

CHARLIE OSCAR

(ALTERNATIVE TITLE: "FLY BABY, FLY")

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Dedicated to Harriet Quimby, an aviatrix and screenwriter,
who in 1911 was awarded a pilot's certificate by the Aero
Club of America, becoming the first woman to earn a pilot's
license in the United States.

Today, there are 584,362 active airmen certificates held in the United States, of which 39,187 or 7% are held by women, in a population that is 51% female.

FADE IN:

EXT. IN AND OUT OF THE CLOUDS - DAY

A TWIN-ENGINE, TURBINE AIRPLANE slices through a stormy sky.

FEMALE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER (V.O.)
Atlanta Center Seven Three Four
Echo Quebec expect moderate to
heavy precipitation at your 11
O'clock and extends 30 miles. Let
me know if you'd like to deviate.

CAPTAIN O'BRIEN (O.S.)
We're okay right now. Looks like
we are above it, Seven Three Four
Echo Quebec.

In a blink the airplane is incased in ZERO VISIBILITY, the outside air temperature is -30 DEGREES CELSIUS, SNOW PELTS the LEADING EDGES of the airplane.

INT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Seated in the left seat of the COCKPIT is the PILOT, CAPTAIN SAM O'BRIEN: late forties, self-assured, a quiet man. Seated beside him is passenger, CHARLOTTE O'BRIEN: mid-forties. They are eastbound at flight level two five zero.

Captain O'Brien scans the INSTRUMENT PANEL, keen to any unusual instrument deviation. He spies the LEFT WING.

CAPTAIN O'BRIEN
(speaks into headset)
Atlanta Center Seven Three Four
Echo Quebec has a request.

FEMALE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER (V.O.)
Seven Three Four Echo Quebec go
ahead.

CAPTAIN O'BRIEN
(speaks into headset)

We'd like to climb to flight level
two seven zero, Seven Three Four
Echo Quebec.

Charlotte's heart beats fast, chest visibly inflates then
deflates at a rhythmic and thumping pace. Her breathing is
heavy but not audible. She swallows a lump of nervousness,
slowly blinks.

FEMALE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER (V.O.)
Seven Three Four Echo Quebec clear
to flight level two seven zero.

CAPTAIN O'BRIEN
(speaks into headset)
Clear to flight level two seven
zero, Seven Three Four Echo
Quebec.

Captain O'Brien resets the altimeter hold dial on the
instrument panel, programs two seven zero into the
AUTOPILOT CONTROL BOX fixed on the floor between the pilot
and copilot seats.

At a snail's pace the altimeter needle rises.

CHARLOTTE
(a quiver in her voice,
nervously speaks into
headset)
Sam, I'll keep an eye on the WINGS
and let you know if any ice builds
up.

CAPTAIN O'BRIEN
(speaks into headset)
No need Charlotte. It's too cold
for icing.

CHARLOTTE
(weak with relief,
whispers)
Thank God.

Charlotte monitors the wings anyway.

Without warning the AUTOPILOT disengages. Turbulence shakes the airplane, jostles it to the right; 100 feet is lost, then gained. Within seconds, the airplane is 200 feet below the assigned altitude.

It rocks to the right; nose pitches up, altimeter reads 27,200.

The PILOT'S ARTIFICIAL HORIZON teeters 10 degrees to the right.

The COPILOT'S ARTIFICIAL HORIZON teeters 20 degrees to the right.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

Sam, my artificial horizon says we are in a 20 degree right bank. Pull it left.

EXT. IN THE CLOUDS - CONTINUOUS

The airplane sways and dives.

INT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

CAPTAIN O'BRIEN

(speaks into headset)

I got it.

Captain O'Brien absorbs every instrument reading and the weather. His left hand holds the YOKE firmly as the weather tries to yank it from his control. His right hand rolls the ELEVATOR TRIM WHEEL, the artificial horizon see-saws.

Charlotte focuses on the instrument panel, squirms deeper into her seat, tugs the already tight seat belt even tighter.

CAPTAIN O'BRIEN

(speaks into headset)

Charlotte, pull the AUTOPILOT BREAKER.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

(inner voices arguing)
OMIGOD, OMIGOD!

Do it Charlotte.

*What? I don't know where the
autopilot breaker is.*

Yes you do. Figure it out.

*To the right, under the window,
Charlotte!*

The airplane BOUNCES and JIVES. Captain O'Brien twists the RUDDER KNOB, steers the yoke, spools the elevator trim wheel. The airplane steadies. Snow PELTS the windshield, SLEET RICOCHET'S off.

Charlotte's head is cocked sideways, eyes strain and squint as she X-RAY'S each of the 32 AVIONICS BREAKER BUTTONS. Keeping her head aimed at the breaker panel, her eyes slide and dart back and forth from the instrument panel to the breaker panel.

CHARLOTTE
(speaks into headset)
Sam, I don't see the autopilot
breaker!

Captain O'Brien spies the needles of each instrument, knees dance up and down, one hand steers the yoke, the other fixed on the ELEVATOR TRIM WHEEL.

Airspeed is 180 knots.

The ALTIMETER needle unwinds below flight level two seven zero, then winds above flight level two seven zero.

The VERTICAL AIRSPEED INDICATOR swings slightly above and below zero.

The TURN-AND-BANK INDICATOR pendulums far to the right then to the left.

EXT. IN THE CLOUDS - CONTINUOUS

Jetting through the milky, gray, dense weather, unremitting bobbing, banking, dipping endures.

INT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE
(speaks into headset)
Sam, I see AP!

CAPTAIN O'BRIEN
(speaks into headset)
Pull the breaker.

She pulls the breaker.

CHARLOTTE
(speaks into headset)
Okay, I did it.

CAPTAIN O'BRIEN
(speaks into headset)
Okay, push it back in.

CHARLOTTE
(speaks into headset)
Did it.

With his right hand Captain O'Brien presses the autopilot control box system reset button.

The autopilot remains disengaged.

The turn-and-bank needle holds steady, the airplane regains level attitude; the GPS heading fluctuates between 80 and 85 degrees.

Charlotte lightheaded, near vertigo; eyes roll around their sockets.

CAPTAIN O'BRIEN
(speaks into headset)
Pull the AP breaker again.

She pulls it.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)
DID IT!

CAPTAIN O'BRIEN
(speaks into headset)
Okay, push it back in.

Again, Captain O'Brien presses the autopilot control system reset button.

The autopilot ENGAGES. The airplane flies level and smooth; the instruments revert back to their fixed and static positions. The pilot's artificial horizon lags to the right.

Confidence blooms over Captain O'Brien.

Charlotte goes LIMP; her eyes roll. She sets her head against the headrest, slowly closes, then opens her eyes and lets out a breath of bottled up fear. She cuddles her hands one over the other, intertwines her fingers, resting them in her lap.

Captain O'Brien cross-checks the COMPASS, the turn-and-bank indicator, and the co-pilot's artificial horizon.

CAPTAIN O'BRIEN
(speaks into headset)
Charlotte, all three instruments agree with each other, indicating that my artificial horizon is off 10 degrees. Everything's fine. No need to worry. Okay?

CHARLOTTE
(lifeless, lethargic,
speaks into headset)
Okay Sam.

Opaque, gray clouds envelope the airplane. Charlotte turns her head to the right, seeing her frightened reflection in the window.

CHARLOTTE
(low whisper, holding
back tears)

*Please God, just safely get us on
the ground.*

EXT. IN THE CLOUDS - CONTINUOUS

TCHEEEEEWM! The airplane rockets through the muck. No longer snowing, a glimmer of sunlight shines through the pale, storm cloud.

INT. COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte and Captain O'Brien squint to protect their dilated pupils. A smile ekes from Charlotte's lips. Captain O'Brien is stoic.

In a blink dimming light and zero visibility overrule. A wave of disappointment droops across Charlotte's face.

FEMALE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER (V.O.)
Seven Three Four Echo Quebec
descend to flight level one niner
zero.

CAPTAIN O'BRIEN
(speaks into headset)
Descend to flight level one niner
zero, Seven Three Four Echo
Quebec.

Captain O'Brien resets the altimeter hold dial, program's one niner zero into the autopilot control box.

The nose pitches down, altimeter unwinds.

A moment passes.

SUNSHINE AND BLUE SKY stream through the windshield, warming Charlotte's face. Mischievous, cumulus clouds dot the periphery; a godly view transpires.

Charlotte rolls her eyelids shut, lays her head on the headrest, shoulders, rib cage relax. A smile of relief glistens across her face.

CHARLOTTE

(low whisper)
 Thank you God.
 (lower whisper)
 ...and thank you Sam.

EXT. ON TOP OF A MOUNTAIN - NEXT DAY

Sporty, fit, dressed in running shorts, a tank top, and wearing an athletic watch, and sneakers, Charlotte, sweaty and breathing mildly, climbs to the MOUNTAIN'S SUMMIT. CHUCK, her dog, panting, trots next to her.

Reaching the peak's rocky, narrow ground Charlotte walks in circles, paces back and forth, wipes the sweat from her forehead, unties the long-sleeve sweatshirt from her waist, places her head and arms into the garment, pulls it down over her chest and stomach, lays two right forefingers over the veins in her neck, fixating her eyes on her watch, counts the pulses of her heartbeat.

She and Chuck sit on a ROCK, resting. Both stare into the HORIZON.

CHARLOTTE
 (somber)
 Chuck. What am I going to do? Sam loves to fly. It's his passion, his joy, his relief, his therapy. We always fly together...

Charlotte turns toward Chuck, strokes his forehead; his eyes narrow, ears lay back. His expression says, *Aaah, don't stop. I love you Charlotte.*

CHARLOTTE
 ... But guess what Chuckie? I'm afraid to fly.

 I'm not just afraid. I'm PETRIFIED. When I get into an airplane I feel as though my only relief is to pass out. I think the airplane is going to fall out of the sky, or hit a mountain.
 (beat)

And weather? Have I told you how I
 feel when we encounter weather,
 like clouds, or turbulence, or
 snow, or rain, or sleet? Are you
 LISTENING to me Chuck?---

She pulls her hand away from stroking his head; stands,
 arms stretched out, continues talking with greater
 desperation.

Chuck dances his fore paws around, wags his tail, let's out
 a muzzled "woof." Smitten, taking his eyes off Charlotte
 only to blink, he moves his snout slightly higher and
 toward her.

CHARLOTTE

---Sam is my passion, my joy, my
 relief, my therapy.

...MY! ...MY EVERYTHING!

Chuck tilts his head, wags his tail a little slower,
 searches for a solution.

BROKEN, Charlotte sits back down, next to Chuck.

CHARLOTTE

And, do you know that when Sam and
 I met 20 years ago, one of the
 first things we did together was
 fly in his airplane?

(eyes GROW WIDE)

I was intrigued; being in the co-
 pilot's seat was enthralling. I
 eagerly scanned the instrument
 panel with wonderment.

(eyes GROW WIDER)

I even enjoyed flying through
 puffy clouds.

I loved to fly with Sam. The
 sensations were freeing and
 powerful. It was an alluring and
 captivating adventure.

CUT BACK TO THE
PAST (TWENTY YEARS
EARLIER):

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT - FLASHBACK

Heat waves shimmer upon the AIRPORT PAVEMENT beneath the BLUE SKY on a breezy, warm spring day.

SHOOOOOOOOOOM! A GULFSTREAM V catapults itself from the runway.

YOUNGER CHARLOTTE, mid-twenties, quickly - with the pace of the Gulfstream turns toward the runway, shields the sun's glare with her cupped, right hand, squints. GOOSE BUMPS grow upon her skin and the RUSH of the jet's departure ripples through her. YOUNGER SAM, late twenties, stands inches from Charlotte, mirrors her behavior, feels the identical sensations.

CHARLOTTE

(dazzled)

WOW! What a feeling. Did you see that Sam? Beautiful wasn't it?

(beat)

What are we doing here anyway?

In the background, on the APRON is a blue and red on white ROCKWELL COMMANDER.

SAM

(softly snuggles her hand and pulls her toward the Commander)

C'mon, this way. I want to show you something special. See that BLUE, RED, and WHITE SINGLE-ENGINE AIRPLANE over there?

CHARLOTTE

Yeeaah.

SAM

It's mine.

CHARLOTTE

No it's not!

SAM

Yes it is.

CHARLOTTE

You're joking.

SAM

NO! I'm not. Wanna go for a ride?

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT - MOMENTS LATER

The Commander LIFTS OFF the runway.

INT. COMMANDER COCKPIT

Charlotte, enthralled with excitement, absorbs the beauty of the verdant, mountainous terrain, the endless horizon curving to infinity, the instrument's movements, the humming of the engine.

Her feet gently fiddle with the rudder pedals, hands cautiously grip the yoke; she gleams Sam a sweet, pretty smile.

Sam, lovestruck, pilots the Commander.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

Can I try?

SAM

(speaks into headset)

Go ahead.

She tightens her grip on the yoke.

You got it?

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

Yeah, I got it.

She turns the yoke to the left, then to the right.

SAM

(speaks into headset)
Charlie, let the yoke fall
forward.

Now pull it back toward you.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset, giddy)
Oh myyyy gosh! Amazing, I can't
believe it. I'm actually flying an
airplane.

WOW! This is super fun.

(beat)

I better give it back to you.

SAM

(speaks into headset)
Okay. I got it now.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)
When did you learn to fly ...and
why?

SAM

(speaks into headset)
My GRANDFATHER, we called him MAC,
was a NAVY FIGHTER PILOT during
WORLD WAR II, and flew mail for
the US Postal Service. Later, he
built the SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT
MAINTENANCE BASE.

He knew everything about
airplanes. He would take them
apart, put them back together. He
could identify and fix any
problem. Knew every airplane that
crossed the sky.

He was an extraordinary pilot who
held the flight controls with a
command and a tenderness that made
me feel as though he was one with

the airplane. For him, I think it was romance.

He taught me.

Of course, NANA, my grandmother, supported everything he did. They adored each other.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

Was she a pilot too?

SAM

(speaks into headset)

Yes, she earned a license in 1940, was an elegant pilot, always dressed the part. She was ahead of her time, fiercely independent; a real free spirit. Mac taught her to fly too.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

So, flying's in your blood?

SAM

(speaks into headset)

Ya, you could say that.

Mac took me under his wing when I was a young boy. I was his sidekick, tagged along everywhere with him. He never missed a chance to teach me about airplanes. And I loved it.

A few years after completing aeronautical school he passed away and I came back home to take over the maintenance base.

Well... we should get back Charlotte.

EXT. IN THE AIR - CONTINUOUS

The Commander gracefully lands, taxis, parks.

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT APRON - MOMENTS LATER

Sam shuts the pilot side door, walks around the nose of the airplane.

Charlotte opens the door, places her foot onto the step. Sam extends his hand, her eyes soak up his, ...they hold a stare, then - they draw close, their noses and lips TOUCH. A deep, long sensuous kiss pulls their bodies tight.

CUT BACK TO THE
PRESENT:

EXT. ON TOP OF A MOUNTAIN - CONTINUOUS

Interrupted by the sound of a SINGLE-ENGINE AIRPLANE crossing the horizon, Charlotte and Chuck look into the sky. An idea strikes Charlotte like a jolt of lightening, galvanizing her. She turns toward Chuck.

CHARLOTTE

I CAN do that Chuckie! I CAN FLY
AN AIRPLANE!

(beat)

Wait-a-minute.

Who am I kidding? A girl like me
can't fly an airplane. Smart,
steady, disciplined people fly
airplanes.

Not insecure scaredy-cats like me.

Plus I'm a girl. Pilots don't want
girls around.

(beat)

--But ...But if Sam's Nana could
do it. Then so can I.

CHUCK

Woof.

CHARLOTTE

Plus, Chuckie ...another reason I know I can do it, is because when I was a little girl I played baseball.

(beat)

NO, not softball; BASEBALL!

(beat)

You probably don't know this Chuckie - well of course you don't know this, but the first day of practice was a real tough day for an eleven-year-old little girl.

CUT BACK TO THE
PAST (CHARLOTTE'S
CHILDHOOD):

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY - FLASHBACK

In front of the DUGOUT the COACH (late 20's) paces up and down a row of a dozen, eleven-year-old LITTLE BOYS, and one delicately, tough, eleven-year-old LITTLE GIRL, lecturing about expectations, rules, sportsmanship, respect, and the mandate to have FUN.

COACH

Jimmy?

JIMMY

Here.

COACH

Kelly?

KELLY

Here.

COACH

Ogilvie?

OGILVIE

Here.

COACH

Rudi?

RUDI

Here.

COACH

Charlotte? Huh? CHARLOTTE?

CHARLOTTE

Here.

OGILVIE

A *GIIIRL*? I'm not playing baseball with a girl.

COACH

Uh, Charlotte? Are you sure you're in the right place? Do your parents know you're here?

CHARLOTTE

This is FARM TEAM BASEBALL right?

COACH

Yes, but it's typically not for girls.

CHARLOTTE

That's not true. They said at registration that girls can play.

RUDI

Well, of course you're *allowed* to play; but do you know *how* to play?

COACH

Okay team, head for your positions.

The boys jog toward the FIELD, complaining, snickering, taunting Charlotte.

Charlotte rambles off the field. The coach runs after her.

COACH

Charlotte, Charlotte. Where are you going?

CHARLOTTE

Home.

COACH

What position do you play?

CHARLOTTE

Catcher.

COACH

Catcher!?!

CHARLOTTE

The catcher's in charge, the team leader, right?

COACH

(a cute smirk)

Go suit up Yogi. The face mask, leg guards, chest protector, and mitt are in the dugout.

The boys chins drop, mouths hang open; each yell, shout in disdain.

OGILVIE

For real?

ROY

Coach, what are you thinking? A girl catcher? I ain't taking no orders from a girl.

RUDI

(kicks the dirt, head hangs, shakes defeated)

We're not gonna win a single game.

KELLY

This is preposterous.

OGILVIE

What does preposterous mean?

COACH

PLAY BALL.

The PITCHER winds up, twirls his left leg, hurls the fastest pint-size pitch he can muster. It sails at lightning speed; SMACK, dead into Charlotte's mitt.

In a flash Charlotte stands from her crouched position, raises the mask, hurls the ball back to the pitcher.

All stare, open-mouthed, dumbfounded.

CHARLOTTE

(holds out her arms)

What's the matter?

Coach? What's the matter?

COACH

Nothing Charlotte. Nothing at all.

(beat)

MIGUEL, take FIRST BASE. AHMAD
take THIRD BASE. REGI get up to
BAT.

Coach pulls Miguel aside.

COACH

Miguel, after the first pitch I
want you to steal SECOND BASE.

Miguel nods in agreement. Charlotte's eyes jet at the coach, pan across the infield, stink-eyes third base. She pulls down the face mask, squats, holds the catcher's mitt in front of her chin and nose.

A STRIKE is thrown, Miguel sprints to second base. Charlotte whips (pitcher ducks) the ball to JOEY, the SECOND BASE MAN, who TAGS OUT Miguel. Joey chucks the ball back to Charlotte, who scoops it up, skimming Ahmad's hands as he dives for home plate.

Charlotte fast-forwards to the season's end.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES (cameo role for a popular, retired baseball player like Bo Jackson, Ozzie Smith, Frank Thomas etc.)

And the league MVP goes to . . .
CHARLOTTE NYLUND, who batted .333

with six home runs, and a Gold
Glove for catching.

As Charlotte, dressed in a pretty pink dress, white knee socks, and patent leather shoes, stands and walks to the dais, Ogilvie, Kelly, Rudy, Roy, Miguel, Joey, Jimmy, Ahmad, Coach, and the rest of her teammates hoot and holler, applaud Charlotte, high-five each other.

CUT BACK TO THE
PRESENT:

EXT. ON TOP OF A MOUNTAIN - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE

Flying can't be any more
intimidating than those boys?

(beat)

There's no need, no need at all
for me to feel out of place.

(beat)

Right Chuckie?

(beat)

Oh, by the way, we won every game.

CHUCK

Woof.

Charlotte pulls her CELL PHONE from her sweatshirt pocket, locates the SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT phone number in the contact list, TAPS the telephone icon with her forefinger.

INTERCUT: INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT

AIRPORT MANAGER

(phone rings, he answers)

Shady Valley airport, DAN
speaking.

CHARLOTTE

Hi Dan! This is Charlotte O'Brien.

I'd like to learn to fly.

DAN

Oh, hi Charlotte! Okay, great.
 HARVEY WARNER is the flight
 schools chief instructor. Can you
 come by at 9 a.m. tomorrow for a
 meeting and most likely an
 introductory flight?

CHARLOTTE

Yes! I'll be there. Thanks Dan.

Charlotte packs her phone into her sweatshirt pocket,
 shoots a quick smiling glance at Chuck.

CHARLOTTE

I'm gonna do it.

Chuck returns a smile. Charlotte rubs his ears and cheeks.
 A gentle brush along his snout, she leads him back down the
 mountain. He trails behind.

INSIDE O'BRIEN HOME - THAT EVENING

Sam, Charlotte, and their daughter, JANE (16) eat supper at
 the KITCHEN TABLE. Chuck lies curled up on his bed, every
 now and then wags his tail.

CHARLOTTE

Sam, I called the FLIGHT SCHOOL
 today. I'm going to learn to fly.
 I scheduled an introductory flight
 with Harvey Warner at 9 a.m.
 tomorrow.

Sam and Jane freeze, stop chewing, slide their eyes toward
 Charlotte.

SAM

WOW! Honey. That's great. When did
 you decide to do this?

Jane resumes eating, listens. Chuck props his ears to
 attention.

CHARLOTTE

Well, when Chuckie and I were
 hiking this afternoon I saw an

airplane crossing the sky and
right then and there I decided
I am going to become a pilot.

(beat)

Do you think I can do it?

SAM

Yes, of course you can do it
Charlotte. You're smart,
disciplined...

CHARLOTTE

...and SCARED TO DEATH.

(beat)

Sam, you know I'm scared to fly.

Sam looks proudly at Charlotte.

SAM

You can do it, Charlie. Once you
put your mind to something, you
always get it done.

CHARLOTTE

Sam, remember when we first met?
You took me flying in your
Commander - remember how I loved
it? Sometimes I still love it..

(beat)

...but, but so often, a wild and
ferocious fear takes over.

Why? Why is that Sam?

SAM

You know Charlotte, you're *just*
human; time and experiences change
us all, a little bit.

(beat)

But, you can do it Charlie. I know
you can.

EXT./INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT - DAY

An AIRPLANE lands, another holds short, ready for takeoff.
Parallel to the runway a HELICOPTER hovers for a second,

then thrusts into forward flight. The AMERICAN FLAG waves in the distance. With the REMOTE Charlotte locks her car doors, walks into the SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT FBO.

CHARLOTTE

(muttering to herself)

What am I doing? This is crazy,
ridiculous.

Entering the SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT FBO LOUNGE Charlotte stumbles and trips, catches herself. She and Harvey spot each other.

HARVEY

Hello, you must be Charlotte?

Charlotte and Harvey, who is in his late 60's, shake hands.

CHARLOTTE

I am. It's very nice to meet you
Harvey. Let's hope I fly better
than I walk.

Harvey leads Charlotte to the GROUND INSTRUCTION ROOM. Small talk ensues, she nervously chatters. They sit across from each other at a RECTANGULAR TABLE.

HARVEY

What is your goal, Charlotte? What
do you hope to accomplish?

CHARLOTTE

My goal is to become a pilot...
(beat)
Buuut... you should know that I am
petrified to fly.

HARVEY

Okay. We'll see what we can do
about that. Let's go take a look
at the airplane.

Exiting the ground instruction room Harvey slowly, methodically and Charlotte timidly, a quarter step behind, walk down a HALLWAY to the spotless HANGAR which houses three SINGLE-ENGINE AIRPLANES. They walk toward the SKYHAWK, tail number EIGHT ONE FOUR SIERRA TANGO.

CHARLOTTE
 (blinks in shock, gulps)
 There it is: a house of horror.

HARVEY
 Go on in.

CHARLOTTE
 (skeptical)
 In the PILOT'S SEAT?

HARVEY
 Yes.

Charlotte climbs into the pilot's seat. Shy, wide-eyed, scans the instrument panel, touches the instrument's glass covers, bashfully pulls, twists, and turns the yoke. Harvey walks around to the COPILOT'S SIDE, steps onboard.

CHARLOTTE
 You know Harvey, we are both crazy
 to even consider my flying this
 machine.

He ignores her comment.

EXT. IN THE AIR - MOMENTS LATER

The Skyhawk soars through the crisp, shiny mid-morning sky. A few whimsical, bright, white puffy clouds break-up an otherwise endless aerial view.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - SAME TIME

Harvey, at ease, flies the airplane. Charlotte, left-seat, like a statue, loosely holds the yoke, rests her feet on the rudder pedals, robotically follows along.

A slight bit of turbulence shakes the airplane.

CHARLOTTE
 (startled, speaks into headset)
 OH NO!

HARVEY

(speaks into headset)
Nothing to worry about Charlotte.
Just unstable air, thermals
beginning to build up from the
warming day.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)
Easy for you to say.

Another bit of turbulence rumbles the airplane.

CHARLOTTE

(startled, anxiety in
her voice, speaks into
headset)
Um, Harvey, we have some shake,
rattle and roll here!

Harvey maneuvers the airplane into a shallow bank-turn,
flies back to the airport.

EXT. IN THE AIR - CONTINUOUS

Seven One Four Sierra Tango steadily approaches the landing
strip; descending, descending, descending... the main
wheels smooch the pavement, the nose wheel snaps a quick
kiss onto the runway centerline.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)
Wow! That was beautifully done.

Will I be able to do that?

Harvey tosses a glance toward Charlotte, smiles and nods.

HARVEY

(speaks into headset)
Yes.

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT GROUND INSTRUCTION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Harvey enters the ground instruction room carrying a six inch thick stack of textbooks, an E6B, a PLOTTER, a PILOT LOGBOOK, SECTIONAL CHARTS, places them on the table in front of Charlotte, who is in a chair pulled up close to the table.

CHARLOTTE

(overwhelmed, sharp
shoulders)

I guess all of this is for me? Oh
gosh!

HARVEY

Read and work through Chapters 1
and 2, of the *Guided Flight*
Discovery textbook.

I'll see you at 9 a.m., Thursday.

Charlotte forcing a smile, struggles to pick up the load of books and equipment, exits.

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT MAINTENANCE HANGAR - AFTERNOON

Two TWIN ENGINE, a LOW-WING SINGLE ENGINE, two HIGH-WING SINGLE ENGINE AIRPLANES, and a HELICOPTER are tightly organized in the MAINTENANCE HANGAR. Tool cabinets and lockers line the walls. Rolling tool chests and chairs, mechanic's creepers, floor lights, extension cords, and heavy duty jacks are on the hangar floor. Heavy power tools hang from the ceiling. Compressors TURN-ON and -OFF at random. Adjacent to a work bench, oxygen and nitrogen tanks stand.

COUNTRY MUSIC bellyaches in the background.

Contained inside a GLASS ENCLOSED OFFICE within the hangar are file cabinets, a desk, a few chairs. Maintenance and parts books cover the shelves, the walls are decorated with airplane paraphernalia. Sam sits concentrated, studying airplane drawings; maintenance parts books clutter the desk.

Laying on the CREEPER below the single-engine airplane WILLIAM CALHOUN (18), a dedicated, serious aircraft mechanic fiddles with the main wheel. Jane is his assistant.

WILLIAM

Janey, I need a flashlight and a screwdriver.

She hands them to William. From the glass enclosed office Sam walks towards them.

SAM

Are you almost finished replacing the wheel?

WILLIAM

Uh. Just about done Sir.

SAM

Okay. Great. Next, I need you two to prepare the SKYHAWK for an annual inspection.

WILLIAM

We'll get it done Sir.

Sam walks away.

WILLIAM

Janey, go ahead and start loosening the fasteners from the nose cowling on the Skyhawk.

JANE

Okay William.

William pulls himself up from under the airplane, lowers the airplane from the jacks, wipes his hands with the rag hanging from his back pocket, works with Jane to remove the cowling from the Skyhawk. The two drain the oil, replace the oil filter, and clean the spark plugs.

Every now and then Sam oversees, inspects their work.

A large barnstormer airplane clock hangs on the wall above the glass office. It STRIKES 5 p.m.

WILLIAM
Looks like quit'n time.

JANE
Yup.

WILLIAM
I'll see you at school tomorrow.

JANE
Okay. I'll be there William.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - NEXT DAY

CALCULUS CLASS

While the TEACHER lectures, most of the STUDENTS pay close attention. Jane sits at a desk near the front, William a row behind. JOSEPH, TANNER, WALT and a few other disinterested and flippant BOYS create commotion. The teacher returns test papers.

JOSEPH
(whispers to Tanner and
Walt)
That red-haired girl over there is
an airplane mechanic.

TANNER
(laughing)
Yeah right! She probably doesn't
even know what a spark plug is.

WALT
(laughing)
Do the airplanes even fly when
she's finished working on them?

Joseph, Tanner, and Walt hysterically laugh.

William overhears the conversation.

The teacher approvingly winks at Jane, hands her, her test paper.

Joseph wryly observes the teacher's wink.

Jane smiles at the bold, circled A+ in the upper right hand corner of the paper. William looks at his A-. Joseph glances at the "B, *you can do better!*" and shoves the test paper in his backpack.

TEACHER
Class dismissed.

The students gather their belongings, bustle into the crowded hallway.

JOSEPH
Hey! STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE. I hear you're an airplane mechanic. Do you even know how to use a screwdriver?

The boys fist-pump each other.

Jane and her GIRLFRIENDS, JUDY and LUCY ANNE look at each other, roll their eyes, laugh, and snicker.

LUCY ANNE
What a loser!

JUDY
He's a cute looking loser though.

LUCY ANNE
Hey Janey, are you working this afternoon?

JANE
Yeah, William and I are preparing a Skyhawk for an annual inspection.

JUDY
Okay, then we'll see you tomorrow.

INT. O'BRIEN HOME - AFTERNOON

Sitting on a couch, highlighter and a pen in hand, Charlotte reads the textbook. At the foot of the couch

Chuck lies curled up on his bed. An hour passes. Charlotte glances at her watch.

CHARLOTTE

Omigod! It's 2 p.m. I need to pick up Janey from school.

She jumps out of the chair, gathers her book, highlighter and pen, rushes to the CAR, zooms out of the driveway, speeds down the COUNTRY ROAD, arrives at the HIGH SCHOOL'S LONG DROP-OFF/PICK-UP LINE.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

INT. CHARLOTTE'S CAR

Charlotte opens her textbook and resumes studying. Intermittently when traffic moves, she inches the car forward.

Eventually Jane opens the car door, jumps in.

JANE

Hi Mom.

Charlotte closes her textbook, drops it in the back seat.

CHARLOTTE

Hi Janey. How was school?

JANE

Eeh. School, ya know. I got an A+ on my calculus test... and the stupid guys keep calling me strawberry shortcake.

CHARLOTTE

Did you punch their lights out?

Jane rolling her eyes in irritation.

JANE

No. Mom. That's not the way it works.

CHARLOTTE

I'm just kidding honey.

You know,... they just think
you're cute, adorable.

Jane rolling her eyes in irritation, *again*.

JANE

Yeah, right Mom.

Jane adjusts the radio to her liking.

JANE

Mom? Where are you going? I need
to go to the airport. William and
I have to finish changing the oil
in a Skyhawk.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, okay. I'll drop you off and
say Hi to Dad.

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT MAINTENANCE HANGAR - MINUTES
LATER

SAM'S GLASS ENCLOSED OFFICE

CHARLOTTE

Hi Sam.

SAM

Oh, hi sweet heart. Are you
dropping off Janey?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, thought I'd stop in and say
hi.

SAM

I'm glad you did.

Come on. I'll show you the new GPS
we are installing into a KING AIR.

Sam gets up from his desk, leads Charlotte into the
maintenance hangar.

In the distance Jane and William work on the Skyhawk. A few MECHANICS work on airplanes.

Hurtin', cheatin', drinkin', lovesick, honky-tonk Country music twangs in the background.

INT. KING AIR COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

WIRES, INSTRUMENTS, KNOBS, PLUGS hang in the cockpit's open instrument panel.

CHARLOTTE

Looks pretty complicated.

SAM

Mmmm. It's more technical than complicated.

Charlotte glances out the cockpit window, notices Jane and William working together.

CHARLOTTE

Sam, look over there; those two make a good team.

SAM

Yes. They do. I'm keeping an eye on it.

CUT BACK TO THE
PAST (JANEY'S
CHILDHOOD):

INT. O'BRIEN HOME - LATE MORNING - FLASHBACK

YOUNGER SAM (30's) lifts YOUNG JANEY (7) onto the kitchen counter, ties her shoes, zips her jacket, snap's a glitter barrette into her stringy, long, strawberry colored hair.

SAM

C'mon little pumpkin, we're going to the hangar.

Janey, gibber-jabbering incessantly, jumps from the

counter, struggles excitedly to keep up.

CHARLOTTE (O.S)

Sam, don't forget the lunches - they're in the fridge, and no water fights if you two wash the airplane. Remember, Janey always out foxes you.

SAM

Got 'em honey. We'll be back later this afternoon.

(beat, under his breath)

That little munchkin never out foxes me. What is Charlie talking about?

JANEY

Daddy, can I listen to the air traffic controllers?

(beat)

Are we going to wash the airplane again?

SAM

Yup, we'll do all that fun stuff.

Sam fastens Janey's seat belt, shuts the truck door, hops into the driver's seat, backs out the driveway.

We see the truck fade into the distance as it travels the neighborhood street.

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT MAINTENANCE HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

Buckets of soapy water, scrub brushes, hoses lay on the tarmac.

Sam and Jane stand side-by-side, spraying a twin-engine turbine airplane.

JANE

Mommy said no splashing or squirting me.

SAM

Mommy doesn't *always* know ...

In a flash, Sam is pummeled with gushing, relentless water.

Jane stands firm, a devilish look across her face, mercilessly aiming the hose at Sam.

Soaked to the bone, dripping, Sam throws down the hose, takes giant steps toward Jane, and like the abominable snowman scoops her up, throws her over his shoulder; both giggle and laugh.

SAM

...Rats! Mommy *always does* know best. You're a little fox - you know that?

JANE

I got you good Daddy.

CUT BACK TO THE
PRESENT:

INT. KING AIR COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE

Sam, where were you just then?

SAM

Oh, just reminiscing about the days when I was the most important guy in Janey's life.

CHARLOTTE

You're still the most important guy in Janey's life; you always will be.

SAM

Yeah, but little girls grow up.
(points to Jane and
William)
See! Just like that.

Sam and Charlotte disembark the King Air. Sam returns to his office.

CHARLOTTE

See you later Honey. I'm going home.

SAM

Okay, see you later Charlie. Glad you stopped by.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte drives along a country road, large maple and oak trees form an enveloping picturesque tunnel; old memories creep up.

CUT BACK TO THE
PAST (SEVENTEEN
YEARS EARLIER):

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - MORNING

Charlotte lays face up on the examination table, ultra sound gel slathered on her naked belly. The doctor runs the probe back and forth across her tummy, monitoring the images and sounds coming from the screen.

DOCTOR

(grim faced)

Charlotte, I'm not detecting a fetal heartbeat.

She lays numb, speechless. Heartbroken.

The doc's consoling words fall on deaf ears. Charlotte comprehends only bits and pieces.

DOCTOR (cont'd)

Wah, wah, wah, wah, wah. One in 50 women experience a miscarriage.

DOCTOR (cont'd)

Charlotte? Wah, wah, wah, wah, wah. I've scheduled a D&C for tomorrow at 9 a.m.

Damaged, Charlotte drives home, calls Sam.

CHARLOTTE
Sam, there's no heartbeat.

SAM (O.S)
Charlotte, I'll be right there;
are you home?

CHARLOTTE
I will be.

Sam is waiting in the driveway.

Charlotte's car rounds the corner, travels the driveway,
stops; she gets out. She and Sam hug.

The car rolls through the flower garden, off the bank, hits
a tree.

Sam hugs and holds Charlotte.

CUT BACK TO THE
PRESENT:

INT. CHARLOTTE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE
I wonder if it was a boy, or a
girl? What would he have looked
like? Would she be a pilot - like
her Dad, or a pretty, strawberry,
redhead like Janey? Maybe she
would have jet-black hair and blue
eyes.

Charlotte blinks, rattles her head, as if to shoo the old
memories away, turns on the radio.

CHARLOTTE
(singing)
Stood there boldly
Sweatin' in the sun
Felt like a million
Felt like number one
The height of summer

I'd never felt that strong
Like a rock

I was eighteen
Didn't have a care
Working for peanuts
Not a dime to spare
But I was lean and
Solid everywhere
Like a rock

My hands were steady
My eyes were clear and bright
My walk had purpose
My steps were quick and light
And I held firmly
To what I felt was right
Like a rock

Like a rock, I was strong as I
could be
Like a rock, nothin' ever got to
me
Like a rock, I was something to
see
Like a rock

And I stood arrow straight
Unencumbered by the weight
Of all these hustlers and their
schemes
I stood proud, I stood tall
High above it all
I still believed in my dreams

Twenty years now
Where'd they go?
Twenty years
I don't know
I sit and I wonder sometimes
Where they've gone

And sometimes late at night
When I'm bathed in the firelight
The moon comes callin' a ghostly
white

And I recall
I recall

Like a rock, standin' arrow
straight
Like a rock, chargin' from the
gate
Like a rock, carryin' the weight
Like a rock

Like a rock, the sun upon my skin
Like a rock, hard against the wind
Like a rock, I see myself again
Like a rock

INT. IN THE AIR SKYHAWK COCKPIT - NEXT DAY

Charlotte is the pilot.

Harvey right seat, observes the instrument panel, the runway ahead. His hands and feet quietly rest on the flight controls.

HARVEY
(speaks into headset)
Charlotte. Watch your airspeed.
Keep that nose up.

Sweat drips down Charlotte's temple. Gingerly her hands and feet steer the yoke and rudder pedals. She GULPS, eyes switch from the horizon to the AIRSPEED INDICATOR, right hand lowers the final increment of FLAPS, holds the throttle. The airplane tilts to the left, then to the right, the nose falls, the NUMBER SIX on the RUNWAY approaches.

HARVEY
(speaks into headset)
Hold that nose up Charlotte.

His grip on the yolk tightens, feet control the rudder pedals.

HARVEY
(speaks into headset)
Hold it up. Hold it up.

Harvey pulls the yoke, applies firm foot pressure on the rudder pedals. One main wheel skims the pavement; the other hits the ground, bounces; both mains securely roll on the pavement. The nose wheel spansks down. They feel a jolt, their necks snap forward, then backward. Charlotte aggressively applies pressure to the BRAKE PEDALS. The airplane fish tails, wheels SCREECH, correcting themselves.

Charlotte trembling, shamefaced, turns her head toward Harvey.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

We're here.

HARVEY

(speaks into headset)

Very good Charlotte. Let's try it again.

CUT TO:

SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT SERVICE COUNTER - SAME TIME

Through the LARGE WINDOWS Dan and a few LINEMEN observe Charlotte's landing.

DAN

Pough! That was a rough one.

Poor Harvey.

EXT. SKY - OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS

MONTAGE

In a quick series of shots Charlotte, at the controls in the left seat, Harvey instructing from the right seat, performs several maneuvers.

--SWOOSH! The airplane takes off, needing only a short portion of runway.

--CA PLUNK! The airplane lands, needing only a short portion

of runway.

--SWEESH! The airplane meanders low over a SNAKING RIVER.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
 Hey Harvey... I feel like a BOND
 GIRL. And guess what?--
 (beat)
 --That makes you James Bond,
 Double 07.

HARVEY (O.S.)
 I suppose it does Charlotte.

--SWOOSH! The airplane turns above and around a SILO.

--EERRN! The airplane circles in a 55 degree bank turn.

--VROOOM! The airplane nearly touches the runway when it
 abruptly pitches up and goes around.

--SHOOOM! In the distance the airplane flies along the
 mountain ridge.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
 (sheepishly)
 Shady Valley Traffic, Skyhawk
 Eight One Four Sierra Tango on
 final, Shady Valley.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.) (cont'd)
 (proudly)
 Was that correct Harvey? Did I say
 the right stuff?

HARVEY (O.S.)
 Yes, very good Charlotte.

The airplane perfectly touches down.

HARVEY (O.S.) (cont'd)
 Take back off Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
 Wha--- right now?

HARVEY (O.S.)

Yup.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte firewalls the throttle and the CARB HEAT KNOB, gently pulls the yoke. The NOSE pitches up, she lifts the flap lever 20 degrees, glances at the airspeed indicator. It reads 73 knots. She retracts the final increments of flaps.

EXT. IN THE AIR - SAME

TCHOOOOOOWM! The airplane takes off, flies into the horizon.

CUT TO:

SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT SERVICE COUNTER - SAME TIME

Through the large windows Dan, arms folded across his chest, observes Charlotte's landing and takeoff.

DAN

Good ones Charlotte.

CUT BACK:

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT

The engine idles --CHUG, CHUG, CHUG, the airplane stalls, TCHEEEEEWM! It roars back to life.

Harvey pulls the throttle, the engine idles.

HARVEY

(speaks into headset)

Execute the engine out procedures,
Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

Okay. No problem.

HARVEY

(speaks into headset)
What is the airplane's best glide
rate?

CHARLOTTE
(speaks into headset)
65 knots. I have it memorized.

Charlotte lets the yoke fall, lowers the flaps lever 20 degrees. The airspeed indicator needle points to 65 knots. She scans the land below, spots the Shady Valley airport, twists the yoke to the right. The airplane descends, airspeed indicator needle bobs to 70 knots. She reels the ELEVATOR TRIM WHEEL clockwise, nose pitches up. The airspeed indicator needle bobs to 65 knots.

HARVEY
(speaks into headset)
Good work Charlotte. Let's call it
a day.

EXT. IN THE AIR - CONTINUOUS

The airplane lands, taxies, parks.

END MONTAGE

FADE INTO THE
PRESENT:

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT FBO SERVICE COUNTER

Through the large windows Dan and a few LINEMEN observe Charlotte's landing.

DAN
She's come a long way.

LINEMAN 1
She sure has.

Harvey and Charlotte walk into the FBO lounge.

LINEMAN 1
It won't be long 'till you solo,

Charlotte.

Somehow not feeling the same degree of confidence, Charlotte shoots the LINEMAN a wan smile.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)
*What a frightening thought. I
 can't solo, EVER!*

Is he for real?! Never!

Charlotte passes the service counter, enters the LADIES ROOM, stands in front of the VANITY, glumly stares into the mirror.

CHARLOTTE
 What are you doing?

You've taken this ludicrous idea
 waaay too far.

Charlotte, you are crazy. It's a
 wonder you haven't killed
 yourself... and Harvey too.

Now! Enough is enough!

Time to re-think this!

With her tremoring left hand she turns the water facet knob, holds both hands under the soothing, warm water, gathers it in her cupped hands, rinses her face.

Avoiding her reflection, a voice from the mirror draws her back in.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)
 You can do this Charlotte.

C'mon, pull yourself together.

With a paper towel she dries her face and hands, exits.

OUTSIDE the ladies room she sips water from the BUBBLE FOUNTAIN. Lifting her head, she is startled by a MIDDLE-AGED MAN leaning against the wall, so close he almost touches her.

SINISTER MIDDLE-AGED MAN
 (pompous)
 Have you done any pilotage, worked
 with the VOR, gone to Snowbird or
 Holston Mountain?

CHARLOTTE
 (startled, taken aback)
 What?!

SINISTER MIDDLE-AGED MAN
 (righteous)
 You know...used your instruments
 to get from point A to point B?
 NAVIGATION! So you don't get lost.

CHARLOTTE
 (intimidated)
 No...I haven't been taught that
 yet.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN
 Well, I hope you learn that stuff
 soon. I don't want to read about
 you in the newspaper.

CHARLOTTE
 (distraught)
 What? ...What do you mean? ...Die
 in an airplane crash?

Middle-Aged Man grins sinisterly at Charlotte.

Charlotte shakes like a leaf, walks away.

INT. O'BRIEN HOME - EVENING

Engaged in conversation Sam, Jane, and Charlotte eat ice
 cream at the kitchen table. Chuck lies curled up on his
 bed.

CHARLOTTE
 Hey! Have I told you two what I've
 learned lately?

SAM

No, Charlotte, not in the last few hours.

CHARLOTTE

Okay. Well. First of all, I flew over and around a silo. Meandered along a snaking river...

...I felt like a Bond girl. Such an adventure.

(beat)

Oh, and!, hit-and-runs.

SAM

You did what?

Perplexed. Jane stares blankly at her mother, pulls up her right lip and check. Her nose scrunches, eyes furrow.

CHARLOTTE

Hit-and-runs.

SAM

You mean touch-and-goes?

Sam and Janey steal a quick "what a ding-dong" glance, smirk and chuckle under their breath.

CHARLOTTE

Ya, ya, ya. That's what I mean.

Sam gives Charlotte a reassured smile and the two continue to discuss flying. Jane returns to her iPhone, rolling her eyes.

CHARLOTTE

So... Janey. When I get my license, okay, *if* I get my license, will you fly with me?

JANE

I dunno Mom, probably not.

CHARLOTTE

Really! Why Not?

JANE

Well. We'll see Mom. I dunno.

Jane returns her attention to her iPhone. Shovels ice cream into her mouth.

SAM

Don't worry Charlotte. She will.

Jane gives her Dad a furrowing, *no I'm not going to do that*, look.

CHARLOTTE

You know. The guys at the airport think I'll be soloing soon.

JANE

Oh. Okay, great Mom. That's a big step.

SAM

Seems about that time Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

How do you suppose Harvey will know when I'm ready to solo?

SAM

A good instructor just knows.

Charlotte returns an insecure expression.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

The HALLWAY bustles with students. Jane fiddles with the contents in her LOCKER.

WILLIAM

Hi Janey.

JANE

Oh. Hi William.

WILLIAM

Do you need a ride to the airport after school?

JANE

No thanks William. My Mom is picking me up. Sweet of you to offer though.

WILLIAM

Okay. Then I'll see you later.

William disappears into the ocean of students. Suavely Joseph strolls from behind Jane, places his arm on her locker.

JOSEPH

Hey Strawberry? What are you doing after school?

JANE

Working.

JOSEPH

Oh, hhhmmmm. So, I guess if we wanna hang out I'm gunna have ta get a job at the airport.

JANE

I guess so.

Jane closes her locker, walks away.

JANE

See you later Joseph.

Rejected, Joseph smugly brushes it off.

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT RUNWAY- DAY

SSWWWWWWSSHH. Seven One Four Sierra Tango approaches the runway, wings bobble. Through the left windshield we see Charlotte in the pilot seat and Harvey in the copilot seat.

The airplane touches down, TTSSST! smoothly, like a hot knife through butter. It taxis to the ready-and-hold position.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)
 (frustrated)
Is he ever going to get out?

Not another pattern. Please don't make me go around, and around, and around again. Over and over, again and again.

We've already done at least twelve patterns. TWELVE, YES TWELVE TIMES AROUND THE AIRPORT!

I'M GETTING DIZZY.

Charlotte looks to the left - sees a long, lonely runway - then to the right.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)
 (greater frustration)
The clouds are sinking and I'm beginning to perfect my mistakes.

*Pleeease, please, please...
 Harvey, let me solo.*

HARVEY
 Charlotte. I'm getting out. You are ready to solo. Fly three patterns, then return to the FBO.

Conflicting emotions ripple across her face. For a split moment she's frozen, thoughts begin to tangle, stares helplessly at Harvey.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)
What?
THREE patterns? That wasn't part of my plan. No one ever told me I would have to solo THREE TIMES, ALL BY MYSELF.

Harvey turns toward her, glares an earnest expression of certainty.

She forces a smile, eyes droop.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - MOMENTS LATER

CHARLOTTE
Focus Charlotte.

Staring at the empty copilot seat, she yearns for security. Crumbling, nerves fraying, she GULPS and steels her courage.

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT RUNWAY SIX - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
(voice quivers, speaks
into headset)
Shady Valley traffic, Four Sierra
Tango taxiing to runway six, Shady
Valley.

The Skyhawk eases onto the runway.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - SAME

CHARLOTTE
(voice quivers, speaks
into headset)
Shady Valley traffic, Four Sierra
Tango departing runway six, Shady
Valley.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)
(performs each task)
Flaps up.

Carb heat in.

Mixture rich.

Ready for takeoff.

Charlotte pans each instrument, the runway, the surrounding terrain through the cockpit window. Clouds hover well above the mountain tops.

CHARLOTTE
 (performs the task)
 Full power.

Sprinting down the runway.

CHARLOTTE
 (performs each task)
 Rotate at 55 knots.

She clockwise rolls the rudder wheel.

CHARLOTTE
 Holy cow, this thing took off
 quickly; it just popped off the
 runway and into the sky. What's up
 with that? Something's wrong.

She gives a once-over to each instrument, peers the
 horizon. Searches for a problem.

CHARLOTTE
 (uptight)
 Everything appears to be okay.

CUT TO:

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT MAINTENANCE HANGAR - SAME

Sam study's a maintenance manual, receives a text from Dan.

DAN
 (text message)
 To: Sam O'Brien

Charlotte just took-off, **SOLO**.

Sam rushes to the large open HANGAR DOOR, watches Four
 Sierra Tango lift off the runway.

SAM
 (proud and wistful)
 That's my girl! **FLY BABY, FLY!**

A pleasing smile ripples, he softly pumps his fist.

CUT TO:

Janey, alongside William, works on an airplane near the hangar opening, sees her Dad briskly walking toward the runway.

Standing still, tools in hand, Janey turns her head toward the departing Four Sierra Tango.

JANE
 (empowered)
 Go get it, Mom.
 (beat)
 Look William, there goes my Mom!
 She's soloing!
 (pause, looks on)
 She's amazing!

Entranced with the airplane a sweet, pleasing smile cutely lights up Janey.

CUT BACK:

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE
 Am I climbing at 73 knots?
 Yup.
 Okay Charlotte, communicate.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)
 (speaks into headset)
 Shady Valley traffic, Four Sierra
 Tango turning right crosswind,
 Shady Valley.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)
 Look outside Charlotte. Check for
 traffic.

Climb to pattern altitude 2,800',
 maintain 80 knots.

She registers the cloud layer hanging a few hundred feet above her, the mountaintops a few hundred feet below her.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

Shady Valley traffic, Four Sierra
Tango turning right downwind,
runway six, Shady Valley.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

(fidgety)

Be patient Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

(performs each task)

Reduce the power to 2,100 rpm's.

Airspeed 70 knots.

10 degrees of flaps.

Okay Charlotte. Pre-landing
checklist: fuel's good, trim set,
cabin is secure, mixture's rich,
carb heat is out, flaps as
required.

She looks at the copilot's seat, imagines Harvey there.

CHARLOTTE

(deep breath)

I'm good. Really?! I'm good.

I'm flying. What? Holy cow, I'm
flying an airplane - SOLO.

Just me; no Harvey.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

(singing - low whisper)

I believe I can fly

I believe I can touch the sky

(singing - a tad louder)

I think about it every night and
day

Spread my wings and fly away

I believe I can soar
 I see me running through that open
 door

(singing extra loudly)

I believe I can fly
 I believe I can fly
 I believe ...

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

(interrupts herself)

WHAT; what am I doing?!

(beat)

K. No more singing. Concentrate.

EXT. IN THE AIR - CONTINUOUS

The airplane descends toward the runway.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)

(speaks into headset)

Shady Valley traffic, Four Sierra
 Tango on final, Shady Valley.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte holds her breath; movements of the flight
 controls are tender, respectful; mountains, trees sprint
 past the windows.

CHARLOTTE

(performs each task)

Thirty degrees of flaps.

1,700 rpm's.

Slow this thing down.

Approach at 65 knots.

EXT. IN THE AIR - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)

Flare, keep the airplane straight,
 a little rudder, ailerons, nice

and easy.

Okay. Okay.

TTSSST...*SQUEAKER*.

YES! I did it. Great landing.

The Skyhawk approaches the landing strip a second time; bobbles, touches down with a thud, bounces, glides inches above the runway, baby-bounces a few times, lands permanently, and safely rolls out.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)

(sigh)

One more to go.

Shady Valley traffic, Four Sierra
Tango taxiing to runway six, Shady
Valley.

Charlotte taxis the Skyhawk to the ready-and-hold position.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

Shady Valley traffic, Four Sierra
Tango departing runway six, Shady
Valley.

Spooky clouds obscure the mountain tops.

CHARLOTTE

(arguing with herself)

Wait-a-minute!

I can't see the mountaintops.

Harvey said three patterns!

But I *CAN'T* see the mountaintops.

Charlotte. You're the pilot in
command. You can't fly. You're

required to stay clear of clouds.

But Harvey said three patterns.

What do I do? ----I'll call
Unicom.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)
(speaks into headset)
Harvey. This is Charlotte. I can't
see the mountaintops. What do I
do?

No response...

Charlotte's thoughts unravel, fingers tap and roll on her
lap. Her tightened legs hold the brakes.

Still no response.

CHARLOTTE
(panic)
Omigod, he's not answering me.
What do I do?

She turns her head as far left and then as far right as
possible, eyeballs crossing to the ends of their sockets
scanning the horizon.

Clouds obscure the mountaintops.

CHARLOTTE
(resigned)
Harvey said THREE patterns.

Charlotte pushes the throttle forward, applies pressure to
the rudder pedals ensuring a straight takeoff, holds the
yoke in anticipation for liftoff, swapping her eyes from
the airspeed indicator to the outside, then back to the
airspeed indicator.

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT RUNWAY SIX - CONTINUOUS

Skyhawk races down the runway, gaining greater momentum.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE

CHARLOTTE. YOU can't. SEE. The
mountaintops.

She pulls the throttle. The Skyhawk decelerates; a wave of relief slides across her face, shoulders relax. She breathes.

CHARLOTTE

(hangs her head)

But I didn't accomplish the
requirement. I only flew two
patterns.

(beat)

Oh well, I'm alive! That's the
requirement as far as I'm
concerned.

HARVEY (O.S.)

Charlotte. What's the matter?

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

Harvey, I couldn't see the
mountaintops.

HARVEY (O.S.)

Okay Charlotte. Let's call it a
day. You did great.

CHARLOTTE

PHEW! He's not upset and I soloed.
It counts. Yay me!

A large smile permeates her face.

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT APRON - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte shuts down the Skyhawk, Harvey waits on the airport apron. She exits the airplane, each walk toward one another. He reaches out his hand; she extends hers. He pulls her close, proudly wraps one arm around her shoulder.

HARVEY

Great work today Charlotte.
 Congratulations.

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT GROUND INSTRUCTION ROOM -
 CONTINUOUS

Seated at the rectangular table in the ground instruction
 room Charlotte texts Sam.

CHARLOTTE
 (sends a text message)
 To: Sam O'Brien

Did it!

CUT TO:

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT MAINTENANCE HANGAR - SAME

Sam working on an airplane, hears his phone ding a text
 message from Charlotte, walks into his office, reads the
 message, immediately calls her.

SAM
 Congratulations Charlotte! I'm so
 proud of you.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
 (full of pride and
 enthusiasm)
 Aw. Thanks Sam. You're the best.
 (beat)
 Oh! I gotta go now. Harvey just
 walked in.

CUT BACK:

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT GROUND INSTRUCTION ROOM - SAME

Harvey sits down across from Charlotte, reaches for her
 logbook, opens it, slides it back to her.

HARVEY

Charlotte. This is when you begin making entries into your logbook.

Her eyes grab his, she picks up the pen. Honored; she enters: August 11, 814ST, 0A9, local, **FIRST SOLO☺**.

HARVEY

Charlotte, becoming a pilot is very, very special. You'll gain a lot of confidence. Very few people become pilots.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

(a wan smile)

Hmm, usually I'm a pretty confident girl. What if this crazy flying experience only makes me a less confident girl, when I fail to earn a private pilot's license?

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

Thanks Harvey. I appreciate your confidence.

HARVEY

Charlotte, I'll be away for a few days. While I'm gone, it's a good time to fly outside the pattern.

Fly around a little bit.

Charlotte's jaw drops, eyes bug out of her head.

CHARLOTTE

By myself!?

HARVEY

Yes Charlotte. You can do it.

CHARLOTTE

But Harvey... I just soloed! Are you sure I should be flying outside the pattern; alone?

HARVEY

Yes Charlotte. I'm sure.

CHARLOTTE

Well...

(long pause,
acquiescent)

Okay Harvey. If you say so.

HARVEY

I say so Charlotte.

CUT BACK TO THE
PAST (TWENTY-FIVE
YEARS EARLIER):

EXT. VILLAGE OF SHADY VALLEY MAIN STREET - FLASHBACK

The air hugs Charlotte tight, hair flows free and crazy around her helmet, sweat perspires, legs pump the pedals of her mountain bike as she jets past the waterfall bridge along SHAWNEEHAW ROAD.

Out of no-where, a small, dilapidated, pickup truck, rebel flag and a shotgun hanging in the rear window, passes Charlotte, nearly running her off the road.

YOUNG PUNK

(yells)

Get off the road you stupid,
wimpy, girl.

CHARLOTTE

WHAT? What did he just call me?

(beat)

Stupid wimpy, girl! I am NOT a
stupid, wimpy, girl. Who does he
think he is, calling me that? He
can't just go around yelling
insults out his truck window while
attempting to run me off the road.
I could have been killed. *Splat!*,
dead, third-degree murder because
of his juvenile behavior!

(beat)

No way. I am not taking that. This
road is just as much mine as it is
his.

A puff of smoke pops from the muffler, wheels squeal, the truck jerks and sways along the road. Traffic follows behind.

Four-hundred yards ahead is SHADY VALLEY'S only traffic light.

Faster than the Tasmanian Devil Charlotte pedals her heart out to catch the truck.

CHARLOTTE

(begging)

Please, please, please, traffic
light turn red.

The traffic light turns red.

(incited)

YES, it's red! Pleeeeee stay red;
please, please stay red.

Faster Charlotte; pedal faster.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

(excessive relief, out
of breath)

I got 'im.

The truck's passenger side window is rolled down. Beads of sweat drip down Charlotte's beet-red face, heart thumps out of her chest; she lays her left hand on the door, carefully balances on her bike, catches her breath, turns her head toward the young, skinny, alarmed boy.

CHARLOTTE

(calm, raised eyebrows)

What did you say to me?

YOUNG PUNK

(cowardly, points to the
driver)

Uhhh . . . uh. He said it.

With domineering authority, Charlotte leans into the cabin, eyes bore into the driver's eyes.

CHARLOTTE

What did YOU say to me?

YOUNG PUNK DRIVER

(squirming)

Ah, I, I didn't say anything.

CHARLOTTE

(scolding)

That's what I thought. Don't ever do that again.

The light turns green. Driver hits the gas pedal as though fleeing the scene of a bank robbery.

Charlotte pedals in the opposite direction.

CHARLOTTE

(vindicated)

Where are the police when a girl needs 'em?

(beat)

I wish I was packing some iron!

. . . Without bullets of course, 'cause I surely would have pulled my Smith and Wesson .38 Special, scared 'em half to death, and made a citizen's arrest.

Teenage punks!

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

They got the message, Charlotte. Don't worry.

CUT BACK:

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT GROUND INSTRUCTION ROOM - SAME

CHARLOTTE

(whispering)

I am not a stupid, wimpy girl.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

You're right Harvey; I can fly outside the pattern.

Charlotte stares, ponders. Puzzled, looks at Harvey, yearning to ask a question.

CHARLOTTE

Harvey.

(long pause)

... Why are you a flight instructor? What made you want to become a pilot?

HARVEY

(nostalgic)

When I was a young boy
Charlotte...

CUT TO THE PAST
(FIFTY-FOUR YEARS
EARLIER):

EXT. AIRPORT TAXIWAY - DAY - FLASHBACK

YOUNG HARVEY (13) stands at the edge of a taxiway; thumb out, a pleading, begging look on his face, waiting for any single-engine airplane to pull over, pick him up.

ED, AIRPORT MANAGER, mid 30's, duck-footed, spectacles covering his eyes, clumsily runs from the FBO, grabs Harvey under the arm.

ED

Harvey? What are you doing? You can't be hanging around the taxiway. This is dangerous. Never mind the liability nightmare, and the board of directors - they'll have me fired.

We've been through this three times already. Can't you find anything better to do?

Ed drags Harvey by the arm, off the edge of the TAXIWAY, into the FBO.

INT. AIRPORT FBO - CONTINUOUS

HARVEY
(desperate)
But Sir. Please, Sir.

ED
(ignoring Harvey's
pleas)
Harvey. I don't ever want to see
you on the taxiway again. Do you
understand me? Do you?

And if you keep up this behavior
I'll have you kicked off this
airport ...

ALICE
(scolding)
...Ed, what are you doing to that
poor, young boy? Can't you see
that he's curious about flying?
Plus he's cute as hell.

ALICE (cont'd)
(sweet as can be)
Harvey? Is that your name?

HARVEY
(innocent)
Yes Mam.

ED
Alice, you keep that boy out of my
hair or he'll be banned from this
airport for life.

ALICE
So. Harvey, you want to fly?

HARVEY
(innocent)
Yes Mam.

ALICE
C'mon, I'll take you up.

Huge gulp, Harvey's eyes grow wide with shock, doesn't speak, follows every charming order.

ED

I'm serious Alice. You keep him out of my way, and off that taxiway.

ALICE

Hey Ed! It doesn't hurt to be nice. You outta try it someday.

CUT BACK:

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT GROUND INSTRUCTION ROOM -
CONTINUOUS

HARVEY

(sentimental)

For as long as I live, I'll never forget that day, Charlotte.

Miss Alice, she was my hero, a strong, beautiful, commanding lady, and sweet as could be. She couldn't have been more than 25 years old. And boy, could she handle that mean ol' Ed.

I sat in the right seat of her Bonanza staring at the wing. They didn't seem to do anything. No flapping, no nothing. I couldn't understand how they managed to keep the airplane in the air. And bolted to the nose was this petite and elegant propeller that effortlessly seemed to do all the work.

Charlotte props her chin on the palm of her hand, her fingers rest below her eye, enthralled.

HARVEY

From that day on, flying was to become the most passionate and compelling aspiration of my life.

At the age of 25 I became a first officer flying a DC 10 for American Airlines.

(melancholy)

Time marched on Charlotte and two years ago, just a few days short of my 65th birthday I flew my final flight as captain of a Boeing 777 from London to Atlanta.

CHARLOTTE

Why, then Harvey, if you love flying so much - why did you retire?

HARVEY

It was not my choice Charlotte. For some reason, an airline pilot is forced to retire at the age of 65. It's a federal mandate.

CHARLOTTE

Oh.

HARVEY

Throughout my career I've always taught students. Now, I just have more time.

CHARLOTTE

(eyes smile)

Lucky me.

HARVEY

Enough of this reminiscing stuff. Get out there and practice what I taught you. And Charlotte, be confident, take command of that airplane; don't get behind it. Think ahead.

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT MAINTENANCE HANGAR - AFTERNOON

SAM'S OFFICE

JOSEPH

Hello Sir. My name is Joseph and I am wondering if you have a job available?

SAM

Hello Joseph. Well, what can you do?

JOSEPH

Just about anything, Sir.

SAM

Great. When can you start?

JOSEPH

Right now.

Jane walks through her Dad's office door.

SAM

Oh, hi Janey. Perfect timing.

This young man, Joseph, --- right?

JOSEPH

Yes Sir, that's right.

A flush of cunning rolls over Joseph's face.

SAM

--- will be starting work today. Go ahead and show him how to take the nose cawling off that BONANZA and then the SKYLANE needs washing.

JANE

Sure thing Dad.

Joseph studies Sam, then Jane.

JOSEPH (V.O.)

Oh good grief. What have I gotten

myself into?

Jane and Joseph walk through the hangar to the BONANZA.

JOSEPH

So Strawberry, that's your Dad?

JANE

That's my Dad...

JOSEPH

Oh Boy!

JANE

Okay, Joseph. On to business. This is a Beechcraft Bonanza, single engine - obviously, low wing (she points toward the low wing) as opposed to high wing. Like that Skylane over there. And retractable gear (she points to the gear and wheel well openings). This is the nose cowling. We need to remove it in order to inspect and work on the engine.

Sooner than later you'll know every nook and cranny of these airplanes.

Do you know how to use a screwdriver?

JOSEPH

(scowls)

Of course I know how to use a screwdriver.

JANE

(hands him a screwdriver)

Here. Loosen the screws on the nose cowling.

Joseph fiddles and fumbles to unscrew the screws. He can't do it.

JANE

(irritated)

Look! First of all, righty-tighty,
lefty-lucy. Turn to the right and
you tighten the screw. Turn to the
left, and you loosen the screw.
Got it? ---

---And second of all, these screws
are camloc fasteners. Push down,
then turn to the left to loosen or
to the right to tighten. Got it?

JOSEPH

Okay. I got it now. Thanks
Strawberry.

JANE

Let me know when you're finished.
I'll be over there working with
William.

WILLIAM

Hi Janey. What's he doing here?

JANE

I dunno. My Dad gave him a job.

Jane and William work on the Skyhawk. Moments later Joseph
yells across the hanger.

JOSEPH

Hey Strawberry. I'm finished.

JANE

(to William)

I gotta get him started washing
the Skylane.

WILLIAM

Okay Janey. Thanks for your help.
I'll be finished shortly then I'll
come help you two.

She walks to Joseph, inspects his work, nods approvingly.

He winks.

She rolls her eyes, smirks.

JANE

The SKYLANE is next. C'mon.

Jane and Joseph push the Skylane out the hangar and into the hot sun. Outside the hangar a STEPLADDER, a BUCKET OF SOAPY WATER, a SCRUB BRUSH WITH A VERY LONG STEM, and a SPRAY BOTTLE OF DECREASER lie on the PAVEMENT.

Jane hands a LARGE HOSE to Joseph.

William is en route to help.

Joseph turns the SPIGOT and goes bolting into Jane, both fly into William as the hose whips around like a snake, water ferociously gushing. Sending them soaring off screen.

They reappear.

Sam turns off the water supply. His face scowls.

The hose goes limp. All three lay tangled, drenched, and laughing hysterically.

Sam shakes his head, walks back to his office.

SAM

(wistfully)

Hmm. Janey and I used to have fun like that.

(beat)

...I miss those days.

EXT. IN THE AIR - DAY

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Shady Valley Traffic Four Sierra Tango entering a downwind, runway two four, Shady Valley.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

MALE PILOT (O.S.)

Shady Valley traffic, Hawker Five One Eight Kilo Sierra eight miles

out inbound runway six, Shady Valley.

CHARLOTTE

WHAT? Did he not just hear me?

He's landing runway six. But the winds dictate two four.

Well, he's flying a Hawker, he must know what he's doing.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

(speaks into headset)

Shady Valley Traffic Four Sierra Tango left base runway two four, Shady Valley.

MALE PILOT (O.S.)

Shady Valley traffic, Hawker Five One Eight Kilo Sierra five miles out inbound runway six, Shady Valley.

CHARLOTTE

(nervous wreck)

What is he doing? He's playing chicken with me. I can't land. If I do, we are going to collide.

What do I do, what do I do? I'm just a student - a nervous, petrified student.

Crap! And Harvey thinks I can handle flying by myself. What is he thinking?

What do I do, what do I do?

(beat)

I can extend my downwind.

(beat)

But NO! I have never flown outside the pattern by myself, not even an inch.

(beat)

But I can't land. He's landing,

and he's bigger than me - two jet engines.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)
 (speaks into headset)
 Shady Valley Traffic Four Sierra
 Tango extending downwind for
 incoming traffic, Shady Valley.

MALE PILOT (O.S.)
 Thank you, appreciate that. Hawker
 Five One Eight Kilo Sierra on
 final, runway six.

CHARLOTTE
 (confident nervous
 wreck)
 Oh! Now he talks to me? What a
 jerk.

That pompous, big Hawker jet just
 bullied me and my little Skyhawk
 right out of the pattern.

(beat)
 Fly the airplane Charlotte.
 Concentrate on the task at hand.

Charlotte adds power, slowly retracts the flaps, reverses
 carb heat.

EXT. IN THE AIR - CONTINUOUS

The Skyhawk, no longer abeam of runway two four, continues
 an extended downwind, flies level and steady through the
 valley.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
 I'm doing it; I'm flying outside
 the pattern, and waaay more than
 an inch. Yay! Yay me.
 (beat)
 Okay, review the instruments,
 listen to the engine, scan the
 horizon.
 (beat)
 Oh, look - look how beautiful it

is out there; the trees blanket
the landscape as far as my eyes
can see; the mountains roll
majestically - as if they wish to
lure me close, tuck me in, and
hold me tight.

(beat)

Oh,! and there's the wheel of my
Skyhawk. And that sky - a
seductive ocean that goes on
forever.

(beat)

Boy, could I get lost out there.

(very rapid talk)

Scary! Thrilling! Beautiful,
Scary!

Let's go back home Charlotte.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Ever so softly, Charlotte rotates the yolk to the left, leg
muscles tighten pressing the left rudder pedal; tenderly
she pulls the throttle and the carb heat knob, notches the
flaps lever 20 degrees.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

Shady Valley Traffic Four Sierra
Tango on final runway two four,
Shady Valley.

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT RUNWAY TWO FOUR - CONTINUOUS

From the air Four Sierra Tango approaches runway two four,
wobbles, hovers over the runway numbers, softly glides onto
the runway, rolling to the taxiway, parks on the apron
outside the FBO.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Swallowing her fright, relieved to safely be on the ground,
Charlotte slides her trembling finger along the after-
landing procedures checklist, shuts down Four Sierra Tango,

exits.

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte reclusively walks into the FBO lounge, past the service counter, bumps into a MAN (40's), tall and proud, dressed in a CAPTAIN'S UNIFORM.

CHARLOTTE
(timorously)
Oh. I'm so sorry.

Fidgety, she tucks her hair behind her ear, notices the uniform.

CHARLOTTE
Um... are you the pilot of the
HAWKER that just landed?

PILOT
I am.

Charlotte GULPS, insecure. Tongue-tied.

CHARLOTTE
Well... Um. Mr.?

PILOT
Captain. My name is CAPTAIN
SPENCER MORROW.

CHARLOTTE
(hesitantly)
Um. Well... Mr. I mean, sorry,
Captain Morrow. Um, you, ...well
you... You just bullied me and my
little Skyhawk right out of the
pattern?

--And... *and* you violated VFR,
uncontrolled airspace rules?

She gives a puzzled, contorted look.

But, wait. What about manners? Did
your parents ever teach you any

manners?

Like a smack in the face, a jolt of reality hits Captain Morrow. He pauses, stone-faced.

CAPTAIN MORROW

(numb)

Uh! No. Matter of fact, they didn't.

Well. Maybe they did. At least, maybe they tried.

CHARLOTTE

You know. I'm a student pilot. An insecure, nervous, petrified student.

Tensely, but with a tiny bit more confidence, she leans closer.

CHARLOTTE

Just moments ago you ignored my radio call, bullied me out of the pattern. Then on the opposing runway you landed in front of me.

I was in the pattern first you know? FAA rules state that while in uncontrolled airspace the aircraft in the pattern has the right-of-way. I was in the pattern long before you.

Pilots like you outta know better.

CAPTAIN MORROW

(taken aback, humble)

I am very sorry Mam. I didn't mean to bully you out of the pattern.

CHARLOTTE

Well, YOU DID! And sorry won't do me any good when I'm dead.

CAPTAIN MORROW

I understand. Honestly. I

apologize.

CAPTAIN MORROW (cont'd)
Do you have a name?

CHARLOTTE
(confused)
Yeah.

CAPTAIN MORROW
Would you be so kind and tell me
what it is?

CHARLOTTE
CHARLOTTE! Charlotte O'Brien.

CAPTAIN MORROW
(extends his hand)
It's nice to meet you, Charlotte.

Charlotte reluctantly extends her hand. Each walk in the
opposite direction.

CHARLOTTE
(back turned, mutters
under her breath)
Just don't do it again.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

HALLWAY

William, Judy, and Lucy Anne loiter in the hallway. Joseph
approaches.

JOSEPH
Hey guys, what's going on?
(beat)
Strawberry are you working this
afternoon?

WILLIAM
Janey, do you need a ride to work?

JANE
Thanks William. But my Mom's

picking me up.

(beat)

Yes, Joseph? I'm working. Are you?

JOSEPH

Yup.

Meanwhile Judy ogles Joseph. He scans right over her. Then, suddenly, and for a moment, he catches her eye and gets a feeling he's never had before. A tiny bolt of affection passes between them. She blushes a magical glow.

Joseph nimbly skips a beat, wonders why he didn't see it there before.

JOSEPH

(speaks to Jane)

What do you think we are going to do at work today?

JANE

Well. I'd say *YOU* are going to wash the Skylane.--

JOSEPH

--And what are you going to do?

JANE

William and I will continue to prepare the Skyhawk for inspection.

JOSEPH

Oh. Okay.

(beat)

Hey, since I'll be washing the Skylane maybe we should bring our bathing suits.

Jane and William troll their eyes, glare at Joseph.

JOSEPH

That's a joke. Ha, Ha.

You guys outta lighten up, find the humor.

The morning bell RINGS.

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT MAINTENANCE HANGAR - LATE
AFTERNOON

Melancholy, country yodeling drawls in the background.

Joseph is seen in the background washing the Skylane.
William and Jane remove the inspection plates from the
Skyhawk.

JANE

Do you like this sort of work
William?

WILLIAM

It's more than work Janey.
Airplanes are my life. They are
all I think about. Everything
about them is fascinating, like a
beautiful, smart girl.

JANE

Oh.

WILLIAM

I love to work with my hands, to
fix and build airplanes.

(beat)

A day seldom passes without the
thought of creating or building
something, breathing life into it.

Jane stares peculiarly at William, feels a spark she's
never felt before.

He turns, addresses her.

WILLIAM

What about you Janey? What do you
love?

JANE

(startled)

Ahh...

(awkward silence)

Ah. I dunno.

WILLIAM

Being at the controls of an airplane, Janey... is special too.

There's something about flying that makes me feel confident.

JANE

You're a pilot William?

WILLIAM

Yeah. Two years ago I earned my private pilot's license.

Your Mom's instructor, Harvey, was my teacher.

JANE

Oh.

Sam walks from his office toward Jane and William.

SAM

Janey, I'm heading home. Are you two almost finished?

WILLIAM

I can take you home Janey.

JANE

Mmmm. Okay, William.

JANE (cont'd)

Dad. William is going to take me home.

Jane and William beam a quick smile at each other.

SAM

Don't be too late and lock up as you leave.

WILLIAM

Yes Sir.

JANE

Okay Dad. Will do.

Jane and William huddle close together, talk and smile and laugh while they work on the Skyhawk.

William pauses, gets lost adoring Jane.

WILLIAM

(hesitating)

Janey?

JANE

Yeah?

WILLIAM

(greater hesitation)

Can... can I kiss you?

Jane, starry-eyed, shyly draws him close.

His lips tenderly touch hers. She kisses him back. They pull apart, their eyes lock, moments linger.

JANE

That was nice William.

He smiles, melts.

WILLIAM

Let's go to THE JUNCTION. Wanna?

JANE

I'd love to.

William walks Jane to the door, she turns off the lights, he locks the door behind her.

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT APRON - EARLY MORNING

As the sun rises over the rolling, verdant hills Charlotte bee bops toward the Skyhawk, performs the preflight walk-around inspection.

She obtains a fuel sample from the sumps of each wing, crouches to inspect the left mainwheel brake and tire,

ensures the baggage door is locked, cradles the left aileron up and down, spying its hinges, wiggles the left flap, squats low to inspect the underbelly and antennas, walks around to the elevator, moves it up and down, runs her hand along the elevator trim tab, both hands twist the rudder horizontally back and forth, crouches to inspect the right main wheel brake and tire, jumps to see that the fuel caps are secure, cradles the right aileron up and down, spying its hinges, wiggles the right flap, runs her hand along the leading edge of the right wing, looks over the landing and beacon lights, examines the right side static source openings, caresses the propeller blades and spinner, eyeballs the nose wheel strut and tire, drains fuel from the strainer, checks the oil, secures the oil cap, looks around the engine compartment, examines the left side static source openings, runs her hand along the leading edge of the left wing, clicks the stall warning lever, peers into the fuel vent and pitot tube, and backs up to view the Skyhawk one last time. Then bee bops back into the FBO.

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte sits on the COUCH, drums her fingers on the end-table, taps her foot, sporadically watches TV, anxiously looks at her watch which reads 8:30 a.m., impatiently glances at the FBO's entrance door.

CHARLOTTE

I don't know if I can do this -
cross-country solo.

What am I doing? I'm crazy. This
is ridiculous.

I'm gunna kill myself.

Charlotte snaps out of her insecurities.

CHARLOTTE

Where is he?

She stands up from the couch, paces, sits back down, pulls her IPAD and PAPERS from her BACKPACK, reviews the NAVIGATION LOGS.

She folds the papers, neatly stuffs them back into the backpack, glances back at the FBO's entrance door.

Moments travel.

Harvey enters.

CHARLOTTE

Oh. Hi Harvey, there you are.

She swipes the backpack from the floor and follows Harvey into the ground instruction room.

So... Harvey, I am wondering... Do you think that I can stuff you into my back pocket for the flight? I won't tell anyone. No one will know, not even the FAA.

(beat)

Whaddya think?

Harvey yields no response.

He sits down, reviews her navigation logs, signs her log book.

Charlotte sits at the table, chin resting on her hands. Calm, then fidgety; calm, then fidgety.

HARVEY

You are ready to go Charlotte.

(beat)

Do good.

Charlotte neatly places the logbook and navigation log into her backpack, slings it over her shoulder, desperately looks at Harvey. She exits the ground instruction room, walks out the door to the Skyhawk.

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT APRON - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE

(muttering)

You can do it Charlotte. No problem. Focus on the procedures.

You can do it. No problem. Focus
on the procedures.

You can do it Charlotte. No
problem. Focus on the procedures.

Harvey stands on the apron, texting, fiddling with, talking
on his phone.

Charlotte kicks the chock from behind the main left wheel,
opens the door of Four Sierra Tango. Stops. Turns her head
over her shoulder, looks at Harvey, walks toward him. Half
way between Harvey and the Skyhawk Charlotte cups her hand
around her mouth, whisper-shouts.

CHARLOTTE

Harvey. I'm going to take runway
two four. Okay?

HARVEY

(distinguished
assurance)
Okay Charlotte.

Harvey returns his attention to his cell phone.

CHARLOTTE

Phew! He's happy with that
decision. Yay!

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Holding short of runway two four Charlotte dials into the
GPS: KBLV (the BLUEBERRY HILL AIRPORT LOCATION IDENTIFIER),
scans the instrument panel, then the horizon, for incoming
aircraft.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)
Shady Valley traffic, Eight One
Four Sierra Tango departing runway
two four, Shady Valley.

The airplane lifts off. Her right hand spools the TRIM
WHEEL clockwise. She registers the airspeed and ATTITUDE
INDICATOR readings, compares the compass heading with the

GPS heading, views the HORIZON, the MOUNTAIN FOLIAGE; the nose of the airplane rises up into the sky.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

Shady Valley traffic, Eight One
Four Sierra Tango departing the
traffic area to the southwest,
Shady Valley.

With a stranglehold grip Charlotte's left hand holds the yoke, right hand clutches the seat bottom poised to work the flight controls when necessary.

A gentle shake of turbulence rocks the Skyhawk, grabs her; eyes pan the instrument panel.

Reaching smooth air at cruising altitude of FOUR THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED FEET Charlotte adjusts the power setting, checks the airspeed indicator, sets the pitch and trim controls.

CHARLOTTE

(insecure, deep breath)

Everything looks good. Twenty
minutes to go before I reach the
Blueberry Hill airport.

EXT. IN THE SKY - CONTINUOUS

The Skyhawk zooms through the still sky.

Charlotte peruses the endless space conjoined by massive wilderness and rugged terrain. From the layers of jutting, sloping ridges, subtle hues of blue shimmer. Below, thick clouds fill the valleys; a beautiful, beautiful, red-tailed hawk transcends.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte gasps in disbelief, excitedly leans sideways; her eyes glued to the majestic wonder, she holds back the physical desire to leap from the ersatz flying machine.

EXT. IN THE SKY - CONTINUOUS

Together, they soar.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

(awe-struck)

Oh, wow. Look at that; the work of
God.

The red-tailed hawk tilts its head, left wing rolls; its
cross-shaped body pulls and disappears into obscurity.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE

(awe-struck)

WOW! Now that... that was flying.

(beat)

I heard once that you can't touch
God, but, ...that, he touches you.

Charlotte dances in her seat, proud and giddy.

EXT. IN THE SKY - CONTINUOUS

The Skyhawk continues along its way. The fog dissipates,
foothills emerge, civilization creeps up.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Look for the INTERSTATE, the
SMALL, SINGLE RUNWAY AIRSTRIP near
a FARM alongside a RIVERBEND, and
a LARGE, WHITE ROOFED WAREHOUSE.

They should be coming up just off
the nose to the left.

I should see them any minute now.

Please, please, please. One of 'em
has to be out there.

(beat)

It just has to be.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

There it is! There it is! The

airstrip. Oh, ... and there's the interstate too. Both landmarks I need to fly over before I reach Blueberry Hill.

Moments pass.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte searches the RURAL FARMLAND below, tenderly dips the left wing, combing the land to see if she can spot the large white roofed warehouse.

EXT. IN THE SKY - CONTINUOUS

Above, in the vast, vast blueness, a splash of contrails from a heavy jumbo jet captures Charlotte's attention.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

For a moment she stares frozen in wonder.

CHARLOTTE
(electrified)
Wow! Look at him. I may not be piloting a jumbo jet, but ...I'm flying ---just like him.

EXT. IN THE SKY - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)
Oh, there's the warehouse!
(beat)
Okay, I'm on the right track. I'm not lost. Yay!

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte dials into the GPS the Blueberry Hill airport AUTOMATED WEATHER OBSERVATION FREQUENCY (AWOS): 126.875. Pushes the toggle button and dials into the GPS the Blueberry Hill airport COMMON TRAFFIC ADVISORY FREQUENCY (CTAF): 123.0.

AWOS (V.O.)
 Blueberry Hill airport automated
 weather observation, one three
 four zero zulu, winds two seven
 zero @ niner, visibility more than
 one zero, sky condition clear
 below one two thousand,
 temperature two three, dew point
 one eight, altimeter three zero
 two seven, remarks density
 altitude two thousand three
 hundred.

She jots down the winds: two seven zero @ niner, adjusts
 the altimeter to 30.27.

CHARLOTTE
 Two seven zero @ niner. That means
 the winds are coming from the
 northwest at nine knots. That's a
 strong wind for me and my little
 Skyhawk.

(beat)
 I can do it.

But which runway do I take?

Charlotte looks at the instrument panel, points and runs
 her finger along the two seven zero heading on the COMPASS.

CHARLOTTE
 Two seven, that means the wind is
 blowing from the two seven
 direction. I want to land into the
 wind. TWO EIGHT. So I take runway
 two eight.

(reaffirming)
 Yup. I take two eight.

Charlotte pushes the toggle button switching the GPS from
 the Blueberry Hill airport AWOS frequency to the CTAF
 frequency: 123.0.

CHARLOTTE
 (speaks into headset)
 Blueberry Hill Traffic Four Sierra

Tango is seven miles to the northeast in bound for landing runway two eight, Blueberry Hill.

EXT. IN THE SKY - CONTINUOUS

Several LARGE INTERCONNECTING LAKES sprawl like fingers on the earth below the Skyhawk's nose.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

There they are. . . the lakes. I'm just about there. But where's the airport? Blueberry Hill airport is supposed to be just beyond the lakes.

(beat, panic)

Omigod, omigod. I don't see the airport. I'm confused.

(beat, calm)

Pull it together Charlotte. Keep looking. It's out there.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)(cont'd)

Okay. There it is . . . the AIRPORT, the RUNWAY, the HANGARS, the WINDSOCK. Phew.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)(cont'd)

(speaks into headset)

Blueberry Hill Traffic Four Sierra Tango entering a DOWNWIND, runway two eight, Blueberry Hill.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

Blueberry Hill Traffic Four Sierra Tango LEFT BASE runway two eight, Blueberry Hill.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

(accumulating tension)

Speed is low.

Add power.

Runway coming up quick.

Way high, Charlotte.

(beat, Harvey's voice)

(V.O.)

Plenty of runway, Charlotte.

The altimeter unwinds, 1,700'. 1,500'. Airspeed indicator reads 80 knots.

Charlotte glancing out the front window, then out the left window, sees the runway below.

CHARLOTTE

Omigod! I'm halfway down the runway --- and too high.

(adrenaline pumping)

Charlotte there's not enough runway.

DON'T LAND.

She firewalls the throttle and the carb heat knob, pulls the yoke toward her belly, clock wise rolls the elevator trim wheel.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset,
grasping for composure)

*Blueberry Hill Traffic Four Sierra
Tango I'm gunna have to try this
again, Blueberry Hill.*

EXT. BLUEBERRY HILL AIRPORT RUNWAY TWO EIGHT - SAME

In a blink the engine roars, the nose pitches up.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE

(calm panic)

*Flaps! Raise the flaps, Charlotte.
But slowly. Only ten degrees or*

else you'll lose lift and fall out
of the sky.

Swallows.

EXT. IN THE AIR BLUEBERRY HILL AIRPORT PATTERN - CONTINUOUS

The airplane ascends, turning left CROSSWIND, levels out on
the downwind leg.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

MALE PILOT (V.O.)

Blueberry Hill Traffic, CHEYENNE
ONE TWO FOUR GOLF JULIETT
departing runway two eight,
Blueberry Hill.

CHARLOTTE

No big deal. Just fly the airplane
Charlotte. He's just taking off.
Won't be a factor.

The altimeter reads 2,100', airspeed indicator 80 knots,
fuel gages three-quarters full. The ARTIFICIAL HORIZON and
the TURN AND BANK INDICATOR affirm that the Skyhawk is
flying straight and level. The RPM NEEDLE hovers below the
green safety zone.

Carb heat! Crap. Forgot to add
carb heat.

Charlotte pulls the carb heat knob. The engine drones heavy
and sluggish. The RPM needle nonchalantly climbs, rests
near the bottom of the green safety zone. She heaves a sigh
of relief.

CHARLOTTE

For god's sake Charlotte. Without
carburetor heat the engine could
freeze up and you'd be a goner.

EXT. IN THE AIR - CONTINUOUS

The Skyhawk turns left base, flaps extend 20 degrees.
Runway two eight is dead ahead.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)
Blueberry Hill Traffic Four Sierra
Tango on FINAL, runway two eight,
Blueberry Hill.

The airplane descends, descends, approaching the runway.

The main wheels bump the pavement, the nose wheel hits the
runway centerline. The Skyhawk rolling toward the end of
the runway, turns onto the taxiway, stops.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte's heart beats out of her chest, hands and legs
tremble. Lifeless, she lifts the flaps lever, pushes the
carb heat knob forward, unspools the rudder and elevator
trim wheels.

CHARLOTTE
I'm on the ground. I'm here.
(beat)
Alive.

Deep breaths. She sits still, staring off blankly.

Time is irrelevant.

Lost in fright, she moves gingerly, carefully dialing into
the GPS: KLNK (the LENOX COUNTY AIRPORT LOCATION
IDENTIFIER), the next scheduled touch down.

Methodically she absorbs the readings from each instrument,
touches the flap lever, the carb heat knob, landing light
switch, checks the passenger and pilot side door, pulls the
seat belt tight, looks out the window to the left then to
the right, releases the breaks, gingerly pushes the
throttle forward.

CHARLOTTE
(speaks into headset)
Blueberry Hill Traffic Four Sierra
Tango departing runway two eight,
Blueberry Hill.

EXT. BLUEBERRY HILL AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

The Skyhawk speeds along the runway, lifts off, fades into the blue, still, cloudless sky.

INT. O'BRIEN HOME - SAME DAY MID MORNING

From a LAPTOP COMPUTER Sam reads the morning news, sips coffee from a mug.

Janey prepares a bowl of cereal, pours a glass of orange juice.

SAM

Good morning Janey.

JANE

Oh, morn'n Dad.

SAM

What time was it when you got home last night Jane?

JANE

... 'bout 10.

SAM

I see. ---And where were you until 10?

JANE

William and I went to The Junction.

SAM

And what did you do at The Junction?

JANE

We ate ice cream.

SAM

For hours?

JANE

We talked, ate ice cream, talked;
ate more ice cream, talked some
more.

SAM

(furrows his brow)
That's it?

JANE

You were young once, right Dad?

SAM

Alright Jane. You're mother and I
have taught you right from wrong.
I can only trust that you've
absorbed it.

(beat)

Oh! By the way, your mother is on
her first solo cross-country
flight right now.

JANE

Hey, Dad. I didn't know William
was a pilot.

(beat)

Oh, yeah, about Mom - on her first
solo cross-country, that's great.

SAM

Yeah, I agree. She was pretty
nervous when she left, but I know
she'll do just fine.

JANE

So, William's a pilot?

SAM

Yup, a very good one.

JANE

Oh.

He seems dedicated, bound to
aviation. As though he can't get
enough.

Like you.

SAM

Janey, for many pilots, flying is freedom, a rewarding and fulfilling adventure.

When I soar through the sky there's a chemistry; an irrepressible tug that joins the intellect, the intuitive, the spiritual, and the physical. They all come together to create an experience, a sensation I don't find anywhere else.

The heaviness of life slips away.

JANE

(taken aback)

Woah! Dad, that's intense, heavy stuff.

Do girl pilots feel the same way?

SAM

I dunno Janey.

...But I suspect so. A pilot's a pilot.

EXT. LENOX COUNTY AIRPORT - SAME DAY MID MORNING

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Lenox County traffic Four Sierra Tango on FINAL, TOUCH AND GO RUNWAY FIVE, Lenox County.

SWOOOOSH!

TCH, TCH.

The Skyhawk briefly touches down. In a blink the nose points upward, the tires rise off the runway.

SCHOOOOOOOOOOOM! It shoots through the air, soars into the

sky.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)
Lenox County traffic Four Sierra
Tango departing the traffic area
to the NORTHEAST, Lenox County.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.) (cont'd)
Oh, thank goodness that touch-down
went better than my last one at
Blueberry Hill.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE
Level at 3,500'.

POWER, HEADING, airspeed, turn-
and-bank indicator---all is good.

Charlotte sits back, loosely holds the yoke, relaxes her
shoulders; a tear drips from her eye, rests on her cheek,
then falls through the air ---

MALE CONTROLLER (V.O.)
AVERY APPROACH Four Sierra Tango
traffic at your two o'clock and
4,000', southbound.

CHARLOTTE
Oh geez. What? Is he talking to
me?

(beat)
Yes! He's talking to me.

Charlotte rapidly blinks, halting any more tears from
trickling down her face, snaps to attention, swallows,
considers the two o'clock position, looks through the
windshield.

CHARLOTTE
Oh. There it is! I see it!

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)
(speaks into headset)

Four Sierra Tango has the traffic
in sight.

MALE CONTROLLER (V.O.)
Four Sierra Tango, does it look
like it's at 4,000'?

CHARLOTTE
Huh?

He's asking me a question, like
I'm for real, a real pilot?

He wants *me*-- to let him know what
I think! Does he know who he's
talking to? That I'm a student
pilot on my first solo cross-
country, frightfully insecure,
yearning to safely reach my
destination and have this
experience well behind me? Over
with, DONE.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)
(reeling for confidence)
Get it together Charlotte. C'mon
figure it out. Focus.

Charlotte fixes her eyes on the altimeter. It reads 3,500'.

She scouts the vast empty space at the two o'clock
position, locates the aircraft beyond the windshield,
processes its position.

CHARLOTTE
(speaks into headset)
Avery Approach, from what I see,
it looks like it's at 4,000' Four
Sierra Tango.

MALE CONTROLLER (V.O.)
Four Sierra Tango thank you.

Charlotte beams a sliver of a smile.

EXT. SOARING THROUGH THE BRILLANT LATE MORNING SKY -

CONTINUOUS

The Skyhawk approaches the Shady Valley airport traffic area.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)
(speaks into headset)
Shady Valley traffic, Four Sierra
Tango five miles to the southwest,
in bound for landing, runway six
Shady Valley.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte switches the AWOS and CTAF frequencies, reduces power to 65 knots, adjusts the flaps 20 degrees, pulls the carb heat knob, scans the instruments and the horizon.

CHARLOTTE
(speaks into headset)
Shady Valley traffic, Four Sierra
Tango on final, Shady Valley.

MALE PILOT (O.S.)
Shady Valley Traffic, Hawker Five
One Eight Kilo Sierra five miles
to the west, in bound for landing,
runway six Shady Valley.

EXT. IN THE AIR ABOVE SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

The Skyhawk's wings hold firm, wheels reaching for the runway.

TCH, TCH. A squeaker.

The Skyhawk rolls off the runway onto the taxiway, holds short.

CHARLOTTE
(speaks into headset)
Shady Valley Traffic, clear of
runway six, Shady Valley.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte lays her head against the headrest; body goes limp.

CHARLOTTE

DONE. And I NEVER EVER want to do it again.

She taxis the Skyhawk, picks up her cell phone.

CHARLOTTE

(sends a text message)

To: Sam O'Brien
On the ground at Shady Valley,
holy cow. I did it!

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT APRON - CONTINUOUS

Lineman 1 directs the Skyhawk to a parking area, chocks the Skyhawk, gives Charlotte a thumbs up.

Charlotte gathers her belongings, exits, secures the airplane, walks to the FBO.

Harvey is en route to greet her.

HARVEY

Congratulation Charlotte. I'm very, very, proud of you.

Harvey wraps one arm around her shoulder, squeezes tight.

Charlotte, proud, smiles.

HARVEY (cont'd)

How'd it go?

CAPTAIN MORROW

Excuse me?

Charlotte and Harvey turn toward Captain Morrow. Surprised. Charlotte stares.

CAPTAIN MORROW (cont'd)

(timorously)

Excuse me? Are you the pilot who just landed the Skyhawk?

CHARLOTTE

I am.

(beat)

Wait-a-minute.

Are you the pilot who bullied me out of the pattern a few months ago?

CAPTAIN MORROW

Yes. Ms. O'Brien, I'm the bully with no manners.

CAPTAIN MORROW (cont'd)

But I'd prefer that you know me as Spencer, the pilot of that Hawker that just followed you in. As soon as you earn your license, I'd love to fly with you.

(extends his hand)

It's nice to meet you, *again*, Ms. O'Brien.

CHARLOTTE

(kind smile, extends her hand)

The pleasure's mine. Please call me Charlotte.

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT GROUND INSTRUCTION ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Charlotte records the trip into her logbook: **FIRST CROSS-COUNTRY SOLO ☺☺☺**, calls Sam. He picks up. Charlotte excitedly rambles every detail and emotion about her trip, twirls her hair with her finger, motions her free hand like an airplane through the air, rests her head on her hand. Repeat.

SAM (O.S.)

Charlotte. I adore your enthusiasm.

Congratulations sweetheart. I knew you could do it.

CHARLOTTE

What would I do without you, Sam?
I love you. You're the best. I'll talk to you later.

SAM (O.S.)

I love you too.

INT. O'BRIEN HOME - LATE AFTERNOON

In front of a lit computer screen, textbooks, workbooks sprawled open Charlotte sits at a DESK preparing for the written exam. At the foot of the desk Chuck lies curled up on his bed.

The COMPUTER SCREEN reads:

FAA Private Pilot Practice Test

Questions Taken: 10
Questions Answered Correctly: 6
Your Score!
60.0%

CHARLOTTE

Ugh! I'm doomed! I'll never earn a pilot's license.

Pushing the books away, Charlotte drops her head to the desk, whimpers.

CHARLOTTE

Chuck!

His ears prop; he lovingly looks at Charlotte whose head lays face down in her folded arms on the desk.

CHARLOTTE

I can fly an airplane all by myself, ---not just around the peapod at Shady Valley --- ...but to five different airports, through controlled airspace. I can

handle a go-around, recover from a botched landing, perform a long list of maneuvers, prepare navigation logs, land at night, comprehend an AWOS report, execute basic instrument flying, and even add oil to my airplane, all with a level of proficiency I thought I would never attain. But I can't pass a written exam? It's over! I'm quitting. Five months and 50 hours of training, all down the drain.

Chuckie, it's all over.

Charlotte lifts her head, tears stream down her cheeks. *Confuzzled* (slang), Chuck stares at Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

(tears rest on her cheeks)

And you know what else I can do Chuckie?

From the air, at night, I can turn on the runway lights. You should see it.

(eyes grow wide, face lights up)

One minute the earth below is endlessly dark, lonely. Then I click the mic button five times.

Look here Chuckie,

Charlotte holds her hands in front of herself as if they grip the yolk, right thumb exaggerates the pushing movement over the mic button, located on the yolk, five times.

CHARLOTTE

CLICK! CLICK! CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!
I look out the cockpit window,

She pretends to peer out the cockpit window ahead and to her left.

...and like magic the earth
illuminates; the runway emerges,
even sparkles.

Bewildered and charmed Chuckie's eyes and head follow
Charlotte's voice. Her eyes turn on Chuck.

(Chuckie impressed with
her experience)
How enchanting is that?

It's like. Like... I'm TINKER
BELL.

SAM (O.S.)
(yells)
Charlie? Chaaaarliee?

CHARLOTTE
(quickly wipes away her
tears)
Sam. I'm in here.

SAM
Oh, there you are. Whatcha doing?

CHARLOTTE
Studying.
(beat)
I dunno if I can do this Sam. I
don't think I can pass the
written. I've been studying,
practicing, studying some more. I
just don't think I can do it.

You know, 70 or better is passing.
Without a 70 I'm done; doomed. All
of this, a waste of time and
money.

Failure. I'll be a complete
failure.

SAM
Honey. C'mon, be logical. Let's
take this one step at a time.

What's giving you trouble?

CHARLOTTE
Everything!

SAM
I don't believe that. Let me help.

Sitting next to her, they work through a few questions which she answers correctly.

He lifts her chin with a gentle hand and draws her face toward his.

SAM
You can do it Charlie.

Her cheeks glow red, dimples undulate, eyes sparkle, a smile grows; a wave of love ripples across her face.

SAM
I'm heading to the airport, sweet heart. I'll be back in an hour.

Jane walks through the door, passes Sam on his way out.

JANE
Hi Dad.

SAM
Hi Janey. See you in a bit.

JANE
Okay Dad. Hi Mom. Whatcha doin'?

CHARLOTTE
Studying for my written. How was school today?

JANE
Oh.
It was fine Mom.

William kissed me last night.

CHARLOTTE

(comfortably shocked)
 What? ...Oh. Okay.
 (long pause)
 Well. William is a very nice boy;
 respectful from what I have
 experienced.
 (beat)
 He wasn't fresh was he?

JANE
 No Mom. Not at all. Matter of fact
 it was a nice experience. We
 laughed a lot. He's different.

CHARLOTTE
 Well just remember Janey, you're
 only 16. Don't get carried away.
 Keep your head on straight. And if
 you don't feel comfortable, say
 so.
 (beat)
 A relationship, love ...takes
 time.

Janey rests her chin on the palm of her hand, stares; a
 smile blushes.

JANE
 Okay Mom.

EXT. IN THE AIR ABOVE SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT - LATE AFTERNOON

The Skyhawk soars at us, turning and banking around
 playful, puffy clouds floating in the brilliant, blue sky.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

William is the pilot. Joseph is the passenger, right seat.

JOSEPH
 (speaks into headset)
 WHOA! This is addicting. What a
 thrill.

SWISH! The gargantuan, fluffy cloud is an arms-length away.

JOSEPH
(speaks into headset)
You're not going to fly through
that cloud, are...?

The airplane penetrates the cloud. The view through the windshield is milky, translucent white, beads of water rush and roll around the contours of the windshield.

Suddenly the airplane emerges, gliding through the rich blue sky.

JOSEPH
(speaks into headset)
Aw, man. Let's do that again.

William lowers the flaps 10 degrees, reduces power, pulls gingerly on the yoke, keeping an eye on the turn-and-bank, and the airspeed indicators. The nose rises.

JOSEPH
(speaks into headset)
Yo, dude what are you doing?

WILLIAM
(speaks into headset)
No worries Joseph; I'm just
practicing a stall. Everything is
fine.

The airspeed indicator needle sinks toward 54 knots.

WILLIAM
(speaks into headset)
Hold tight Joseph. In just a
moment you will hear a piercing,
horn-like sound, indicating the
initiation of a stall.

The airplane slows, stands still almost, the nose rolls to the left, the right wing rises.

BEEEEEP...

William pushes the yoke forward, firewalls the throttle, lifts the flaps lever 10 degrees. The stall horn stops

screeching, the nose straightens, right wing levels.

Forward flight resumes.

JOSEPH

(heavy breathing, speaks
into headset)

Holy cow man! You're pretty good.

(beat)

Hey, do you think I could become a
pilot?

WILLIAM

(snarky, speaks into
headset)

Yeah! Of course, especially since
Janey's taught you the basics of
airplane mechanics *and* how to use
a screwdriver.

EXT. ROARING THROUGH THE SKY - SAME MOMENT

The tail of the Skyhawk dune-buggies through the sky
turning and banking around the clouds.

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT - DAY

FAA TEST CENTER

Charlotte sits at a cubicle in front of a COMPUTER SCREEN
which reads "Click to begin your test."

Click!

Question 1 appears.

Silently she reads to herself, then softly reads out loud.

- A. (Refer to figure 25, area 5.)
The VOR is tuned to the Ranger
VORTAC. The Omni bearing
selector (OBS) is set on 256°,
with a TO indication, and a left
course deviation indicator (CDI)
deflection. What is the

aircraft's position from the
VORTAC?

- A. East-Northeast.
- B. East-Southeast.
- C. West-Northwest.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)
(inner voices arguing)
I don't know the answer.
(beat)
*Okay, take a deep breath, slow
down, read the question, read the
answers. Charlie, you know this
stuff.*

CHARLOTTE (V.O.) (cont'd)
(deep breath, out loud she works
through the question)
A. A is the answer.

Okay, next question.

A few moments elapse.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)
HMMMM, I think it's C. Yup. It's
C.

With a bounce in her demeanor Charlotte continues working
through each of the 60 questions.

The computer screen displays "CLICK TO FINISH." With the
MOUSE CURSOR she clicks finish.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)
(hyperventilating,
closes eyes)
*Please God, please let it be a 70
or better.*

Charlotte opens her EYES.

A 93 lights up the screen. Her jaw drops. Overwhelmed with
relief, she stares in disbelief, glows a smile of pride and
relief.

She pulls a phone from her purse.

CHARLOTTE
(sends a text message)
To: Sam O'Brien

I passed! Got a 93, can you
believe it?

CUT TO:

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT MAINTENANCE HANGAR - SAME

While Sam works on an OLD, 1970'S SKYHAWK his phone dings a text message. He walks to his office, reads the text message; smiles proudly, replies.

SAM
To: Charlotte O'Brien

Emoji: smiley, hands clapping, red
heart, jet plane, ice cream cone,
party popper, trumpet, fireworks.

CUT BACK:

INT. FAA TEST CENTER - CONTINUOUS

A large smile blooms across Charlotte's face; her eyes sparkle.

CUT TO:

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT MAINTENANCE HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

Sam walks back to the Skyhawk, continues to work.

WILLIAM
Hi Mr. O'Brien. Can I lend you a
hand?

SAM
Uh. No thanks William. I'm tending
to this one myself.

WILLIAM
Okay Mr. O'Brien. If you change
your mind let me know.

William looks over the airplane, tail number 007CO: **Double
Oh Seven Charlie Oscar.**

CUT BACK:

INT. FAA TEST CENTER - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE
(sends a text message)
To: Harvey Warner

Harvey, I passed! Even got a 93!
Woohoo!

Charlotte waiting for a response, obsessively checks her
phone.

CHARLOTTE
Yay! There he is!

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)
(reads a text message)
FROM: Harvey Warner

FANTASTIC Charlotte!

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT GROUND INSTRUCTION ROOM - A FEW
DAYS LATER

HARVEY
Charlotte, there's no doubt in my
mind that you're a fantastic
pilot.

You should have no trouble
performing well on the oral and
practical exams.

Over the next few weeks practice
each maneuver with and without me.

Be sure to study your test
guidebook too.

The FAA EXAMINER will expect you
to perform proficiently and
confidently.

Don't be afraid to show him that
you have command of the airplane.

Charlotte, in earnest, obediently nods.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS:

EXT. SKY - DAY

In a quick series of shots Charlotte, alone, at the controls
performs several maneuvers.

--SWOOSH! The airplane takes off, needing only a short
portion of runway.

--CA PLUNK! The airplane lands, needing only a short portion
of runway. Taxies off the runway.

--SWEESH! The airplane meanders low above a SNAKING RIVER.

The engine idles --CHUG, CHUG, CHUG, the airplane stalls,
then TCHEEEW! It roars back to life.

--SWOOSH! The airplane flies above and around a silo.

--EERN! The airplane circles in a 45 degree bank turn.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)

(confidently)

Shady Valley Traffic, Skyhawk
Eight One Four Sierra Tango on
final, touch-and-go, Shady Valley.

--VROOOM! The airplane's wheels barely touching the runway,
skims the pavement.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte firewalls the throttle and the carb heat knob,

gently pulls the yoke toward her belly. The nose pitches up. --TCHOOOOOOWM! The airplane rockets skyward.

She lifts the flap lever 20 degrees, glances at the airspeed indicator. It reads 73 knots. She retracts the final increments of flaps.

EXT. RESUME SKY - SAME MOMENT

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
 Shady Valley Traffic, Skyhawk
 Eight One Four Sierra Tango left
 crosswind runway 24, Shady Valley.

INT. O'BRIEN HOME - EVENING

--Sam watches TV while Charlotte lies on the couch, reading *Guided Flight Discovery* textbook.

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT GROUND INSTRUCTION ROOM

--Seated at the rectangular table Harvey draws and explains aeronautical concepts to Charlotte.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S CAR - AFTERNOON

--While Charlotte waits in the High School pick-up line for Jane the radio softly plays country music. Charlotte reads the *Oral Test Guidebook*, periodically highlighting text.

INT. O'BRIEN HOME - DAY

--*Sectional aeronautical chart* sprawled out over the entire desk, Charlotte calculates the route distances, times, headings.

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT GROUND INSTRUCTION ROOM - DAY

--Harvey quizzes Charlotte. Fists and arms do a happy dance when answering correctly; shoulders drop, frustration waves across her face when answering incorrectly.

EXT. ON TOP OF A MOUNTAIN - DAY

--Charlotte lies on her belly in the grass, legs crossed and bent toward the sky reading through the last pages of *Oral Test Guidebook*. Chuckie lies next to her.

INT. O'BRIEN HOME - EVENING

--Sam quizzes Charlotte. She raises her hands in victory, high-five's Sam when reciting a correct answer and drops her head on the table when reciting a wrong answer.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

The radiant orange sphere drops under the horizon, the final sliver of sunlight descends below the edge of the world, darkness prevails, stars light the sky, steady white lights line the runway boundaries; to the right blue lights flowing parallel to a green lighted centerline denote the taxiway.

TRAFFIC CONTROLLER (V.O.)
Eight One Four Sierra Tango clear
to land.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
Clear to land Eight One Four
Sierra Tango.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.) (cont'd)
Oh, boy! There are a lot of lights
ahead.

Harvey sits silently, relaxed in the copilot seat; his hands and feet no longer poised to take command of the flight controls.

The Skyhawk approaches the runway of a busy airport, aims for the string of green lights.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)
Do I head for the green
centerline?

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Flustered, Charlotte scans her brain, studies the constellation of airport lights ahead. The yoke bobs and weaves.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

No, No! White lights. That's where
I need to go, between the white
lights.

Focus on the target, keep the
periphery at bay.

EXT. IN THE AIR - CONTINUOUS

The Skyhawk turns to the left, the nose aims for the string
of white parallel lights. Two red, two white lights on the
left side of the runway illuminate.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

On the glide slope. Yay!

Reduce the power to 2,100 rpm's.

Airspeed 70 knots.

10 degrees of flaps.

Landing light switch.

EXT. IN THE AIR - CONTINUOUS

The airplane descends.

EXT. APPROACHING THE RUNWAY - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Flare, keep the airplane straight,
a little rudder, ailerons, nice
and easy.

Stay between the white lights.

Okay. Okay.

TTSSST...GREASER.

YES! I did it. Great landing.

HARVEY (V.O.)

Let's do it again Charlotte.

END OF MONTAGE:

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - DAY

HARVEY

(speaks into headset)

Charlotte, I'm confident in your abilities; you're ready for the oral and practical tests.

Harvey's torso sways, ...hunches over. His head drops; he collapses on the yolk. The airplane dives.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

HARVEY! Harvey! Harvey, are you okay? What's wrong?

Her right hand pushes his chest back against the seat; she grabs his arm, shakes him, yanking the yolk with all the might of her left arm. The nose of the airplane rises.

Groggy, sweating, dizzy, gasping and heaving for air, Harvey mumbles.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

Shady Valley Unicom, Skyhawk Eight One Four Sierra Tango has a situation, Shady Valley.

SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT UNICOM (V.O.)

Skyhawk Eight One Four Sierra Tango go ahead.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

Shady Valley Unicom, Skyhawk Eight One Four Sierra Tango I think Harvey is having a heart attack. He'll need help. We're on final, runway two four, Shady Valley.

Charlotte holds his hand tight, caresses his arm.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

Harvey, you are fine; everything's going to be okay. Talk to me Harvey. Okay forget it, don't talk to me. Yeah, right. No, don't talk to me. Save your energy. But, Harvey, squeeze my hand tight, if you can.

He struggles, fights for consciousness; a few fingers mildly squeeze her hand.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

Okay, that's great Harvey.

I'm getting us on the ground. We'll be there in just a sec. Okay, hang on. Stick with me.

His grip weakens.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

Harvey, hold on to my arm now. I need my hand to reduce power, lower the flaps. We're almost there.

Tighter Harvey; I need you to hold a little tighter.

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT RUNWAY - CONTINUOUS

TTSSST! The airplane touches down, taxis to the awaiting AMBULANCE and RESCUE HELICOPTER, stops; engine quits, propeller freezes.

INT./EXT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT APRON - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte unfastens her seatbelt, throws the headset on the glare shield, moves toward Harvey, unlatches and opens the passenger side door; frees Harvey from the seatbelt.

CHARLOTTE

Harvey, we're here. You're going to be okay.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

Harvey, Harvey! Can you hear me? Harvey.

Harvey is unresponsive. The paramedics swish Charlotte out of the way, whisk Harvey into the stretcher, loading him into the helicopter. The door latches tightly.

Charlotte, helpless, despondent, looks on.

The helicopter engine spools up, blades rotate faster and faster and faster; noise intensifies, main rotor blades whip around until they appear stationary. The tail wiggles; roto craft lifts slowly, wobbles; hovering, then, thrusting forward like a dart.

Distance and the fading whooping sound separate Charlotte from Harvey.

She stands watch, weak and weeping.

CHARLOTTE

(sad panic)

Don't die Harvey. *Please* don't die. You have to be okay.

(speaks softer, eyes look to the ground)

Please, please, God, let him be okay.

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT - EARLY MORNING

FAA TEST CENTER

Charlotte and the FAA EXAMINER exit the ground instruction room.

CHARLOTTE

(annoyingly chipper)

Do you know that we've been talking about airplanes for two-

and-a-half hours?...

...That's a lot of airplane talk.

Well! So, how'd I do? Did I pass
the oral exam?

FAA EXAMINER
(matter-of-factly)
You did very well Charlotte. Let's
move on to the CHECKRIDE.

CHARLOTTE
(speaks under her
breath, satisfied smirk)
Yes!

FAA EXAMINER
Go ahead and preflight.

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte performs the preflight walk-around inspection,
enters the aircraft.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

The FAA Examiner cozies himself into the right seat,
overtaking a portion of Charlotte's personal space.

Both place the headsets over their ears.

FAA EXAMINER
(speaks into headset)
Takeoff will be short-field. Once
airborne fly the prepared cross-
country route to the first
checkpoint.

CHARLOTTE
(speaks into headset)
Okay.

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
Shady Valley Traffic, Skyhawk
Eight One Four Sierra Tango's
taxiing to runway six, Shady
Valley.

The Skyhawk taxis directly over the centerline, onto the runway, holds short. The wing flaps extend.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
Shady Valley Traffic, Skyhawk
Eight One Four Sierra Tango's
departing runway six, Shady
Valley.

The engine rumbles toward max power.

--VROOM! The airplane takes off, needing only a short portion of runway, climbs to level flight.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

The altimeter reads 5,500'. Charlotte pulls the power to 115 knots - cruising speed, rolls the rudder wheel to ensure the Skyhawk is flying straight and level, scans and compares the compass with the GPS HEADING. Both read forty-five degrees.

FAA EXAMINER
(speaks into headset)
Have you spotted any identified
GROUND REFERENCE LANDMARKS yet?

CHARLOTTE
(speaks into headset)
Below and just beyond the nose, at
our one o'clock are the RAILROAD
TRACKS, at our twelve o'clock is
THE JUNCTION DAIRY FARM. That's
where my favorite ice-cream is
made.

Do you like ice-cream?

FAA EXAMINER

(speaks into headset)
Charlotte, I'd like you to fly a
190 degree heading and descend to
4,500'.

She nods.

EXT. IN THE AIR - CONTINUOUS

The airplane descends, turning left to the 190 degree heading.

FAA EXAMINER (O.S.)
Now, I'd like you to perform a
power-off stall.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte pulls the throttle. The RPM needle reads 1,500; the engine slows, idles, flaps extend 30 degrees, the tail sags, the nose rises gently, airspeed indicator reads 48 knots. She pulls the carb heat knob.

--CHUG, CHUG, CHUG...

The airplane grows mushy, the nose rolls to the left, the right wing rises; it stalls.

---BEEEEEP...

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - SAME MOMENT

Charlotte smoothly pushes the yoke and throttle forward, firewalls the carb heat knob, notches up the flaps lever 20 degrees.

The stall warning horn no longer screeches.

EXT. IN THE AIR - SAME MOMENT

---TCHEEEEEWM!

The engine roars back to life. The nose coils back to the

right. Straight and level flight resumes.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

FAA EXAMINER

(speaks into headset)

See that house next to the lake,
near the helicopter on the dock?

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset,
peers out the window)

Yes, Sir. I see it.

FAA EXAMINER

(speaks into headset)

I'd like you to circle the house.
Maintain 4,500', 90 knots, and a
45 degree bank turn.

Charlotte scans the instrument panel, spots the house and
the helicopter on the dock below.

FAA EXAMINER

(speaks into headset)

That's my house and my neighbor
uses the helicopter to go back and
forth to work. Can you see the
driveway?...

CHARLOTTE (V.O)

(preoccupied)

*Concentrate Charlotte. Fly the
airplane. Check the attitude
indicator - maintain the 45 degree
bank turn, don't let that vertical
airspeed indicator needle bob more
than 100 feet below or above zero,
hold it firm. Appear interested in
his story.*

(beat)

I see the driveway.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

I see it. I see the driveway, Sir.

Wow, that's a neat place to live.

EXT. IN THE AIR - CONTINUOUS

The airplane rolls out of the 45 degree bank turn.

SCHOOOOOOOOOOOM! The tail skids; it zooms through the sky, high above the placid lake, surrounded by verdant, smokey-blue, mountain ranges.

FAA EXAMINER (O.S.)
(speaks into headset)
Very good Charlotte.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

In a blink Charlotte jerks the airplane to the right.

FAA EXAMINER
(gravely alarmed, speaks
into headset)
What are you doing?

CHARLOTTE
(speaks into headset)
Didn't you see that airplane at
our eleven o'clock, approaching
nearly head-on?

FAA EXAMINER
(speaks into headset)
No!
(beat)
Oh, there it is. I see it. Good
work Charlotte.

When two aircraft are converging,
always alter your heading to the
right.

Great instincts.

Like a well-trained fighter pilot (Top Gun - you know?)
Charlotte quickly scans every window, ensuring the aircraft
is clear of her flight path.

CHARLOTTE

(calmly resigned to
destiny, speaks into
headset)

There it is! ...gracefully turning
to the left in the opposite
direction of our path, peacefully
floating without a care in the
world.

Geez, you never know: alive one
minute, dead the next. That's how
fragile life is.

(beat)

That was close, don'cha think?

The FAA Examiner is unamused with her commentary, disguises
his relief.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

FAA EXAMINER

(speaks into headset)

Head back to the airport, descend
at 1,000' per minute to pattern
altitude.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)

Yes Sir.

EXT. IN THE SKY ABOVE THE AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

The airplane banks and turns.

Charlotte flops the radio frequency from CTAF to AWOS to
obtain airport advisories and the weather.

SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT AWOS (V.O.)

Shady Valley airport automated
weather observation, one five four
five zulu, winds one-four zero @
ten gusting to fourteen,
visibility more than one zero, sky

condition clear below one two thousand, temperature two three, dew point one eight, altimeter three zero one eight, remarks density altitude two thousand three hundred.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Oh geez.

A direct crosswind and howling at 10 knots gusting to 14.

She rolls the rudder wheel to the left, the elevator trim clockwise.

You can do it Charlotte. Nothing to it. Crab into the wind. Flaps down, maintain 70 knots. Hold that left rudder pedal.

You got this Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.) (cont'd)

Shady Valley Traffic, Skyhawk
Eight One Four Sierra Tango's on
final runway six, Shady Valley.

Cockeyed, the airplane bobbles, crabs wickedly against the wind as it approaches the runway.

...Descending, descending, descending, fiercely clinging to its position.

...Patiently floating inches from touch down.

The main wheels smooch the pavement, the nose wheel gently kisses the centerline. A squeaker!

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

A confident, relieving smile overtakes Charlotte's face.

The Examiner shoots her a reassuring nod.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks into headset)
Shady Valley Traffic, Skyhawk
Eight One Four Sierra Tango's
clear of runway six, Shady Valley.

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT APRON - CONTINUOUS

At the direction of the Lineman, Charlotte parks the Skyhawk. He chocks a wheel, giving her a thumbs-up.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte shuts down, secures the aircraft. She and the Examiner remove their headsets.

CHARLOTTE
(timidly)
Did I pass?

FAA EXAMINER
You did very well Charlotte. Let's
head inside and finish up the
paperwork.

CHARLOTTE
Yes Sir...

...But. But first, will you take a
picture of me?

FAA EXAMINER
Yes, of course.

CHARLOTTE
Okay great. Here's my cell phone.

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT APRON - MOMENTS LATER

They step out of the airplane. Charlotte stands in front of Four Sierra Tango, the FAA Examiner a few feet away.

FAA EXAMINER
Are you ready Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE

Okaaaay. Ready.

(beat)

Uh, wait. I have to fix my hair,
pull my shirt down, and tie my
shoe.

(beat)

Okay. I'm ready. Tell me when you
are going to take it.

FAA EXAMINER

On the count of three, Charlotte,
I will snap the picture.

One!

Two!

Three!

Charlotte THROWS HER HANDS IN THE AIR, JUMPS TOWARD THE
SKY.

CLICK!

CLICK!

CLICK!

The Examiner returns the cell phone, shuffles into the
terminal. She gathers her belongings, follows him in,
skipping, toggling through the pictures.

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

FAA TEST CENTER GROUND INSTRUCTION ROOM

With his forefingers the Examiner pokes at the COMPUTER
KEYBOARD. Charlotte sits on an office chair in front of the
CLUTTERED DESK scanning the certificates hanging on the
walls. The OLD, DUSTY PRINTER spits out Charlotte's
TEMPORARY AIRMAN CERTIFICATE.

FAA EXAMINER

Sign right here.

Speechless, Charlotte swallows, neatly signs her name.

FAA EXAMINER

If you don't receive your permanent certificate in the next three months, give me a call.

(beat, he stands up, extends his hand)

Uhh, Oh and Charlotte, ...
CONRATULATIONS! You are one of a few. There aren't many pilots in the world and even fewer female. You should be very proud.

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT FBO - MOMENTS LATER

Charlotte sits on a BENCH outside the airport FBO ENTRANCE, admiring her temporary airmen certificate.

CHARLOTTE

I did it. I really did it. I'm a pilot.

Tears drip onto her temporary airmen certificate.

She pulls out her cell phone, texts Sam.

CHARLOTTE

(sends a text message)

To: Sam O'Brien

I'm a pilot!

CUT TO:

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT MAINTENANCE HANGAR - SAME MOMENT

Sam is in the hangar tightening the camloc fasteners on the Skyhawk's nose cowling; his phone dings a text message.

While reading, he tenderly nods his head, humbly smiles.

SAM

(replies)

To: Charlotte O'Brien

Congrats! I'm in the maintenance hangar come over here.

CUT BACK:

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT FBO - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE
(phone dings a text message, reads it and replies)
To: Sam O'Brien

I'm on my way.

She wipes the tears from her face, skips over to the maintenance hangar.

Jane, William, and a team of other mechanics work on the airplanes.

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT MAINTENANCE HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

CHARLOTTE
(overflowing with pride, jumping up and down, waving her airman certificate)
Sam, can you believe it? I'm a pilot!

SAM
(embraces her)
Of course I can believe it Charlie. I'm so proud of you. You're the best!

He softly snuggles her hand and pulls her toward 007CO.

SAM
C'mon, this way. I want to show you something.

CHARLOTTE

Okay, but first I want to tell you everything about my check-ride.

SAM

Yes, yes, and I want to hear all about it, but right now this is more important.

Charlotte, irritated, stops, pulls her hand from his tender grip, placing both on her hips.

CHARLOTTE

(the wind drained from her sails, scolding)
Sam. What possibly could be more important than my earning a pilot's license?

SAM

(he points to 007CO)
That. Charlie ...Double Oh Seven
Charlie Oscar.

It's yours Charlie.

An old, 1970's single engine airplane rests on the tarmac.

CHARLOTTE

No. No way. No it's not.

SAM

Yes it is.

CHARLOTTE

(tears of joy)
OH MY GOD SAM!

My own airplane. And the N-NUMBER:
Double Oh Seven - like a bond
girl.

...And C.O. - **CHARLIE OSCAR** - like
me, **CHARLOTTE O'BRIEN**. My very own
personalized CALL SIGN.

Tears streaming down her face, gasping for air, trying not to choke.

CHARLOTTE
DOUBLE OH SEVEN - CHARLIE OSCAR!

SAM
(happy)
Let's go for a ride Captain
O'Brien.

EXT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT RUNWAY - CONTINUOUS

Double Oh Seven Charlie Oscar LIFTS OFF.

INT. SHADY VALLEY AIRPORT MAINTENANCE HANGAR - SAME MOMENT

Velvety country music strums in the background.

Joseph, Jane and William watch Double Oh Seven Charlie Oscar takeoff. William touches Jane's hand, tangles his fingers with hers.

JANE
William, will you teach me to fly
some day?

They exchange adoring glances.

INT. SKYHAWK COCKPIT - SAME

Charlotte beguiled with the adventure, pilots Double Oh Seven Charlie Oscar. Sam is right seat, lovestruck.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Charlotte, afraid, shyly peeks into Harvey's hospital room. Their eyes meet. Cautiously, she runs to his bedside, wraps herself around him. He lays stiff, fragile, lifts his large, heavy, lethargic arm strung to an IV and dangling with tubes, embraces her.

CHARLOTTE
(happy, full of life)
Thank goodness. Omigod Harvey!

You're okay; ALIVE. I was so
terrified, empty, hollow inside.
But you came through. Thank God.

Straining to speak, to react, Harvey sheds a tear.

HARVEY

(serious)

Charlotte (clears his throat)
...you're a special girl; your
command of the airplane during the
unfortunate situation in which I
put us, was impressive. Thank you.

CHARLOTTE

(matter-of-factly)

Well. What else would I have done?
You taught me.

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

(somber)

Harvey, when the helicopter flew
away I didn't know if I'd ever see
you again.

(beat)

Do you know what that feeling is
like Harvey? Do you? Do you
Harvey?

(beat)

But here you are. Here we are,
talking. Thank God.

(beat)

Harvey, YOU ... you ...

Charlotte lifts herself from his chest, unaware that she is
pulling the IV out of his hand and the tubes from his
chest. Machinery begins to blink and screech, the heart
rate monitor flat lines.

Charlotte, panic stricken, is tangled in the web of tubes
and plugs. She fumbles, fiddles with the tube, the IV
catheter, plugs both back in.

A cast of nurses and doctors barge through the door,
shoving Charlotte aside.

The blinking, screeching machines, fall silent; the heart

rate monitor displays HEALTHY VITALS.

Charlotte stands watch, weak with relief.

CHARLOTTE

(speaks to the medical
personnel)

He's fine, really. There was
nothing wrong with him. It was my
fault. I got caught up in the
wires. But I plugged them back in.
He's good now. Everything is fine.

With a look of disapproval the nurses and doctors exit.

Harvey smiles a peaceful expression.

HARVEY

On the ground, you always were a
clumsy girl, Charlotte. Remember
the first time we met?

CHARLOTTE

How could I forget? What a clutz I
was.

HARVEY

But as soon as you stepped into
the airplane I knew you were cut
out to be a pilot.

You seemed to feel the airplane,
eagerly scanning the instrument
panel and touching the flight
controls, all, with humble
wonderment. Your intrigue and
enthusiasm were infectious.

Yeah, of course ... I saw your
fear, but I knew you would
overcome it.

Charlotte stands close to his bedside, cuddles his hand,
pulls a piece of paper from her back pocket, holds it in
front of his eyes.

HARVEY

(weak)
 What's this Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE
 (flippant, unsympathetic
 to his condition)
 Well, Harvey, you need to read it.

HARVEY
 (weak)
 Charlotte, can you get my glasses
 over there on the bed stand.

CHARLOTTE
 (irritated)
 Oh bother. You'd think you've had
 a heart attack or something.

She places the spectacles over his eyes, holds the piece of
 paper directly in his line of sight.

HARVEY
 (straining)
 United States of America
 Charlotte O'Brien
 Private Pilot
 (beat)
 Well. Look at that, the
 inevitable. Congratulations
 Charlotte!

CHARLOTTE
 You know Harvey, ... you changed
 my life.

HARVEY
 You know Charlotte, ... you saved
 mine.

They embrace.

FADE OUT.