

Page 2

Outline: 2nd draft

NIGHT OVER WATER

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PROLOGUE

Sunday, 1 pm (British Summer Time)

Southampton

At the port of Southampton, on the south coast of England, a small crowd of aircraft enthusiasts and curiosity seekers watch as a huge flying boat comes down on the estuary of Southampton Water.

This is a Boeing 314, known as the Pan Am Clipper, flying in from Port Washington, New York. It is the largest and most luxurious airliner ever made. Specially designed and built for the first-ever transatlantic air passenger service, the Clipper carries forty of the world's most privileged people across the ocean in twenty-four hours (instead of four or five days by ship). It is the art deco Concorde.

But, unlike the Concorde, this aircraft has space. There are no rows of seats: the passengers sit in lounges. Gourmet meals are cooked (not reheated) in the kitchen and served in the dining room, accompanied by fine wines. At night the divan seats convert to bunks and everyone goes to bed. There is even a honeymoon suite. Because of the \$675 round-trip fare - half the cost of a small house - the passengers are mainly royalty, movie stars and millionaire businessmen.

As well as the 100-foot-long passenger deck, there is a large upper deck which includes the spacious flight cabin. The captain supervises a crew of five: pilot, co-pilot, navigator, engineer and radio operator. On a transatlantic flight the plane carries two complete crews who work alternate four-hour watches. For off-duty crew there are sleeping quarters and a day room.

Transatlantic air travel is only a few weeks old. But now, as the plane comes down, the crew hear news that will mean the end of commercial flights across the Atlantic for years to come. Just two hours ago, Britain declared war on Germany.

It is 3 September 1939.

(Historically, the transatlantic Clipper service was cancelled a week earlier, after Hitler invaded Poland. This is a fictional flight.)

I

Wednesday, 12 midnight to 12 noon (British Summer Time)
England

1. The Isleys are a rich and wildly eccentric family of English aristocrats. Lord Isley is a founder member of the British Union of Fascists. He hates all foreigners, except white Colonial types such as Americans and Australians whom he regards as exiled British. He also hates catholics and communists, and the mere mention of suffragettes can enrage him. He is a family tyrant who rules his wife and children absolutely. He has always refused to send his daughters to school, and they have received a haphazard education from governesses and tutors.

His half-American wife Verne is a vague, ethereal beauty no less eccentric than her husband: she eats only uncooked food, she refuses to call doctors for herself or her children, and she is never seen carrying anything. She owns a famous piece of jewelry, the Delhi Suite, consisting of a diamond-and-sapphire necklace with matching earrings and brooch.

Their eldest child, Elizabeth, a large, horsy girl of 21, is a great admirer of the Nazis. She has visited Berlin several times, she speaks German well (they had a German governess for a while) and she has twice dined with the Fuehrer himself: the top Nazis are sufficiently snobbish to feel themselves legitimized by the condescension of a young English aristocrat.

The second child, Margaret, 18, is our point-of-view character. Intelligent, warm-hearted and innocent, she has a firm grasp of international politics but she can be surprisingly

ignorant about ordinary life. The other side of her innocence is a disarming candour. She has a way of turning her clear, wide-eyed gaze on you and saying something that pierces your heart. She has only ever had one lover, a young man who was killed a year ago in the Spanish Civil War. Under his influence she became a feminist and a socialist, which causes tremendous family rows. He was a unique person, and she has no hope of ever finding another man like him. She is bored stiff by the boys her mother is always introducing her to, smug young members of the squirearchy with nothing on their minds but hunting and drinking.

There is also a slightly manic 14-year-old son, Percy. Although he is afraid of Father (as they all are) he has a streak of mischief which is irrepressible. He informs new servants of imaginary house rules, such as that they must go barefoot on Fridays. Once he told the whole village that his father had died in the night. He is not rebellious, just uncontrollable.

Shortly after midnight on the morning of Wednesday 6 September, Margaret is in London, walking the streets in the blackout, alone. She goes into Claridge's hotel and asks for a room, but the night porter is suspicious of a woman alone, with no luggage, at this time of night, and he tells her the hotel is full. She tries a cheap hotel, but they demand payment in advance and she has no money.

As she walks the streets, getting colder, she recalls how she got into this mess.

When the Isleys got home from church on Sunday they heard on the radio that Britain had declared war. Father was furious: he was still hoping that Britain and Germany would unite against the menace of Communist Russia. Elizabeth was depressed that her native country was at war with the regime she idolised. Margaret further infuriated both of them by pointing out that Britain had critically weakened its position by pusillanimously condoning the Fascist takeover in Spain.

Percy then announced that he had discovered that one of his

great-grandmothers had the maiden name of Fishbein, and he therefore considered himself partly Jewish. Father was horrified - this is, after all, the secret nightmare of all racists - and there was tremendous consternation until they all realised that Percy was making it up.

Then Mother dropped a bombshell. "Of course, there's only one thing to be done," she said in the tone of one who merely draws attention to the obvious. "We must all go and live in Connecticut until this silly war is over." *Margaret sees that Father agrees - they have decided already.*

It was Margaret's turn to be horrified. Like many people of her generation, she has for years been feeling ashamed and impotent about her country's role in the Spanish Civil War. (The British, French, German and Italian governments all agreed not to intervene, but the Germans and Italians flouted the agreement and supplied arms to the Fascists, while the British and French turned a blind eye.) Now that Britain has at last taken a stand against Fascism she wants to be part of the struggle.

Father booked them all seats on the Pan Am Clipper, which leaves for New York at 2 pm today. Margaret begged Father to let her stay behind but he refused point-blank.

Yesterday she ran away. Her plan was to stay with an older cousin who has a flat in London, then to join the Wrens (the Women's Royal Naval Reserve). But her escape was poorly planned. She did not even check that the cousin was at home. She found the flat empty and locked up. She has no money and nowhere to go.

Depressed by her foolishness, she drifts toward the river. A drunk frightens her, she screams, and a policeman comes to her aid. He takes her to a police station.

In the charge room she begins to cry. She is comforted by a handsome man of about twenty-five. He is wearing immaculate evening dress and good jewelry, but he speaks with a broad cockney accent. She gathers that he is thief. She is immensely grateful to him: he is the only person who has been kind to her

since she left home.

She now learns that her description has been circulated to all police stations, she has been recognised, and her father has been sent for. She tries to leave, but the police detain her. (They have no right to do this, of course, but this is the thirties and her father is a Lord.)

Eventually Father arrives and takes her away.

2. The thief is Harry Marks, a criminal who has had a successful career until now but has just been caught red-handed. His method of operation is to date upper-class girls in order to gain access to wealthy homes and rob them. He has charm and good looks, and he is a good actor ^{can do accents} and expert at passing for an idle young man-about-town. His great interest in life is jewelry: he loves it and knows a great deal about it.

For some time now he has been restless. Although he has been doing well professionally, as it were, he never gets more than a tenth of the retail value of the objects he steals. It would be almost as easy to make a living as a legitimate jeweller. Although uneducated, he is intelligent and shrewd, and he is weary of the empty-headed socialites with whom he is obliged to spend most of his time. However, he is also idle, selfish and dishonest, and a life of crime is really what suits him best.

In the morning he is brought before the magistrates. Although the police ask for him to be remanded in custody, he makes a very clever speech and gets bail. *Pretending it is all a frightful mix-up.*

Out on the streets the atmosphere is tense, excited and friendly. Everyone carries a gas mask. Millions of children have been evacuated to the countryside. Strangers converse amicably on the buses and trains. Harry buys a newspaper with the headline POLES BOMB BERLIN. When he gets home to his flat he finds he has been conscripted. If he does not spend the war in jail he is going to spend it in the army. All in all, there

could hardly be a better time for Harry to leave the country.

He puts a few things into a leather suitcase and drives his motorcycle to a working-class neighbourhood south of the river. He goes into a small house occupied by a woman with a baby. The child is Harry's.

He goes to the bedroom and opens a locked box. He takes out a large amount of cash - his savings - and an ^{stolen} American passport. He gives the woman a hundred pounds, two years' wages for a shop assistant in Woolworth's (which is what she is).

She is not grateful. "You're running away, aren't you," she says bitterly.

Harry is not moved. "I'm going to America," he says.

The woman suddenly kisses him passionately. He responds coldly. She turns away, defeated. He leaves.

He drives to Southampton, where he tries to get passage on a ship going to the USA. Many other people have the same idea, and he cannot get a berth. Finally a travel agent sells him a ticket on the Pan Am Clipper, leaving today.

He goes to a hotel barber, gets a shave and a haircut, and puts on a clean shirt. Then he has a cup of coffee in the lounge. He sits near an attractive woman in her thirties. She is joined by a man. They are obviously very much in love, and Harry feels a pang of envy. He pushes it from his mind and looks forward to the flight.

3. The woman Harry noticed is Diana Losely, 34, a quiet, rather weak-willed woman who has left her arrogant, overbearing husband Mervyn to run away with shy, charming Michael Alder, an American writer of radio comedy scripts. *Jack Benny, Fred Allen, American Comedy*

Diana has never been happy with Mervyn. She is fond of him but also frightened of him. He is managing director of a company that manufactures fans of all sizes in the northern industrial city of Manchester. A forceful, go-getting type, even his leisure pursuits involve speed, and he is a keen amateur aviator.

His interest in aircraft led him to start manufacturing propellers, a business which has boomed in the last few years as Britain has built up its air force.

Mervyn is fond of Diana but she is too weak to stand up to him and he does not respect her. He has casually tyrannised her all their married life. They have no children: although Diana wants them, he does not, for he already has two by a previous marriage. (His children, sensing Diana's weakness with the unfailing instinct of children, also tyrannise her.)

Diana is apathetic about politics at the best of times, but at the moment her private life is so exciting that she has hardly noticed the outbreak of war, except to be vaguely glad she is leaving before it gets serious. For years she has wished she had the courage to leave Mervyn, and now Michael has given her that courage. She feels as if she has been let out of jail.

All the same, she is biting her nails about what she has done. She is fearful of how hurt and angry Mervyn will be. Indeed, she never quite worked up the courage to tell him she was leaving, and in the end she wrote a note - which, she realises with a shiver of anxiety, he must be reading about now.

However, there is nothing he can do. He is far away in Manchester, and the Clipper takes off in a couple of hours. She makes up her mind to relax and enjoy the feeling: Free at last!

4. In the same part of the world as Diana's husband Mervyn, someone else is feeling betrayed.

Nancy Black, 39, and her brother Peter, 38, inherited from their father a midsized clothing business. They have a swanky dress shop on Fifth Avenue; a tailoring factory on the Lower East Side specialising in work clothes and uniforms for maids, nurses, firemen and so on; and two textile mills in South Carolina. *

The business is a private corporation. Peter and Nancy own 40% each; their Aunt Tilly owns 10%; and the remaining 10% is held by their father's disreputable old lawyer, Danny Riley.

The word diversification has not yet been invented but their father was ahead of his time.

Nancy is a pretty woman, always beautifully dressed. She is smart and strong-willed. She is divorced with two teenage children, and she would like to marry again. But it seems she is always too busy to find a man.

She is older and smarter than her brother, but when their father died it was Peter who became chairman, just because people expect to see a man in charge. However, Peter is not much of a businessman, and under him the company has gone downhill. Nancy knows what must be done to rescue it, but she has been holding back, for the sake of Peter's pride. But recently she decided it was time to act.

She wrote a report, for Peter's eyes only, setting out what had to be done. She proposed that Peter, although retaining the nominal chairmanship, should confine himself to the store, and work with strict cost controls to limit the losses. She would take full responsibility for the factory, introduce new designs, and expand its capacity, in anticipation of huge extra demand for uniforms if the US goes into the war. She also suggested that she should go to South Carolina, fire the mill managers, run the mills herself for a couple of months to find out what is going on, then hire reliable local people to take over.

Peter said he would think about it. Nancy told him, as gently as she could, that if he would not agree to this or something very like it she would have to go over him to the board of directors - which would inevitably mean her taking over from him as chairman.

When war broke out they were both in Paris, buying from the couturiers for the store. Nancy is very well aware of the implications of war for her business, but otherwise she counts herself apolitical. She would probably say that Hitler is a useful bulwark against Communism, despite the distasteful activities of some extreme members of his party.

Their immediate problem was to get back to the USA. Like everyone else they had trouble getting reservations, but finally

they got passage on a ship leaving from Liverpool, on the north-west coast of England, on Thursday.

By accident Nancy now learns that Peter is plotting against her. While pretending to mull over her report he has in fact been looking for someone to take over the company, and in Paris he found a buyer: Nat Ridgeway, the millionaire owner of Multitex Inc, a clothing conglomerate with branches in several countries. The deal provides for Peter to continue to run the store, but there is no role for Nancy. The board meeting to approve the sale will be held in New York tomorrow. Peter will not be using his cabin on the ship - he is returning to New York today on the Pan Am Clipper.

Nancy is shocked by his treachery and heartbroken at the prospect of losing her birthright. She is also quite sure Peter has made a bad business decision. If the US enters the war everyone will be desperate for uniform-making capacity and their company will be worth twice or three times the price Ridgeway is offering. But the other shareholders will follow Peter's lead - unless Nancy is there to argue against it.

She checks the schedules. The Clipper takes off at 2 pm. There is no way she can get to Southampton by then - not by train, car or plane, even if she could find a plane. However, the Clipper stops at Foynes, in the Shannon estuary on the west coast of Ireland, landing at 5 pm and taking off again at 6. (Despite its great power it is not a fast plane: it cruises at 188 mph.) Nancy could get to Foynes in time to catch it - if she could find a plane.

She goes to an airfield outside town. There is only one pilot there, a tall, attractive man of about her own age. He tells her rudely that he is not for hire. She persists in talking to him, hoping to persuade him. It turns out that he is about to fly to Foynes to intercept the Clipper. He is chasing his runaway wife, and his name is Mervyn Losely.

He agrees to take Nancy with him.

5. The engineer on the Clipper is our fifth and last point-of-view character. Ted Deacon, 30, is the eldest child of a poor New England smallholder. He was brought up in a strict churchgoing family, went to Annapolis, became a Navy engineer working on flying boats, and resigned from the Navy for more money with Pan Am. He is a firm believer in the Protestant work ethic, which has got him where he is today.

The family was desperately poor when he was a child. His dream then was to find buried treasure in the woods, and use it to transform the draughty, ramshackle old farmhouse into a place of warmth, comfort and happiness. His parents have died but he still lives on the old property, and he is well on the way to fulfilling his dream. With his engineer's wages he has installed electricity and plumbing and bought rugs and bedspreads. There are electric fires, a phone and a radio. He no longer runs it as a farm, of course, but he rents out the fields as pasture and takes care of the woodland himself.

Although he is a hunk, he has always been shy with girls. However, a couple of years ago he fell for Carol-Ann, a sweet, pretty stewardess from Texas. They got married and now she is three months pregnant. When the old house is filled with the laughter of children, Ted's dream will have come true.

But now, as he is about to leave his Southampton hotel and board the Clipper for the flight home, the dream turns into a nightmare.

The phone rings. An unfamiliar voice says: "I have your wife on the line." Ted's heart lurches - something is wrong. Carol-Ann comes on, breathless, sobbing, barely coherent. She has been kidnapped. She is unhurt but terrified. She begs Ted to do whatever these people want. He promises. The man comes on to say that Ted will get his instructions on the plane, and he had better follow them to the letter if he wants to see his wife again. The phone goes dead.

Ted is distraught. He does not know what to do. This kind of thing is supposed to happen in Chicago, not Maine. He casts around for someone he can talk to, someone he can trust absolutely. He thinks of Steve Appleby, his buddy through Annapolis and the Navy. Steve was best man at Ted's wedding.

Ted calls him at the naval base at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Steve is not at home. Ted asks the wife to find him, urgently, and get him to call.

He waits in his room until the last possible moment, but no call comes.

II

Wednesday, 12 noon to 5 pm (British Summer Time)

Southampton to Foynes

6. Passengers are served lunch at the Clipper pier before boarding. Margaret Isley is cast down by the humiliating failure of her escape attempt, but she is too young to remain for long unaffected by the excitement of a trip in the most glamorous aircraft in the world. She spots the movie star Lulu Bell, the French-Jewish banker Baron Gabon, and the White Russian Princess Lavinia. She also meets or notices Diana Losely and Michael Alder, Peter Black (the brother of Nancy), and the engineer, Ted Deacon.

Over lunch, her sister Elizabeth makes a surprise announcement: she is not coming with them. Instead she will make her way to Germany and fight for the Nazi cause. *

There is an almighty row. Father says: "I absolutely forbid it!" But Elizabeth is 21, she has a little money of her own, and she has chosen her moment well: in this public place her father cannot physically coerce her. She even had two sets of luggage: the cases which are now being loaded on to the Clipper are full of pillows and towels from the hotel, and her real luggage has

They are sexy as well as politically appealing.

gone to a different pier.

So she leaves, to take ship for Lisbon in neutral Portugal, from where she will get passage to Germany.

Margaret sees that her father is deeply shaken, beneath his choleric exterior. His world is falling apart. He is not, after all, invincible. Perhaps Margaret may yet escape from him

But next time she must plan ahead, like Elizabeth.

As they are boarding, another passenger arrives. Margaret is astonished to see Harry Marks, the young man who was kind to her in the police station this morning. He is now using an American accent.

Harry is even more disconcerted that she is, but he swiftly recovers his composure, and says quietly: "Forget you met me in a police station, and I'll do the same for you." She grins back at him and agrees.

7. Harry is in fact more than disconcerted - he is shocked rigid. What bad luck! He tries to assess the risk he is taking by travelling with Margaret. She knows he is not what he pretends to be, and if she should talk there could be awkward questions at US immigration. On the other hand, if he gets off the plane now, he will call attention to himself, and it may be days or weeks before he can get out of the country. He decides to stay on board, and work on her to make sure she does not talk.

He studies the other passengers. He notices a tall, distracted German of about 30 who looks as if he has forgotten where he is. It turns out to be Carl Hartman, a Jewish physicist who has escaped from the Nazis and is being flown to the States at the expense of the US government.

A couple who do not fit are Ollis Field, a middle-aged man in a cheap suit, and Frank Spuntino, a younger, hefty man in a loud pinstripe. Harry's instinct tells him Field is a cop - but Spuntino looks more like a crook. Interesting.

Harry is also surprised to recognise Margaret's mother.

Lady Verne Isley is the owner of the famous Delhi Suite. She is not wearing it, of course; although she does have on a diamond-and-ruby brooch in the shape of a cockerel that Harry recognises as the work of the great Louis Cartier.

The plane taxis out into Southampton Water and manoeuvres into position. The four 1500-horsepower engines - the most powerful ever made - begin to roar, and the fifteen-foot propellers spin. The plane sends up a wall of spray as it gathers speed across the estuary, then it lifts into the air.

Cocktails are served. Harry talks to Margaret again, turning on the charm that has won the hearts of so many girls of Margaret's age and social station. She is oddly impervious to it. When he flirts with her she frowns at him as if he is behaving peculiarly. Ironically, he finds himself charmed by her. There is something very seductive about her combination of innocence and candour.

Eventually he finds the key to her heart: politics. He tells her that he used to belong to the Communist Party (which he did, for three weeks, when he was sixteen) and he subtly presents himself as a modern Robin Hood, stealing from the rich to give to the poor. In reality he does the former much more than the latter. Nevertheless the tactic is effective, and she becomes much more interested in him.

He learns that the whole family is going to live in the US for the duration of the war, and he is struck by a thought. When people flee a country on the outbreak of war, they do not leave their valuables behind. The priceless Delhi Suite must be somewhere on this aircraft.

Harry decides to steal it.

8. Mervyn Losely's plane develops engine trouble over the Irish Sea. For a while Nancy Black fears for her life. But they make it to land and come down outside Dublin.

Mervyn tries to fix the plane. Nancy impatiently suggests

finding a real mechanic. Mervyn rejects the idea bad-temperedly. Nancy goes off on her own and finds a mechanic. He fixes the plane in seconds. To her surprise, Mervyn accepts this with good grace, laughing at his own stubbornness.

Mervyn and Nancy are similar personalities, both over-achievers. Nancy is frequently exasperated by him, but she also finds him attractive.

9. For Diana Losely, the thrill of running off with her lover is spoiled. Michael has met up with Lulu Bell, the movie star. It turns out they worked together on a radio show years ago. They chat and reminisce, and Diana feels excluded.

For a while she talks to a handsome young American called Frank Spuntino, but she keeps thinking about Mervyn. She begins to feel that she has done something foolhardy. She has abandoned the world she knows and is going blindly to a new life about which she knows nothing. It will always be like this, she thinks gloomily: Michael's friends, Michael's work, Michael's country. But it is not yet too late to change her mind. The plane touches down in Ireland, she knows. She could yet get off there....

10. Ted Deacon is approached by a passenger who introduces himself as Tony Joe and says: "I have your instructions." He is clearly a tough guy but he seems very nervous.

He tells Ted to interfere with the plane's engines so as to force it down in the sea at a specific location in the Bay of Fundy, off the coast of Maine near the Canadian border.

Ted protests that it's not so easy. Tony cuts him off. They have consulted experts, he says; they know it can be done. Despite his bluster he looks unsure. However, Ted thinks it probably can be done. Tony Joe says: "You'll find a way - if you want to see your pretty wife again."

Tony Joe will not reveal the purpose of this, but it seems obvious that a boat will be waiting to rendezvous with the

Clipper, and Ted assumes this must be a major smuggling operation.

Ted was brought up with a powerful sense of right and wrong, and it breaks his heart to co-operate with criminals. He recalls talking to his father about bullies at school. "Those guys are mean, but they ain't smart," the old man would say. Ted figures that Tony Joe is mean but not smart. Ted should be able to outwit him. What he needs to do is set some kind of trap. But they have Carol-Ann. If Ted does anything to upset them, they may harm her.

He sees no way out.

III

Wednesday, 5 pm to Thursday, 1 am (British Summer Time)

Foynes to mid-Atlantic

11. As the Clipper comes down in the Shannon estuary, Diana tells Michael that she has changed her mind and she is leaving the flight here. He is distraught. He disembarks with her and they go into the terminal building. They are stunned to see Mervyn waiting there.

Diana has been planning to beg her husband's forgiveness and ask him to take her back. But now, in the conversation they have, he is so arrogant and condescending that she changes her mind again. Remembering how unhappy he made her, she becomes more determined than ever to leave him. She gets back on the plane with Michael.

12. Nancy tries to buy a ticket for the plane. It is full except for the honeymoon suite. She agrees to take that.

Mervyn also tries to buy a ticket. He is told there are none left. Of course, the honeymoon suite takes two. He asks Nancy to let him travel with her. Despite its name, the

honeymoon suite does not have a double bed - just two bunks, one above the other. After Mervyn has brought her here from England, Nancy can hardly refuse him.

As they take off, Nancy confronts Peter, who is with his buyer, Nat Ridgeway. (Ridgeway, 60, has been visiting his European branches - probably for the last time in years.) Triumphantly, Nancy tells them she will attend the board meeting and oppose the sale.

Stung, Peter says this will make no difference, because he has Danny Riley's vote in the bag. Nancy does not doubt this: Riley is nothing if not corruptible. Now even with Aunt Tilly on Nancy's side the voting will be fifty-fifty - and the issue will be decided by the casting vote of the chairman, Peter.

Nancy is not yet ready to give up. She has observed that Ridgeway does not seem pleased with this turn of events, and she guesses that he did not know, until now, that Peter was working behind Nancy's back. She asks Ridgeway bluntly whether he wants to go through with the takeover now that he realises that dishonest methods have been used on his behalf. Ridgeway replies: "I've made a deal and I'll stick to it."

Nancy explains to Peter how the war is going to multiply the value of the company, but he does not care. He only wants to do her down. She is shaken by his malice.

The main lounge is converted to a dining-room and a seven-course dinner is served in three sittings. Nancy dines with Mervyn and tells him the problem. He says shrewdly: "If you're so sure Danny Riley is corrupt, surely you must know something you can use against him?"

Nancy realises she does. Some years ago Riley was involved in bribing a judge and her father protected him.

Now she persuades the captain to let her send a radio message to New York, instructing her lawyer to call Riley and question him about that case.

She realises she is becoming fond of Mervyn. What a shame

he is (a) in love with Diana and (b) firmly rooted in England.

13. Harry Marks continues to chat to Margaret and gets to know the family. However, he does not dine with them, and while they are eating he goes through their cabin bags. The Delhi Suite is not there. It must be in their checked baggage.

He resolves to find a way into the baggage hold.

14. Margaret decides that Harry Marks is the most interesting man she has met since her lover died, and begins to wonder whether Harry might play a role in her future.

Her father becomes bad-tempered when he hears Baron Gabon and Carl Hartman arguing about Zionism. He objects to Jews travelling first class. Percy makes matters worse by sitting down to dinner in a yarmulke. After a few glasses of wine, Father starts to talk loudly and offensively about Jews. Margaret is mortified; Percy goes "Oy, vey," every now and again; Mother just ignores him.

However, the other passengers do not ignore him. He is not in England now, and the kind of thing he might get away with among the Dorset squires, or at his London club, is not acceptable on an American airplane. There is a scene. The captain is called. He gives Lord Isley a dressing-down in front of everyone.

15. The flight deck receives a radio message for Ollis Field from the FBI. The contents of the message perturb the captain and electrify Ted Deacon. It says: "Bureau has received information that associates of Spuntino are on your flight. Take extra precautions with the prisoner."

The captain concludes that Ollis Field is an FBI agent and is escorting a criminal, Frank Spuntino, back to the States for trial. He is angry that the airline was not told of this. He summons Field. Field is unapologetic: Spuntino is wanted on

charges of murder and extortion, and it was necessary to get him to the States as fast as possible; and why should the airline be informed? The captain demands that Field surrender his gun. After an argument, Field gives in. The captain puts the gun in his desk drawer.

They then notice that this entire conversation has been overheard by an eavesdropper - young Percy Isley. He has not come up the staircase to the flight deck, but has appeared at the rear. He must have come up the aft ladder and through the crew sleeping quarters. The captain sends him away crossly.

At last Ted can figure out what Tony Joe is up to. This is not a smuggling operation after all. It is a rescue. When the Clipper comes down off the coast of Maine, a boat will come alongside and take Spuntino off. The boat will land somewhere along the coast and Spuntino will disappear, perhaps to Canada.

Spuntino is a murderer who will surely kill again. How many deaths will Ted have on his conscience after helping Spuntino escape from justice? But he has no choice.

IV

Thursday, 1 am to 9 am (British Summer Time)

Mid-Atlantic to Botwood

16. Passengers start getting ready for bed. They go into either the Men's Retiring Room or the Ladies' Powder Room and change into elegant nightwear: striped pyjamas, embroidered nightdresses, silk dressing-gowns and carpet slippers. When they emerge, their seats have been transformed into curtained bunks, each with its own window, ventilator, light, call button, parcel shelf and clothes hanger.

Among the first to retire are Ollis Field and Frank Spuntino. Percy has told several people about Spuntino. His family think this is another one of his jokes, but then someone

sees that Spuntino is handcuffed to his bunk, and soon everyone knows. The captain has to go around explaining and apologising.

Margaret Isley is inclined to put Spuntino in the same category as Harry, but Harry soon sets her straight: the Mafia do not merely steal jewelry from the rich - they murder, torture and terrorise people.

Margaret has a long conversation with Nancy Black. Nancy's attitude to Spuntino is different again. She says there will always be crime in the slums and it might as well be organised so as to keep order. However, Margaret decides that Nancy may not know much about slums.

Margaret confides in Nancy and tells her about her plan to escape from her father. Nancy is sympathetic, and eventually Margaret says: "Will you give me a job?" Nancy replies: "I will - if I have one myself."

17. Diana Losely and Michael Alder are too wrapped up in themselves to worry about Spuntino. Diana actually does not believe he is a murderer. However, she does believe that her ex-husband is falling in love with Nancy Black. (Mervyn himself has not yet realised this.) Diana becomes irrationally angry about it. This offends Michael, who accuses her of still being in love with Mervyn. They have a row and go to bed.

18. Ted Deacon still cannot see how to outwit Tony Joe but he has thought of something that may help.

He seeks out Tony Joe and says: "Carol-Ann must be on board the boat that meets us when we splash down."

Tony Joe says: "You can't make no demands - "

"But I can," says Ted, sounding more confident than he feels. "You've got Carol-Ann, but I've got Frank Spuntino. One word from me and Spuntino will be taken off the plan at the next stop. And, incidentally, so will you."

Tony does not think Ted will do this. But can he take the

risk?

Tony says: "It ain't that easy - "

"It can be done," Ted says. You can call your people from Botwood, the next stop. There's one more stop after that: Shediac. Before we take off from Shediac, you have to confirm to me that Carol-Ann will be on the boat. And then, when we're on the water, I have to see her before your people come aboard."

Tony agrees to call.

Ted still doesn't know what he's going to do, but getting Carol-Ann back that much sooner will give him a chance at least.

19. The plane comes down at Botwood, Newfoundland, at 8 am British Summer Time, 3 am Eastern Standard Time. Some passengers disembark and stretch their legs, others stay in bed. Harry Marks explores the upper deck, which includes the flight deck, crew sleeping quarters, wing crawlways and baggage holds. He also goes down the forward ladder and discovers the crew day room in the nose of the aircraft, immediately in front of the forward passenger cabin. There is in fact a door through from the day room to the passenger cabin, although it is never used while there are passengers aboard. Harry is also amused to see a concealed peephole through which the crew can look into the passenger cabin.

However, he is unable to get into the baggage hold unobserved, and to his intense frustration he has to give up for fear of arousing suspicion by hanging around too long.

20. In the terminal building, Nancy Black is called to the phone. It is a frantic Danny Riley. "People are calling me about that old case!"

Nancy says: "Relax, I'll take care of it - if you vote against the takeover." Riley agrees, and Nancy is triumphant.

V

Thursday, 4 am to 8 am (Eastern Standard Time)

Botwood to Shediac

21. Ted gets off the plane to find his old Navy buddy, Steve Appleby, waiting for him. * He has called in every favour anyone ever owed him to fly up here from Portsmouth. "Nella said you sounded like you were in deep trouble. I've never known you even a little shook. What the hell's going on?"

Ted is weak with relief and feels choked up. He tells Steve the whole story.

Steve proposes an unofficial Navy patrol in the Bay that will not move until after Carol-Ann is on the Clipper and Spuntino is off it. But there is a risk that Tony Joe's people will spot the patrol and get suspicious. Ted has to make the choice.

While he is thinking about it, Tony Joe tells him that everything is arranged, Carol-Ann will be on the boat.

Just before take-off, Ted gives Steve the go-ahead.

22. Margaret tells Harry about her plans, which are shaping up. Nancy will give her a job. To Harry she says: "Can I see you in New York? Can we be friends?" He promises.

She now tells her father that when they reach the States she is going to find a place to live, get a job, and save enough money for a ticket back to England, where she will join the Wrens. She begs him not to oppose her, because she does not want to be estranged from her family.

Isley summons all his authority to undermine her. He pours scorn on her aspiration to independence, points out that she does not even know the price of a loaf of bread, and predicts that she will not survive a single day in any kind of military organisation.

If he is right, of course, it is only because of the way he

Ted was not expecting this.

has brought her up; but this thought is no consolation. She burns with shame and longs for a chance to prove her courage.

She will get it sooner than she imagines.

23. Mervyn tells Diana that she is free to go with Michael--he has decided he has no right to stand in the way of her happiness.

Diana is furious. She knows perfectly well that he no longer wants her because he has fallen in love with Nancy Black. She yells at him and calls him a hypocrite. For once she gets the better of him.

Afterwards, Michael points out that she has just stood up to Mervyn for the first time in her life.

24. The Clipper splashes down at Shediac, New Brunswick, at 7 am Eastern Standard Time. Once again Harry Marks stays on board while the plane is refuelled. This time he is able to get into the baggage hold unobserved.

He locates the Isleys' bags. As an experienced thief he is not long delayed by luggage locks. In a wardrobe trunk he finds a simple hidden compartment. It contains the Delhi Suite, a small pistol--loaded--and a fortune in bearer bonds, which Isley must be smuggling out of the country to evade exchange controls. Harry finds it ironic that Lord Isley is no more honest than Harry himself.

Meanwhile, Ollis Field gets another message from the FBI. Checking the passenger list, they have found the name of a man who is dead. Whoever is using the dead man's passport is Spuntino's man on board, they assume. In fact it is Harry.

He does not appear to have deplaned so they go on board to arrest him. Harry is about to transfer the Delhi Suite and the bonds to his own (half-empty) suitcase when he hears someone coming. He hastily stuffs clothes^{*} from the wardrobe trunk into his own case, then hides in the trunk.

full-length fur coats, etc.

He gathers from the conversation of the searchers that they are looking for him and realises that somehow he has been found out. However, his vanishing trick has them flummoxed. They are forced to conclude that he got off the plane and sneaked away from the terminal.

Harry now devises a new, somewhat desperate plan. The only way he can avoid arrest is to pass through customs and immigration inside Lady Verne's wardrobe trunk.* If he makes it undetected, he will stay inside until the trunk reaches her hotel. There he will escape as best he can, preferably with the jewels and the bonds.

25. Mervyn tells Nancy that he loves her and asks her to return to England with him. She says she probably loves him, too, but why doesn't he move to the States? He says he must make his contribution to the war effort by manufacturing propellers for the RAF. She says she must do the same by making uniforms. They get cross with one another.

Her brother Peter asks her to talk peace. They go to a private room in the terminal building. Peter locks Nancy in.

Some time later, Mervyn finds her and frees her. They kiss passionately. But the Clipper has left without them. (No doubt Peter said they had decided to leave.)

Undaunted, they charter a seaplane and set off in pursuit.
not without difficulty.

VI

Thursday, 8 am to 1 pm (Eastern Standard Time)

Shediac to Port Washington

26. Margaret is heartbroken. Both Nancy, who was going to give her a job, and Harry, who was going to be her friend, have left the flight without warning, and without leaving her any

Makes an air hole, figures out how to open it from inside, throws away the padlock.

means of contacting them. She feels betrayed.

Then something odd happens to the engine note, and the Clipper loses height.

27. Ted has surreptitiously interfered with the fuel supply to the engines, causing a loss of power.

He tells the captain he cannot figure out what is causing it. The captain tells the pilots to prepare for an emergency splashdown, calls the second engineer, and orders the radio operator to inform New York. The second engineer is in the john, incapacitated by a large dose of laxative slipped into his coffee by Ted; and the radio has mysteriously gone wrong (also organised by Ted).

Timing it carefully, Ted causes further loss of power and the captain orders an emergency splashdown at just the right spot.

A boat comes alongside immediately. To Ted's joy, Carol-Ann is on deck.

She comes on board the Clipper with three men, entering by the usual door which leads into the main lounge. Until this moment, the passengers and crew of the Clipper have assumed that the boat was there by coincidence and these people have come aboard to offer assistance. Now Carol-Ann falls sobbing into Ted's arms. He hugs her, vowing he will not let her out of his sight now, whatever happens.

The three men pull guns, and people start screaming.

Carol-Ann says to Ted: "I lost the baby."

28. Harry Marks hears women screaming. Then there are heavy footsteps running along the upper deck, and a voice shouting: "Everyone get down below and go to the back of the plane--move it!" He realises that something very odd is going on. When things seem to have quietened down he peeps out.

The upper deck is deserted. He tiptoes through to the

flight cabin, taking Isley's pistol with him. He listens at the top of the stairs. He goes down the forward ladder to the crew day room and looks through the peephole he discovered earlier. He sees that Frank Spuntino is handcuffed to his seat and Tony Joe is figuring out how to release him.

Harry decides to go back to the hold. But when he looks into the flight cabin he sees young Percy Isley. The boy must have climbed the aft ladder, which is out of sight at the back end of the plane, and come through the crew day room. While Harry watches, Percy takes Ollis Field's pistol from the captain's desk drawer. Then he stands near the top of the stairs, listening.

Harry goes back down the ladder and looks through the peephole.

29. To Ted's great relief, Tony Joe gets the handcuffs off. Then Tony Joe receives a warning, via his boat radio, of a Navy patrol off the coast. He suspects a trap and decides to take Carol-Ann hostage again. Ted is devastated.

Then everyone hears the sound of another plane.

30. In the chartered seaplane, Nancy Black is reviewing her situation. She is still determined to defeat her brother, but she wonders whether she should go to England with Mervyn. She is gnawing at the problem when they see the Clipper on the water below.

Her first thought is that now she will win the race, get to New York before Peter, and defeat the takeover. Then she realises that the people in the Clipper may need help. She and Mervyn are obliged to go down and find out what has happened.

They splash down, pull alongside, go aboard, and are held at gunpoint.

Tony Joe realises he can avoid the coastguard patrol by taking the seaplane. That means that he must take Mervyn, to fly

it. Nancy realises she may never see Mervyn again.

31. Margaret has been in a paralysis of terror ever since the guns were pulled. Now it occurs to her that the Mafia are just like the Nazis, people who rule by fear; and she concludes that her father was right to say that she does not have the courage to fight against Fascism or anything else.

Tony Joe, Frank Spuntino and the three gunmen prepare to leave, taking with them Mervyn Losely and Carol-Ann Deacon. Ted Deacon suddenly goes for Tony Joe, knocking him down. Ollis Field joins in and hits Frank Spuntino. But both Ted and Ollis are shot. Ted is wounded and Ollis is killed.

As the others move into the main lounge, Margaret is horrified to see Percy step into the lounge holding a pistol. He points it at Tony Joe and fires.

Suddenly Margaret finds her own courage. Standing next to the galley, she sees a pot of boiling coffee. She picks it up and hurls it in the face of the man who shot Ollis Field.

Percy is knocked down. Tony Joe turns his gun on Margaret. There is a shot, and Tony Joe falls. Harry steps through the door from the crew room.

Suddenly Mervyn Losely, Nancy, Michael Alder and Carl Hartmann all turn on the gunmen. They are overpowered. Several shots are fired but only one causes serious damage: Diana Losely is killed.

32. They call for help on the Mafia boat radio.

While they are waiting, Nat Ridgeway offers Nancy a deal: shares in his company and a seat on the board.* She asks for the job of directing his British operations. He agrees.

Suddenly everyone hears the Mafia boat start up and pull away. Who is driving it?

33. Margaret Isley is driving it. And Harry Marks is with

* Say why.

her. They head for the Newfoundland side of the bay, to avoid the Navy.

Margaret does not know what they will do but she knows she has escaped.

There is one thing she does not know. Harry still has the Delhi Suite.

THE END.