rubble on the ice field.

Some of the men grimace. Then, one by one, each grabs a tool, or a length of wood, or a bucket and marches out to the runway.

Gradually it becomes the "Colonel Bogie March" as everyone joins in to continue the impossible job.

EXT. NEAR THE ICE CAVE - DAY

Drake is watching the march from his secret observation spot where he hides and spies. He slides down from the height and goes into his cave, mumbling to himself.

DRAKE

Why should I dig. I ain't goin nowhere. Don't want people. Don't like em. They don't like me. Hate em.

EXT. ICE FIELD - DAY

Victoria is sitting on a discarded container at the edge of camp, watching the sky.

The FAINT SOUND OF AN ENGINE wavers on the breeze. She is instantly alert, not sure if she heard it. We aren't sure we heard it.

Drake approaches, and she tenses.

DRAKE
Cook lady needs you.

VICTORIA
What for?

DRAKE
How do I know? Peel potatoes er
somethin'.

VICTORIA
Why did you follow me on the docks
at Vancouver?

DRAKE
Ehh.

VICTORIA
You scared me.

DRAKE
Ehh?...some people are scared a me -
- The way I look... Nothin' to be
scared of. I like you. That's
all... Don't like most people.

She is not sure how to take this.

VICTORIA
Why did you say you could save me?

DRAKE
Maybe... you're worth saving is
all. Not everyone. Some won't make
it, y'know.

VICTORIA
I think you're wrong... Will you do
something for me? I wish you
wouldn't treat the crew so badly?

DRAKE
Bahh! -- That's the way of the sea.
I give it to them, the same way I
got it all my life.

VICTORIA
But we're not at sea now. We're in
our city. And if we don't live
together we'll never survive this.

DRAKE

(angry)

Nobody's been knifed yet, have they? Don'tcha dare give me orders.

VICTORIA

I see... Only Captain Jensen can do that.

DRAKE

Jensen! He's not my idea of a captain..

VICTORIA

But he respects your experience. You've been at sea a long time.

DRAKE

Since I was a lad. My step-mother sent me to the ships...

VICTORIA

(points to her face)

Is that how it happened?

DRAKE

Fishing accident... Its no bother to me now. Ya get used to it.

VICTORIA

Oh...

DRAKE

She was right. It's a hard life at sea.

He touches his face.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

But harder on land for me.

The SOUND OF A DRONING ENGINE faintly rises from the quiet air. A tiny drone, an engine getting louder. She looks around and sees - A PLANE.

VICTORIA

Heavens, it sounds like...an airplane!

Drake turns to look. Victoria leaps up and runs into camp.

She runs, screaming in joy through camp.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
A PLANE, ITS A PLANE! WE'RE FOUND!

EXT. TONY'S PLANE -DAY

He makes a pass over the camp, looking for a landing spot.
He sees the runway and can't believe it. How could they possibly!?

EXT. RUNWAY - DAY

People come running out of shelters and stream out to the runway screaming and waving in joy as he lands and rolls to a stop with the engine running.

Victoria runs with them, but when she sees that its Tony she stops in sheer amazement. The crowd elbows past her and mobs around the plane.

Jensen helps her forward.

VICTORIA
It's him! He's here! Tony!

Jensen forges his way with Victoria through the bodies to Tony.

When Tony sees her he reaches out with tears blurring his eyes. He starts to fold her in his arms. Men rush past him fighting for seats in the plane.

TONY
NO! NO! Get out. Get out.

He struggles against the crowd, but its no use. Several men are crammed in the small compartment.

BEARDED MAN
Jensen! This is how it has to be.
First ones in! If he takes her,
that's what he came for. And he'll
never come back for us.

The crowd of harsh men never was more insistent. *The feeling is to keep Victoria as hostage to insure the plane's return.*

Jensen knows he doesn't have a chance to object. The men move Victoria to the back of the crowd.

WEATHER MAN
There's no time to debate. Here
comes a storm front.

Tony is in agony at the decision, but he knows he must take off immediately. He jumps in the cockpit and dons his goggles etc.

TONY
(angry)
Get away! Get back!

He powers up the engine and the crowd retreats. He roars down the ice and rises 100 feet in the air when a down draft hits him, sending the plane sinking toward the ground. The plane disappears below the ice ridges.

EXT. ICE FIELD BEHIND THE CROWD - DAY

Victoria gasps in horror as the plane disappears in a downward plunge. Suddenly a bag is flung over her head and gnarly hands drag her away behind an ice mound.

INT. LUMINOUS ICE CAVE - DAY

Freshly broken-up young ice scintillates with reflections of aquamarine and turquoise.

The roof and walls of an icy grotto burn with a deep sapphire blue making a gorgeous vision. At the entrance to the grotto, crystals of snow, hit by the sun, glitter like dazzling diamonds.

Victoria shakes off the dirty hood on her head and gazes in awe at her beautiful surroundings. For a brief moment she is mesmerized by the sheer beauty of the colors.

She tries to get up and falls hard on the icy floor. Disoriented, she crawls toward the entrance. Suddenly her leg gives way underneath her.

A rope is tied to her ankle and secures her to an ice boulder.

EXT. WEVOK WHALING STATION -DAY

Tony lands on the icy field. As he rolls to a stop, the building empties as everyone pours out, astonished at the rescue. Tony is applauded and congratulated when he gets out of the plane.

As his passengers reach the ground, Tony punches the first one in the jaw.

INT. WEVOK WHALING STATION - DAY

The radio operator turns the mic over to Tony.

TONY
Are the civilian pilots in the
room?

RADIO VOICE (O.S.)
Yes, they are all here.

TONY
All right, boys...

INT. NAVY AIR STATION NOME -DAY

Nick and the six pilots are assembled, listening to the radio speaker.

TONY (O.S.)
Get prepped and fueled. Get out
the maps. I'll be there in a few
hours -- I've found them!

They all erupt in cheers and spring into action.

INT. NAVY AIR STATION, NOME - DAY

Open on a map and PULL OUT to reveal Nick and the six pilots huddled around it. Tony circles a spot in the ocean.

TONY
There it is, fifty miles offshore.
But it all looks the same. You
won't see water at all. Write down
the coordinates.

NICK
Tony, listen. Biggest problem is
the weather. It's awful here. If
the weather closes in here, we need
options. We should scatter our
landing sites. Give us a better
chance for some of us to get
through.

TONY
All right. Two to each coastal
village.

Tony looks over the map.

TONY (CONT'D)

Tigara at Point Hope... Kivalina on the coast...and Wales. Make me a promise. Whoever can reach them first - take Victoria first. Don't take no for an answer.

MARTY

What kind of conditions are we facing? What about landing on the ice?

TONY

(smiles)

I forgot to tell you. They made us a runway. It's perfect -- better than the fields you're used to.

Joy and amazement from the pilots. They are fired up at the challenge.

EXT. ICE CAMP- DAY

CLOSE ON a personnel list that Jensen is writing. We can read the names of women, including Victoria, near the top of the list. PULL OUT to reveal him in his tent with his sailor aide.

JENSEN

Tommy, the first fifteen are the aged, the children and the women -- whatever way they fit in the planes.

SAILOR AIDE

Yes, Captain... If more planes make it...

JENSEN

After that I want this list followed to the letter. There will be no one going out of order, you understand?

TOMMY

Yes, sir. If someone asks?

JENSEN

Send them to me.

EXT. RUNWAY (SERIES OF SHOTS)- DAY

Planes land each day, rescuing a few, two to four at a time.

When a plane lands, people rush out from camp in excitement. Some are happy for those getting a ride. Others are angry, afraid and frustrated.

One plane is taking off, while two others are in the process of landing.

Jensen hands the manifest to his Sailor Aide.

JENSEN

Tommy, hold this for me.

Jensen goes out to manage the group of people crowding near the oncoming planes.

EXT. NEAR THE RUNWAY - DAY

The Sailor Aide watches passively as restless people are milling about.

Drake stands next to him, looking at the list.

DRAKE

Where's my name, eh?

SAILOR AIDE

We crew are last.

Drake points near the bottom line

DRAKE

Ah, there's me, down near the end.

SAILOR AIDE

Don't touch it. You're not getting any privilege.

Sailor Aide wrenches away from Drake, takes a step, and slips on the ice, falling hard, knocking his head, and dropping the list and his pencil.

DRAKE

Don't you worry. I'm content to stay.

Drake picks up the pencil and looks quickly at the list. He crosses off Victoria's name, then picks up the manifest and helps Sailor Aide to his feet.

DRAKE (CONT'D)
 Careful boy, don't hurt yerself. My
 turn will come soon enough.

SAILOR AIDE
 Let me alone.

Sailor Aide grabs the pencil and manifest and hurries off to join Jensen and the crowd loading the first plane.

Drake watches him go. His lip curls into a smile that looks more like a grimace.

EXT. BARREN ICE FIELD -DAY

Drake stands alone, away from everyone. Looking out over the limitless horizon of desolation, he takes out the photo, holds it in his gnarled hands - and crushes it. He has made the decision of a lifetime.

The photo drops to the ice as he walks back to camp.

INT. ICE CAVE ENTRANCE - DAY

POV Looking out from the inside of the small cave. Drake walks up, looking into the cave. He advances, and as he stoops to enter, he leaves daylight behind and turns black in the dark cave, as he fills the FRAME.

VICTORIA (O.S.)
 Please tell me -- The plane! Did
 it crash? -- What about the pilot?
 Is he alive?

INT. NAVY AIR STATION BARRACKS, NOME - NIGHT

Tony and Nick are lying on cots in a bunkhouse.

NICK
 I iced up about ten miles from the
 coast. But I could see it was
 clear to the east, so I'm sure some
 of the others must have made it.

TONY
 God, I hope so...

NICK
 -- Don't worry. I'm sure one of
 them got through and took Victoria.

TONY

How many have been taken? How many are left?... *No wireless contact with the settlements is maddening!* Weather forecast says its an early spring thaw.

Nick looks at him in alarm.

NICK

Thaw...?

TONY

They say it happens every year.

NICK

What do we do?

TONY

(grimly)
Fly faster...

EXT. ICE CAMP -DAY

The eight year-old and ten year-old boy are walking from the cook tent with their bowls of steaming food. They are looking at the ice in fear.

TEN YEAR-OLD

Watch carefully or we'll be swallowed up.

EXT. ICE CAMP (POV) DAY

Boys POV moving through the camp, between the shelters -- looking for the next deadly fissure to open up at any second.

EXT. TENT IN ICE CAMP - DAY

The Weather Man is scanning the sky with binoculars... he looks, squints... puts down the binoculars, cups his hands over his face and exhales warm air to defrost his eyes.

EXT. FROZEN WILDERNESS - DAY

A POLAR BEAR, perfectly still, stands by a seal air hole in the ice. A seal pops its nose out to breathe -- the bear clamps steel jaws on to its nose and flings the seal over its head, slamming it down on the ice in a bloody mess.

HORRIBLE RENDING NOISES as it rips chunks of fat from the dying seal -- a FAINT ENGINE NOISE rises on the wind... suddenly Tony's plane roars past low overhead as...

The bear roars back in anger.

EXT. RUNWAY - DAY

DOZENS OF BOOTS crash out of camp, running toward Tony's plane in the distance as it taxis to a stop.

Tony jumps out and hurries over to Jensen as...

JENSEN

Tony it's great to see you again at last!

TONY

Tried to get here sooner, but the weather has been much worse at Nome than the northern settlements. How many planes have arrived?

JENSEN

Three or four -- See for yourself.

Jensen shows him the list. He sees Victoria's name crossed off. *Elation and relief!*

TONY

She made it -- Thank god!

JENSEN

Tony, the ice at the outer edge... it's showing cracks. That means it's getting thin.

Tony slaps him on the back...

TONY

(energized)
-- Then it's back to work for me.

JENSEN

(refers to list)
Simons and Cavanaugh-- you're up.

Tony hustles the next two men into the compartment and climbs aboard.

TONY

Put markers out for us at the short end.

He revs up and everyone backs away in the snow flurry that is kicked up.

EXT. END OF THE RUNWAY - DAY

Tony's plane skims low over the monstrous ice crags that make up Drake's secret ice cave near the end of the runway.

INT. LUMINOUS ICE CAVE - DAY

Victoria sits hobbled to and leaning against the ice block -- miserable in the midst of the glowing sapphire-blue and green of the grotto.

Drake feeds her little morsels of food.

DRAKE

There, there, my pet. You must eat. I want you healthy.

She lies in misery -- terrified and shivering.

VICTORIA

(crying)

Tell me what happened to the plane.

DRAKE

I never saw him again. Poor man. You see...you die if you try to leave my kingdom. Its beautiful here, isn't it.

She shrinks into herself and goes into a near catatonic state. *Her tortured heart dies within her.*

He looks at her -- confused. Frustrated, he paces, wanting more from her.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Stop it. You're with ME. You're MINE now. You're HERE.

He grabs her, wrestles her, slaps her. Still she is non responsive. He slaps twice and she comes out of the trance.

He begins to gently stroke her hair. She hits him away. He slowly leans toward her and begins to nuzzle her abdomen and thighs, stroking her, awkwardly intimate, building in desire.

VICTORIA IS FROZEN IN FEAR -- *He might do anything.*

DRAKE (CONT'D)

I've always been alone - on the sea, on the ice. ... They're all leaving. *That's what we want.* Now I am alone -- *with you.* Together.

He reaches up and pulls her hair, forcing her to look up.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

(hisses)

Isn't it beautiful here...

Terrified, she hardly breathes.

VICTORIA

Yes. It's beautiful...
We can't stay here. We'll die.

DRAKE

What of it.

She looks down at him with sour pity.

VICTORIA

No one deserves to die. We don't deserve that, after everything -- We've come so close...

His head is pressed between her breasts and her abdomen... she reaches out, trembling...and gently touches his head. He looks up and she touches his deformed face.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

You're... not ugly to me now...
You're just being ugly...

He freezes. His eyes well with tears... Choking up, he breaks down -- crying in misery... and huddles against the wall.

SHE HAS WON... FOR NOW

INT. MESS TENT - DAY

Ten men are seated at two crude tables made out of boards set on metal drums. They are eating out of bowls.

Suddenly the ground under one table gives way and the table with the bowls slides down to one end, spilling the contents all over the man at the end.

He jumps up, cursing and storms out of the tent.

The others pick up their bowls off the table and continue eating.

EXT. ICE CAMP -DAY

Two men walking through camp. Suddenly a large crack opens up in front of them. One man's foot slips into it. His companion pulls him out. They run in a different direction.

INT. ICE CAMP TENT SHELTER - DAY

Three men are sleeping on canvas and rags. A large crack tears through the tent and one man's leg falls into the crack. He screams as it is pressed in the moving ice.

His screams waken the others -- Pandemonium

One of the other men grabs an axe and starts chopping the ice. The man is in agony, and the chopping is frenzied. Soon there is enough space to free the leg.

The two men pull the injured man out of the tent as it is torn apart by shifting ice - along with some of the other shelters in camp.

Still moaning, they roll up his pants. His leg is bruised but unbroken.

ICE FIELD - DAY

Far away from the camp, the ice field is breaking up. A patch of water is revealed, *like an ominous omen.*

EXT. ICE CAMP - NIGHT

A group crowds around a fire, burning anything they can for warmth.

Jensen sits among the group.

A man comes out of the crowd and faces Jensen, trembling and agitated.

AGITATED MAN

Captain. We are out of time. The ice is melting - you know it is.

JENSEN

I know it.

AGITATED MAN

I'm begging you. I plead with you.

He drops to his knees in front of Jensen.

AGITATED MAN (CONT'D)

Take me off the ice. It's not for me - for my two daughters and a son. I can't die here. So many are before me. There isn't time enough for all of us to leave. Please, please have mercy on my soul. Give me a seat on the next plane.

He turns to the crowd.

AGITATED MAN (CONT'D)

I will give anyone every penny I have for your seat. What good is money if I die?

No one responds. They simply stare in distress.

Tears are rolling down his face. He leans forward, touching his face to the ice, sobbing as...

JENSEN

You're on the list. As everyone is.

The man sits up with a burning look at Jensen --

AGITATED MAN

A list! I curse your damned list - and you along with it!

Jensen is moved, and struggles to keep his composure. He places his hand on the man's shoulder

JENSEN

I promise you... you will be saved.

SERIES OF SHOTS, SQUADRON PLANES - DAY

Each of the planes in the squadron makes flights through clouds and wind...

A plane landing on the runway rolls right up to the danger markers at the end...

People squeezing into small plane seats...

Two men are being wrapped in canvas and tied to the wings of a plane...

A man runs after a plane and hangs on to the tail in desperation...

A plane lands at an Eskimo settlement. Eskimos bring the passengers into warm huts...

EXT. ESKIMO SETTLEMENT -DAY

An Eskimo watches as a plane in the distance lands heavily in the snow field. He mushes up his dog team and races over the snow to the crash site.

EXT. PLANE CRASH SITE -DAY

The Eskimo arrives as Sergei and passengers get out of the plane, unharmed. Sergei slaps his hat into the snow in frustration.

EXT. PLANE CRASH SITE (LATER) -DAY

Two dog teams hooked up to the plane are pulling, and the pilot and several Eskimos are pushing on the plane to try and free it.

EXT. WEVOK WHALING STATION - DAY

The engine on Tony's plane starts up and, with a tremendous BANG, spits out a flame and a cloud of smoke.

Nick rushes over and looks at it. As Tony comes up to see, Nick just shakes his head in disgust.

EXT. TENT IN ICE CAMP - DAY

The Weather Man -- scans with binoculars -- But they fog up... he wipes off the condensation and continues searching the clouds...

A DARK SPOT NEAR THE HORIZON... Something is coming out of the clouds! *Is he seeing things?...Could It be...? His excitement grows as he hears the glorious sound of an engine.*

EXT. CLOUDS IN THE SKY - DAY

Nick's plane is roaring through the sky, brushing alongside a cloud... Tony's plane appears out of the cloud beside him -- in perfect close-flying formation.

EXT. RUNWAY - DAY

Two open-cockpit biplanes buzz low over the camp, as Jensen, Weather Man and five others run to the runway. The planes circle and touch down on the runway.

Nick and Tony each climb out as Jensen and the others run to the planes. Two squeeze into the rear seat of each plane.

Jensen tries to squeeze into Nick's plane, but its hopeless, almost funny.

TONY

Take off, Nickie. Head for the Kivalina village.

NICK

You can't take four!

TONY

Maybe -- GO!

Nick climbs in, gives him a nod, and roars off.

EXT. TONY'S PLANE ON RUNWAY -DAY

Jensen helps Tony wrap the last two men in furs and canvas sheets and Jensen hoists them on to the wings. Together they tie them on.

Tony shakes Jensen's hand. *This could be the last flight.* Jensen is calm.

TONY

I'll try and get back in time. Don't go anywhere.

JENSEN

Godspeed, Tony.

Tony powers up, bounces over the runway, barely lifting into the air.

Jensen walks down the runway, resigned to his fate.

EXT. ICE CAVE AREA - DAY

Jensen walks oh-so-close to the jumble of ice blocks that make up Drake's cave. He climbs up to a higher point.

He sees that the ice is melting and cracking.

INT. ICE CAVE -DAY

Inside the cave, Drake is holding his hand over Victoria's mouth, keeping her silent, listening to Jensen walk by.

EXT.ICE CAMP (HOURS LATER)- DAY

Jensen eats jerky. Hearing more ICE GRINDING NOISES, he gets up to see the ocean water appearing at one side of the runway.

INT. ICE CAVE - DAY

Victoria is secretly working on the knot that ties her leg to the ice block.

EXT. ICE CAMP - DAY

JENSEN stops chewing. He hears a faint PLANE NOISE. He turns and sees Tony's plane.

EXT. ICE CAVE - DAY

Drake hears the plane. Peering through an opening in the ice wall outside the cave, he sees Tony landing.

He rushes in the ice cave, whips out his knife and cuts the rope off her ankle.

He grips Victoria tightly and forces her outside to look.

DRAKE

See, my beauty. The last one to leave is always the captain. I'm captain now - on my own ship. You'll be my first mate.

She recognizes Tony's Plane and her eyes come back to life. She moans as she realizes Tony is alive. She struggles frantically in Drake's grasp. He throws her back into the cave.

EXT.RUNWAY -DAY

Jensen climbs into the plane and it starts to taxi.

EXT. ICE CAVE - DAY

Victoria, with an animal cry, plunges head first into Drake's belly, knocking him flat, and rushes past. His talon fingers grab her ankle and prevent her next step. A tug of war lasts several seconds, then she breaks free.

EXT. RUNWAY - DAY

Victoria runs screaming after the plane, now taxiing faster and faster, The prop wash blows her back in a cloud of snow.

VICTORIA
(screams))
Tony...wait...come back!

She is not going to make it. She falls flat in the prop wash.

EXT. TONY'S PLANE COCKPIT -DAY

He thinks he hears something; looks around, right and left. He guns it full bore and lifts off.

EXT.RUNWAY - DAY

Victoria falls and slides on the ice, watching him go, through tears.

VICTORIA
(moans)
Noooooo!

Drake looms over her again, now with a crazed look. He hoists her up and tries to drag her back to the cave.

A primal rage rises in her. She beats and pounds on him mercilessly.

EXT. TONY'S PLANE COCKPIT -DAY

Jensen takes one last look at his camp and sees the two struggling figures below. He slaps Tony's shoulder and points.

Tony sees and immediately torques the plane over into a steep dive and lands.

Jensen jumps out as Tony taxis the plane around the cracks in the runway.

EXT. END OF THE RUNWAY -DAY

Jensen attacks Drake, freeing Victoria -- who runs toward the plane.

EXT. NEAR TONY'S PLANE - DAY

Tony leaps from the idling plane and runs for Victoria. It's a moment that seems to take forever...They meet in a crushing hug, Tony scoops her up in a monumental kiss while he carries her to the plane.

EXT. END OF THE RUNWAY - DAY

Jensen flings Drake across the runway like a doormat. He slides and rolls a good distance, then he's up and charging back in a fury -- *like a cockroach that won't die*. He draws his knife and lunges.

Jensen's strong hands grab Drake's right arm and whirls Drake like a sack of potatoes over the ice even farther than before.

Drake lands at the edge of the runway, next to a large crack in the ice.

EXT.TONY'S PLANE -DAY

Tony lifts Victoria into the rear seat. The plane lurches as a crack grows between the wheels. Tony jumps in and guns it, moving off the crack.

TONY
(yells)
GET IN, NOW!

Tony revs up and starts to taxi.

EXT. END OF THE RUNWAY -DAY

Jensen runs toward the plane.

Drake is in dangerous shifting ice. He scrambles to get away from the widening crack.

EXT. END OF THE RUNWAY (SLO MO) -DAY

DRAKE jumps across the crack as the end of the ice runway tilts into the sea. He falls, and slides down the tilting ice sheet.

FLASHBACK IMAGE - DRAKE'S MOTHER

She looks directly into the LENS.

DRAKE'S MOTHER

You should go down to the sea. Its where you belong.

DRAKE

(screams)

NO -- NOT ALONE!

...and he rides the ice floe down into the sea.

EXT.RUNWAY -DAY

As Jensen squeezes in the plane with Victoria, the plane roars down the cracking ice field, and lifts into the air.

EXT. ICE CAMP - DAY

The deserted camp, home to 101 people for months, is swallowed up by the sea. In the distance, the plane disappears into the clouds.

EXT. NOME FLIGHT LINE - DAY

The sun is shining, bringing warmth and comfort. Tony walks around his plane, checking for damage and wear.

VICTORIA

If you think I'm riding home in that useless rattle-trap, forget it.

Tony walks over to her.

TONY

A little too chilly for ya?

VICTORIA

I've had enough cold for the rest of my life. If you can guarantee me that -- then I'll listen to another offer.

Tony gives her a polite kiss.

TONY
 Hmm... Let me think. Something
 without the possibility of
 frostbite.

EXT. NOME HARBOR DOCK - DAY

The SS Wenatchee is moored at the dock, in final boarding stage for passengers.

Victoria is near the gangplank, warmly dressed and impatient. She looks around for Tony, anxious.

Tony rushes up out of the crowd -- out of breath.

TONY (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry, Vicky. Something I had
 to do.

VICTORIA
 Important enough to miss the boat?

TONY
 We're fine. Yes -- pretty important
 for the future. Lets go.

He picks up their bags and they hurry up the gangplank.

EXT. DECK OF THE PASSENGER SHIP - DAY

Victoria is standing at the rail, looking out at the ice floes in the sea.

Tony and the ship captain come on deck from the passageway door. Tony comes over to Victoria who is staring at the ship's wake.

TONY
 Never look back.

VICTORIA
 I know... Easier said than done.

TONY
 We've got too much ahead of us.
 The captain would like to see us
 for a moment.

She is puzzled, goes with him to the captain standing in front of the passageway door.

TONY (CONT'D)

This is Victoria. Captain Peterson.

CAPTAIN PETERSON

Hello young lady. I wanted to meet both of you after I heard the whole story. What you both have accomplished will be remembered in the history of the arctic sea. A great disaster was averted.

VICTORIA

If you'll pardon me, I'd like to forget it.

CAPTAIN PETERSON

I understand.

(looks at Tony)

Would you like to be married now?

Tony looks to Victoria, who is stunned.

VICTORIA

What?...Uhh...well...yes!

CAPTAIN PETERSON

Fine. I'll see what I can do.

He goes through the door to the passageway. Immediately the door opens and Captain Jensen appears.

Tony and Victoria are both surprised. Then they realize the strength of their connection and comradeship is enough to last a lifetime.

VICTORIA

Frederick...thank you for...everything.

She hugs him warmly. He clasps her hand with genuine affection in his eyes.

TONY

Captain, I have a lot to thank you for -- bringing Victoria back to me.

Their handshake is genuine and heart felt.

JENSEN

And I have both of you to thank, for saving me.

(MORE)

JENSEN (CONT'D)

Now -- It's the least I can do for
you. Do you have the ring?

Tony takes a ring case from his pocket and opens it to reveal
a beautiful gold and Jade ring.

Victoria is impressed. Smiles.

VICTORIA

For the future... Let's go home.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW - DAY

The ship steams south toward the sun. It follows closely
behind an ice-breaker moving ice out of their path.

END TITLE

*In 1934, the plight of 101 survivors of the shipwreck of the
Chelyuskin became front page news for weeks. They survived
for two months, living on the ice pack.*

END TITLE

*Small planes were able to reach them, land, and fly out a few
at a time -- only because the leader ordered a runway to be
cleared on the ice -- a runway that was under constant repair
for weeks in shifting ice.*

END TITLE

One soul, only, was lost to the sea.

THE END