They Promised Her the Moon
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Cast of Characters

(In order of appearance:)

JERRIE COBB, an Oklahoma girl, portrayed from 7–50 years old.

DR. LOVELACE, a scientist and a doctor, in his 50s.

MRS. WHITE, Jerrie's first-grade teacher in Oklahoma.

CHILD 1

CHILD 2

JACKIE COCHRAN, portrayed from 35–55 years old.

HARVEY COBB, Jerrie's father, portrayed from 30–60 years old.

PILOT

HELENA COBB, Jerrie's mother, in her 30s.

CIRCUS BOB, owner of a rural Oklahoma circus.

MAYOR, a small-town politician.

JACK FORD, a pilot with plenty of swagger, in his 40s.

YOUNG WOMAN

JOHN GLENN, one of the Mercury 7 astronauts.

CONGRESSMAN ANFUSO, New York congressman.

CONGRESSMAN WAGGONNER, Southern congressman.

CARLOS (voice only), air traffic controller in the Amazon jungle.

RADIO NEWSCASTER (voice only)

FEMALE REPORTER

VARIOUS OTHER REPORTERS

Casting Note

Roles can be doubled, except for the roles of Jerrie and Jackie.

Suggested casting breakdown for six actors (three men, three women):

1. JERRIE COBB, one actress plays Jerrie from ages 7 to 50.
2. JACKIE COCHRAN, one actress plays Jackie from ages 35 to 55.
3. HELENA, also Mrs. White, Young Woman, and Female Reporter.
4. DR. LOVELACE, also Congressman Waggonner.
5. HARVEY, also Circus Bob and Congressman Anfuso.
6. JACK FORD, also Mayor, Pilot, and John Glenn.

Various reporters, school children, and voice-overs can be determined in the room.

Style of Play

The play takes place in a highly theatrical world in order to create many locations and events over the span of decades. We go back and forth in time, and into Jerrie's head and out again.

Simple, representational, and flexible props, set pieces, costume pieces, lighting, and sound design create the desired theatrical effect. For example, "floating" in the isolation tank may be achieved in many ways—one of the simplest is a pool of light on the stage floor. The physical tests that Jerrie is put through at the end of Act One should be intense and quick, accelerating and ending in the isolation tank.

Scene changes are often indicated only by shifts in light and sound while the action is continuous. Swift transitions are key.

Author's Note

They Promised Her the Moon is based on the true story of Geraldyn "Jerrie" Cobb (1931–2019), a barrier-breaking, world record–holding pilot, and *almost* the first American female astronaut.

When NASA cancelled the space shuttle program, I was struck by the idea of what it must have been like to be an American astronaut in line to go up in space and have the program cancelled—particularly for a female astronaut. There was no SpaceX then. NASA was the only ride.

I imagined all the things those women had to do—to prove, to get that far, to get that close to their dream. I started writing a short story about a female astronaut whose program was cancelled. As part of my research, I googled "first American female astronaut," expecting stories about Sally Ride. I was shocked to also find a much earlier group of aspiring female astronauts. Jerrie Cobb was the prominent figure in the "Mercury 13," a group of exceptional women pilots who passed the same tests as the Mercury 7 astronauts (i.e. John Glenn, et al.) at the same time.

Why had I never heard of them? No one I knew had heard of them. There are far too many amazing women in our history that we don't know because their stories are not told. I wanted to tell this one.

There is so much research you can do for a play like this. But at a certain point, you have to stop researching—and just write it. Certainly, there are scenes that are completely from my imagination. But there are also things that were so unbelievable that I couldn't have possibly made them up.

The quotes from the reporters and journalists of the time and the words in the congressional hearings are 99% verbatim from transcripts of actual events.

Acknowledgments

I am eternally grateful for the support and insight from a number of actors, directors, designers, producers, dramaturgs, and the unconditional support of many fabulous friends.

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Production History

They Promised Her the Moon was developed and produced in an Off-Broadway workshop production by the Miranda Theatre Company in 2017. It was directed by Valentina Fratti. The cast included Amanda Quaid, Edmund Lewis, Andrus Nichols, John Leonard Thompson, John Russell, and Polly McKie.

They Promised Her the Moon was developed at the Old Globe as part of their Powers New Voices Festival in 2018. It was directed by Giovanna Sardelli.

They Promised Her the Moon was developed at TheatreWorks Silicon Valley as part of their New Works Festival in 2018. It was directed by Giovanna Sardelli.

They Promised Her the Moon received its West Coast premiere at the Old Globe Theatre (Barry Edelstein, Erna Finci Viterbi Artistic Director, and Timothy J. Shields, Managing Director) on April 11, 2019. It was directed by Giovanna Sardelli, the scenic design was by Jo Winiarski, the costume design was by Denitsa Bliznakova, the lighting design was by Cat Tate Starmer, the sound design was by Jane Shaw, and the stage manager was Jess Slocum. The cast included Morgan Hallett, Matthew Boston, Mary Beth Fisher, Michael Pemberton, Lanna Joffrey, and Peter Rini.

The Northern California premiere of *They Promised Her the Moon* was produced by TheatreWorks Silicon Valley (Robert Kelley, Artistic Director). It opened in March 2020, and sadly only played for three performances due to the virus. It was directed by Giovanna Sardelli with assistant director Emily Jackson, the scenic design was by Christopher Fitzer, the lighting design was by Steven B. Mannshardt, the costume design was by Cathleen Edwards, the sound design was by Jane Shaw, and the stage manager was Randall K. Lum. The cast included Sarah Mitchell, Dan Hiatt, Anthony Fusco, Stacy Ross, Luisa Sermol, and Craig Marker.

THEY PROMISED HER THE MOON
by Laurel Ollstein

ACT ONE

(In the darkness.
The sounds of an Oklahoma cornfield on a summer night. Wind brushing through the stalks. Crickets chattering.
The sound of breathing.
Lights softly up on JERRIE COBB*—hard to tell how old she is with her thin frame and hair pulled back into a tight ponytail—she could be 12 or 40.)*

JERRIE. I'm running as fast as I can through the cornfield—the stalks taller than me. Ten feet maybe. Scratching my arms, my face—I don't care—I have a good tailwind—and then in this dream, I jump—and fly. Over the field, zoom past our house with mother standing at the back porch searching for me, course she doesn't look up. I fly over the barn, the cows, school, church, Lake Thunderbird, and fields and mountains and oceans.
I see the curvature of the earth.
The moon rises out of the sea.
Hear myself breathing.
The same air that angels breathe. I explode into the clouds.
And—I—disappear.
I'm *not* lost. I just don't wish to be found.

(She laughs lightly.)

The first time . . .
Even before we reached 300 feet, I knew that the sky would be my home. You knew, too.
"And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive." Matthew 21:22.

(Lights change as JERRIE *is now floating in an isolation tank. A voice over a microphone.)*

DR. LOVELACE. Jerrie?

(Lights brighten on Dr. Lovelace's lab. He's at a console speaking into the microphone.)

Jerrie?

(The echoey sounds from inside an isolation tank. JERRIE *can hear him, but she does not see him as she floats in the tank.)*

DR. LOVELACE. We are about to begin. Are you ready?

JERRIE. I am, sir.

DR. LOVELACE. *(Speaking into a recorder:)* Geraldyn Cobb—isolation tank—0800 hours February 14, 1960.

(To JERRIE, *in the microphone:)*

Comfortable, Jerrie?

JERRIE. It's . . .

DR. LOVELACE. . . . like flying.

JERRIE. I can't feel the water.

DR. LOVELACE. It's the same as your body temperature, so is the air.

JERRIE. Weightless.

DR. LOVELACE. As close as we can get to simulating space.

JERRIE. Just where I want to be, sir.

DR. LOVELACE. Floating in a lightproof, soundproof, vibration-proof room?

JERRIE. And I thank you, sir.

DR. LOVELACE. We're monitoring you at all times. And watching with an infrared camera—so you won't drown.

JERRIE. I am not worried. I'm a good swimmer, sir.

DR. LOVELACE. Now, Jerrie, as I told you, you might experience visions or voices. Probably will. Everyone else has. Even John Glenn. Extreme sensory isolation can produce periods of high levels of anxiety and hallucinations. So if and when you're ready to come out, just say the word. All you have to do is speak.

JERRIE. Speak, sir?

DR. LOVELACE. If you want to come out, just let me know.

JERRIE. Just say what I need, sir?

DR. LOVELACE. That's right, Jerrie. Just speak.

MRS. WHITE. *(From offstage, a distant Oklahoman voice:)* Speak, Geraldyn.

*(*LOVELACE *does not hear or see* MRS. WHITE.*)*

DR. LOVELACE. This test will give us some indication of how you would react to prolonged weightlessness and tolerate stress.

(An exasperated MRS. WHITE*—an Oklahoma schoolteacher—enters the tank and talks directly to* JERRIE*.)*

MRS. WHITE. Speak! Geraldyn, just spit it out, girl. You been standin' there for a full minute. Say something.

(Actors run onstage as the children—pushing and teasing. JERRIE *is now, at once, floating in the tank and her seven-year-old self. Her memories are invading the tank.*
DR. LOVELACE *continues to work at his console and speaks to* JERRIE *through the microphone.)*

CHILD 1. She can't even talk!

CHILD 2. Let me read.

CHILD 1. No.

CHILD 2. She's stupid.

CHILD 1. You're stupid.

CHILD 2. YOU are!

BOTH CHILDREN. Mrs. Whiiiiite!!

MRS. WHITE. Everyone sit down. Children! You are distracting poor little Geraldyn here. I know your first day in first grade is very exciting. But it's not my first day, though it may be my last. This is reading time! Geraldyn. Give it a try.

DR. LOVELACE. And if you start seeing little green men you be sure to speak up, Jerrie.

MRS. WHITE. Geraldyn, just spit it out, girl. I'm reaching the age of retirement here!

(One of the children aims a pencil at JERRIE*.)*

Doyle, you put down that pencil right this minute before you poke out an eye! What is it about you boys—always making everything a weapon!

*(*MRS. WHITE *turns back to* JERRIE*.)*

Now read that sentence.

DR. LOVELACE. Just relax . . .

MRS. WHITE. Use your consonants.

DR. LOVELACE. Enjoy the quiet.

MRS. WHITE. You have some challenges. But so do we all. What doesn't kill us makes us stronger! I had your sister Carolyn in my

class two years ago. And, oh my, how she could talk. Is that what happen darlin'? Carolyn take all your words away?

*(*JERRIE *tries to answer but can't.)*

Come on now, girl, you're seven years old. You'll do nothin' with your life if you can't be heard and understood. Speak!

DR. LOVELACE. Jerrie, we're about to begin.

*(*MRS. WHITE *and the* CHILDREN *are gone.*
JERRIE *floats.*
JACKIE COCHRAN, *a well-put-together fifty-five-year-old, bursts into the lab. She is dressed in a tailored rose-colored jacket and skirt.)*

JACKIE. My, my, if it isn't the famous Doctor William Randolph Lovelace II. The Mercury 7 man himself!

DR. LOVELACE. Hello, Jackie.

JACKIE. That's it? I gave you a Nobel Prize–winning intro. And all I get's *"Hello, Jackie."*

DR. LOVELACE. I was just about to start the clock.

JACKIE. Start her up, cowboy.

*(*LOVELACE *starts to speak into the microphone*—JACKIE *grabs it.)*

Hi there, Jerrie, this is your benefactor. You're the first woman to be tested in the isolation tank, if you fail—that's it. Over. End of the line. It's all on you.

(He grabs the mic back.)

DR. LOVELACE. Don't let that get you nervous.

JERRIE. It never has, sir.

DR. LOVELACE. We're just trying to see how you handle stress. This experiment is carrying quite a bit of weight. If you pass, we'll test more women.

JERRIE. Not stressed, sir.

DR. LOVELACE. All right then. Those hallucinations can seem very real. If and when you are ready to come out, just say the word. Clear?

JERRIE. As a bell, sir.

DR. LOVELACE. If your heart rate is at all elevated to the point that I'm concerned, I'll get you out of there.

JERRIE. I'm not worried, sir. Not a lick.

DR. LOVELACE. Any last minute questions?

JERRIE. Not a one, sir.

DR. LOVELACE. You're a woman of few words. Unlike some. Happy floating, Jerrie.

*(*LOVELACE *shuts off the mic.*
JACKIE *leans into* LOVELACE *with a smile.)*

JACKIE. You should be keeping your "partner" better informed. I could have missed this. And since Floyd and I are paying—would have been a darn shame to miss Phase Two of the testing. I want to be here for all tests. Asshole.

DR. LOVELACE. You're such a charmer.

*(*JACKIE *laughs as she looks over Jerrie's paperwork.)*

JACKIE. Well—she passed everything else, didn't she? Three-foot rubber hose down her throat—a few enemas up the other end . . . Let me ask you something, Doc?

DR. LOVELACE. Could I stop you?

JACKIE. Ever feel like you're running a torture chamber instead of a scientific lab?

DR. LOVELACE. Progress is painful.

JACKIE. Failure is worse.

DR. LOVELACE. If you're on the other side of that wall, particularly.

JACKIE. You can put me on that side anytime you say.

DR. LOVELACE. We're getting into dangerous territory.

HARVEY. *(Offstage voice:)* Jerreeee! Geraldyn!

JACKIE. Don't you do that again. I am here for everything.

*(*LOVELACE *smiles and turns to his work at the console.* JACKIE *watches him.)*

HARVEY. *(Offstage voice:)* Jeeerrreee!

*(*HARVEY *runs up to* JERRIE *in the tank.*
JERRIE *sinks to the floor and covers her face—now a child, and fully in the memory with her father.*
JACKIE *and* LOVELACE *continue to work quietly at the console.)*

There you are . . . Jerr. I nearly . . . You okay? Say somethin', girl?

(She doesn't.

Sounds of the cornfield—wind—crickets.)

Honey—were you out here all night . . . alone . . . in the middle of a cornfield?

*(*JERRIE *looks up at the sky.*
HARVEY *sits down next to* JERRIE.*)*

JERRIE. Di they fin hah? *(Did they find her?)*

(When she was young, JERRIE *suffered from ankyloglossia, commonly known as being tongue-tied, a congenital oral anomaly which decreases mobility of the tongue tip.)*

HARVEY. Find who?

JERRIE. Amela. *(Amelia.)*

HARVEY. Oh. Oh. Amelia. Amelia Earhart.

*(*JERRIE *nods.)*

No. No, they haven't. By now they figure she went down at sea. Is that why you ran away?

*(*JERRIE *nods.)*

I been talkin' 'bout that too much. You know, Daddy flies, but I don't fly the distances or take the chances she does—did.

JERRIE. You sa. *(You're sad.)*

HARVEY. Well, I didn't know her personal. But . . . not a lot of extraordinary people in the world, Jerr. Don't listen to me. I'm tired, I guess. I been up all night looking for someone myself.

(He tries to pull her up—she resists.
He follows her gaze up to the sky.)

Did you share your night with the moon?

(He sits down next to her, and they both take in the moon.)

I do like it when it's a fingernail like that. So clear you can see the shadow of the earth, perfect outline. Funny, I think I like that better than when it's all lit up. It's kinda full of itself then. This way the mystery's still hiding out.
Sometimes when I fly at night I think—wouldn't that be something, to just keep a going—up and up.

JERRIE. Sompin. *(Something.)*

HARVEY. You musta been scared.

JERRIE. Na skad. *(Not scared.)*

HARVEY. That's my girl. Braver than the first man who ate an oyster!

(He looks her over.)

You are a mess, your mama will not be pleased. Your sister was supposed to watch you.

JERRIE. I ra way. *(I ran away.)*

HARVEY. She shoulda gone after you.

JERRIE. Is ohay. *(It's okay.)*

HARVEY. No. It is not. You should be able to trust your own sister to take care of you.

JERRIE. I li ben aone. *(I like being alone.)*

HARVEY. What am I going do with you?

JERRIE. Ta ma fyan! *(Take me flying!)*

(He laughs.)

HARVEY. Mother will not let me take you flyin' 'til you go to the doctor.

(He watches her.)

Look, it's just a little operation, sweetheart. A snip. Right under your tongue. And then people will be able to understand you.

JERRIE. You uda stan me. *(You understand me.)*

HARVEY. Other people. Open up a whole new world, I promise.

*(*JERRIE *shakes her head.)*

Wouldn't it be sweet if you could tell on your sister—good and loud? To everyone. So all those folks would know there was some razor blades buried in that syrup?

(She giggles.)

A she-bear in satin. Like your mother. Don't tell either one of them I said that. They'll kill me. Come to think of it—maybe you shouldn't have the operation. This way you'll keep all my secrets.

*(*JERRIE *"locks" the secrets in her lips and puts her head on his shoulder.)*

Let's go home.

(He grabs her hand and tries to pull her up. She still resists.)

JERRIE. Ta me a in your pane? *(Take me in your plane.)*

HARVEY. You think I can perform miracles?

*(*JERRIE *nods.*
He looks deeply at his daughter.)

Why can't I say no to you . . . If I take you flying, will you promise me you'll see the doctor?

JERRIE. Fy now! *(Fly now!)*

*(*JERRIE *jumps up—ready to fly.)*

HARVEY. Okay, let's fly— Don't tell your mother—or your sister—'cause she'll tell your mother!

*(*HARVEY *is gone.*
JACKIE *and* LOVELACE *in the lab.*
JERRIE *floats in the tank.)*

DR. LOVELACE. Three hours. No changes.

JACKIE. Wasn't Shepard talking to God in a little over three hours?

DR. LOVELACE. All the men were in for no more than four.

JACKIE. Women know isolation better than anyone. And yet we still wear lipstick.

DR. LOVELACE. And a lovely shade it is.

JACKIE. Don't be flirtin' with me, Randy Lovelace.

DR. LOVELACE. I wouldn't dare.

JACKIE. What did you do last night?

DR. LOVELACE. Excuse me?

JACKIE. Not a difficult question.

DR. LOVELACE. Let's see—well, I had a quiet dinner with my wife and daughters. Spaghetti. With red sauce. Went to sleep at 2100. Okay—Captain?

JACKIE. I see. So you weren't tied and gagged in a basement, then.

DR. LOVELACE. I was not.

JACKIE. And I suppose you spoke actual words to Mary and a daughter or two at said dinner?

DR. LOVELACE. We conversed.

JACKIE. Ah. So in other words you *could* have called me and informed me you were doing this testing today?

DR. LOVELACE. You're here now, Jackie.

JACKIE. And aren't ya pleased?

DR. LOVELACE. We are moving on. Jerrie's in the top two percent of everyone in Phase One testing. Everyone.

JACKIE. Now's the time—we should start testing more women. We have Jerrie's numbers as proof.

DR. LOVELACE. We need to get as much evidence as we can before going public. Who knows what NASA and the press will do with this. You should know that better than anyone.

JACKIE. That's why we need to test more than one woman—unless of course—I was the woman.

DR. LOVELACE. Jackie.

JACKIE. What?

DR. LOVELACE. You are too . . .

JACKIE. Beautiful? Was that the next word outta your mouth?

(He stays silent.)

Who is the most famous woman pilot in aviation history?

DR. LOVELACE. Amelia Earhart.

(A silent fuck you.)

JACKIE. Who is the most famous woman pilot who hasn't been *dead* for 20 years?

DR. LOVELACE. You're going to make me say it—again—you're too old!

JACKIE. Screw you!

DR. LOVELACE. How do you talk to your enemies?

JACKIE. Oh, I'm much nicer to them.

DR. LOVELACE. You think I'm scared of you? I've known you for over twenty-five years.

JACKIE. How can that be when I'm only thirty.

DR. LOVELACE. Oh. So during the war—you were running the WASPs at . . . five?

JACKIE. Careful.

DR. LOVELACE. I bailed out of an airplane at 40,000 feet with only my parachute between me and God, and you think I'm afraid.

JACKIE. I believe you were unconscious from that jump. And yes, I think you are terrified of me.

DR. LOVELACE. True.

JACKIE. I got you your first grant, I put you on the aviation map. You owe me, Dr. Lovelace. Don't forget it.

(She exits.
LOVELACE *is now alone.)*

DR. LOVELACE. You never let me.

(Sounds of the tank. JERRIE *floats peacefully.*
Suddenly, the sounds of an airfield—a plane roars overhead.
Now-teenage JERRIE *on the airfield excitedly examines a plane—nervous about getting caught. She points out the parts that she's memorized.)*

JERRIE. Tail wheel, turtle deck, wing, elevator control linkages, torque tube with bearings, master cylinder, firewall, wing, crash pad, disk brakes, throttle, rudder pedals, prop cuff, instrument panel . . .

(A younger JACKIE *steps onto the runway—the legs of her flight suit are splattered with blood. And feathers are stuck to her shoes.)*

JACKIE. Lost, kid?

JERRIE. No.

JACKIE. You're on my plane.

*(*JERRIE *starts to run off. But stops and looks back.)*

JERRIE. You're Jackie Cochran!

JACKIE. That's what my pilot license says.

JERRIE. I wanna be a pilot.

JACKIE. How old are you?

JERRIE. Twelve.

JACKIE. What you done so far?

JERRIE. Nothing.

JACKIE. By the time I was twelve I was married. You married?

JERRIE. NO!

JACKIE. Don't look so horrified. Men are useful—use them. Then fly right past 'em. Have ya soloed?

JERRIE. Ah, no. But I been flyin' since I was ten.

JACKIE. What ya waiting for?

JERRIE. Soon as they let me.

JACKIE. Let you? You gotta turn that thinkin' around.

*(*JACKIE *goes back to cleaning her shoes.)*

JERRIE. You won the Bendix race and you were the only woman.

JACKIE. I'm the best pilot in the world. Not everyone knows that. But they will.

JERRIE. How many world records you have?

JACKIE. You writin' a book?

JERRIE. No. I'm not. I just . . . Well, I . . . I . . . I . . . Sorry.

JACKIE. Get a sense of humor, kid. That's more important than a man.

JERRIE. Okay. I will.

JACKIE. You should be takin' notes. These are pearls I'm giving ya.

JERRIE. How did you do it?

*(*JACKIE *laughs.)*

JACKIE. How did I become Jackie Cochran?

*(*JERRIE *nods.)*

Well, let's see now. Don't be afraid to get your hands dirty.

JERRIE. I'm not. I get my hands dirty *all* the time. I get my whole self dirty somehow, I don't bathe much—

JACKIE. Okay, kid. I get it.

JERRIE. What else? Tell me. Please.

*(*JACKIE *takes a long look at* JERRIE.*)*

JACKIE. Look up. Go on. Look—up.

(They both do.)

Big, isn't it? Can't see the end of it. Just keeps going. Every time I look up there, I see a new place to conquer.

JERRIE. Mother says girls shouldn't be pilots.

JACKIE. She ain't gonna be the one sleeping in your skin—while you're bored outta your mind baking a pie, dreaming of what you're missing.

JERRIE. I hate pies.

*(*JACKIE *laughs.)*

JACKIE. What do you like?

JERRIE. Flying.

JACKIE. Why?

JERRIE. I don't know.

JACKIE. Sure you do. It's freedom.

JERRIE. Yeah.

JACKIE. Adventure.

JERRIE. Yeah.

JACKIE. I started flying so I could get places faster. For my cosmetics company—deliveries, meetings. It was just another mode of transportation. That's what I thought. But it isn't. Is it?

(They both look up.)

JERRIE. No.

*(*JACKIE's *really just talking to herself now.)*

JACKIE. No. The sky's the only place you're completely responsible for your own existence. You control the air. And everything beneath you melts away. A patchwork quilt of crazy. That's all that it is. It doesn't matter. Only what's in front of you, only what's in that cockpit with you. Where else you gonna feel that much control.

JERRIE. No place.

JACKIE. All that matters is what you want and how far you'll go to get it.

(A young male PILOT *storms on and glares at* JACKIE.*)*

PILOT. You landed on the wrong runway! Who the hell do you think you are?

JACKIE. Jackie Cochran. And you? Oh—wait a minute now, I know you.

PILOT. Oh, yeah, and I know *you!*

JACKIE. You're that cocky son of a bitch who was against me gettin' in the Bendix race.

PILOT. The only reason you got in was because your husband built the damn plane!

JACKIE. Right. Remind me who won that race?

(He starts to walk away.)

JERRIE. Jackie won!

PILOT. I suppose now you'll need to use the men's room?

JACKIE. I only need to use the little boys' room because there ain't a little girls' room within four miles of this runway—still. But I'm fine— You go right on in. Oh and last time I was here, I fixed it up a little—put a mirror up. So now you'll have to look at yourself. And it ain't pretty.

PILOT. You broads think you're so smart.

(The PILOT *scoffs off to the bathroom.*
JACKIE *deals with these guys all the time—but it does get to her—a bit.*
She turns to JERRIE.*)*

JACKIE. And *never* forgive the bastards who get in your way.

JERRIE. Okay.

*(*HARVEY *enters wearing his Army Air Corps uniform.)*

HARVEY. Geraldyn! You can't just wander away— We're in the middle of an airfield. Hope my daughter's not bothering you.

JACKIE. I'm educating her. But she is a pain in the ass. Talks too much.

HARVEY. Really? Come on, now. Promised your mother I'd take you to church on time.

JERRIE. I don't wanna go to church.

HARVEY. Some might consider that blasphemous. Not me. But some.

JACKIE. You're okay, kid.

HARVEY. I hope you're educating her that it's tough to be a lady pilot.

JACKIE. I don't think you can be a pilot and stay a lady.

HARVEY. See?

JACKIE. Hard to be ladylike at 20,000 feet while chickens are exploding around you. And you're standing in their guts.

HARVEY.
Exploding chickens?

JERRIE.
You're flying with chickens?

JACKIE. Dr. Randy Lovelace and I are finding a way to pressurize cabins so we can go higher. Chickens are—helping.

(She picks a feather off her shoe.)

HARVEY. I know Dr. Lovelace.

JERRIE. You do?!

HARVEY. I know *of* him. He developed the oxygen mask, Jerr. Stopped me from getting headaches up there. Quite a genius.

JACKIE. Genius needs money.

HARVEY. I suppose.

JERRIE. How high you gonna go?

JACKIE. We'll just see, won't we?

JERRIE. Yes, ma'am.

JACKIE. Do I look like a ma'am to you!?

JERRIE. No, sir.

*(*JACKIE *takes a long, wand-like tube out of her jacket pocket.)*

What's that?

JACKIE. It's a *Perk Me Up* stick. I invented it for my cosmetics company.

JERRIE. What's it do?

JACKIE. Perks you up. See?

(Shows it off like a commercial.)

"All in one. Five separate refillable compartments: cleansing creme, foundation, rouge, lipstick, and face powder. Everything you need in a stick slim enough to put in your flight suit pocket. Jacqueline Cochran's Wings to Beauty."

(Poses and laughs.)

I carry this and a pair of heels on every flight. You can't ever forget you're a woman—'cause they won't.
You could use a little color.

(Starts to apply blush to JERRIE's *cheek.)*

REPORTER. *(Offstage:)* Jackie—over here!

JACKIE. You'll excuse me. There are some photographers waiting for me. How do I look?

*(*JACKIE *exits—not waiting for the answer.*
JERRIE *watches her.)*

JERRIE. Beautiful.

(She touches her cheek.)

HARVEY. You're beautiful.

JERRIE. No. Am I, Pop?

HARVEY. Oh, Geraldyn, of course you're beautiful.

JERRIE. Not like her.

HARVEY. I think your mother will like you wearin' a little of that makeup. Let's ask her.

*(*JERRIE *waves him off and looks back to* JACKIE. HARVEY *watches.)*

She certainly is somethin', that Mrs. Cochran.

JERRIE. Yeah.

HARVEY. Come on now. Let's get to church so's your mother doesn't kill the both of us.

JERRIE. I'm gonna be a pilot.

HARVEY. Okay then. Better marry rich. That's what she did.

*(*HARVEY *is gone.*
Lights shift to LOVELACE *checking vitals.*
JERRIE *floats.*
JACKIE *enters the lab.)*

JACKIE. Is she climbing the walls yet?

DR. LOVELACE. Five hours. Five. No sign of any irregularities in heartbeat or pressure. And not a word.

JACKIE. Well, well, little Miss Oklahoma might just be tougher than she looks.

DR. LOVELACE. And she weighs barely a hundred pounds.

JACKIE. I will smack you right into the middle of next week.

DR. LOVELACE. What? I didn't say anything.

JACKIE. How long are we going to let her stay in there? She already passed the men.

DR. LOVELACE. Just by an hour. We need all the evidence we can get.

JACKIE. This is your lab.

DR. LOVELACE. Thank you for remembering that.

JACKIE. But . . .

DR. LOVELACE. I knew there would be a "but."

JACKIE. It's going to be Jackie Cochran's Women in Space Program!

DR. LOVELACE. Oh, really?

JACKIE. Like the sound of that. I have the same feeling I had during the war. When it was all possible. The WASPs were going to be a legitimate unit of the armed forces.

DR. LOVELACE. And you would lead them.

JACKIE. You bet I'd lead them. I made them.

DR. LOVELACE. But.

JACKIE. *But* the damn war ended too soon. They didn't need us anymore.

DR. LOVELACE. Would you have had the war go on longer?

JACKIE. Maybe.

DR. LOVELACE. Whose side are you on?

JACKIE. Mine!

DR. LOVELACE. Jackie—I will never cross you.

JACKIE. I knew you went to Harvard. Now I know you're smart. This time will be different, Randy. I've learned a few things.

DR. LOVELACE. God help us. What have you learned?

JACKIE. I kept trying to break through the wall back then.

DR. LOVELACE. And now?

JACKIE. Now, I go around.

*(*JACKIE *exits—* LOVELACE *goes back to his paperwork.*
JERRIE *is floating.*
Sounds of a radio playing "I'm a Flying Wreck" sung by a chorus of women pilots.
HARVEY *enters singing along with the radio—* JERRIE *joins him. He salutes her.)*

SINGING VOICES.
I'm a flying wreck a riskin' my neck and a heckofa pilot too!
A heckofa, heckofa, heckofa, heckofa, heckofa pilot, too!

HELENA. *(Offstage voice:)* Geraldyn!

*(*HARVEY *takes out a flask—drinks—and exits.*
JERRIE *ignores her mother, and keeps singing.)*

SINGING VOICES.
Like all the jolly good flyers, the gremlins treat me mean,
I'm a flyin' wreck, a riskin' my neck for the good ole 3l8th!

If I had a PT, sir, I'd paint it blue and gold,
I'd take it up 5,000 feet and make the darned thing roll!

Oh, if I had a PT, sir, I'd fly it off in the sky,
I'd circle over Germany and spit in the Fuehrer's eye!

HELENA. *(Offstage:)* Geraldyn!

SINGING VOICES.
If I had a civilian check, I'll tell you just what I'd do,
I'd pop the stick, then crack his neck, and probably get a "U,"
But if I had an Army check, I'd taxi cross the grass,
I'd flip the ship upon his nose and throw him on his . . . Oh!

*(*HELENA *enters from the kitchen and turns off the radio.)*

HELENA. Geraldyn! Get in the kitchen now! You can't leave the dough sitting on the cutting board like that. You need to finish rolling out the crust.

JERRIE. Mother, please.

HELENA. "Make the best use of the time, for the days are evil." Ephesians 5:16.

(HELENA *exits.* JERRIE *turns on the radio.*
A REPORTER *speaks into a microphone. [The* REPORTER *and* JACKIE *can be onstage or in voice-over.])*

REPORTER. You've been listening to "I'm a Flying Wreck," one of the marching songs of the WASPs. We are speaking to world record–holding pilot Jackie Cochran, the founder of the WASPs.

(Younger JACKIE *in WASP uniform talks to the* REPORTER. JERRIE *with her ear to the radio.)*

JACKIE. Pleasure to be here.

REPORTER. So, Jackie, you are a member of the General Staff of the U.S. Army Air Forces /

JACKIE. Yes and / direct

REPORTER. / and direct all phases of the WASPs. What's that stand for, Jackie?

JACKIE. The Women Airforce Service Pilots, almost two thousand women volunteers. We fly /

REPORTERS. / or *ferry* as they call it—bomber planes from America to England.

JACKIE. That's right, Bill. As you know, the army has a shortage of pilots, I suggested that I could train a corps of women pilots to deliver US combat planes to our men overseas and so /

REPORTER. / so the *real* pilots / those brave men—can spend their time fighting Germans, isn't that right?

JERRIE.
Real pilots!?

JACKIE.
We're just helpin' our boys win the war.

JERRIE. She's flying bombers!

*(*JACKIE *and the* REPORTER *are gone.)*

HELENA. *(Offstage:)* And you are not! Get in here!

*(*JERRIE *starts off to the kitchen when the next song comes on. It's the Army Air Corps song.*
JERRIE *spins around and sings along.)*

RADIO VOICES.
Off we go into the wild blue yonder
Climbing high into the sun;
Here they come, zooming to meet our thunder,
At 'em boys, Give 'er the gun! Give 'er the gun!

*(*HELENA *enters and turns off the radio.)*

HELENA. The only place you're flying is into that kitchen. "Do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."

HELENA.
Ephesians 5:17!

JERRIE.
To bake a pie?

HELENA. Your grandmother's Southern Sweet Potato Pie. Yes indeed.

JERRIE. In a minute. I just want to hear /

HELENA. / This is important, Geraldyn.

JERRIE. I thought you wanted me to go to college—not bake pies.

HELENA. And you will! Go to OU like your father and I did and your sister is. And join the Gamma Phi Beta sorority. *And* learn to bake pies. And go to church. And get married.

JERRIE. I just wanna fly.

HELENA. You want! You want! My father—your grandfather—was a congressman.

JERRIE. I know that.

HELENA. But do you think he could have accomplished what he did without Mother taking care of the house, the children, the social calendar? No. He could not. And I, when I married your father, don't you think I wanted . . .

*(*HELENA *stops herself midsentence.)*

JERRIE. What?

HELENA. Come into the kitchen.

JERRIE. What did you want? Papa to be a congressman?

HELENA. When I think of things that—didn't go the way I'd hoped—I put that thought in a little jar. And I close that lid very tight. And place that jar way back in the pantry. Behind the pickles. And that's where it stays. You should try that. You really should. I don't know what makes you think the rules don't apply to you. You have to accept what God has given you. "For indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake." Corinthians 11:9. Pastor John is going to talk with you today. I asked him to pray with you. He heard about you playing with that baseball team.

JERRIE. Softball.

HELENA. You are embarrassing this family, Geraldyn!

JERRIE. I'm sorry.

HELENA. Your sister is getting married—she is settled. I just fear, sweetheart, you'll never be settled.

JERRIE.
Well . . .

HELENA.
You need some confidence—
Learn to talk to boys.

JERRIE. But I don't want to.

HELENA. When you go to college your Gamma Phi Beta sisters will /

JERRIE. / Softball team will pay me enough to get more flying hours.

HELENA. Stop it!

JERRIE. Papa knows I can be a great pilot.

HELENA. He is just giving you false hope. He is a dreamer. Particularly when he . . . drinks.

JERRIE. Don't.

HELENA. Well, you know how he can be. Geraldyn, before the war your father was . . . something! Now all he can do is sell used Oldsmobiles.

JERRIE. He sells new ones, too.

HELENA. He wants you to be a famous pilot. Which is ridiculous. We should pray, Geraldyn.

*(*HELENA *kneels to pray.* JERRIE *doesn't.)*

You won't pray with me? Talk to the Lord, Geraldyn— Maybe the Lord will help you. You're all mixed up.

JERRIE. I pray all the time, Mama. All the time. And the Lord talks back to me and tells me I'm doing the right thing. I am meant to be a pilot. Or he wouldn't have given me this talent for it. Why would he have done that if it wasn't what I am supposed to do with my life?

HELENA. You're misreadin' his message. You think the Lord would give you a job as a pilot when all those boys will be coming back from the war? Pray with me, Geraldyn, that you will see there are advantages to being a woman. What you are. The joy of being a woman. And there are . . . joys. Pray with me!

*(*JERRIE *kneels next to her. They both shut their eyes and put their hands together.)*

JERRIE. Please Lord, help me . . . make my mother understand that she is *wrong.* "By the grace of God, I am what I am." Corinthians 15:10.

(The sounds of the tank. HELENA *is gone.*
JERRIE *floats.*
JACKIE *is in the lab, very still, watching* JERRIE.
They wait.
It's been many hours. Maybe LOVELACE *sharpens a pencil or makes a paper airplane.*
Shift to sounds of a circus.
A man with a big hat and a sour face shakes his head while looking JERRIE *over.)*

CIRCUS BOB. I thought Jerry was a boy's name.

JERRIE. It's my name, sir.

CIRCUS BOB. Uh-huh. What in damn nation makes you think I'd give you this job?

JERRIE. I'm a good pilot. That's what.

CIRCUS BOB. Hmmm—this is my plane, my little circus cub.

(He introduces her to his small plane.)

Jerrie Cobb here wants to be flyin' you all summer.

JERRIE. Yes, sir! *(She talks to the plane:)* If that's okay with you?

CIRCUS BOB. How old are ya?

JERRIE. Sixteen.

CIRCUS BOB. Don't you have other things you wanta do with your summer?

JERRIE. Nope.

CIRCUS BOB. You got friends?

JERRIE. I need friends to get this job?

CIRCUS BOB. Nope.

JERRIE. Good. Cause I don't got none.

CIRCUS BOB. No boyfriend? You should find yourself a boyfriend. Don't you wanta get married some day?

JERRIE. No, thank you.

CIRCUS BOB. Well, I don't know.

*(*CIRCUS BOB *mulls it over as* JERRIE *checks out his plane.)*

JERRIE. Looks like your flame tube's warped— Bet that rattles on takeoff.

CIRCUS BOB. It sure does rattle. Oh, okay. You got yourself a job.

JERRIE. I got the job!!

(She jumps for joy.)

CIRCUS BOB. Simmer down! So you'll be barnstorming for me and my circus. You fly over these towns droppin' my flyers. Stirs up the excitement like nothin'. Those kids think God himself is coming to town with lions and tigers and clowns.

JERRIE. And in between the towns?

CIRCUS BOB. Between . . . Well, I guess you fly all you like. You can chalk up more flying hours and make us some extra money taking folks up for rides if you want.

*(*JERRIE *starts to react.)*

Hold onto your horses! Not sure if they would trust such a little girl as their pilot.

JERRIE. But I am a great pilot.

CIRCUS BOB. Just don't hurt my cub!

JERRIE. Deal.

CIRCUS BOB. Don't crash, and for God's sakes don't kill anyone.

*(*CIRCUS BOB *is gone.*
Lights change.

An older, official-looking man stands in front of JERRIE *and the small plane.*
He's a bit horrified.)

JERRIE. All right, Mr. Mayor. It's a real honor to fly such a dignitary.

MAYOR. How old are you?

JERRIE. Eighteen.

MAYOR. My son dared me to come up in this-there flying machine.

JERRIE. It's perfectly safe.

MAYOR. Let's get it over with.

JERRIE. Step right in there.

(He carefully fits himself into the small plane. JERRIE *gets in.)*

MAYOR. Awful snug.

(They start down the runway. It's VERY bumpy.)

I CHANGED MY MIND!! STOP THIS THING.

JERRIE. CAN'T HEAR YOU.

MAYOR. I'M GOING TO THROW UP!!

JERRIE. JUST WAIT UNTIL WE GET OFF THE GROUND! IT'LL BE SMOOTH AS ICE!

(They take off. It is smooth.)

MAYOR. OH MY GOD!!

(The MAYOR*'s eyes are closed—tight.)*

JERRIE. Open your eyes. We're up.

MAYOR. We're up?! In the air? Oh . . . Take me down! You ever crashed?

JERRIE. Not yet.

MAYOR. Anyone ever die of fright?

JERRIE. Not yet.

MAYOR. Don't you tell anyone I acted like this! You got that?

JERRIE. Just breathe, it's the freshest air you'll ever taste.

(He breathes and for a moment seems relaxed.)

MAYOR. That's my house over there.

*(*JERRIE *tilts the plane to fly over his house.)*

AHHHH!

*(*JERRIE *straightens out the plane.)*

JERRIE. Sorry.

MAYOR. Just don't turn!

JERRIE. Okay. But it's gonna be hard to go back if we can't turn.

MAYOR. Ohhhhh. Just land. LAND!

(The MAYOR *covers his face, crying.*
The MAYOR *is gone.*
JERRIE *floats.*
JACKIE *and* LOVELACE *sit in silence.*
Watching. Waiting. Drinking coffee.
LOVELACE *plays with a slinky.*
Finally, JACKIE *launches into a story.)*

JACKIE. It was a Seversky AP-7.

DR. LOVELACE. The Bendix race.

JACKIE. You've heard this story.

DR. LOVELACE. I've heard them all.

JACKIE. That plane was shaking like a dog passing peach pits.

DR. LOVELACE. Had a buffeting in the tail.

JACKIE. Who's telling this story?

*(*LOVELACE *smiles.)*

Plane could have fallen apart from that.

DR. LOVELACE. But it didn't.

JACKIE. Cause I told it not to.

DR. LOVELACE. The power of Jackie.

JACKIE. The only other woman who had ever been allowed to enter a national race with men was that . . . What was her name?

DR. LOVELACE. Florence Klingensmith. That was a bad crash.

JACKIE. It sure was. And nobody wanted any more female blood on their hands. I had to do some pretty fast dancing to convince those boys to let me race. Every one of those pilots had to agree.

DR. LOVELACE. You have never accepted "*no*" have you?

JACKIE. No. And now no one says no to me. Cause I don't ask questions that can get *no* for an answer.

DR. LOVELACE. That's a talent. You'll have to teach me.

JACKIE. No. It did take me a bit to learn to say that word. To learn that I could say it. There were plenty of nos that should have been. Married the first time at thirteen? No, thank you!

DR. LOVELACE. Jackie, I can't imagine. I look at my daughters and I think . . .

(They both think. JACKIE *breaks it.)*

JACKIE. We're not talking about that. Don't know why I brought it up. Must be tired. We are talking about right here, right now.

DR. LOVELACE. Okay. Sure.

JACKIE. We can do this, Randy. She can do this. We can put a woman in space. Why not? Why the hell not! Put women in the space program. Imagine. What that would do to the world. A woman—as one of them.

DR. LOVELACE. It will be a very, very hard pill for those boys to swallow.

JACKIE. That's why we are gonna give them plenty of water. We're going to bring actual results to the table. This will happen.

(They hold a look.
Lights change.
HARVEY *is in a barroom with a bottle and a glass.* JERRIE *is standing next to him.)*

HARVEY. To my daughter, the fastest girl in Oklahoma! What am I saying . . . in the WORLD! A WORLD RECORD in absolute altitude! And only twenty-two years old! I could not be prouder! The Amelia Earhart Gold Medal of Achievement!

(Cheers from the barroom.)

Have a drink with me!

JERRIE. I gotta be at the airport to open up at 8 am.

HARVEY. They still have you working only in that office after four years, even after all those awards?

JERRIE. Yeah, but I'm flying some. It'll happen.

*(*HARVEY *drinks and hugs his daughter.)*

HARVEY. As independent as a hog on ice.

JERRIE. Don't you worry, I have the Lord's help.

HARVEY. Not sure that's what your mother thought of when she wished for us to be good Christians.

JERRIE. Well—this is what she's got. A couple of pilots.

HARVEY. I'll drink to that.

JERRIE. Lemme take you home, Pop.

HARVEY. I think I'll just have one more with the boys. You go on now.

(She watches him drink up.
He's gone.
The sounds of an airfield boom overhead.
JERRIE *sits on the floor of a hanger listening on a transistor radio.)*

REPORTER. *(Voice-over:)* Just six years ago, Air Force Captain Charles "Chuck" Yeager was the first man to break the sound barrier. And today, May 18, 1953, we're here at Rogers Dry Lake, California, where world record–holding pilot Jackie Cochran is attempting to be the first woman to do the same in a F-86 Sabre plane borrowed from the Royal Canadian Air Force. Mrs. Cochran will have to ride that plane over 650 miles per hour if she wants to pass Mach 1. Can she really do it? We're waiting to see now . . .

(The loud sounds of planes take off above her. And then—the distinct sound of a sonic boom. JERRIE *looks up—thrilled.)*

JERRIE. Oh my lord, oh my lord! She did it!

REPORTER. *(Voice-over:)* Jackie Cochran, you just broke the sound barrier.

(A plane roars overhead.)

First woman to go . . . faster than sound . . . What's next, Jackie?

JERRIE. What—is—next? Faster—than—sound! Faster than sound!!

(She lies down and scoots under a plane.)

Boy, oh boy . . .

*(*JACK FORD *enters and sees a pair of feet sticking out from under the plane— He gives them a kick.)*

JACK. Hey! Hey, fella! Need a work order.

*(*JERRIE *emerges from under the plane.)*

Oh. Oh. What the hell's a girl doing under a plane?

JERRIE. Um. Looking at it.

(He has no idea what to say to that.)

JACK. Yeah, well . . . okay. Where can a guy get a work order filled? Huh?

JERRIE. *(Very quiet and polite:)* Office doesn't open until 8 am.

JACK. What kind of airport is this!! Piece of shit /

JERRIE.
/ I can sign the work order.

JACK.
/ Damn little Oklahoma airports. I gotta get this airplane fixed. My brakes jammed. It costs me 100 bucks a day that I'm late delivering this puppy.

JERRIE. Office opens at 8, but I can write the work order now.

JACK. Oh. Oh. Good.

*(*JERRIE *starts to do the paperwork. He watches her.)*

How you happen to be here so early?

JERRIE. *(Very quietly:)* Just . . . am I guess.

*(*JACK *leans in closer to hear her and she backs away.)*

JACK. Wha'd you say?

JERRIE. I don't know.

*(*JACK *laughs a little and gets closer— She smiles.)*

JACK. You keep talking so quiet I'm gonna have to get a little closer.

JERRIE. Oh. Well.

*(*JERRIE *smiles nervously as she keeps trying to focus on the work order.)*

JACK. Jack Ford.

JERRIE. Oh I'm . . . Jer—

(He points to the form. She goes back to filling it out. He laughs at her.)

JACK. You're a funny girl.

JERRIE. I am?

JACK. Why does a girl like you hide yourself under a plane?

JERRIE. No place else I'd rather be.

JACK. Under a plane?

JERRIE. Oh. No. *In* a plane. I meant. That. In the sky. That's what I meant. Um.

(She shrugs and smiles and looks back to the work order. He's charmed.)

Where you flying to?

JACK. Peru.

JERRIE. Over the Andes?

JACK. Yup. Fleetway International. My business. Ferrying planes all over the world. We're contractor to the US Air Force.

JERRIE. That's impressive.

(She hands him the work order.)

JACK. I keep about forty pilots busy delivering surplus military planes to foreign governments around the world. And we're the best—damn it.

JERRIE. Flying over the Andes in a single engine.

JACK. That's right, and my big strong pilots are scared to fly these planes over those mountains. Bunch a sissies. So here I am delivering the first one and looking for some pilots with guts.

JERRIE. *(In her biggest voice yet:)* I'll fly your planes to Peru!

JACK. Right. I have no time for training school, honey.

JERRIE. I have over three thousand hours of certified flying time in forty-one different airplanes. I have four world records in distance and altitude.

JACK. Ever flown a T-6?

JERRIE. No sir, but I am a fast learner.

JACK. I'm not that crazy.

JERRIE. I am.

JACK. Are you *serious?*

JERRIE. As a heart attack.

JACK. No. I don't think so.

(He starts to walk away and she follows him.)

JERRIE. I am a great pilot.

JACK. I'm sure you are, sweetheart.

(He keeps walking.)

JERRIE. I can fly any plane you put me in.

JACK. Oh, can you?

JERRIE. And I'm not scared of any mountains. Or—anything! What can you lose? You'll get your money.

(He stops on that.)

JACK. That would sure be a kick in the pants to those pilots of mine. If a girl can do it. Okay. I'll pick up another T-6. Be on the ramp at 0500 tomorrow. I'll check you out and we'll fly to Peru. Got a passport?

JERRIE. Yes, I do. And it's never been used.

JACK. Well, shine her up. She's gonna get used now. If you live. Trial by fire. Here's the manual for the T-6. Have it memorized by tomorrow.

*(*JACK *is gone.* JERRIE *is ecstatic.*
JERRIE *floats.*
Lights change.
LOVELACE *is in the lab alone.)*

DR. LOVELACE. Seven hours and forty-five minutes.

(He writes down the numbers.
JACKIE *enters.)*

DR. LOVELACE. *(To* JACKIE*:)* Seven hours and forty-five minutes.

JACKIE. Well, kiss my go-to-hell.

DR. LOVELACE. I'm never quite sure what you're thinking.

JACKIE. Good. Keeps life interesting.
I was not prepared for an overnight. I thought she'd be outta there by now. I think we need more coffee and supper.

DR. LOVELACE. Doesn't Floyd mind you being here all day? It's Valentine's Day.

JACKIE. Is it? How the hell did you know that? Mary send you a note to buy her flowers?

DR. LOVELACE. She's very self-sufficient— She did let me know she was sending herself some roses today. I sign the cards retroactively.

JACKIE. Floyd goes out and buys his own florist when he wants a bouquet. Thought you'd get rid of me?

DR. LOVELACE. Can't blame a guy for trying.

*(*JACKIE *takes out her compact and fixes her face as she speaks.)*

Who are you fixing up for?

JACKIE. The press.

DR. LOVELACE. Jackie . . .

JACKIE. We're going to be announcing this. And I intend to look my best.

DR. LOVELACE. Jackie—I'll be announcing the results—if they continue to be this good—at the conference in Stockholm next month. To a room of scientists who understand and respect results. Those NASA boys are 100% against women in the program. Look how long it took them to put a man instead of a chimp in that can?

JACKIE. Yeah. It took a Russian.

DR. LOVELACE. Be patient, Jackie. Let me do this the right way.

JACKIE. Sure why not. You're going to do this the same way you did that 40,000 foot jump.

DR. LOVELACE. What do you mean?

JACKIE. Unconscious. You've already gotten all you wanted. You have your boys—those heroes—the Mercury 7. Invincible. Explorers. The Lewis and Clark of the sky. Your name is intertwined with them forever. You're the God maker.

DR. LOVELACE. I think not. Those boys are out there riding in their open convertibles waving to adoring crowds all on their own. No one cares about the man behind the curtain. And that's just fine with me. I know what I've done.

JACKIE. You're lying, Dr. Lovelace. You wanted to be the one up there. You're just so very good at graceful defeat.

DR. LOVELACE. It's not defeat. I don't need to be the star anymore. You always have.

JACKIE. What is wrong with that exactly? Hmmm? Those Mercury boys think the sun comes up just to hear them crow. And no one thinks the worse of them for that. Now do they? So what is wrong with me wanting to be the star? I certainly know I've earned it. I had to play all sides to get what I want. All you had to do was your job.

(Lights change.
JERRIE *climbs in a plane.*
JACK *slides in beside her.)*

JACK. We'll be flying in formation to Henderson Field on Midway Island. Need to refuel there. Stay right on my tail— Don't miss that island, not much else around. We're landing at night.

JERRIE. Roger, Captain. Get in your own plane. Let's do this.

JACK. You've flown everything else for me the past six months. But this is the B-17 Flying Fortress, Jerr. It's one hell of a big boy.

JERRIE. I thought her nickname was Memphis Belle?

JACK. Okay—hell of a big girl, then.

JERRIE. Right.

JACK. Flying in formation with these babies is tough. A lot of metal to control. Sure you can handle it?

JERRIE. Like you said. I've handled everything else.

JACK. Including me.

JERRIE. Oh, you're not so tough.

JACK. Really? Keeping me at a safe distance, aren't ya? Not many do.

JERRIE. Get outta here. I'll see you on the other side.

JACK. What if we take a few days off? We'll be in Paris.

JERRIE. What are you doing?

JACK. I believe I'm flirting.

JERRIE. Oh. Well—quit it.

JACK. You don't mean that.

JERRIE. Hasn't anyone ever said no to you?

JACK. Not that I can recall.

JERRIE. Oh, really.

JACK. You intend to be the first?

JERRIE. Well . . . I . . .

(She doesn't seem to have the answer.
So he leans in for a kiss. She pulls away.)

Jack. I am incredibly grateful to you for the opportunity of flying planes that most women do not get to fly.

JACK. Is that it?

JERRIE. I have learned things I didn't know I didn't know.

JACK. Damn right.

JERRIE. In any emergency, I wouldn't want anyone else in my ear.

JACK. You can be a pilot and have some fun on the ground.

JERRIE. Flying is more fun than anything.

JACK. I don't think you've tried *everything.*

JERRIE. You're married.

JACK. We're separated.

JERRIE. You mean you're separated because she isn't in the cockpit with us right now? Oh—please just get in your own plane! PLEASE. You're distracting.

(He laughs.)

JACK. You've never been—pursued before. Have ya?

JERRIE. Go away, Jack.

JACK. For now.

(He leaves.)

JERRIE. Oh, my, Lord.

(He's back.)

Oh, my Lord!

(They kiss.)

Oh, my Lord.

JACK. See you in Paris.

(He gets into his own plane.
JERRIE *is alone in her plane. She takes a deep breath.)*

JERRIE. Let's go Belle. You and me.

(Her plane takes off.
An alarm in the lab sounds.)

JACKIE. What's that?

DR. LOVELACE. Rapid heartbeat. Pressure fine.

JACKIE. Is she going nuts on us?

DR. LOVELACE. Sinus tachycardia. 102 beats per minute . . .

(Lights change.
Action in the lab and plane scenes continue concurrently—with slight lighting shifts.
JACK *talks to* JERRIE *from his plane to hers. They've been flying for a while and they're in some weather.)*

JACK. No visual, let's climb outta this weather.

JERRIE. Good idea.

JACK. Climb to flight level two eight zero.

JERRIE. Climbing to two eight zero.

(Back to the lab.)

JACKIE. A dream? Stress?

DR. LOVELACE. The psychiatrist says nothing made her snap.

JACKIE. Is she snapping now?

DR. LOVELACE. Heart rate is only slightly elevated. And we are at nine hours. Nine hours!

JACKIE. Okay—so we have it.

(Back to the planes.)

JACK. There you are!

JERRIE. Thanks for the climb. It's beautiful up here.

JACK. I'll say. Let's keep visual contact. I like lookin' at ya.

*(*HELENA *marches in toward* JERRIE *and her plane.* JERRIE*'s worlds are colliding.)*

HELENA. "Adultery is a sin against God."

JERRIE. You wanted me to learn about men.

HELENA. I want you to go to heaven, girl.

JERRIE. Right now?!

(Shift to lab.)

DR. LOVELACE. I think we should wait.

JACKIE. We have the results, more than we hoped. What are you waiting for?

(Shift to planes.)

JACK. You're drifting. Jerrie. Adjust.

*(*HELENA *is now in the plane with* JERRIE.*)*

HELENA. I want you to live a spiritual life.

JERRIE. Oh, I do, Mama—in the sky!

HELENA. I want you to have it on the ground!

(Shift to lab.)

JACKIE. Well?

DR. LOVELACE. Jackie, please, let me check the numbers.

(Shift to planes.)

JERRIE. I can control a two ton piece of metal.

*(*HARVEY *enters, flask in hand, smiling at* JERRIE.*)*

JACK. I'm off your wing. Hold steady.

HARVEY. You are extraordinary!

HELENA. She's out of control!

(Shift to lab.)

JACKIE. What about the numbers? What do they say?

(Shift to planes.)

JERRIE. I can fly through the clouds. Turn upside down and spin around and dance in the sky. I could never dance on the ground.

(Suddenly, a loud pop— Everyone hears this.)

Wait a minute, something's going on.

HELENA. I'll say!

(Shift to lab.)

JACKIE. What was that?

DR. LOVELACE. I'm not sure.

JACKIE. You're not sure?!

DR. LOVELACE. All her vital signs are within normal range. I want to see how long she can go.

JACKIE. Until what? Until she does lose her mind? And then what would we have?

(Shift to planes.)

JERRIE. Jack—prop seal's blown. Oil's all over the canopy, can't see. Flying by instruments.

JACK. Pull prop control all the way back. Call out your pressure.

JERRIE. Pressure dropping. 24 PSI.

(Shift to lab.)

DR. LOVELACE. No one has stayed in the isolation tank this long. I would like to push it as far as we can.

JACKIE. It's enough, Randy. We have enough proof. She did it. She passed all the men. Get her out.

DR. LOVELACE. What if it was you in there?

JACKIE. But it isn't.

DR. LOVELACE. Would you have wanted me to take you out?

JACKIE. BUT IT ISN'T!

(Shift to planes. JERRIE *is trying to read the instruments.)*

HELENA. Geraldyn, pray with me.

HARVEY. Helena!

JERRIE. Little busy here. Oil seeping in the cockpit now.

HARVEY. Nothin' can stop my girl.

JACK. Off your heading.

HELENA. *(To* HARVEY*:)* I blame you for this!

JERRIE. Pressure dropping to 12 PSI now.

(Shift to lab.)

DR. LOVELACE. I took the men out after four hours. They might have been able to stay longer.

(Shift to planes.)

JACK. Hold your altitude—but get ready to ditch.

(Shift to lab.)

JACKIE. You took the men out because they were talking to ghosts!

(Shift to planes.)

JERRIE. Ditch? Right. Raft ready, Mae West straps secure. Oil's really pouring in.

*(*JERRIE *tries to control the plane. In both worlds now.)*

DR. LOVELACE. Maybe Jerrie's talking to ghosts, too— She's just quieter about it.

HELENA.
Geraldyn, listen to me.

JACKIE.
Listen to me.

JACK. Don't ditch. Island's on the horizon. We'll try for a long glide in. Turn off your engines.

JERRIE. Engines off.

JACK. Start left turn now.

JACKIE. Take her out.

JACK. Level off. Nose up! Too much.

JERRIE. Gear down and locked.

JACK. Cleared for landing.

JACKIE. Take her out, Randy.

DR. LOVELACE. Are you ordering me?

JACKIE. You are my employee.

DR. LOVELACE. I am the scientist here.

JACKIE. Get her fucking out of that tank, Randy! Now. You are playing a dangerous game here. I don't give a shit if this little Okie can live in an isolation tank for the rest of her life. If one woman snaps, that's it! No one will look at another. GET HER OUT.

DR. LOVELACE. All right.

JACKIE. Now!

DR. LOVELACE. All right, Jackie. You win. As usual.

HELENA. Only the Lord can help you now.

*(*JERRIE *is struggling.)*

HARVEY. You got this.

JERRIE. I got this.

JERRIE.
Angel of God,

My Guardian dear,

To whom His love commits me here.

(She lands with a thud and is bouncing on the ground.)

Ever this day be at my side,

To rule and guide.

HELENA.
Lord help her.

HARVEY.
Let her fly, Helena.

HELENA.
You've ruined her.

HARVEY.
Let her be herself.

HELENA.
You mean let her be you, don't you?

HARVEY.
Leave her alone, leave me alone.

Amen.

JACK. Easy on the brakes.

JACKIE. Well—go on get her out!

DR. LOVELACE. It has to be done slowly. You can't rip her out of there after almost ten hours.

(He starts his work at the console. Jerrie's plane stops. She's safe.)

JERRIE. Yes. YES. I did it.

*(*HARVEY *toasts her with his flask and exits.)*

JACKIE. It might be Randy Lovelace's Mercury 7—but it's gonna be Jackie Cochran's Mercury 13! My lucky number.

*(*JACK *steps into the light as* JERRIE *stumbles out of the plane and* HELENA *watches.*
JERRIE *and* JACK *laugh and kiss.)*

JACK. You taste like oil.

JERRIE. Cause I'm part plane.

JACK. I think you are.

JERRIE. That was—something.

JACK. You put your hero goggles on and got her done.

JERRIE. I couldn't see anything. Oil everywhere.

JACK. One of your better landings.

JERRIE. Thanks for being my eyes.

JACK. My pleasure. There's a nice little bar right over there under those palm trees.

JERRIE. That is an excellent idea. First let me clean up, and I'll be right withya.

*(*JACK *walks off toward the bar.*
JERRIE *turns—* HELENA *is there and slaps* JERRIE *across the face—hard.)*

HELENA. If you think he's going to leave his wife for you . . . Well, that's even worse.

JERRIE. I don't want him to marry me.

HELENA. May the Lord forgive you, I don't think I can.

JERRIE. All I want is to be up there forever—and never have this conversation with you again. Jack is helping me get where I want to be. He's teaching me.

HELENA. Teaching you what exactly?

JERRIE. You really want to know?

HELENA. Just stop talking! STOP!

JERRIE. Are you ever sorry you made me get that operation?

HELENA. What?

JERRIE. If my tongue was still tied I couldn't say anything you disagree with.

HELENA. What a thing to say.

JERRIE. *I* wish I never got that operation.

HELENA. You do not.

JERRIE. Yes. I do. Cause when kids called me stupid I just stopped talking, remember? I found my peace in silence and solitude. Then you and Papa told me if I got that operation my life would be so much better. You promised me that folks would understand me. But—really I just want you to understand. And you still don't.

HELENA. I think you're doing more than talkin' and he's doing more than listening. "For God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous."

JERRIE. Oh, Mama, I don't believe that God is judging me. God is flying with me!

*(*JERRIE *starts to exit.)*

HELENA. Where are you going, Geraldyn?

JERRIE. Albuquerque!!

*(*JERRIE *turns, and* LOVELACE *is there.*
HELENA *is gone.*
This is the first time JERRIE *and* LOVELACE *meet. The beginning of Phase One testing.)*

DR. LOVELACE. Jerrie Cobb.

JERRIE. Dr. Lovelace.

DR. LOVELACE. Thank you for coming to Albuquerque.

JERRIE. I—I couldn't be more honored.

DR. LOVELACE. Woman of the Year in Aviation. First woman to receive the Gold Wings of the Federation Aeronautique International. You've been breaking records all over the world. Hard not to notice. How'd you like Paris?

JERRIE. Cold.

DR. LOVELACE. You know that I've been testing pilots for the Mercury astronaut program.

JERRIE. Everyone in the world knows.

DR. LOVELACE. Now the Russians are talking about putting a woman in space. Jackie Cochran and I did research in World War II on female ferry pilots, and they were able to tolerate isolation and extremes in temperature much better than the men. And they weigh less. Every pound costs on a spacecraft.

JERRIE. That makes sense, sir.

DR. LOVELACE. We will be testing you with the same Phase One tests that the Mercury boys went through. They're tough. It won't be easy.

JERRIE. Nothing good is, sir.

*(*JACKIE *enters.)*

JACKIE. Did I hear my name mentioned?

DR. LOVELACE. There she is. Jerrie, this is Jackie /

JERRIE. / Jackie Cochran. We've met.

JACKIE. We have?

JERRIE. A long time ago. I was very young.

JACKIE. We all were once. Go on. I'm just here to observe. And write the check.

DR. LOVELACE. Thank you. So, yes—you'll be meeting with a psychiatrist.

JACKIE. Making sure you're crazy enough to do this.

DR. LOVELACE. You're our guinea pig, Jerrie. We need data to prove that a woman can endure the rigors of spaceflight. You'll be spending hours on treadmills and tilt tables . . . And if all goes well—we can go on to Phase Two of the testing. Starting with putting you in an isolation tank.
How's that sound?

JERRIE. Can't wait.

JACKIE. Let's just see what you're made of.

(Lights change.
JACKIE *and* LOVELACE *are gone.*
JERRIE *is alone.)*

(Sound of a heart monitor.
A choreographed montage of physical tests that JERRIE *is put through.)*

(As this is happening, HELENA, HARVEY, *and* JACK *enter, now as lab technicians in white coats. They watch and assist as* JERRIE *is put through different tests that accelerate to the end of the act—*JERRIE *in the tank.*
Possible tests:
Running.
Cycling.

Lifting weights.
One of the technicians enters with a large syringe of ice-cold water and injects it into JERRIE*'s ear. It's painful and* JERRIE *is disoriented.)*

(The technicians are gone.
JERRIE *is in the isolation tank.*
Alone. Floating.
LOVELACE *and* JACKIE *are behind the console—watching.*
The sounds of water. Stillness.
LOVELACE *speaks into the microphone.)*

DR. LOVELACE. Jerrie. Jerrie—we're about to take you out of the tank. You've been in there for quite some time. The lights will come up very faintly. Open your eyes. Adjust.

(She does.)

Take time to adjust. Slowly. I'll be changing the temperature in the room so that you'll feel the water—the air. You'll feel the ground again. Everything is going to feel very, very different.

*(*JERRIE *is alone in a circle of light.*
She looks up and takes in a deep breath.
Blackout.)

End of Act One

(Lights up on a single REPORTER.*)*

REPORTER. Nine hours and fifty minutes later she reemerged from an isolation tank. The same tank that tested the Mercury 7—that's right—those brave men, our American heroes. One day last February, trim, twenty-nine-year-old Geraldyn Cobb packed a single suitcase, said goodbye to her fellow workers in Bethany, Oklahoma, and left for a supposed vacation with her parents. Jerrie Cobb never reached home. Last week Jerrie's strange disappearance was explained by Dr. Randolph Lovelace.

(Lights up on LOVELACE *and* JACKIE *at the press conference.)*

DR. LOVELACE. Jerrie Cobb is qualified to live, observe, do optimal work in the environment of space, and return safely to earth.

*(*JACKIE *steps in front of* LOVELACE.*)*

JACKIE. That's not all, boys— There are twelve more women pilots waiting in the wings! *Jackie Cochran's Women in Space Program!*

REPORTERS. Where's Jerrie? Is that Jerrie Cobb? Jerrie! Over here! Jerrie!

(JERRIE *enters in a girly dress. She's a bit unsteady in a pair of heels.*
Cameras flash.)

REPORTER. Jerrie Cobb, are you ready to be the first lady astronaut?

*(*JERRIE *looks to* JACKIE *and* LOVELACE *and back to the reporters and speaks VERY quietly.)*

JERRIE. Me? Oh. What? I—well. / I—um.

(Cameras flash— JERRIE *turns away from the reporters—but they are everywhere.*
JACKIE *and* LOVELACE *watch her flounder.)*

JACKIE. I don't think she's ready for this.

DR. LOVELACE. You're the one who alerted the press.

*(*LOVELACE *exits.)*

REPORTER. Jerrie—why do you want to go into space?

YOUNG WOMAN. What do you think it'll be like?

PHOTOGRAPHER. Over here, Jerrie!

REPORTER. What do ya want people to know about you?

REPORTER/YOUNG WOMAN/PHOTOGRAPHER. Come on Jerrie!/Tell us something!/Over here!

*(*JERRIE *turns and speaks again VERY quietly.)*

JERRIE. I would—I would—um—go into space even if I knew for certain . . . I could never even come back.

(They all move closer.)

REPORTER/YOUNG WOMAN/PHOTOGRAPHER. Wha'd she say, Jerrie?/Say that again!/Over here, Jerr!

*(*JERRIE *repeats herself a little louder.)*

JERRIE. I I I said . . . I would go into space even if I knew for certain I could never . . . come . . . back.

(Cameras flash.)

REPORTER/YOUNG WOMAN/PHOTOGRAPHER. Over here, Jerrie!/That's something!/Jerrie!/Did you hear that!/Jerrie!

*(*JACKIE *sweeps in.)*

JACKIE. Sorry to pull her away from you, boys, but . . .

(A YOUNG WOMAN *runs up.)*

YOUNG WOMAN. Would you sign me an autograph?

*(*JACKIE *takes a step forward.*
The YOUNG WOMAN *walks past her up to* JERRIE.*)*

Sign me an autograph.

JERRIE. You must think I'm someone else.

YOUNG WOMAN. Jerrie Cobb?! I saw your pictures in *Life* magazine.

*(*JACKIE *exits.)*

JERRIE. Oh.

(The YOUNG WOMAN *hands her an autograph book.)*

JERRIE. Well—yeah.

YOUNG WOMAN. Are you ever scared?

JERRIE. Not when I'm flying.

YOUNG WOMAN. Yeah. But going in space? Being an astronaut? Going to the moon? I saw your picture and I thought yeah that's what I want I wanta go to the moon like Jerrie Cobb. And you're my hero—cause I didn't think that was possible.

(In one breath:)

I wanta be a pilot more than anything in the world my mother and father and teachers and brothers all think I'm weird but I know what I want and when I see you up there and I hear about you you're real not fake like Amelia not that Amelia was fake but she's dead and you're not you're alive and you're a pilot and a girl and that means I can do it so I wanted your signature . . . Okay?

JERRIE. Okay . . . But I don't have a pen.

YOUNG WOMAN. Oh, well, I have a lipstick!

(The YOUNG WOMAN *takes out lipstick and* JERRIE *signs.)*

JERRIE. A lipstick it is!

(Lights change.
HARVEY *enters with a bottle and a copy of Life magazine.*
YOUNG WOMAN *is gone.*
Sounds of a barroom.)

HARVEY. Everybody drink up!!! My daughter's here! The astronaut! *Life* magazine! *Life* magazine. MY DAUGHTER— You all hear that? The First Lady Astronaut. That's what they're calling you now! Jerrie Cobb, First Lady Astronaut!

JERRIE. Oh, Pop. Stop it. That's enough.

HARVEY. I will not! I will not stop talking about my daughter. Nope. We are celebrating!

JERRIE. It's almost too . . . I mean look at me. I don't even look like me.

HARVEY. You look beautiful. But even more important, you are *something!*

JERRIE. I'm not sure if I know how to do all this.

HARVEY. Geraldyn, you look at me girl. Right now.

(She does.)

I always knew you were extraordinary. Always! And now everyone else knows. And you are *my* daughter! Yes, you are. I tell ya, life can throw a lot of bad things at ya. I sure know that. And you have to learn to take the good when it happens. I wish I had. There are plenty a times when there's nothing to celebrate. Plenty of times there is nothing.
So when there is somethin', grab it with both hands and eat it for breakfast, lunch, and dinner! You got that? Do that for me. Won't you? Do it for me.

JERRIE. Yes. Okay. Pop. I will.

(She looks around.)

Mother didn't want to join us . . . I guess.

HARVEY. No. Sweetheart. She . . . Well, you know how she can be. I'm so sorry. But—hey—a Cobb is going to the moon!! Drinks for the house!

(Cheers and applause from the other patrons.
HARVEY *is gone.*
JACK *is there.*
Sounds of an airfield.)

JERRIE. Jack!

JACK. Hey, there. Wow. Well, you clean up nice.

JERRIE. Did you see the article in *Life*?

JACK. What article?

JERRIE. They called me "The first lady astronaut." There are photos and /

JACK. / I know. I read it. Everyone read it. "The girl who excels at loneliness," isn't that what it said?

JERRIE. Oh. Yeah. Well. Jack, you wouldn't believe what's been happening since. There's a parade in Pittsburg.

JACK. "A parade in Pittsburg." Sounds like a song. Me? I gotta DC-7 waiting to go to Japan.

JERRIE. I was hoping I could join you. But . . .

JACK. Your fans await.

JERRIE. I'm sorry.

JACK. Hard to pass up a parade. You can sip sake under the cherry blossoms anytime.

JERRIE. It's more than that. I'm going to be the first woman in space.

JACK. So you said. You enjoy yourself. Sounds exciting.

(He turns to leave.)

JERRIE. Jack?

JACK. What? You want me to come to the parade? I gotta work.

JERRIE. Are you angry?

JACK. No. Why would I be angry? Look, Jerr. Enjoy this. As long as it lasts.

JERRIE. No. Jack. Jack. Don't you understand? Everything I've done until now has led to this. I think. I really do. I didn't expect it, that's for certain. And I'll learn to get better at all this reporter stuff. But I know I'm a great pilot. I can do this. I'm going to be an astronaut.

JACK. Happy for ya. Glad I could be of assistance. Part of the plan. The student surpasses her teacher.

(He salutes her.)

JERRIE. Jack. Stop.

JACK. What?

JERRIE. I didn't mean you were just part of my education. I mean, you were. But . . . we've /

JACK. / We've had fun, Jerr. That's what we've had. A lot of fun. And now you go do what you were born to do. And I am going to do what I was born to do. See ya on the runway.

(He exits.)

JERRIE. Jack . . . Jack?

(She turns and cameras flash.
JERRIE *does several poses like a model. She is better at it now.*
REPORTER *speaks to the audience.)*

REPORTER. Though she competes successfully in a tough masculine trade, she's a pretty twenty-nine-year-old Miss who would probably take heels along on her first spaceflight if given the chance. She's a woman who would be mistaken for an average housewife on TV's *What's My Line?* And yet Jerrie is a quiet, religious girl with more than the usual pilot's respect for the firmament.

(Cameras flash.)

JERRIE. Space is God's unspoiled world which humans should not trespass upon without a feeling of reverence.

(Camera flash.
JERRIE *exits.*
Two REPORTERS *speak to the audience and each other.)*

REPORTER #1. The Mercury 13, they're called by some.

REPORTER #2. Astronettes—they are called by others.

REPORTER #1. That's a cute name.

REPORTER #2. It is . . . catchy. Astronettes!

REPORTER #1. They are women who have excelled in the field of aviation. Women with thousands of air miles between them.

REPORTER #2. And some of them are beauties to boot. Am I right?

REPORTER #1. You are! There are the twins, Jan and Marion Dietrich. Some are comparing their beauty to Natalie Wood.

REPORTER #2. Imagine that going into space! And twins. Yowza!

REPORTER #1. There's also a pretty farm girl, Rhea Woltman, an electrical engineer, a professor at the University of Oklahoma. And Mrs. Philip Hart, wife of Senator Philip Hart.

REPORTER #2. She has eight children—four boys and four girls. Now that's equality!

REPORTER #1. And then there is the first to be tested, the world record–holder, twenty-nine-year-old Jerrie Cobb.

REPORTER #2. I hear her numbers are perfect.

REPORTER #1. Oh, really?

REPORTER #2. 36, 24, 36!

REPORTER #1. Now that's a heavenly body!

*(*REPORTER #1 *exits.)*

REPORTER #2. Certainly Miss Cobb will have no audience to which she may complain that she has nothing to wear once she is actually in flight . . . Who will, I wonder, pin the suddenly sundered shoulder strap? Who will repair with the lady to the astral little girls' room, there to gossip and giggle and refurbish the face? Who will double-park the spaceship while she searches for a drugstore? Who will zip the zippers, hook the eyes, inspect the stocking seams, and locate the lost gloves?

*(*REPORTER #2 *exits.*
FEMALE REPORTER *steps into the light.)*

FEMALE REPORTER. Colonel John Glenn, ladies and gentlemen. Colonel John Glenn.

*(*JOHN GLENN *makes an entrance to huge applause as he waves to his adoring crowd.)*

He just completed orbiting the planet three times—the first American to do so! And look at him now. There he is! Our very own conquering hero! And he's handsome, too! But ladies, he's taken! Colonel Glenn, what was it like in space?

JOHN GLENN. Well, I tell ya I was glad I made it up, finally. That first day was sure short. It was the shortest day I've ever run into. What can I say about a day where you've seen four beautiful sunsets.

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!



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