

SCREENPLAY

Memphis Gettmark

Heaven over Hell Earth

Epic aviation drama & Love story



Written by: Ruby Con

Mobile: +49 171 4980909

Email1: rubycon@mail.de

Email2: agentur@screencreator.de

Website: www.screencreator.de

Script deadline: September 8, 2025

The script is legally protected according to §2 paragraph 2 of the German Copyright Act and is notarized as a registered work of authorship 407C69CE1B227 at www.priormart.com. The script may only be read for private use or for review purposes. Private or commercial reproduction of the text for commercial distribution, as well as unauthorized further development or film adaptation, is expressly prohibited.



1) EXT., COUNTRY ROAD, DAY

SUPER: August 1920, Dortmund

Two motorcycles ride dangerously side by side on a winding country road. The riders are at the same speed. Memphis Gettmark and Günter Galant compete with each other in their driving style.

We see a team of horses ahead of the pilots.

The people on the wagon, miners and their families, are drinking beer, sniffing tobacco, and singing miners' songs. Over their shoulders, we see two motorcycles rapidly approaching. The motorcycles speed past the team. The horses shy away. The wagon rocks. The driver threatens with his whip.

COACHMAN

Damned scoundrels!

The pilots head towards two trees flanking the road on the left and right, which are marked with white cloths.

MEMPHIS

First!

Memphis and Günter turn off the country road onto a forest path on their motorcycles.

2) EXT., FOREST CLEARING, DAY

We see an open meadow where Masha Abisanka is sunbathing on a blanket and reading a book. A bicycle is parked next to it. When Masha hears the engines, she straightens her upper body and looks.

OVERVOICES MASHA

I hear the motorcycles and immediately know who won the little race: Memphis. He was such an incorrigible guy who risked everything. Gigi, on the other hand, was so different. Only I can understand why the two are best friends, who couldn't be more different.

The motorcycles roll into the frame and are parked. The two riders take off their leather helmets. Memphis cheers, Günter is annoyed.

GÜNTER

I can't believe it!

MEMPHIS

You owe me a bottle of cognac.

OVERVOICES MASHA

Memph is like Gigi Mailfly. He's damn good-looking, a real ladies' man, a charmer who always spreads good cheer - he looks a bit like Errol Flynn, a guy my mom always warned me about.

Memphis straightens his blond hair with a wave of his hand and approaches Masha. Masha throws on a blouse.

GÜNTER

Aren't you ashamed to lie around here naked?

MASHA

Why should I?

MEMPHIS

Yes, Gigi, why should she?

Masha takes sandwiches, some fruit, and a bottle of cognac out of a picnic basket. Memphis makes himself comfortable on the blanket, opens the bottle of cognac, and sips appreciatively from a glass.

Günter is busy with his motorcycle. He unscrews the spark plug from the front cylinder and examines it critically.

OVERVOICES MASHA

Gigi is a lovable guy, a man you just can't help but like. He's shy and always embarrassed around women. In his world, machines and engines - "mechanical creatures" - rule everyday life. He preferred to leave problems he couldn't solve with tools to Memphis. Memphis, on the other hand, subjugated machines and engines to his will to win. He doesn't care if these "metallic things," as he once put it, break in the process.

MEMPHIS

What are you doing?

GÜNTER

There has to be a reason why I lose to the constantly drunk womanizer - and I want to find it!

MEMPHIS

Take it easy.

Masha takes her book and turns to a particular page.

MASHA

Guys, we don't just want to indulge in physical pleasures like food and drink...

MEMPHIS

(looks at Masha with a certain look)

I know what you mean. But here?

MASHA

Yes, right here. I'll read you something by Oscar Wilde: ...

MEMPHIS

(slightly disappointed)

Oscar Wilde, is he a pilot?

MASHA

Love is nourished by imagination, which makes us wiser than we know, better than we feel, nobler than we are. Only beauty and beautifully conceived things can nourish love.

Masha looks at the pilots with a certain anticipation. Memphis continues drinking cognac. Günter unscrews the second spark plug.

GÜNTER

Nothing, no error to be seen.

MASHA

Do the words not touch you at all?

MEMPHIS

Cognac and liters ... atur - more of that.

GÜNTER

When I discover nuts and bolts in literature, I become interested in them.

MASHA

(friendly anger)

How can you say such a thing?

Masha closes the book, offended.

Günter reinstalls the spark plugs. He takes a screwdriver from his leg pocket and unscrews the air filter.

MEMPHIS

Gigi, stop with the filter thing and come sit with us.

MASHA

Yes, Gigi, the blanket is big enough. And the breads are really delicious.

GÜNTER

I'm not hungry.

Masha hugs Günter from behind and gives him a big kiss on the cheek.

MASHA

I just like you - I like both of you. I'm just happy to have friends like that.

Günter sits on the blanket and eats a piece of bread.

MASHA

Memph, I never asked you why you have such a strange name?

MEMPHIS

I was born above the sunken ruins of the pharaoh's city of Memphis - in a Bedouin tent.

MASHA

How romantic... born in Egypt above the secrets of a lost culture.

MEMPHIS

I grew up in boarding school. My parents, archaeologists, live mostly in Egypt.

GÜNTER

(smugly)

Imagine if they had dug in Aphroditopolis.

MEMPHIS

Then I would still drive faster.

There is a lot of laughter.

At that moment, a biplane with a sputtering engine flies over them at low altitude.

GÜNTER

This is a French plane - a mail plane.

MEMPHIS

The colleague has strayed far from the course.

Günter takes his tools and runs over to the plane that has crash-landed. Memphis tries to follow him, but Masha holds his hand and looks at him with wide, expectant eyes. Memphis is torn. Then they embrace and kiss passionately. A lovemaking session begins on the blanket.

The repaired biplane flies over Memphis and Masha with its engine roaring loudly.

3) EXT., SKY, DAY

SUPER: February 1921

From Earth, we see two biplanes. We hear their engines.

We see the two biplanes from above, flying north along a coast.

We see Memphis from behind. To the side, we see Günter's plane. Günter points to his 35mm camera. Memphis waves and smiles at the camera.

4) EXT., AIRFIELD, DAY

Two biplanes land on a snowy runway. The planes come to a stop next to a corrugated iron hangar.

Memphis climbs out of the plane and jumps into the snow. His breath condenses in the air. He pulls off his leather hood and pushes back his hair with his other hand. He lights a cigarette. Günter enters the frame.

MEMPHIS

Damn, it's cold.

GÜNTER

The machines must go into the hangar immediately - it is too cold for the engines.

Memphis takes a bottle out of his biplane.

MEMPHIS

Everything is in perfect order.

Günter opens the gate to the hangar.

5) INT., HANGER, NIGHT

The hangar is extremely sparsely equipped. The biplanes are parked close together. We see gasoline drums, shelves with tools and spare parts, as well as a cannon stove.

Memphis inspects the cannon furnace. He looks over at Günter, who is inspecting his machine's engine, and shakes his head.

MEMPHIS

What in God's name are you doing?

GÜNTER

The head gasket of the second cylinder must be replaced.

(He lifts a cylinder head.)

Thank goodness I always have a sentence with me!

Memphis looks slightly contemptuous at such zeal.

MEMPHIS

A mother cries for every crashed pilot.

Günter reacts with shock. He slowly takes off his aviator cap. His face is smeared with a fine mist of oil. Only where his aviator goggles had been does his pale complexion show.

GÜNTER

(with a sad look)

My mother is already crying.

It's obvious that Memphis made a mistake.

MEMPHIS

Sorry, that was thoughtless.

GÜNTER

She's been crying since she found out I'm a mail pilot.

Memphis pats him on the shoulder twice in a friendly manner.

MEMPHIS

The engine can wait. Let's fire up the furnace, otherwise we'll freeze to death here - worse, the engines could freeze.

Günter puts down his tools and walks resolutely over to the oven.

6) EXT., AIRFIELD, NIGHT

We see the hangar. The wind is stirring up snow. Light shines through the small windows.

7) INT., HANGAR, NIGHT

The wind can be heard from outside.

Günter opens two cans of bacon and beans. He places them on a metal rack over a propane burner.

GÜNTER

I have something else very special, a cake from my mother.

MEMPHIS

We'll save that for breakfast.

Memphis finds a gramophone and some shellac records on the shelf, between oil cans, tools, spare parts, and cans of food.

Enrico Caruso can be heard singing Rudolfo in Giacomo Puccini's "La Bohème" with Nellie Melba.

Memphis and Günter sit between the planes. A gas lamp provides light. They eat the contents of the cans. They drink coffee and cognac and smoke cigarettes.

MEMPHIS

I love Caruso's voice.

Günter gazes melancholically at his biplane. He strokes the propeller.

GÜNTER

Memphis, we're risking a lot for a few letters and packages. These decommissioned English World War II crates are unpredictable.

MEMPHIS

Just don't think about it and nothing will happen.

GÜNTER

(laughs loudly)

I should do something else.

MEMPHIS

This is our job. We knew in advance what kind of flimsy aircraft we'd have to fly and what we were risking our lives for.

GÜNTER

You're right. Still...

MEMPHIS

(encouragingly)

Gigi, I heard birds chirping that the company has bought three new machines.

GÜNTER

Again, old World War II crates, only this time they come from France.

MEMPHIS

(performs an imaginary trajectory with the flat of the hand)

They have powerful engines, are extremely capable of climbing, and...

GÜNTER

(annoyed)

I'm not a fighter pilot, I'm a mail pilot!

MEMPHIS

What would you like to fly with?

GÜNTER

A Junkers F 13 - enclosed flight cabin, several rows of seats for passengers, made entirely of metal.

MEMPHIS

Giggi, you're talking about a tram, those things that run on rails.

GÜNTER

Soon, giant airplanes will be flying around the world. Destinations like New York, Rio de Janeiro, or Buenos Aires will be commonplace.

MEMPHIS

With all foresight, we should think
about what is feasible for us.

GÜNTER

What do you think?

MEMPHIS

We'll soon have enough money to buy our
own planes. Then we'll have our own
pilot's license.

GÜNTER

You wouldn't be Memphis Gettmark if you
didn't already know where we get these
planes from?

MEMPHIS

That's right! Three-year-old Sopwith
biplanes are being auctioned in
Liverpool.

We see Günter thinking. He goes to the gramophone and puts on
another record. Günter turns the crank and places the record head
on the record. We hear Caruso's voice in Ruggiero Leoncavallo's
"I Pagiacci."

GÜNTER

Have you ever thought about entering
into a committed relationship?

MEMPHIS

A fixed connection? The only one I
prefer is the one to my parachute.

GÜNTER

I want to get married and start a family
someday.

MEMPHIS

Gigi, you're a nice guy, and you're
great with engines, but women are built
completely differently, believe me.

GÜNTER

And Masha?

MEMPHIS

(reminiscing)
Masha?

GÜNTER

A magnificent woman, beautiful,
intelligent, and she loves you. She
would marry you immediately - although I
would advise her against it.

Memphis opens the door of the cannon stove and adds more logs to
the fire. Sparks fly.

MEMPHIS

Give up me and my freedom? - No.

The record runs out.

The pilots are tired. They roll out sleeping bags under the wings
of their biplanes and place the parachute on the landing gear as
a pillow.

GÜNTER

Memph, one more thing - if I ever crash,
if I ever die, you have to tell my
mother.

MEMPHIS

Why would you crash?

GÜNTER

Promise me!

Memphis takes a final sip of cognac and extinguishes the lamp.

MEMPHIS

All right, I promise.

8) EXT., AIRFIELD, EVENING

We see the hangar in the twilight. The wind can be heard.

9) INT., HANGAR, DAY

Memphis wakes up in his sleeping bag. He feels lousy and
scratches his stubble. He gets up and goes to the window.

We see the thermometer showing minus 15°C.

Günter stands in front of his plane, fiddling with the engine.
His hands are smeared with oil. He wears a satisfied smile.

MEMPHIS

How long have you been up?

GÜNTER

Engines are everything, Memphis!

Memphis looks at the new-looking engine with ignorance.

MEMPHIS

Without a pilot, an airplane and its engine are just useless technical gadgets.

GÜNTER

You know, Memphis, I've always wondered why you can drive faster and fly better than I can, even though there's hardly anyone who understands engines and machines like I do.

Memphis looks as if he's searching for something. He unwraps the raisin cake, tears off a piece, and bites into it.

GÜNTER

It's not a technical issue, it's your ignorance.

MEMPHIS

(with full mouth)

How did you come to that conclusion?

GÜNTER

You don't care if the engine overheats, the cylinders explode, or the crankshaft breaks, as long as you can give it full throttle!

Memphis offers Günter a cigarette. Günter wipes his hands somewhat clean on a rag. He takes the cigarette, puts it in his mouth, and holds it over Memphis' lighter.

MEMPHIS

Gigi, a piece of advice from a winner: If you think you have everything under control, you're simply not going fast enough.

GÜNTER

This is the advice of a suicide.

10) EXT., AIRFIELD, DAY

Two biplanes take off one after the other.

11) EXT., IN FRONT OF A DOCTOR'S OFFICE, DAY

Masha comes out. She's worried and confused. She wants to leave, takes a step, and decides to go in the opposite direction.

12) EXT., WATER TOWER, DAY

The sky is clear. The sun is at its zenith. The wind stirs the wheat field.

We see Masha on a bicycle. She's riding along a country road up a hill where there's a water tower.

The brake block presses on the front wheel. Masha gets off her bike and looks around uncertainly. Then she looks up at the water tower.

She leans her bike against the external spiral staircase. Feeling oppressive, she slowly walks around the steel tower. At the spiral staircase, she looks up again. She considers it. She rubs her stomach with her hand. Then she climbs the spiral staircase.

Masha steps onto a viewing platform. She clings precariously to the railing. She checks her watch, then scans the sky impatiently.

The tower guard, an old man in an ill-fitting uniform, looks at the bicycle. Puzzled, he strokes his Kaiser Wilhelm beard. He looks around until it dawns on him and he looks up.

Tower keeper
Miss, come down - via the spiral
staircase, please!

MASHA
(calling from above)
Even!

Masha is annoyed. She takes the first rung of the stairs. Then we hear a faint humming. On the horizon, we see two biplanes as shimmering dots, rapidly growing larger.

MASHA
(pleasantly surprised)
You crooks!

Masha swings her arms as hard as she can.

13) EXT., BIPLANE, DAY

We fly along. We see Memphis ahead. We see Günter as our wingman.
The biplanes fly toward the water tower.

14) EXT., WATER TOWER, DAY

Masha watches Memphis fly low over the cornfield, with Günter following behind. The pilots circle the water tower several times, performing tricks and looping the loops. Memphis and Günter outdo each other with daring maneuvers.

15) EXT., BIPLANE, DAY

We see Memphis and Günter laughing and having fun.

16) EXT., WATER TOWER, DAY

Masha waves.

MASHA
Memphis, Günter!

17) EXT., BIPLANE, DAY

We're sitting behind Memphis. Next door, we see Günter's plane. Memphis and Günter communicate with each other using hand signals. Günter turns, and his engine explodes. Günter's biplane spins out of control and crashes into the water tower.

18) EXT., WATER TOWER, DAY

Masha falls. She gets up and hurries down the spiral staircase.

19) EXT., BIPLANE, DAY

We see Memphis desperately landing his biplane. In the background, we see the burning wreckage.

After Memphis lands, he hurriedly gets out, throws away his aviator goggles, gloves, and helmet, and runs frantically toward the crash site. We see burning aircraft debris.

At the crash site, Masha kneels before Günter and weeps bitterly. She holds Günter's head in her arms. Günter's body is disfigured, covered in blood.

MASHA
(desperate)
Günter, Günter ...

Memphis enters the frame. He falls to his knees next to Günter, puts an arm around Masha, who strokes Günter's hair, and cries with her. Then Masha slowly lets go of Günter's head. The head falls lifeless to the ground.

A few steps away stands the tower keeper, watching helplessly.

20) EXT., FORECOURT OF A RESIDENTIAL BUILDING, DAY

It's raining. We see Memphis standing by a lamppost. He's hastily smoking a cigarette. He looks toward the front door. Memphis flicks the butt into a puddle where two butts are already floating.

Uneasily, Memphis presses the bell. After a while, an old woman opens the door a crack.

MEMPHIS
Ms. Galant, I am a friend of Günter.

21) INT., LIVING ROOM, DAY

We see heavy oak furniture and a grandfather clock. Dozens of framed photographs depicting figures and human faces stand or hang on the furniture and walls.

Memphis sits on a couch. Mrs. Galant enters the room with a tray of teapots.

MRS. GALANT
Would you like a cup of tea? - My son is coming to visit me today. You can wait here... would you like green or black?

MEMPHIS
Black, with lots of sugar.

Mrs. Galant clears her throat cautiously.

MRS. GALANT
Young man, that's an Earl Grey! You drink it with either milk or lemon.

MEMPHIS
Then pure, please.

Memphis feels uneasy. He glances around furtively.

Mrs. Galant pours the tea and places the pot under a tea cosy. She then crushes a lemon peel over her cup. She looks at the grandfather clock, whose hands indicate almost a full hour.

MRS. GALANT
Where is Günter?

Memphis looks at his tea, which he stirs and stirs. He drinks it.

MEMPHIS
Günter won't come, he'll never come again. Günter had an accident!

MRS. GALANT
(looks up in shock)
Günter ... had an accident?!

Mrs. Galant puts down her cup. She sits there as if she wants to scream, as if she wants to cry - but she sits there motionless.

Memphis is close to tears.

The grandfather clock's bell strikes four times.

MRS. GALANT
How did Günter die? Did he suffer?

MEMPHIS
No, he died instantly.

MRS. GALANT
Please tell me the truth, please! Did Günter have to suffer?

MEMPHIS
His plane's engine exploded. He crashed. He died instantly. I assure you, he felt no pain.

MRS. GALANT
(cries bitterly)
I know they don't want to tell me the truth.

Mrs. Galant picks up a picture in a silver frame. It shows the entire Galant family. It includes an elderly gentleman and five young men in Imperial Army uniforms (except for Günter, who is in civilian clothes).

MRS. GALANT

This is my husband, an army colonel - he fell at Verdun. He suffered for three more days until he died. These are Peter and Hans, who, like Günter, were pilots, military pilots - shot down over Ypres. These are Fritz and Hermann, they were wounded at Reims and Arras, Fritz by mustard gas, and Hermann is paralyzed from the waist down - I lost my entire family; they all died or are living in agony and disfigured. And now I ask you again, did Günter suffer?

Memphis can't look into her eyes. He presses his lips together, barely managing to hold back his tears.

22) EXT., CEMETERY, DAY

We see a grave with a coffin. Memphis, Masha, Mrs. Galant, two men in wheelchairs and a few people are gathered. Memphis approaches Masha, but she moves away and stands next to Mrs. Galant.

The mood is subdued. Bells ring. The priest offers comforting words. The coffin is lowered into the grave.

The men in chairs are wheeled to the grave. With fixed eyes, they throw flowers and soil onto the coffin. Flowers and soil from Mrs. Galant, too. Masha tosses in a letter. A quiet, inaudible farewell follows.

The mourners leave in silence. Memphis looks for Masha. He spots her again and follows her. He catches up with her at the totem chapel. He holds Masha by the arm.

MEMPHIS

Masha, you can't run away from me!

MASHA

(energetic)

Let me go!

MEMPHIS

What about you?

MASHA

(angry, crying)

You're a flying good-for-nothing who can't accomplish anything except flying machines around!

Memphis stands there in dismay.

MASHA

(weeping)

Look at Günter! He was only twenty years old. Until the accident, I never questioned my love for you. But with Günter, all my hope died.

Memphis wants to hug her and comfort her, but Masha backs away.

MASHA

Don't you understand? Günter died in my arms - and I don't want to experience something like that again.

MEMPHIS

What do you want from me?

MASHA

Give up flying, do it for me and for ...
do it for me and for Günter.

Memphis considers.

MASHA

Give up flying!

MEMPHIS

No... Flying is my life! Should I give up my life? You can't ask that of me - you're not allowed to!

Masha turns away and leaves. She cries.

Memphis goes back to the grave site.

Grave inscription: Nearer to the eagle, nearer to the sun, nearer to the stars.

MEMPHIS

Gigi... suddenly I lost everything!

A plane flies over the city. Memphis looks up and follows the plane for a while.

23) EXT., AIRPLANE, DAY

We fly along on the biplane. We see Memphis before us. We see his body shaking with inner pain.

The biplane spins toward Earth. We see the Earth rotating in front of the biplane. Memphis is stunned, his head reeling.

At the last moment, Memphis intercepts the biplane.

24) EXT., AIRFIELD, DAY

We see an audience watching for a biplane approaching. The biplane is intercepted at the last moment and flies over the crowd, its engine roaring. The audience applauds.

25) EXT., AIRPLANE, DAY

We see Memphis in one (or another) biplane. He's incredibly happy. He's drinking from a bottle of cognac.

26) EXT., AIRFIELD, DAY

SUPER: March 1923, "Der Adlerhof" in Berlin

We see a man with a metal funnel in front of his mouth.

MAN WITH FUNNEL

This is Memphis Gettmark, ladies and gentlemen - but the next planes are already racing towards us. It is the death-defying Rockethannes, Hans Friday, followed by Torpedobruno, Bruno Tamberg! - Women should hold on to their children, men to their cigars, because things are about to get dangerous!

Memphis's plane lands. He gets out and walks - somewhat unsteadily - to a wooden shack. Above the entrance is a sign reading: Operations Control.

27) INT., SHACK, DAY

The interior is sparse. A desk, three chairs, and an office cabinet look like junk. The large posters on the wall advertise air show announcements. A mean-looking man, puffing on a cigar, sits behind the desk, studying some papers.

From outside we hear the noise of engines and the man with the funnel.

VOICES OFF/ MAN WITH FUNNEL

Ladies and gentlemen, now we see
something very special - flown
by Saint'Fly, Christ Moses!

Memphis comes in.

MEMPHIS

I've had enough for today. I want my
money!

The man with a cigar looks at Memphis without raising his head.

MAN WITH CIGAR

Gettmark, you're a disaster! You crashed
two planes this month - and you still
want money from me?

MEMPHIS

They need me because I put on the most
spectacular shows - with crappy
vehicles. That's why they broke down!

MAN WITH CIGAR

Pah! I don't need them. - There are
plenty of pilots who carry their lunch
in their pockets.

MEMPHIS

My money!

The man with the cigar opens the table drawer and takes a thick
wad of bills into his hand. He hands some to Memphis. Memphis
takes the money with a quick wave of his hand and counts it.

MAN WITH CIGAR

And here's some good advice: Stop
drinking. You're only 23 and your life
is out of control.

Memphis pockets the money and gives a crooked smile.

MEMPHIS

You provide new airplanes, I'll provide
the disasters.

28) EXT., AIRFIELD, DAY

We see Memphis coming out of the shack. After a few steps, he
stops and looks up at the sky. He lights a cigarette.

We see a biplane in the sky.

29) EXT., DANCE HALL, NIGHT

The bar is well attended, and people are dancing to the music of a band. The air is smoky, the guests are loud and boisterous. We see Moses moving through the crowd with two beer glasses and two champagne glasses. We see a round table where Memphis, Lili, and Uschi are sitting. Memphis and Uschi are exuberant. Lili appears reserved. Moses comes over and places the glasses on the table.

USCHI
There's my plane.

MOSES
Uschi, my darling, I dreamed about you last night - but don't worry, you were clothed!

They laugh, except Lili.

A new song begins. Uschi immediately jumps up and takes Moses by the hand.

USCHI
Dance, dance, dance.

Memphis also asks Lili to have a cigarette, but she refuses. Lili, bored, takes a cigarette. Memphis hands her a light.

LILI
So, you're a circus pilot?
(She slowly exhales the smoke in Memphis' direction.)
I didn't want to experience any more flying. - I only came along for Uschi's sake.

MEMPHIS
What happened to the last plane? Did it die of boredom?

LILI
He had an accident with his machine.

MEMPHIS
Yes, things like that do happen.

LILI
Why are you a pilot?

MEMPHIS

(thinking)
Probably because I don't like the world.

Lili looks Memphis straight in the eyes.

LILI
It's because of a woman who left her,
right?

Memphis looks at her questioningly.

LILI
Believe me, I've heard the same stories
over and over again.

MEMPHIS
I must admit, I wasn't expecting a
profound conversation.

Lili smiles relaxedly.

Memphis drinks his cognac.

LILI
What kind of aircraft do you fly?

MEMPHIS
An old World War II biplane. Would you
like to fly in one?

LILI
Perhaps.

MEMPHIS
Maybe? What kind of answer is that?
Yes or no?

LILI
First tell me about this woman you
want to suffer for?

MEMPHIS
I feel like I'm made of glass in your
company.

Lili puts out the cigarette.

LILI
Not the first time I've heard that.

Memphis stands up, grabs Lili by the wrist and pulls her from
behind the table onto the dance floor.

MEMPHIS

Lili, you're getting on my nerves. -
Let's dance!

LILI

Hey, are you always so rude?

We see Memphis and Lili dancing in the crowd.

30) INT., BEDROOM, NIGHT

We see Lili and Memphis in bed. Memphis is smoking a cigarette.

LILI

Are you always so rude?

MEMPHIS

Only when pleading thighs ask me to.

33) EXT., AIRFIELD, DAY

We see an enthusiastic audience. Memphis stands in front of his biplane and waves to the audience. Then he climbs into the cockpit. The propeller is started. Memphis takes off.

MAN WITHFUNNEL

Ladies and gentlemen, today we are about to witness a very special thrill: Memphis Gettmark races vertically into the sky at unimaginable speed, piercing the clouds, and then...

34) EXT., AIRPLANE, DAY

We fly on the biplane and see Memphis in front of us.

Memphis turns off the engine.

35) EXT., AIRFIELD, DAY

MAN WITHFUNNEL

What's that? Is the engine failing? Like a mortally wounded eagle, the plane plummets from the clouds with its propeller stopped. Oh God, it's plummeting vertically toward the spectators!

The audience is gripped by tension.

MAN WITHFUNNEL

If nothing happens, the metal eagle would immediately crush the people with incredible force!

36) EXT., BIPLANE, DAY

Memphis tries to restart the engine several times, but he fails.

37) EXT., AIRFIELD, DAY

Shrill cries of fear can be heard from the audience. As we hear the roar of the wings, people try to get out of the danger zone or throw themselves to the ground. From their (exaggerated) perspective, we see Memphis's blue eyes staring into space with a maniacal look.

Man with funnel looks up at the sky in horror, as if considering making his escape.

Memphis is able to start the engine at the last moment and lands his biplane close to the spectators.

MAN WITHFUNNEL

(wipes the sweat from his forehead.)

And then the engine roars into action with a howling fortissimo, straining to bursting point, giving up its last reserves of power. Ladies and gentlemen, don't be afraid, stay in your seats - it's all part of the show. Now Memphis Gettmark will demonstrate why he's the best pilot at Adlerhof. He'll demonstrate a maneuver that no one else can do. He'll pick up a handkerchief from the ground with the tip of his wing.

Memphis attempts a low-level approach to the white flag and misses. He turns his plane and hits a signal pole. The biplane is so badly damaged that he has to make an emergency landing, and the plane is destroyed in the process.

The man with a cigar runs out of his shack. He sees Memphis climbing unharmed out of the wrecked machine. He angrily throws his cigar to the ground.

MAN WITH CIGAR
(screaming)
Gettmark!

The crowd applauds. Memphis waves to the audience and smiles. A pretty young woman runs up and gives Memphis a kiss.

38) INT., HANGAR, DAY

Memphis sits next to the destroyed plane and looks at a small black and white portrait photo of Masha.

MEMPHIS
What is freedom worth if you have to
fight for it every day? - I'm quitting
flying.

39) EXT., AIRFIELD, DAY

SUPER: March 1925

Memphis walks to his biplane. He checks the propeller, the tires, the flaps. A tall, thin man runs into the frame.

Carlsson
Memphis Gettmark?

MEMPHIS
What's up?

Carlsson
Had you previously worked in the postal
service and flown the winter route
Hamburg - Oslo?

MEMPHIS
Are you a biographer?

Carlsson
I'm Roald Carlsson and I need you on my
team!

MEMPHIS
I prefer to fly for the mob.

Carlsson
Fine. Just keep wasting your talent.
You're like the wreck you're flying!

MEMPHIS

(annoyed)

I want to plunge into the Wannsee with my bike today, maybe just take a hot bath - but they're a bit too intrusive.

Carlsson

Do you know who I am?

Memphis turns toward the biplane.

Carlsson

I was part of the polar explorer Amundsen's team when we reached the South Pole on December 14, 1911.

MEMPHIS

Assuming they are not crazy, what do they want?

Carlsson

I need a pilot with exceptional skills - take on a task that will demand everything from you as a pilot!

MEMPHIS

Where should I fly?

Carlsson

To the North Pole!

MEMPHIS

Did you come all the way from Sweden to tell me this?

Carlsson

From Norway... and I've bought two planes. One of them will fly them to Svalbard, the expedition's starting point.

MEMPHIS

Who will fly the second one?

Carlsson

The famous Norwegian aviator Oskar Lundgren.

MEMPHIS

He can't be that famous!

(He climbs into the machine)

Contact!

Carlsson

Why?

The propeller is started.

MEMPHIS

Otherwise I would know him!

The engine revs loudly. The exhaust emits dark smoke.

Carlsson

(hands Memphis an envelope)

Here are your instructions and a one hundred US dollars advance. I expect you in Svalbard in ten days!

Memphis puts the envelope inside his coat and hits the gas.

The biplane roars off, ascends, and spirals vertically upward like a corkscrew. The crowd applauds.

40) EXT., LAKE CONSTANCE/ FRIEDRICHSHAFEN, DAY

We see two Dornier Wal flying boats floating at the end of a jetty on Lake Constance. In the background, we see the Altenrhein shipyard. In the foreground, we see Memphis and Lundgren looking out at the flying boats.

MEMPHIS

(surprised)

So what is that?

LUNDGREN

A flying boat called: The Whale.

MEMPHIS

This is supposed to be able to fly? Did I miss something in the development of aircraft?

LUNDGREN

The large wings give the whale high lift at low speed and with heavy load.

MEMPHIS

You certainly won't impress a single woman with that.

LUNDGREN

But they are perfect for polar expeditions - provided they can actually fly!

Memphis climbs into the open cockpit of Flying Boat 1. Uneasily, he turns around and looks at the large propeller cross of the Buck engine. Then he pins Masha's photo to the hub of the steering wheel.

We see flying boat 2, whose engines are started one after the other by means of a crank.

Two flying boats rise from the water and slowly ascend.

41) EXT., SKY, DAY

The two flying boats can be seen.

The sun sets in the west. The land beneath the flying boats has sunk into the blackness of night.

42) INT., FLYING BOAT1, NIGHT

Memphis turned on the instrument lights.

We see Memphis struggling with the wind, the cold, and microsleep.

43) EXT., SKY, DAY

With the rising dawn, Spitsbergen before the flying boats.

44) INT., FLYING BOAT1, DAY

We see Memphis's fuel gauge. The needle is in the red zone.

45) EXT., SKY, DAY

Memphis communicates with Lundgren. Memphis gives a thumbs-down. Lundgren waves him off.

46) EXT., PIER, DAY

Flying boat 1 lands, followed shortly by flying boat 2.

The flying boats dock at the pier one after the other.

Memphis stands in front of Flying Boat 1 and lights a cigarette.
Lundgren runs toward Memphis.

LUNDGREN

This wasn't a coordinated landing. They jeopardized the entire mission.

MEMPHIS

Are they criticizing my abilities?

LUNDGREN

Skills? - You're a circus pilot.

MEMPHIS

Listen, Lundgren, our task is to fly these crates into some of the most unreal environments imaginable. And if you can't control your whale in these conditions, then you don't have what it takes to complete this mission!

(He flicks the cigarette away.)

47) INT., HEADQUARTERS, NIGHT

The barracks is a single large room that serves as storage, work and sleeping space.

A gas lamp is lit. A polar map lies on a table. Around the table are Memphis, Lundgren, Carlsson, Ash Alices Armstrong (the American financier) and Uta Tjaereborg (a Danish meteorologist, tall and strong with red hair).

In the background, a man wearing headphones can be seen sitting in front of a table with a radio system. He's taking notes.

Carlsson

Each whale will carry 1,200 kg of equipment and 2,800 kg of aviation fuel on board - it will be more difficult to fly, they take this into account.

ARMSTRONG

Let's take a moment to study the map. We're flying at the 20th meridian at an altitude of 3,000 meters.

Carlsson

Both flying boats fly next to each other within sight of each other.

(pointing to Memphis)

We're flying the lead whale. Wherever we go, you, Lundgren, and you, Mr. Armstrong, will follow us.

LUNDGREN

How long will we be on the road?

Carlsson

It's almost a thousand kilometers. Depending on the wind strength, the flight takes eight to nine hours.

ARMSTRONG

We'll land at the pole. But even with runners, it won't be easy on the uneven ice.

LUNDGREN

Not for Memphis Gettmark. He could land on an ice lolly!

Relaxed laughter.

MEMPHIS

What temperature can we expect at an altitude of 3,000 meters?

Tjaereborg lays the weather map on the table.

TJAEREBOG

A strong low-pressure system currently prevails over the Arctic. Temperatures are just below minus 40 degrees Celsius.

(She gives a small warm smile.)

Gentlemen, don't forget your warm underwear.

48) INT., HEADQUARTERS, NIGHT

We see the crew resting for the night. In the twilight, Memphis looks at a small photo.

49) EXT., LANDSCAPE, DAY

We see landscape impressions of Spitsbergen at sunrise.

50) EXT., PIER, DAY

The flying boats are loaded and refueled. Memphis and Lundgren take their seats. The engines are started. The propellers rotate slowly and irregularly. Black clouds of exhaust fumes are visible. Then the engines rev up.

Carlsson climbs into the cockpit and takes his seat next to Memphis.

The man with headphones runs toward Armstrong. He hands Armstrong a piece of paper. Armstrong reads it and hears bad news. We see his motionless face. His eyes stare ahead for a few seconds. Then he crumples up the paper and throws it into the water.

Memphis takes the small photo from his coat pocket and pins it to the scar on the steering wheel.

Carlsson
I'm glad she's back.

MEMPHIS
(minds elsewhere)
Hmm..?

Carlsson
Her friend.
(pointing at the photo)
What is her name?

MEMPHIS
Masha - Masha Abisanka.

CARLSSON
I noticed the photo the first time we met. I would feel awkward if they didn't have it with them.

Memphis pulls his aviator glasses over his eyes.

MEMPHIS
Trust me!

51) EXT., SKY, DAY

We see the flying boats below us and further on we see the Arctic ice massif.

52) INT., FLYING BOAT1, DAY

Carlsson

My hands and feet are going numb. I can barely move in this confined space.

MEMPHIS

(pointing in front of him)

Look at this.

53) EXT., SKY, DAY

We see dark clouds. The flying boats are restless in the air.

54) INT., FLYING BOAT1, DAY

Carlsson

Can we get through there?

MEMPHIS

No problem for a circus pilot, but Lundgren?

Carlsson

We can't fly around the storm. We only have a limited amount of aviation fuel on board.

MEMPHIS

Okay, right through.

55) EXT., SKY, DAY

We see the flying boats flying into the black clouds. The flying boats rock back and forth.

56) INT., FLYING BOAT1, DAY

Memphis gently turns his steering wheel, skillfully keeping the flying boat in the air.

57) INT., FLYING BOAT2, DAY

Lundgren violently moves his control wheel to keep the flying boat in the air. It rocks back and forth.

58) EXT., SKY, DAY

The flying boats are flying along calmly again.

59) INT., FLYING BOAT1, DAY

Carlsson
That was close. My compliments.

MEMPHIS
(smiling)
You should see me ride a motorcycle.

Memphis looks over at Flying Boat 2. We see that the tail assembly is damaged.

MEMPHIS
Lundgren's rudder flutters in the wind.

Carlsson
Is the expedition in danger?

MEMPHIS
He has to land, immediately!

60) EXT., SKY, DAY

Flying boat 1 catches up with flying boat 2.

Carlsson makes a hand signal. Lundgren nods back.

Flying Boat 2 prepares to land. It lands on the ice with a jolt.

61) INT., FLYING BOAT1, DAY

Flying boat 1 circles the landing site.

MEMPHIS
I ask again, should I land?

Carlsson
Lundgren and Armstrong have everything on board to survive safely for several days. - The pole is within reach!

Memphis is preparing to land.

Carlsson
You're right. Ambition can quickly prove fatal in the Arctic.

62) EXT., ICE SHEET, DAY

Flying boat 1 lands on the ice.

The propellers continue to rotate at low speed. Memphis and Carlsson climb out of the cockpit. Armstrong and Lundgren approach them.

ARMSTRONG

How far have we come?

Carlsson

Not far enough.

Memphis and Lundgren inspect the tail assembly of Flying Boat 2. He notices that the fuselage is damaged.

LUNDGREN

The damage is not great.

MEMPHIS

The hard landing caused one of the skids to break. Under these circumstances, the whale cannot be saved.

ARMSTRONG

Damn! That's just what we needed. \$4,000 burned for nothing.

LUNDGREN

Don't blame me.

Carlsson

We're turning back!

MEMPHIS

We need to empty all the equipment out of the other one. We need space and less weight for two additional men.

Snowfall.

Flying boat 1 is being cleared out.

MEMPHIS

Let's hurry - the cooling water is freezing in the engines.

The four men board Flying Boat 1. The engines rev up. Flying Boat 1 slowly takes off.

63) INT., FLYING BOAT 1, DAY

MEMPHIS

Something was wrong! The rear engine wasn't producing any power.

64) EXT., FLYING BOAT1, DAY

The rear engine explodes. Flying Boat 1 crashes back onto the ice. One of the skids breaks off. The wings are damaged.

65) EXT., ICE SHEET, DAY

Memphis, Carlsson and Armstrong stand in front of Flying Boat 1 and look wistfully at the smoking engine.

ARMSTRONG

We won't survive long in this freezing cold.

MEMPHIS

Where is Lundgren?

66) INT., CARGO COMPARTMENT - FLYING BOAT 1, DAY

Lundgren lies unconscious on the ground. He is bleeding from his ears and nose. One leg is bleeding. Carlsson examines him.

Carlsson

Skull base fracture, broken knee, shallow breathing, weak pulse, suspected internal bleeding.

ARMSTRONG

He won't get through - none of us!

MEMPHIS

The second whale! Let's fix it.

ARMSTRONG

It's minus 40°C. We're frozen to death before we're finished.

MEMPHIS

Let's begin!

CARLSSON

Mr. Armstrong, take care of Lundgren.

67) EXT., ICE SHEET, DAY

Memphis and Carlsson skate across the ice. We hear the constant rustling of the wind and the constant creaking of the ice.

Pack ice breaks up in some places and compresses in others.

68) INT., CARGO COMPARTMENT - FLYING BOAT 1, DAY

In the cargo hold, Lundgren comes to. He's wearing a bandage around his head. Lundgren groans. Armstrong looks at the vial. We see the label: Morphine. Armstrong gives Lundgren an injection. Lundgren relaxes.

69) EXT., FLYING BOAT2, DAY

Memphis and Carlsson use pickaxes to clear the ice from the hull.

A crack is heard. We see a crack opening up beneath the flying boat.

MEMPHIS

The ice! It gives way under the whale's weight.

We see Carlsson's fear-filled eyes. Then he shakes his head in resignation.

MEMPHIS

We take the holding ropes and pull the whale a few meters out of the danger zone.

CARLSSON

That monster weighs eight tons. I can't do it!

MEMPHIS

We must!

Carlsson takes the ropes from the cargo hold and attaches them to the bow, tying the other ends around his hips.

MEMPHIS

On three - one, two, three!

They throw themselves forward and pull, but Flying Boat 2 doesn't move. Then we see the fuselage give way after a jerk. Flying Boat 2 slowly moves forward a few meters.

Memphis and Carlsson gasp, struggling for air, which is expelled in a fountain of smoke.

MEMPHIS

Just a short rest, then move on.

CARLSSON

I can not anymore.

MEMPHIS

Just one more piece!

CARLSSON

No, I can't.

MEMPHIS

(screaming)

Death is in our sight! You must persevere - don't give up, don't die!

Carlsson nods in agreement.

They crawl across the ice. They kick small hollows into it with their boots. The ropes tighten. Flying Boat 2 moves again.

CARLSSON

That should be enough.

MEMPHIS

The first small victory that is so important.

The men climb into the cargo hold.

70) INT., CARGO BAY - FLYING BOAT 2, DAY

Carlsson turns on the auxiliary heater. Memphis gets out the tools.

CARLSSON

Let's rest a bit and eat something.

MEMPHIS

Two hours, then we move on.

We see Memphis and Carlsson eating dried meat and cookies. They melt ice into water over a small burner. Tea bags are hung in the pot. They drink tea. They sleep. We hear the heater rattle, hear the wind whistle.

71) EXT., ICE SHEET - FLYING BOAT 2, DAY

Memphis repairs the tail of the flying boat.

Armstrong and Carlsson free the flying boat from ice and snow.

72) INT., CARGO BAY 2 - FLYING BOAT 2, NIGHT

Memphis and Carlsson are eating something.

73) INT., CARGO BAY1 - FLYING BOAT 1, NIGHT

Armstrong ties off his arm and gives himself an injection.

74) INT., CARGO BAY 2 - FLYING BOAT 2, DAY

Carlsson boils snow.

75) INT., CARGO BAY 1 - FLYING BOAT 1, DAY

Memphis changes the bandage on Lundgren's leg.

Memphis notices several empty vials on the floor. He reads the label.

76) EXT., ICE SHEET - FLYING BOAT 2, DAY

Armstrong films the works, Carlsson and Memphis in close-up. Their faces are unshaven, emaciated, and visibly irritated.

ARMSTRONG

(slightly euphoric from the morphine)

Gettmark, smile - I am documenting our downfall.

MEMPHIS

Please help me.

ARMSTRONG

Listen, Gettmark, how did you come to take command here?

MEMPHIS

Who else is going to do it - you? You might cut a fine figure at a cocktail party, but this is my job!

ARMSTRONG

I can't stand her.

MEMPHIS

Save that for after the rescue.

ARMSTRONG

I'm afraid it's unwise to plan that far in advance.

Memphis takes the wrench and tightens a nut.

MEMPHIS

Then they disappear, I want to be out of here before winter sets in.

Armstrong retreats, sulking. Memphis takes a deep breath.

MEMPHIS

Armstrong, help me, and I promise I'll get us out of here!

Armstrong thinks for a moment. He nods in agreement.

ARMSTRONG

I only have one roll of film left. I'll save that for when I start.

77) EXT., ICE SHEET - FLYING BOAT 1, DAY

Carlsson and Memphis stand in front of Flying Boat 1. Armstrong emerges from the cargo bay.

ARMSTRONG

For how much longer?

MEMPHIS

Maybe tomorrow, maybe a day later.

CARLSSON

Do we have anything left to eat?

Armstrong, Memphis and Carlsson look at each other, disappointed and suspicious.

78) EXT., ICE SHEET - FLYING BOAT 1, DAY

Thick fog. We see Memphis and Carlsson ahead. Flying boat 2 stands.

CARLSSON

We don't see anything - that's too daring.

MEMPHIS

We're starting!

CARLSSON

I'm still the expedition leader!

Memphis looks at Carlsson determinedly.

CARLSSON

So nice.

MEMPHIS

Where is the American?

CARLSSON

(shout)

Mr. Armstrong!

They listen. They look around.

MEMPHIS

When did you last see him?

CARLSSON

About an hour ago.

MEMPHIS

In this fog he could be anywhere.

79) EXT., ICE SHEET, DAY

Fog. We hear the howling of the wind.

Memphis is looking for Armstrong.

MEMPHIS

(calling)

Armstrong!

VOICE Carlsson

Mr. Armstrong!

MEMPHIS

(calling)

Armstrong!

VOICE Carlsson

Mr. Armstrong! ... Where are you?

Memphis stumbles over Armstrong. Armstrong lies on his back with his arms outstretched. His face is white with frost. A syringe and a vial lie beside him.

MEMPHIS

In God's name, what are they doing?

ARMSTRONG

(smiles numbly)

Gettmark, you devils! If it weren't for them, everything would be so easy.

MEMPHIS

Stand up, immediately!

Memphis grabs Armstrong under the arms and sets him up on his feet. Armstrong resists weakly.

ARMSTRONG

Let me go! I'm staying here, I don't want to go anymore...

MEMPHIS

We want to start - come on!

ARMSTRONG

I can't go back, don't you understand? I don't act rashly!

MEMPHIS

Come ...

ARMSTRONG

Shortly before departure, I received a telegram - I'm ruined! If I die, at least my family is secure.

Memphis grabs his collar with both hands in anger.

MEMPHIS

You madman! You're following me - even if I have to beat you to save you!

Armstrong resisted. Memphis slapped him twice. Armstrong cried. Memphis supported him and laboriously dragged him to the flying boat.

80) INT., CARGO HOLD2 - FLYING BOAT 2, DAY

Lundgren is unconscious. Armstrong sits next to him, taking off a boot.

ARMSTRONG

My foot itches like crazy.

MEMPHIS

Let's see.

ARMSTRONG

I haven't taken my boots off for three weeks.

Memphis gently pulls off his woolen stocking. A black foot appears.

ARMSTRONG

Damn it! - Gettmark, my insurance won't pay if I die in pieces!

81) EXT., FLYING BOAT 2, DAY

Memphis climbs into the cockpit. He checks the gauges. Then, angrily, he searches his pockets.

82) INT., CARGO HOLD2 - FLYING BOAT 2, DAY

Memphis scans the ground. Armstrong is leaning against the side of the boat, bandaging his foot.

ARMSTRONG

What are you looking for?

MEMPHIS

Nothing.

ARMSTRONG

I found a small photo.

MEMPHIS

You have it? Give it to me!

Armstrong took the small photo from his jacket and handed it over.

ARMSTRONG

She's pretty. Your wife?

Memphis takes the photo and smiles.

MEMPHIS

If I weren't so stubborn...

ARMSTRONG

It is thanks to her stubbornness that I am still alive.

(After the bandage has been applied, he begins to have doubts)

At least part of me does. I'm not sure whether I should thank them or not.

MEMPHIS

And Lundgren?

ARMSTRONG

Unchanged.

83) EXT., 2ND FLYING BOAT, DAY

Memphis sits in the cockpit. He pins the photo to the hub of the steering wheel.

Memphis flips a switch.

MEMPHIS

(exclamatory)

Contact!

Carlsson starts the rear propeller. The propeller rotates slowly at first, then a little faster.

Carlsson smiles.

The propeller rotates more slowly and stops again.

We see Carlsson's disappointed face.

MEMPHIS

Again!

Carlsson starts the propeller again. The propeller spins jerkily.

VICE MEMPHIS

Contact!

The engine starts again. The propeller rotates slowly, unable to reach full speed.

We see Carlsson with hope in his eyes, clenching his fist.

The propeller rotates even slower.

Memphis gently touches the photo. Memphis closes his eyes, his lips moving.

The propeller almost comes to a stop - but then the engine revs up with a loud roar.

Memphis presses his lips together determinedly.

Carlsson cries with joy.

84) INT., CARGO BAY2 - FLYING BOAT2, DAY

Armstrong is quietly pleased. He takes Lundgren's hand.

85) EXT., FLYING BOAT 2, DAY

We see the propeller of the front engine, which immediately reaches speed.

Carlsson climbs into the cockpit next to Memphis.

CARLSSON
Let us return home!

Memphis pushes the thrust lever forward.

The flying boat accelerates over the ice runway and rises into the fog.

The flying boat emerges from the fog into a clear layer of air.

MEMPHIS
We've done it. Nothing can stop us now.

CARLSSON
(pointing at the photo)
We have her to thank: Masha Abisanka. I don't know her, but I'm sure we owe our rescue to her.

MEMPHIS
Yes! Yes, that's right! Masha, Masha, I want to see her again.

86) INT., HOTEL ROOM, DAY

Memphis stands at the open window and looks down.

Below we see National Socialists chanting through the street.

Memphis closes the window. He looks at the desk.

We see an envelope leaning against a table lamp.

Memphis sits down and lights a cigarette. He looks at the letter. He drinks a glass of cognac and picks up the photo of Masha.

MEMPHIS

What do you want to tell me?

Memphis places the photo on the table. He picks up a magazine lying nearby. We see the title: Flugrevue (Flight Review). Memphis flips through the pages. He turns back a few pages with interest. We see the headline of an article: Survived in the Northern Ice. Photos show the icy faces of Memphis and Carlsson repairing the stern of the flying boat. Photos of Lundgren are also visible.

MEMPHIS

(reading the article)

As the American Armstrong recounts, he single-handedly repaired the flying boat, provided medical care to Lundgren, and rescued the crazed pilot, Memphis Gettmark, who wanted to die in the ice with morphine in his veins. It was then child's play, Armstrong continued, to fly the flying boat back to Spitsbergen - even with a frozen foot.

(He throws the magazine into the corner.)

Memphis looks at the letter. He gets up and goes into the bathroom.

Memphis turns the porcelain star on the sink. Water bubbles from the tap. He refreshes himself.

We see the letter.

Memphis comes out of the bathroom and throws the towel on the bed. He picks up the letter and tears it open.

OVERVOICE MASHA

Dear Memphis - My dear Memphis! I hope this letter reaches you. I followed this expedition, read everything in the newspaper, and was very worried about you. I was all the more relieved that you returned safely. - Perhaps you know,

I married a loving man. He can offer me everything you can't - a future, a future together. - We'll never see each other again, but I'll always think of you... With love, Masha

Memphis crumples the paper in his hands and throws it toward the magazine. Desperately, he puts his face in his hands. Then he picks up the photo and begins to tear it up. He shoves it back into his breast pocket.

87) EXT., AFRICAN WEST COAST, DAY

SUPER: January 6, 1933

The DO-X airship flies along the coast.

88) INT., DO-X, DAY

Memphis and Olof Finne, a Swede, are in the cockpit. Navigation Officer Georg Danzer calls via the telephone line.

VOICE DANZER

Captain, we need to fly 3° west-southwest.

MEMPHIS

Understood! - Finne, take over. And go to an altitude of 3,500 meters.

FINNE

Aye, Captain.

Memphis stands up and goes to the rear command room.

89) INT., COMMAND ROOM - DO-X, NIGHT

Large sea and land maps are laid out on the navigation table. The vibrations of the engines cause rulers and pencils to move across the maps. Memphis looks at the main map, which shows the coastline of West Africa.

DANZER

We are flying through a high-pressure area, 1,025 millibars - clear visibility.

MEMPHIS

Let's hope it stays that way.

Danzer sees Memphis rubbing his eyes with his index finger and thumb.

DANZER

You should rest a little.

MEMPHIS

Hmm? ... Oh, yes. You're right, but it doesn't work.

Memphis moves over to the control room.

90) INT., CONTROL ROOM - DO-X, NIGHT

Flight engineer Klaus Kaminski stands in front of the engine display panels, calmly smoking a cigarette. Kaminski is wearing a sweat-soaked shirt. He glances alternately at the tachometer and the temperature gauge. Then he flips a switch and turns a valve wheel.

MEMPHIS

What do the engines do?

Kaminski smiles, sweating. He takes the cigarette out of his mouth and flicks off the ash.

KAMINSKI

They run perfectly. All twelve play like a musical ensemble.

Memphis nods in agreement. He seems unfocused and worried.

KAMINSKI

Captain, you look like you've seen a ghost.

MEMPHIS

I have that... among the passengers.

KAMINSKI

Is that why they haven't greeted the passengers yet?

MEMPHIS

Who on earth started this bad habit? Every captain has a duty he reluctantly fulfills. - But okay, I get paid for that too.

Memphis adjusts his captain's cap and uniform and walks toward the spiral staircase.

91) INT., PASSENGER DECK - DO-X, NIGHT

There are 28 passengers: men, women, and four children. In the front lounge, guests gaze out the window hatches, read, play cards, or enjoy themselves. Stewards serve cocktails and champagne. The children play hide-and-seek.

Memphis looks into the back salon as if expecting someone familiar.

Memphis greets with handshakes a cigar-smoking millionaire and his wife, a monocle-wearing military attaché, a special ambassador of the Catholic Church, and an engineer with a hairstyle like the braids of a wire brush.

Memphis notices a man in a suit, a traveling salesman, digging his fingers into the armrest cushions. He looks at Memphis as if wondering who's piloting the plane. Memphis approaches him.

MEMPHIS

Don't worry, the flying ship has more than just one pilot on board.

TRAVELING SALESMAN

Thanks, but I don't suffer from a fear of flying, I suffer from a fear of heights! - Would it be possible to fly lower?

Memphis smiles understandingly.

MEMPHIS

Don't worry, believe me.

TRAVELING SALESMAN

If you need a vacuum cleaner or a refrigerator... guess what? I'll give you a special DO-X discount. Is that a deal?

MEMPHIS

These are not exactly things that pilots absolutely need.

Memphis wants to turn to other guests.

TRAVELING SALESMAN

How about a razor? Pilots have to shave sometimes, right?

MEMPHIS

I'm a wet shaver by nature! - And now, excuse me, I have to greet the other passengers as well.

The conversation and the sounds of the salon fade as Memphis's heartbeat becomes audible. Memphis looks back into the salon. A well-dressed woman (Masha) can be seen from behind, tending to a boy (Günter).

VOICE DANZER

Captain.

Memphis turns to the voice and sees Danzer in front of him.

DANZER

(whispering)

You are expected in the engine room immediately.

92) INT., SPIRAL STAIRCASE - DO-X, NIGHT

We see Memphis and Danzer climbing the spiral staircase.

93) INT., CONTROL ROOM - DO-X, NIGHT

In the control room, Memphis, Danzer, and Kaminski are standing in front of the engine display panels. We see a temperature gauge with its needle in the red zone.

KAMINSKI

Engine eight is running hot.

Kaminski hands out cigarettes. Memphis accepts. Kaminski smokes nervously.

KAMINSKI

The oil pressure is correct and the cooling circuit pump is operating within the specified range.

DANZER

An instrument error?

KAMINSKI

Unlikely.

MEMPHIS

What about seven.

We see a temperature indicator whose needle is between yellow and red.

KAMINSKI

Should we turn off Seven and Eight?

MEMPHIS

No, not yet. On the other hand, it would be too risky to ignore the problem.

(to Danzer)

How far are we from Lüderitz Bay?

DANZER

A good 650 nautical miles.

MEMPHIS

We'll keep it running at low speed. Let me know if anything changes.

KAMINSKI

Aye, Captain!

94) INT., COCKPIT - DO-X, NIGHT

Memphis takes the wheel.

95) EXT., AFRICAN WEST COAST, NIGHT

We see the silhouette of the flying DO-X.

96) INT., PASSENGER DIRT - DO-X, NIGHT

In the rear saloon, passengers settle in for the night. They make themselves comfortable in the seats, some under a blanket.

We see Mascha at 32 years old. She's snuggled up to her husband, Mr. Schindel, who is about 55. Their son, Günter, 11 years old, lies asleep across the seats in front of them.

SCHINDEL

This time tomorrow we will be in Cape Town.

MASHA

If only we had taken the boat.

SCHINDEL

Flying is very safe these days - and
it's much faster.

Masha looks at Schindel with worried eyes.

97) INT., CONTROL ROOM - DO-X, NIGHT

We see Kaminski. He's observing the fixtures and smoking a
cigarette.

98) INT., COMMAND ROOM - DO-X, NIGHT

We see Danzer walking with a compass over the maps illuminated by
the table lamps.

99) INT., COCKPIT - DO-X, NIGHT

We see Memphis looking at the small photo of Masha. Finne,
piloting the DO-X, notices but says nothing.

100) INT., PASSENGER DECK - DO-X, NIGHT

We see the passengers, most of whom are resting in their seats.
Two passengers are smoking cigarettes in the lounge.

101) EXT., AFRICAN WEST COAST, MORNING

We see the DO-X flying. To port, the Namib Desert, to starboard,
the rough sea, and below, the coast with stranded, rusting ships.

102) INT., COCKPIT - DO-X, MORNING

The steward brings two cups of coffee. Memphis and Finne grab the
cups and drink them hurriedly.

FINNE

Thanks.

MEMPHIS

What are our passengers doing?

STEWARD

They enjoy breakfast.

The steward withdraws.

FINNE

Captain, look out: lots of stranded and rusty ships - seems to be dangerous waters.

MEMPHIS

The Skeleton Coast - it is a single ship graveyard.

FINNE

As a child, I always wanted to be a sailor - thank God I quickly came to my senses.

The boy, Günter, appears in the cockpit. Finne notices him first. Finne nudges Memphis on the upper arm and nods toward Günter.

MEMPHIS

Yes, who do we have here?

FINNE

What's your name, little one?

GÜNTER

Are you pilots?

MEMPHIS

I'm the captain, and yes, I fly the plane. And this is my co-pilot, who flies when I don't want to.

GÜNTER

Can I fly too?

MEMPHIS

(smiles heartily)

Oh no, you're way too small for that. But you can watch us.

103) INT., COMMAND ROOM - DO-X, DAY

We see Masha in the command room. She's both worried and uncertain.

MASHA

Günter ... Günter!

Günter runs towards Masha.

104) INT., COCKPIT - DO-X, DAY

Memphis looks after Günter and then looks at Masha.

We see a close-up of Memphis' frightened face.

105) INT., COMMAND ROOM - DO-X, DAY

We see a close-up of Masha's frightened face. She stands there frozen, then grabs Günter's hand as if she needs to hold on to something.

106) INT., COCKPIT - DO-X, DAY

MEMPHIS
(to Finne)
Take over!

Memphis stands up and kneads his cap with his hands.

107) INT., COMMAND ROOM - DO-X, DAY

MEMPHIS
Masha...

MASHA
Memphis... I didn't know... my boy, he
didn't know it was illegal to come up
here.

MEMPHIS
This is your son?

The boy doesn't leave Masha, who gently strokes his blond hair.

MASHA
Günter, this is... this is Memphis
Gettmark. Say hello.

MEMPHIS
Günter? - In memory of Günter Galant?
(He takes Günter's small hand and
shakes it gently.)
Hello Günter, I'm pleased to meet you.
(to Masha)
A bright, interested boy -
congratulations, you must be very proud
of him?

MASHA

Yes, my son is my favorite. But since when... where were you...

(They are overwhelmed by memories, tears gather in their eyes)

Please excuse me, my husband is waiting for me.

Crying, Masha retreats with Günter.

108) INT., COCKPIT - DO-X, DAY

Memphis quietly takes his place at the wheel again. He looks at the small photo.

FINNE

Captain, do you want to take the helm again?

MEMPHIS

Not yet, Finne, not yet.

109) EXT., AFRICAN WEST COAST, DAY

We see a sandstorm approaching the DO-X.

110) INT., COCKPIT - DO-X, DAY

Memphis looks out the window.

MEMPHIS

Finne ..!

We see Finne's wide eyes.

It's getting darker in the cockpit. The sound of the sand can be heard.

MEMPHIS

Damn! We can't climb up and have to go right through the middle. I hope it doesn't get any worse.

FINNE

Let's put into the water and wait for the sandstorm to pass.

VOICE KAMINSKI

(via tube telephone)
Captain, Seven and Eight are causing
problems.

MEMPHIS
(to Kaminski via
tube telephone)
I'm coming.
(He stands up. To Finne)
Prepare everything for an emergency
landing.

111) INT., CONTROL ROOM - DO-X, DAY

We see Kaminski wiping the sweat from his face and neck with a
cloth.

MEMPHIS
Speed and temperature of 7 and 8?

KAMINSKI
Deep red!

Together they look at the control panel. Engines 7 and 8 are
running at half speed. The temperature gauges are in the red
zone.

MEMPHIS
Turn off 7 and 8. Turn on the others.

112) EXT., INSIDE VIEW OF ENGINE 7 - DO-X, DAY

We see the engines' air filters becoming clogged with sand. Then
the water pump sparks. The water hose pops off, and coolant leaks
out.

113) EXT., EXTERIOR VIEW OF ENGINE 7 & 8 - DO-X, DAY

We see propellers 7 and then 8 stop.

114) INT., PASSENGER DECK - DO-X, DAY

We see tense passengers looking out the windows with worried
expressions.

115) INT., CONTROL ROOM - DO-X, DAY

VOICE FINNE
(via tube telephone)
Captain, we're losing altitude.

MEMPHIS
(to Finne via
tube telephone)
Look for a suitable place to water.

We see Kaminski looking at the other ads.

KAMINSKI
Captain!

Memphis looks at the ads of 9 and 10.

KAMINSKI
The sand destroys the engines!

MEMPHIS
Keep your nerve, otherwise everything
will end in disaster.

116) EXT., ENGINE 9 - DO-X, DAY

We see engine 9 explode. Flames and black smoke emerge.

MEMPHIS
Cut off the fuel supply to 9 and 10 -
we're going down!

117) INT., PASSENGER DECK - DO-X, DAY

A jolt rips through the deck. Terror is written all over the passengers' faces. They cling to each other in fear. We hear another explosion, and people are shaken. They scream in panic.

118) INT., COCKPIT - DO-X, DAY

Memphis and Finne move the steering wheels with all their might.

MEMPHIS
(calling into the telephone line)
Kaminski, full throttle on all available
engines!

119) EXT., DO-X, DAY

We see dramatic scenes. The DO-X flies turbulently amidst a sand cloud.

Then the DO-X emerges from the sand cloud, leaving a long, dark trailing cloud behind it.

The DO-X lands in choppy water and then heads toward the coast. We see the DO-X's bow touch down on the beach.

120) INT., COCKPIT - DO-X, DAY

Danzer enters the cockpit. He runs his hand over his face.

MEMPHIS
(to Kaminski via
tube telephone)
All engines off.

FINNE
(completely exhausted)
What a hell ride. I don't want to
experience that again.

MEMPHIS
That? That was harmless, wasn't it? I
used to be a mail pilot, then a circus
pilot at Adlerhof, then a North Polar
pilot, I've crashed countless times -
there's nothing, absolutely nothing,
that can unsettle me.

FINNE
Captain, if I had known that, I wouldn't
have to change my underwear now.

121) INT., COMMAND ROOM - DO-X, DAY

In the command room, Kaminski, Danzer, Stockinger and Finne stand in front of Memphis.

MEMPHIS
Finne, secure the airship. Kaminski,
assess the damage. Danzer, establish our
position. Stockinger, try to establish
radio contact! - Meanwhile, I'll go and
see the passengers.

122) INT., PASSENGER DECK - DO-X, DAY

Memphis speaks to the frightened passengers. Some women are crying, especially the children. Masha is unsettled, as are her son and her husband.

Memphis observed Masha and her husband briefly and precisely. He understood why Masha avoided any eye contact.

MEMPHIS
(to Mr. Schindel)
Are you injured?

SCHINDEL
Thank God we escaped with just a scare.

MEMPHIS
And you, Mrs. Schindel, I hope you and the boy are well?

MASHA
(quietly, her gaze is evasive)
It's fine, thanks for asking.

Masha hugs Günter and kisses his blond hair.

MEMPHIS
(to all passengers)
I would like to ask you to remain in the airship for the time being until my crew has everything under control.

123) EXT., WING - DO-X, DAY

Memphis and Finne pass the engine nacelles. They stop in front of the burned-out nacelle. Kaminski is standing on a deployed work platform next to the nacelle, his upper body stuck in the engine compartment.

MEMPHIS
You know, Finne, there's a woman on board whom I lost twelve years ago. All I have left is a nearly blind photo of her.

FINNE
The one on the steering wheel?

MEMPHIS
And now it's here, on my DO-X - and I find myself enjoying the sight of the engines.

FINNE
(pushes his cap askew)
Dilemma, dilemma...

MEMPHIS
I guess our flight engineer won't share
my joy.
(shout)
Kaminski!

Kaminski's oil-smearred face peeks out. A half-burned cigarette is stuck between his lips.

KAMINSKI
Nine and ten are broken. I can repair
seven and eight. Also, all the air
filters need to be cleaned.

Kaminski takes another drag and flicks the cigarette away.

MEMPHIS
How long do they take?

KAMINSKI
Normally 2 to 3 months. I can do it in 2
to 3 days - assuming I have enough
cigarettes.

MEMPHIS
(quietly to Finne)
Go to the passengers and confiscate all
cigarettes.

FINNE
Uh... how should I explain that?

MEMPHIS
Be creative, for example with fire
protection.

FINNE
Aye Captain.

Finne leaves the wing. Stockinger approaches him.

STOCKINGER
Captain, the radio is broken. We can
only receive, but no longer transmit.

Memphis looks thoughtfully at Danzer, who is standing at the stern of the ship with the octant.

MEMPHIS

Dilemma, dilemma...

124) INT., DO-X, EVENING

The crew and guests gathered in the front lounge. People were sweating. Large sweat stains on their shirts and blouses.

Among the passengers is an engineer who stands out as the speaker.

MEMPHIS

(looking over at Masha several times)

I can assure you all, there's no cause for alarm. My team and I are prepared for such a situation.

ENGINEER

We've lost four engines. What's your confidence based on?

KAMINSKI

We get two engines running again.

ENGINEER

I doubt that's enough to get this colossus out of the water.

MEMPHIS

What do they suggest?

ENGINEER

According to my calculations, we need to reduce the weight of the DO-X by 7 to 8 tons.

MEMPHIS

Kaminski?

KAMINSKI

If we remove the entire interior of the passenger deck, that should be enough.

MEMPHIS

Okay, remove everything that isn't absolutely necessary.

125) EXT., IN FRONT OF THE DO-X, NIGHT

The generator can be heard. The brightness of the lights fluctuates several times.

We see Kaminski and the engineer carrying parts of the interior from the DO-X and placing them under the wing.

People are tired, they lie down to sleep, preferably on the interior that has been carried out.

126) INT., DO-X, DAY

In the cockpit, Memphis wakes up. He feels his stubble. He pushes himself out of the pilot's seat and curls his spine inward.

MEMPHIS
Finne? Danzer?

Memphis moves to the command room. Masha is standing there, smiling shyly.

MASHA
(in a thin voice)
Memphis -

MEMPHIS
Masha...

MASHA
I... I came to apologize.

MEMPHIS
You look good.

MASHA
Thank you. And you? You've now become a pilot of this giant aircraft? Your passion has taken you far.

MEMPHIS
Yes, very far. - Why are you on my DO-X?
- I mean... I'm happy, but I'm also very surprised.

MASHA
I'm accompanying my husband. He wants to buy lumber in Johannesburg. - I don't usually accompany Wilhelm on his trips.

MEMPHIS
Maybe it's fate?

MASHA

Yes, fate.

They look at each other intensely.

MASHA

Memphis... I never told you why I acted that way back then...

(She is close to tears)

It wasn't easy for me back then - flying is so dangerous!

MEMPHIS

You're standing before me, and you couldn't have expected anything else. It's my life.

MASHA

Yes, I expected nothing else. - But hoped for something else? - Who knows.

Masha turns away.

MEMPHIS

Masha, don't despise me.

Masha turns back to Memphis.

MASHA

I don't hate you - I hate what I've become - because of you!

Memphis stands there motionless. He feels paralyzed. He watches Masha, who moves as if in slow motion.

127) EXT., BEACH, DAY

We see Schindel and the businessman. In the background, we see the other passengers, who are in the shade of the wing. They are eating and drinking something - it looks like a picnic. On the wing, we see Kaminski and the engineer working on the engines.

BUSINESSMAN

As long as there are still supplies, as long as everyone is busy with a meaningful task, they will follow the captain...

SCHINDEL

It won't come to that. They'll be looking for us soon enough.

BUSINESSMAN

No one will come looking for us: the radio system is broken. - And look around:

(We see the many stranded ships)
Dangerous waters. And that puts us outside of shipping lanes.

Schindel thinks for a moment. While he's looking at the DO-X, Masha comes out. She runs out to the beach, crying.

Schindel runs after Masha.

From a distance, we see Schindel catching up with Masha. They talk together, but it's inaudible. Finally, they embrace.

128) EXT., WING, DAY

Kaminski and the engineer are working on Engine 7. The engineer wipes his sweaty face with a cloth. A wind picks up, and the cloth flickers. The engineer looks out to sea. The sky is covered with heavy, dark clouds.

ENGINEER

A storm is approaching.

129) INT., BEACH, EVENING

We hear the wind and the metallic creaking of the aircraft's structure. The DO-X moves with the ocean waves.

Memphis delegates the crew to anchor the DO-X to the beach with ropes.

Schindel approaches Memphis and looks into the distance.

SCHINDEL

That doesn't look good.

Memphis turns to Schindel.

MEMPHIS

Can I do something for you?

SCHINDEL

Offer you my support.

Memphis doesn't really know what to do with Schindel.

MEMPHIS

Okay, help my crew. But be careful. I don't want to be responsible if you get kidnapped by dolphins.

SCHINDEL

I would like to speak to them too.

MEMPHIS

About what?

SCHINDEL

You know my wife?!

MEMPHIS

How do you come to that conclusion?

SCHINDEL

I didn't miss the way they looked at each other - aloof, yet familiar. And today she had tear-filled eyes...

MEMPHIS

Look, I have enough trouble on my hands.

SCHINDEL

I'm serious! I wish they'd leave my wife alone!

MEMPHIS

(annoyed)

How old are they? ... In any case, they're old enough to be Masha's father. Is that why they're so concerned about this?

SCHINDEL

Let me tell you one thing, she would never leave me or even cheat on me!

MEMPHIS

Schindel, I'm not interested in your interpretation of Othello. - Now make way!

(He pushes Schindel aside and approaches Kaminski.)

Memphis, Finne, Kaminski and the engineer attach the last rope.

KAMINSKI

Captain, the ship is slowly sinking into the sand.

MEMPHIS

How long until we can no longer take off?

KAMINSKI

maybe 24 hours - no longer.

MEMPHIS

By then we'll have run out of cocktail snacks - then it won't matter anyway.

130) EXT., BEACH, NIGHT

Sand and water are stirred up by rain and wind.

Crew and passengers are staying in the DO-X.

131) EXT., WING, MORNING

Bright sunshine, not a cloud in the sky.

We see a cigarette being lit. His fingers are smeared with oil. Kaminski takes a deep drag. He stands on the work platform, his shirt stained with sweat and oil.

KAMINSKI

What are they actually called?

The engineer emerges from the engine nacelle. He wipes his hands clean on a cloth.

ENGINEER

Andreas, Andreas Schneider.

KAMINSKI

But they know their way around engines.

ENGINEER

Not with the American engines here - I work at MAN.

KAMINSKI

MAN?

ENGINEER

Machine factory Augsburg Nuremberg.

KAMINSKI

Uh.

ENGINEER

I develop diesel generators for ships.

KAMINSKI

Marine diesel? Well, it's not quite the same thing.

ENGINEER

Yes, this is more of a toy.

KAMINSKI

Hey, nothing against my darlings!

132) EXT., BEACH, DAY

The cook and a steward stand in the water with their trousers rolled up. The cook holds a fishing rod. The steward stabs a fish. When he pulls the improvised spear out of the water, a jellyfish is hanging from the tip.

In the background we see children jumping into the water from the stern of the DO-X.

133) EXT., REAR OF THE DO-X, DAY

Günter takes a run-up and plunges into the sea. The other children jump after him, screaming with joy.

134) EXT., UNDER THE STARBOARD WING, DAY

The women sit on folding chairs and fan themselves. Other women drink tea or read.

135) EXT., UNDER THE PORT WING, DAY

We see the male passengers unloading the DO-X. Chairs, tables, curtains, carpets, and much more are being carried out. A steward carries out a gramophone and places it on the table. He puts a record on, turns the crank, and attaches the tonearm.

136) EXT., UNDER THE PORT WING, EVENING

We see the funnel of the gramophone and hear music.

Torches illuminate the surrounding area with its lavish furniture.

The cheerful people eat what the chef prepares on the grill.

The spirits are brought in.

We see the eyes of Finne, Danzer and Stockinger glitter.

FINNE

Captain, we demand our well-earned reward.

MEMPHIS

Okay, the alcohol ban is lifted until tonight!

Memphis opens a bottle of cognac and pours himself a glass. The others follow suit.

Some passengers are dancing in the background.

Memphis' eyes spot Masha, who is talking with Schindel and another couple.

KAMINSKI

(already quite drunk)

Captain, I took a close look at the damage. The cooling water lines weren't properly secured.

(He lights a cigarette.)

The vibrations did the rest.

Memphis continues to look over at Masha, who inadvertently meets his gaze. But she looks away and rejoins their conversation.

137) EXT., UNDER THE PORT WING, EVENING

A few meters away from Memphis we see Finne and Danzer watching Memphis and Masha.

DANZER

(to Finne)

Kaminski is talking our captain's ear off.

FINNE

I don't think he even notices him. Look at how he keeps staring at Mrs. Schindel.

DANZER
They know each other.

FINNE
They love each other.

138) EXT., UNDER THE PORT WING, EVENING

Memphis signals to Kaminski to shut up.

MEMPHIS
Kaminski, no technical nonsense now.
Relax, be relaxed, and dance a little.

KAMINSKI
(slightly slurring)
Aye captain, I dance!

Kaminski mingles with the dancers. He drinks from a bottle and dances like crazy until he falls into the sand. Some passengers find this funny and laugh.

Memphis takes a bottle of cognac and goes to the water. He sits down and drinks from the bottle.

MEMPHIS
She's on my DO-X - with another man.

We see Masha about 10 meters from Memphis. Masha is visible only as a silhouette, "ghostly." She is moving away from Memphis along the water.

Memphis looks at the bottle. He stands up and follows.

MEMPHIS
Masha?

Schindel stands in Memphis' way.

SCHINDEL
I knew they were after my wife!
(He points a gun at Memphis)
What would they say if I shot them now?

Memphis looks calmly into the muzzle of the gun.

MEMPHIS
You know, I actually have no opinion on that.

Schindel tries to shoot, but he can't. In his inner rage, he tries to hit Memphis with the gun, but Memphis pushes him away. Schindel falls on all fours. Memphis takes the gun away from him, discovers it's not loaded, and throws it into the sea. Schindel sobs.

SCHINDEL
Leave my wife alone!

MEMPHIS
Damn idiot! She's not her wife!

Memphis continues walking along the beach, constantly drinking from the bottle.

139) EXT., BEACH, MORNING

We see Memphis lying asleep on the beach. The empty bottle is next to him. The DO-X is visible in the background. We hear an engine start. Memphis wakes up. He spits out sand.

140) EXT., ON THE WING, DAY

Kaminski and the engineer are standing on the work platform. The engine slowly turns off. Kaminski climbs down from the work platform.

Memphis, looking crumpled, approaches Kaminski.

MEMPHIS
(in a hoarse voice)
I have no idea where I went with myself
last night - everything is gone!

Kaminski
(smiling)
From the looks of you, you weren't kind
to yourself.

Kaminski rummages through his pockets and can't find what he's looking for. His cheerful face now looks scrawny.

MEMPHIS
What is?

Kaminski
(irritated)
I have no more cigarettes.

We hear an argument. Memphis goes to the wing edge and looks down. We see Schindel and Masha.

141) EXT., BEACH, DAY

Schindel is furious with jealousy. Masha calms him down. She's embarrassed by the whole thing.

SCHINDEL

Where do you know each other from?

MASHA

He's a childhood friend. We have nothing in common anymore.

SCHINDEL

Were you with him?

MASHA

You're sick with jealousy.

Schindel is about to hit Masha, but Memphis stops him. For a moment, it looks as if Memphis is about to strike.

MASHA

No! - Memphis, you're only making everything worse! Go away and leave us alone!

Memphis lets go. Irritated, he steps back. He turns around in alarm as an engine starts in the background.

142) INT., COMMAND ROOM, DAY

Memphis, Kaminski, Stockinger, Finne and Danzer are standing, sitting or leaning somewhere.

KAMINSKI

7 and 8 are working again. 9 and 10 are beyond repair. - Anyone have a cigarette?

Memphis

When can we start?

KAMINSKI

I will test run all the engines one after the other until this evening.

FINNE

Then we can start tomorrow morning.

143) EXT., AT THE DO-X, DAY

We see crew and passengers lazily seeking shade.

Meanwhile, we see engines being started up one after the other.

144) EXT., ON THE WING, NIGHT

Full moon night.

Memphis is alone between the engine nacelles. He runs his hand over the blade of a propeller.

Memphis

I'm sure you won't let me down tomorrow.
You have to give it your all. Many
people rely on you, they trust you. And
I...

(He gently hits the aluminum with
the flat of his hand)

And me especially.

We hear footsteps and see Masha standing behind Memphis. Memphis turns around and looks at her.

MASHA

How romantic the night is tonight.

Memphis

How long did you listen?

MASHA

Long enough...

Memphis

And... worried that we won't make it?

MASHA

No, not at all. The old lady obeys only
you. - No one else would have found her
way back from the ice back then.

Memphis

You haven't forgotten?

MASHA

I've read everything related to you,
including the book Lost in the Ice by
Roald Carlsson, the expedition leader.

Memphis

The situation was more hopeless back
then...

MASHA

The book has a dedication: For Masha
Abisanka. She was the longing of a
man, ...

MEMPHIS

...who never wanted to give up. We all
owe our lives to her..

MASHA

From then on I knew you must still love
me!

MEMPHIS

How could it be otherwise? I've never
forgotten you.

For a few seconds, they gazed at each other longingly. Then they
kissed passionately. Memphis took Masha by the hand and climbed
with her up the ladder onto the gondola, which offered enough
space for two lovers.

We see an intimate love game.

145) EXT., NEXT TO THE DO-X, DAY

We see the DO-X floating in the sea with its engines running low.

146) INT., COCKPIT - DO-X, DAY

Memphis and Finne take their seats. Memphis, with a smile on his
face, pins Masha's photo to the steering wheel. Finne notices.

FINNE

The lady is a private world sensation.

Memphis

Yes (draws his long, enthusiastic
breath). Finne, check the elevator and
ailerons again.

146) INT., PASSENGER DECK - DO-X, DAY

On the middle deck, passengers sit on the floor. They are tense, but also confident.

147) INT., COCLPIT - DO-X, DAY

Memphis captures the tube phone.

Memphis
Kaminski, maximum power on all engines!

148) INT., CONTROL ROOM - DO-X, DAY

Kaminski
(chewing on a toothpick)
Aye, Captain.

Kaminski operates the thrust levers of 10 engines.

149) EXT., DO-X, DAY

We see the DO-X rising out of the water and gaining altitude.

150) INT., COCKPIT - DO-X, DAY

Danzer appears in the cockpit.

FINNE
A perfect start.

Danzer
(euphoric)
We made it!

MEMPHIS
We have Kaminski to thank for that.

VOICE KAMINSKI
(via smart phone)
Captain, please come to the control room!

Memphis takes the hose phone.

MEMPHIS
What's up?

151) INT., CONTROL ROOM - DO-X, DAY

Kaminski
You should see it for yourself.

152) INT., COCKPIT - DO-X, DAY

In the cockpit, Memphis and Finne look at each other briefly.

FINNE
Hopefully no other engine will die.

MEMPHIS
Take over!

FINNE
Aye, Captain.

153) INT., CONTROL ROOM - DO-X, DAY

Kaminski stands in front of the displays and turns two small handwheels.

Memphis comes in and immediately looks at the displays.

Kaminski
Captain, I checked all the cooling water
and oil lines before the flight -
normally, there should be no problems.

MEMPHIS
And?

Kaminski
Look at the temperatures of 3 and 4.

We see the displays, the pointers are in the yellow-red area.

There is concern on Memphis' face.

MEMPHIS
It's only a matter of time before they
fail.

Kaminski
The engines cause severe vibrations,
which loosen the connections to the oil
pressure line.

MEMPHIS

We need the engines. We can't ditch again.

Kaminski

We risk them exploding.

MEMPHIS

Kaminski, is there an alternative that I have overlooked?

Kaminski

They exist.

(He looks up at the skylight.)

Someone needs to get to the wing and the engines!

Memphis looks up, pushes his captain's hat aside, and ruffles his hair.

MEMPHIS

The propellers will tear them apart!

154) EXT., WING - DO-X, DAY

We see the roof hatch being opened. Kaminski climbs out. He has difficulty standing, so he clings to the struts of the engine nacelles.

Kaminski

(to oneself)

I would give anything for a cigarette right now.

155) INT., COCKPIT - DO-X, DAY

Memphis steers the DO-X. Finne looks through the small skylight.

FINNE

(upset)

He climbs between the struts beneath the gondolas. He has now reached gondola 2.

156) EXT., WING - DO-X, DAY

Kaminski slips. He barely manages to grab the bracing with his hands.

157) INT., COCKPIT - DO-X, DAY

MEMPHIS

What about Kaminski?

FINNE

He swears terribly, but he's okay.

158) EXT., WING - DO-X, DAY

Kaminski unscrews the side panel. He takes a wrench from his leg pocket and tightens the connecting bolts of an oil pressure line. As he's about to move on to the next oil pressure line, the wrench falls from his hand. He grabs it reflexively.

159) INT., COCKPIT - DO-X, DAY

FINNE

Oh God, Kaminski is sliding off the wing!

MEMPHIS

Was he hit by the propeller?

FINNE

I can't see that.

MEMPHIS

Finne, then figure it out! - Wait!

160) EXT., WING - DO-X, DAY

The passengers look outside in horror. They see Kaminski hanging helplessly from the rope, fighting for his life.

A WOMAN

Terrible! - Help him!

A MAN

Something has to be done! It flutters like an advertising banner in the wind.

161) INT., CONTROL ROOM - DO-X, DAY

In the control room, Stockinger and Danzer hold the safety rope. Memphis comes in.

STOCKINGER

Captain, we can't do it!

The three of them pull on the rope, reeling it in meter by meter.

162) EXT., WING, DAY

We see Kaminski approaching the wing. Eventually, he manages to escape onto the wing.

163) INT., CONTROL ROOM - DO-X, DAY

In the control room, Memphis takes a wrench from a toolbox and climbs the ladder to the roof hatch.

164) EXT., WING - DO-X, DAY

Memphis is up to his hips out of the skylight. His shirt and hair are flapping in the wind. With his last bit of strength, Kaminski approaches the skylight. Memphis hands Kaminski the wrench.

KAMINSKI

Captain, I can't, I have no strength left.

MEMPHIS

Mobilize your last reserves, suppress your pain, and repair the damn oil pipeline!

Kaminski returns to engine nacelle 2.

Kaminski takes the wrench and tightens the connecting bolts of an oil line. Then he reinstalls the side panel.

165) INT., CONTROL ROOM - DO-X, DAY

Kaminski comes back through the hatch. He's exhausted, covered in scrapes, bruises, and contusions, and has a bloodshot eye. He immediately checks the temperature gauge.

We see the pointer moving from the red to the yellow area.

166) INT., COCKPIT - DO-X, DAY

Memphis and Finne take their seats. Kaminski enters the frame.

FINNE
That was great!

KAMINSKI
Captain, I need a vacation.

MEMPHIS
I have something better - I have
cigarettes.

KAMINSKI
(noisy)
Cigarettes?!

Memphis takes a pack of cigarettes from a side compartment and offers one to Kaminski.

With a broad smile, Kaminski takes a cigarette and immediately lights it. He takes deep drags. As he exhales, he gets a slight cough.

FINNE
Kaminski, you probably haven't looked in
the mirror yet?

KAMINSKI
(still coughing)
How come?

MEMPHIS
They should get bandaged, they look
horrible.

KAMINSKI
Right away, Captain.

Kaminski happens to glance at a chrome-plated hatch on the side panel. When he sees himself, he faints. Finne immediately takes care of him.

MEMPHIS
Take him back and take care of him.

167) EXT., DO-X, EVENING

The DO-X sits quietly in the air. The engines can be heard.

168) EXT., DO-X, NIGHT

The DO-X lands in Lüderitz Bay.

169) EXT., LANDING STAGE, MORNING

Exhausted, all passengers leave the DO-X. The sick are carried out and taken to a small hospital.

Memphis grabs Stockinger.

MEMPHIS

They visit the German Telegraph Station and request spare parts, tools, and aviation fuel from Cape Town.

STOCKINGER

Aye, Captain.

170) EXT., LANDING STAGE, DAY

Memphis, Finne and Danzer are in front of the DO-X.

MEMPHIS

What about Kaminski?

FINNE

On the mend. - He's already asked the doctor about cigarettes.

Memphis, Finne, Stockinger and Danzer laugh heartily.

Memphis looks over Finne's shoulder at Masha, who is breaking away from her husband and now approaching.

MEMPHIS

Finne, look what the engines are doing.

FINNE

The Mot...?

Danzer

The engines. Come on.

Finne turns around and sees Masha approaching

FINNE

Aye, Captain!

Finne, Stockinger, and Danzer leave the frame. Masha stands in front of Memphis. Schindel waits patiently in the background.

MASHA

We've decided to take a ship to Cape Town. One will be leaving in a few hours.

MEMPHIS

I hate goodbyes, and goodbyes from you especially.

MASHA

It's better this way.

MEMPHIS

Back then, saying goodbye was very painful - believe me, it is no less so now.

MASHA

We probably won't see each other again.

Masha gives Memphis a tender kiss on the cheek.

In the background, Schindel turns away.

MASHA

(smiles with tears in her eyes)

Farewell, Memphis.

Masha leaves and doesn't turn back. When she reaches Schindel, she hooks her arm in his.

MEMPHIS

(wistfully)

Goodbye Masha.

We hear the noise of an airplane engine. Memphis looks up at the sky.

We see a small red sports plane coming in to land and disappearing behind the buildings.

171) INT., RESTAURANT, NIGHT

From the INT., the restaurant looks like a Hofbräuhaus (a German brewery). (Southwest Africa was a German colony before World War I.) About 50 guests can be seen, all speaking German. Memphis sits alone at a table near a window. He looks frustrated. The innkeeper enters the frame.

HOST

What does the Lord want?

MEMPHIS

I have sand between my teeth, it needs
to come out!

HOST

A toothpick, very much so, sir.

MEMPHIS

No, a beer, ice cold!

Memphis takes out the small photo and muses over it. Before the
barman returns with a glass of beer, Memphis slips the photo back
into his breast pocket.

We see a glass of beer placed on the table. Memphis picks up the
glass and drinks with great relish.

Christ Moses enters the inn. He looks intently at Memphis, whom
he sees from the side.

MOSES

Memphis Gettmark!

Memphis jumps up from his chair.

MEMPHIS

Christ Moses! - I'm going crazy.

Memphis and Moses hug. They then sit down at the table. Memphis
signals to the bartender to bring two beers.

MOSES

What in God's name are you doing here,
at the end of the world?

MEMPHIS

Experienced an airplane accident, lost
the woman you loved - the usual.

They laugh heartily. The beer arrives. They clink glasses and
drink with relish.

MOSES

So you fly the monster at the pier?

MEMPHIS

The DO-X, yes. - And my old lady doesn't
like to hear the word "monster."

MOSES

I've rarely seen ships larger than this.
And until today, I would have considered
it a pilot's tale.

MEMPHIS

She flies and with real elegance. But
tell me, what brought you here?

MOSES

After my career as a circus pilot, I
worked for the German Africa Society,
which maintains a large base here.

MEMPHIS

What about the other boys,
Raketenhannes, Torpedobruno, what
happened to them?

MOSES

(depressed)

Torpedobruno is married and drives a
tram through Berlin. Rockethannes is
dead. - Hans Friday died on a Saturday.

Memphis smiles subduedly.

MEMPHIS

Good old Rockethannes - I knew him well,
I raced against him many times.

MOSES

Many others are also no longer alive. We
are the last ones still flying.

MEMPHIS

In moments like these, I always think
about giving up flying.

MOSES

We challenge fate every day.

MEMPHIS

I've lost a lot to flying. It destroys
you and blinds you to a woman's love.

MOSES

(sighing)

Tell me about it. I've wanted to quit
twice. Instead, I've been divorced
twice.

(He drinks his beer)

I can't stop flying. It's like dancing
to beautiful music.

Memphis pats Moses on the shoulder in a friendly manner.

MEMPHIS

Moses, you should remarry!

We hear a shrill, siren-like voice. A beautiful but lively
Italian woman in pilot's uniform, Cristina Bellodi, commands
everyone's attention.

Cristina

I need aviation fuel!

Cristina takes off her aviator cap and shakes out her hair.
Everyone stares at Cristina. A whisper can be heard. She looks
around and recognizes from their clothing that Memphis and Moses
are pilots.

Cristina

Do you know where I can get kerosene?

MOSES

Patience doesn't seem to be your strong
suit?

Cristina

(lifts her pointy little nose)

Let me guess: you're a cargo pilot,
right?

Memphis

(annoyed)

We are pilots, apparently just like
them.

Cristina

Pollen also flies and yet they are not
pilots.

Memphis

Please sit down...

Cristina signals to the bartender to bring a round of beer and
sits down on a chair.

Memphis

I am Memphis Gettmark, and this is
Christ Moses.

Cristina

I'm Cristina Bellodi, a recreational pilot. I assume you've never seen a recreational aircraft before?

Memphis
Do you mean the little red toy I saw this morning?

Cristina
The toy is a Macchi MC72. It has 2,800 horsepower. That's certainly more than their flying trucks have.

Moses laughs.

Memphis
Come to the pier tomorrow and you'll get your kerosene.

172) EXT., IN FRONT OF THE RESTAURANT, EVENING

Memphis comes out of the restaurant. We hear the sound of engines. Ten trucks drive down the road. They stop in front of Memphis.

DRIVER
Hey guys, do you know where the airship is? We're bringing two new engines and 1,000 barrels of aviation fuel.

173) EXT., WING - DO-X, DAY

We see Memphis watching as Kaminski, the engineer, and four technicians install two new engines.

174) EXT., PIER, DAY

Finne supervises the helpers who pump the kerosene from the barrels into the DO-X's tanks using hand pumps.

Cristina comes to the pier and looks up at the DO-X in disbelief.

CRISTINA
(to himself)
What in God's name is this?

FINNE
A flying ship.

Cristina turns around.

FINNE

Sorry if I frightened you.

CRISTINA

All right. I want to see Memphis
Gettmark. Is he here?

FINNE

The captain is on the wing.

CRISTINA

He's captain of this... thingamajig?

FINNE

flying ship.

CRISTINA

This flying ship?

FINNE

Yes.

(pointing to a ladder)

Just go up.

175) EXT., WING - DO-X, DAY

Memphis and Cristina stroll along the wing toward the wingtip.
Both are in good spirits. Cristina is smiling and completely
different.

CRISTINA

It's beautiful here.

MEMPHIS

Yes, there is a beautiful view from up
here.

CRISTINA

I'm sorry if I was a little rude
yesterday. I'm stuck here, so I
overreacted a bit.

MEMPHIS

How many liters do they need to make it
to Tuscany?

CRISTINA

(smiles refreshingly)

Emilia-Romagna.

MEMPHIS

Please?

CRISTINA

I'm from Ferrara, a city in Emilia-Romagna. - And I need 1,200 liters.

MEMPHIS

This means my engines can only run for a few minutes.

CRISTINA

A sports aircraft is designed for speed. - I hold the speed record with it.

MEMPHIS

What are you doing with your speeding car in Africa?

CRISTINA

I was on a record-breaking flight from Ferrara to Johannesburg and back.

MEMPHIS

Speed record, sport flying... tsss.

(shaking head)

They understand flying completely differently than I do. I earn my living from it.

CRISTINA

(smiling heartily)

I don't need that. I buy what I want, and I take what I desire.

MEMPHIS

(with a confident undertone)

I believe them at their word.

176) EXT., SAND TRACK, DAY

Memphis and Kaminski stand in amazement in front of a red sports plane. Cristina climbs into the cockpit. She starts the engine.

CRISTINA

(shouts over the engine noise)

Thank you so much for everything. If you're ever in Ferrara, you must visit me.

The plane takes off and quickly gains altitude. Memphis and Kaminski watch it for a long time.

KAMINSKI
She is a diva.

MEMPHIS
The racing box or Cristina?

KAMINSKI
As well as.

MEMPHIS
I'm sure we'll hear more from her.

We see our view of Memphis and Kaminski slowly moving away.

OVERVOICE MEMPHIS
Upon returning to Germany, the DO-X was already considered technically obsolete. Despite its worldwide fame and the adoration it garnered everywhere, the Olympus of the skies was no longer economically viable. Ultimately, the DO-X was decommissioned. In the spring of 1934, this technological marvel was exhibited in the aviation collection at Lehrter Bahnhof in Berlin. I had to answer to an airline committee, which ended with me being simply scrapped, just like the DO-X. Eventually, I signed on as a supply pilot with the German Polar Society. And Masha Abisanka? I haven't seen her since. All I have left is the small photo... and the memory. On the other hand, I met Cristina Bellodi again - she not only has the most beautiful legs in aviation history, but also the fastest.

177) EXT., LAKE GARDA, DAY

SUPER: May 1936

We see a Dornier DO 24 landing. The flying boat landed gently.

Cristina is already waiting on the shore, waving happily.

OVERVOICE MEMPHIS

I've visited Cristina many times in Ferrara. But this time we met at Lake Garda.

Memphis moors the flying boat to a pontoon dock.

Cristina throws her arms lovingly around Memphis's neck.

CRISTINA
Memphis!

MEMPHIS
Cristina!

They kiss passionately.

178) INT., RESTAURANT, NIGHT

Memphis and Cristina enter a restaurant. The waiter assigns them a table by the window, through which the flying boat can be seen. On the table is a candlestick with several burning candles.

Memphis and Cristina eat their food, drink a lot of wine and stare at each other constantly.

CRISTINA
Where I grew up, there was an ancient tree - and no one climbed as high as I did.

Cristina lights a cigarillo.

MEMPHIS
And yet it wasn't high enough.

CRISTINA
I was fifteen when I sat in an airplane for the first time, alongside my father. By sixteen, I was already taking over the controls.

Memphis smiles dreamily. Cristina casually holds her wine glass between her thumb and middle finger, skillfully swirling its contents in a circle.

CRISTINA
After all that wine, I'd rather have an espresso - Cameriere!

The cameriere comes into the picture.

MEMPHIS
Espresso?

CRISTINA
Allora, prendiamo due Espressi, per
favore!

CAMERIERE
Subito, Signorina.

Cristina looks deep into Memphis's eyes as if trying to figure out to what extent she can trust him.

CRISTINA
You never told me if there was a Mrs.
Gettmark?
(She drinks from her cup with
relish.)

MEMPHIS
Is there a Signor Bellodi?

Cristina smiles shyly.

CRISTINA
There was one, yes. It was three years
ago. Vittorio was my first and only love
- a dream for every woman. We got
married, but then...

MEMPHIS
What happened?

Cristina reluctantly continues speaking, her eyes nervously darting back and forth across the table.

CRISTINA
A year after our wedding, he died in a
car accident.

MEMPHIS
(he takes her hands)
That's bitter.

CRISTINA
I loved Vittorio very much.

Cristina looked Memphis in the eyes again for a long time.

Memphis notices how with each breath Cristina's hard nipples move back and forth against the fabric.

CRISTINA

Is there a Mrs. Gettmark?

MEMPHIS

(hesitantly)

For almost 20 years there would have been a Mrs. Gettmark - if I were to give up flying.

CRISTINA

(smiles understandingly)

I can understand that; pilots aren't exactly in demand. I piloti sono condannati, as we say here.

MEMPHIS

Condannati?

CRISTINA

Doomed!

179) EXT., LAKE GARDA LANDSCAPE, DAY

We see Lake Garda just before sunrise. On the mountain slopes, we see ancient castles and palaces. A shepherd leads his sheep to the mountain pastures.

We see the moment when the sun casts its first rays of light onto the lake.

180) EXT., PIER ON LAKE GARDA, DAY

Cristina and Memphis are in front of the DO 24. Both are in a good mood. We hear their laughter.

MEMPHIS

Where are we flying to?

CRISTINA

Verona - an uncle of mine is throwing a big party. - I'm flying.

MEMPHIS

With my flying boat? You're not serious?

CRISTINA

Oh, don't be such a baby, I'm not going to put a dent in it.

Memphis releases the mooring rope from the pontoon dock when he hears the noise of an engine.

We see a Junkers Ju 52 with German insignia in the sky. It is escorted by two German and two Italian fighters.

CRISTINA

Today is May 8th - Rome celebrates the German Duce, who comes at the invitation of Mussolini.

Cristina and Memphis look at each other as if their day had been ruined.

MEMPHIS

Let's fly off.

181) INT., COCKPIT - DO 24, DAY

Cristina gives the engines full throttle. Memphis sits uncomfortably in the copilot's seat.

MEMPHIS

It's strange to be sitting here. Luckily, it's not forever.

CRISTINA

(happy)

Compared to my sports plane, it's as comfortable as a living room.

MEMPHIS

And you can take a little more with you than just a toothbrush.

182) EXT., SKY, DAY

We see the flying Do 24.

183) EXT., COURTYARD OF A VILLA, NIGHT

At a large party, many people are dancing, including Cristina. Memphis watches and drinks a martini. Finally, Cristina invites Memphis to dance. Memphis hesitates, but then hands his glass to a servant and goes onto the dance floor. It turns out that both are great dancers.

OVERVOICE MEMPHIS

After that evening, I never visited Italy again. What became of Cristina was important to me at first, but later I barely remembered her. My memories were entirely of Masha. Over the next few years, I repeatedly flew supply missions to the South Pole. I didn't notice the changes in my homeland from my plane. I was startled by the news that Guernica had been bombed by the German Condor Legion. That was on April 26, 1937. Until then, I couldn't imagine that flying machines could wipe a small town from the face of the earth. But Guernica was only the prelude to much greater destruction - destruction of biblical proportions.

184) INT., OFFICERS' MESS, NIGHT

SUPER: November 1939

The casino is busy. Smoke hangs in the air. It's movie night. The naval pilots are packed together in their seats, eagerly awaiting a Hans Albers film (the man who played Sherlock Holmes).

In the middle we see Memphis in his aviator uniform.

OVERVOICE MEMPHIS

Germany was heading full steam ahead toward its downfall. Military aircraft dominated the skies. It was this branch of the military that made modern warfare possible. This was something new: war could be waged at any time, anywhere in the world. And pilots were needed for these aircraft. Civilian pilots were being recruited throughout the German Reich. I was conscripted by the Supreme Naval Command as a flight instructor. Stationed in Wilhelmshaven, I trained student pilots to become naval aviators.

The light goes out.

First, a trailer is shown, a documentary from the German weekly newsreel. Memphis wants to quickly grab a beer when he reacts noticeably. When the first images flash up, Memphis flinches slightly.

On the screen, we see Memphis sitting in a cockpit. Through the windows, we see a rough sea, teeming with large icebergs.

The fellow pilots cheer in surprise and clap in recognition.

OFFICER 1

Gettmark, I always knew you were an actor.

OFFICER 2

Where was this filmed?

MEMPHIS

(almost embarrassed)

I think that was... the end of February 1936. I was flying on behalf of the German Polar Society at the time. Cameraman Bernhard Trost was with me on this flight.

FILM COMMENTATOR

A pilot, Memphis Gettmark, faces this icy hell.

(appreciative cheers from fellow pilots)

He calls the most dangerous flights to the most unreal places in the world pure routine. He risks his life to bring necessary supplies to a German research station in Antarctica. The survival of the Third Reich depends on new sources of raw materials.

The officers cheer again and cheer Memphis.

In the next scene, Cristina appears. The sight of her immediately arouses enthusiasm among the starving officers. First, Cristina stands in front of an Italian fighter plane, talking. Then we see it flying at breakneck speed through the sky.

FILM COMMENTATOR

This beautiful woman is Cristina Bellodi, the only female military pilot in the Axis powers. It's no coincidence that the fiery Italian leads her own squadron, trained to combat high-flying bombers. She holds the still-standing speed record of 709 kilometers per hour, which she set in 1932 in a Macchi MC72. Not even our Me 109s can keep up with that.

The trailer has ended. Applause erupts. Until the main film begins, people talk loudly.

OFFICER 3

Imagine doing a loop-the-loop with this woman.

Cheers can be heard again. Then it falls silent again.

Memphis goes to the bar and waves the orderly over.

MEMPHIS

A beer.

EITEL

Don't you like the film either?

MEMPHIS

Hans Albers as Sherlock Holmes? - There are more pleasant ways to be bored.

EITEL

I love American movies, especially those with Errol Flynn.

We hear Hans Albers' and Heinz Rühmann's singsong, to which the pilots join in.

PILOTS

Yes, gentlemen, worries are far away -
Yes, gentlemen, that's how we like it...

Memphis toasts with vanity.

MEMPHIS

On Cristina Bellodi.

(He drinks.)

I haven't seen her in years. I'd love to fly to Ferrara right now.

EITEL

Do you know this flying beauty?

MEMPHIS

Eitel, the question is indiscreet.

EITEL

Whatever, we have a war.

MEMPHIS

That's not enough, it would have to be
the end of the world for me to answer
that.

EITEL
(holds his glass to Memphis)
On Cristina Bellodi.

MEMPHIS
(clinks the glasses together)
On Masha Abisanka.

EITEL
Who is that again?

MEMPHIS
(means Eitel, to drink. They drink)
Eitel... end of the world.

EITEL
(shakes his head)
Tsss, Gettmark, you are incorrigible.

Officer Milch joins us.

MILCH
Gettmark, have you seen your new
recruits yet?

MEMPHIS
Not yet, why?

MILCH
These are schoolchildren! The Tommys
will laugh at us.

EITEL
They're getting older too.

MILCH
The war won't last that long. This time
we have a powerful air force. Stukas and
Heinkel bombers will put a fear in the
British...

EITEL
Milch, you are an optimist.

MEMPHIS
As if the British didn't have an air
force.

MILCH

The RAF? It's just a few rattlesnake
planes dropping chicken eggs.

There is loud and extensive laughter.

MILCH

We'll get them...

(He makes a sweeping gesture.)

... straight from the sky - if they can
even make it across the English Channel!

There is laughter again.

EITEL

(raises his beer glass)

Milch is thicker than blood!

MILCH

To the Air Force!

(Their glasses clink together.)

185) EXT., PIER, DAY

It's shortly after sunrise. The windows of the DO 24 are covered
in frost. Six recruits are standing in front of it, rubbing their
hands together against the cold. They are wild young guys of
eighteen and nineteen. Among them is Masha's (and Memphis's) son,
Günter Schindel. He is the top of the six recruits.

GÜNTER

I volunteered for the Air Force, and now
I have to pilot a flying Warthog.

RECRUIT 1

The Messerschmitt Me 109 - that's a real
airplane.

Memphis comes into view. The recruits immediately stand at
attention.

MEMPHIS

Is the DO 24 a flying warthog?

GÜNTER

(in Reportton)

I report obediently that six recruits
have lined up for their first flight
mission.

MEMPHIS

Stir. - Well, we have frustrated fighter pilots?!

(He looks critically at the recruits.)

Let me tell you something: Fighter pilots are doomed. In World War 14-18, the average mission duration for fighter pilots was 20 hours. A total of 4,000 German pilots never returned from their combat missions.

186) INT., COCKPIT, DAY

Memphis sits in the pilot's seat, Günter in the co-pilot's seat. The other five recruits sit in the cargo hold.

Memphis starts the engines. Through the glass, we see the propellers spinning steadily faster.

187) EXT., PORT FACILITY, DAY

We see the DO 24 rising from the water and gaining altitude.

188) INT., COCKPIT, DAY

Memphis glances at Günter's name tag more or less by chance. When Günter is called by his first name, Memphis starts to think.

MEMPHIS

Private Schindel, allow me a personal question: Are your parents' names Friedrich Wilhelm and Masha Schindel?

GÜNTER

(surprised)

Yes. How do you know her?

MEMPHIS

It's a long story...

Memphis looks out the side window and just happens to spot a lifeboat floating on the sea.

MEMPHIS

Fasten your seatbelts, immediately!
We're going down.

189) EXT., SEA, DAY

We see three submarine survivors in an inflatable boat, waving their caps.

Survivor 1
A flying boat!

Survivor 2
You saw us!

They are extremely happy.

190) INT., DO 24, DAY

The recruits look out the windows, some fearfully, others as if a very special adventure were about to take place.

We see Günter pondering the flight maneuver.

GÜNTER

Now I remember the DO-X... I was just a kid back then, but my mom kept telling me about it later.

(to his comrades)

Listen guys, this is Memphis Gettmark, a living legend. He's going to turn us into the best pilots in the world!

MEMPHIS

They'd rather not let their mother hear about the living legend.

GÜNTER

If it were up to my parents, I wouldn't be allowed to be here at all.

MEMPHIS

Sounds like you joined the military without your parents' consent?

GÜNTER

(quiet)

My parents are somewhere in India. My father does business there.

MEMPHIS

Understand.

191) EXT., SEA, DAY

We see the three survivors being taken on board.

192) EXT., PORT FACILITY, DAY

We see the DO 24 landing on the water.

193) INT., OFFICERS' MESS, DAY

Music is playing from a radio. The casino is only half as busy as it was during the movie night. Memphis comes through the door and walks to the bar where Eitel is sitting.

EITEL
So, how was the flight?

MEMPHIS
Inspiring - picked up three submarine survivors along the way.

A soldier enters and hands Memphis a note. Memphis reads it. Then he crumples it up and throws it away.

EITEL
What's in it?

MEMPHIS
Order for special operation.

EITEL
I know, I'm the co-pilot.

MEMPHIS
I find the old man's special requests a little inconvenient.

EITEL
Let's go, the old man is waiting for us in his office.

MEMPHIS
I hope to be back for breakfast.

194) EXT., PIER, NIGHT

Twelve paratroopers board the DO 24. Memphis and Eitel stand beside them, looking at each other in amazement.

We see the DO 24 take off from the water and disappear into the darkness.

195) INT., DO 24, NIGHT

In the cockpit, only the lights of the instruments are visible. While Memphis concentrates on the flight, Eitel studies a map, which he illuminates with a flashlight.

The cargo hold is illuminated in blue. The 12 paratroopers are crouching on the ground. They are heavily armed. Their faces are blackened and grim. They are silent. Some are checking their weapons.

In the cockpit, Eitel puts the map away.

EITEL

What do you think they're up to?

MEMPHIS

I have no idea - I don't care either.

EITEL

A few days ago I heard on the radio that the British are holding a German passenger ship near Malter.

MEMPHIS

And?

EITEL

We are flying south with coordinates for Malta - and we have a boarding party on board.

Memphis looks at Eitel out of the corner of his eye. He notices that Eitel is slightly nervous.

MEMPHIS

How long have they been flying?

EITEL

Let's put it this way: Max Immelmann, Werner Voss, Oswald Boelcke and, of course, Manfred Freiherr von Richthofen were friends of mine.

MEMPHIS

They're all dead.

EITEL

I was lucky. My plane was hit frequently, often seriously, and I was

always so drunk that I had to be carried
off the plane.

MEMPHIS
(bored)
Sounds familiar.

Eitel takes a thermos from his pilot's bag and pours the contents
into a mug.

EITEL
Not at all. I'm not one of those
hardcore military pilots. I'm a flight
drinker.

MEMPHIS
A what?

EITEL
A flight drinker, ...
(holding up the cup)
...a pilot who cannot fly at all without
being drunk.

MEMPHIS
Yes, military aviation has a disgusting
side to it.
(He looks over the instruments.)
In eight minutes we'll be above point
zero.

Eitel flips a switch.

In the cargo hold, the blue light turns green. The paratroopers
are getting ready.

In the cockpit we see Eitel, who seems increasingly nervous.

MEMPHIS
One more minute. Signal red.

The light changes in the cargo hold. The paratroopers line up in
front of the cargo hatch and hook their parachutes onto a cross
cable. The hatch opens. One by one, they jump out of the flying
boat.

In the cockpit, Memphis gives it full throttle. We hear the
engines revving to full speed.

MEMPHIS
Off home!

196) EXT., MALTA, NIGHT

We see an anti-aircraft position. British soldiers point their searchlights toward the sky. The anti-aircraft fires.

197) EXT., SKY, NIGHT

We see the DO 24 in the sky, surrounded by several searchlights. Flak explosions are next to it.

198) INT., DO 24, NIGHT

Small explosions can be seen at the windows. The DO 24 is shaking. Glowing metal fragments pierce the cockpit. A short circuit in the power supply. A fire is on. Thick smoke is everywhere. Eitel takes an extinguisher and puts out the fire.

EITEL

It was all too smooth, it was bound to go wrong!

MEMPHIS

(with stoic calm)
I've experienced worse.

EITEL

Get us out of here - as quickly as possible!

199) EXT., DO 24, NIGHT

More flak. The port engine is on fire.

200) INT., DO 24, NIGHT

EITEL

If the tank in the wing catches fire, the whole thing will explode!

MEMPHIS

Evacuate tank one!

EITEL

That's no use anymore.

201) EXT., SKY, NIGHT

The DO 24 rushes through the night like a glowing comet.

202) INT., DO 24, NIGHT

MEMPHIS
Get out, immediately!

Eitel goes into the cargo hold and opens the hatch.

EITEL
Captain!

In the cockpit, Memphis grabs the photo of the steering scar.

MEMPHIS
Not without you.

203) EXT., SKY, NIGHT

We see two parachutes with Memphis and Eitel hanging from them.
The DO 24 crashes into the sea, burning, and explodes.

204) EXT., MALTA, NIGHT

Memphis and Eitel land on the beach. Eitel approaches Memphis,
who is still detaching from his parachute. They look toward the
burning spot at sea.

EITEL
That was 6,000 liters of kerosene.

MEMPHIS
Let's get out of here.

SERGEANT
Good evening, gentleman.

We see a sergeant with a fine Victorian mustache and three
soldiers pointing their rifles at Memphis and Eitel.

EITEL
Are we their prisoners?

SERGEANT
No... you are prisoners of the British
Crown.

MEMPHIS

(cynical)
My compliments to King Edward.

The sergeant snaps his fingers. Memphis takes a blow to the neck with the rifle butt. He falls unconscious to the ground.

205) INT., PASSENGER SHIP, DAY

Memphis (still unconscious) and Eitel are in the dining room along with many other people. They are all prisoners. Men, women, and children sit almost motionless at tables or on the floor. There's little conversation. British soldiers are also on board, rifles slung over their shoulders.

Memphis is stretched out on a bench. His head rests on Masha's lap, and she places a moist compress on his forehead.

OVERVOICE MEMPHIS

I felt like I was in the warm arms of a woman. It was like a wonderful dream: no pain, no hunger, no thirst.

(We see through Memphis' eyes)

With the first light, I saw the face of a fine woman. It was beautiful, lovely, smiling. - I feared I was seeing an illusion from the depths of my heart. I saw Masha above me, holding me gently in her arms. I felt her breath, smelled her scent...

MEMPHIS

(takes Masha's hand)

Masha...?

MASHA

(quietly and wistfully)

Memphis, thank God you're coming around.

OVERVOICE MEMPHIS

I sat up and wanted to embrace this wonderful dream image, to kiss it - only now did I realize I was not in paradise.

MEMPHIS

I don't understand, where am I? - Masha!

(With a pained expression on his face, he grabs his neck.)

Uh ...

MASHA

Memphis, you were struck down and brought here on a German ship. The English are refusing to let us continue.

MEMPHIS

You're sitting next to me like a dream - Masha, why are you here?

MASHA

I was in India with my husband on business. In Bombay, he was arrested by English soldiers.

Memphis spots his co-pilot, Eitel. He looks over uncertainly and signals to Memphis that he's okay.

With his hand on his neck, Memphis stands up and walks back and forth a few steps with Masha.

MEMPHIS

I never thought we'd see each other again - I owe a lot to the British.
(He touches Masha's cheek with his fingers.)

Masha takes this hand and doesn't let go.

MASHA

Memphis, I'm afraid we're all going to die here.

MEMPHIS

No... now that fate has brought us together again, I won't allow that.

Eitel slowly joins them. The soldiers on guard become suspicious, but they don't take any action yet, just keep an eye on the three.

Eitel looks through the porthole. He sees soldiers, military equipment, and a flying boat.

MEMPHIS

That must be an American Catalina. It's very similar to the Do 24.
(to Masha)
Do you know if other ships are being detained?

MASHA

Our ship is the only one. On board are several naval attachés who are currently being interrogated.

MEMPHIS

We need to get out of here as quickly as possible.

(He looks around.)

We dropped German paratroopers last night. And I'm afraid they're trying to board this ship.

EITEL

Let's try to get to the flying boat.

MASHA

That sounds very dangerous.

MEMPHIS

Trust me - I have a photo of you with me.

MASHA

What do you think?

206) INT., PASSENGER SHIP, NIGHT

The passengers have lain down wherever there's space. We hear a cough. A soldier shines a flashlight on a boy.

An English officer and two soldiers enter through a door and walk determinedly towards Memphis.

EITEL

Now things are getting uncomfortable.

MEMPHIS

I expected that.

A soldier grabs Memphis by the arm. Memphis defends himself.

We see the barrel of a rifle. At that moment, shots are heard, then an explosion, more. Screams. Clouds of smoke enter the mess hall. Memphis snatches the rifle from the soldier and pushes him away.

Memphis grabs Masha. Eitel follows. Machine gun fire. Screams.

207) EXT., PASSENGER SHIP, NIGHT

Memphis, Masha, and Eitel jump into the water and swim and dive over to the Catalina. A soldier notices their escape and shoots.

Eitel is hit in the water, but he doesn't let it show.

The soldier stops shooting because he can no longer see anything.

Memphis releases the Catalina's tethers. Board the cockpit.

208) INT., COCKPIT - CATALINA, NIGHT

Memphis starts the engines. Only then does he sit down. Eitel sits hunched over in the copilot's seat. Masha nervously stands behind Memphis's seat.

209) EXT., COAST, NIGHT

The Catalina slowly sails out to sea and takes off.

210) INT., FLYING BOAT, NIGHT

MASHA
(relieved)
Memphis, did we make it?

Memphis looks outside and then turns to Masha.

MEMPHIS
Yes - God knows, we have - and we ...
(Masha involuntarily gives Memphis a
big kiss on the cheek.)
... are reunited.

MASHA
I could have imagined many things, but
running away with you on a plane, that
certainly wasn't it!
(now thoughtful)
I am also thinking now of my husband and
my son, whom I have not seen for a long
time.

MEMPHIS
I spoke to your son just three days ago.
He's doing great.

MASHA
With Günter? - Where is he so you could
talk to him?

MEMPHIS

He is a flight student in Wilhelmshaven.

MASHA

(horrified)

He's a military pilot?

MEMPHIS

I'm a flight instructor - he's in good hands with me.

MASHA

Should that reassure me?

Masha looks intently at Memphis. She is worried.

Eitel sits in his seat as if he were studying the instruments.

MEMPHIS

Eitel? What is it? We did it!

EITEL

(gasping)

I think I'm not feeling well.

When Memphis turns on the cockpit light, we see blood on Eitel's wet flight jacket.

Masha immediately examines it. There's a gunshot wound to her upper arm. Masha carefully opens her jacket and is startled. A metal splinter is embedded in her shoulder.

MEMPHIS

(impatient)

How bad is it?

MASHA

He is seriously injured.

MEMPHIS

Check if there is a medical kit on board.

Eitel wheezes in pain.

Masha finds a first-aid kit. She rips it open and hastily pulls out several containers. Then she takes the scissors, cuts open the jacket from the back, and pulls one half off over the injured shoulder. She then applies a pressure bandage.

MASHA

The man has lost a lot of blood, but there is nothing more I can do.

MEMPHIS

I'm trying to get to Sicily. They'll help us there.

211) EXT., SKY, DAY

We see the flying boat flying over the sea, with Sicily ahead.

Two patrolling Italian fighters approach the flying boat. We see Memphis waving to them through the windows.

212) EXT., MILITARY PORT, DAY

Soldiers stand in front of the flying boat. Memphis gets out and is immediately arrested, as is Masha. Two paramedics arrive and take care of Eitel.

An Italian officer arrives and receives a briefing from a soldier. Afterward, he positions himself in front of Memphis.

OFFICER

Memphis Gettmark, you are under arrest.

MEMPHIS

Why?

OFFICER

You are an English spy.

MEMPHIS

Wait a minute, you're making a huge mistake!

MASHA

(pleading)

Memphis, don't let them separate us!

MEMPHIS

Masha, we will see each other again.

SOLDIER

(thrusts Memphis in the back with the gun)

Avanti!

MASHA

(screaming)

Memphis! Memphis!

We see the eyes of Masha and Memphis, their eye movements in slow motion.

213) INT., PRISON CELL, DAY

The cell contains a bed, chair, table, and toilet bowl. A wire-mesh lamp is mounted on the ceiling, which burns day and night.

Memphis sits on a chair. His face is in his hands.

OVERVOICE MEMPHIS

I was so close to everything, seemed to have achieved everything, found Masha again, escaped the British, and now I was stuck here in a cell - for weeks without a single soldier showing up. Every now and then an old man came with some food and a jug of water. Otherwise, it was always just loneliness.

Memphis slams his fists against the door in fury. He's unshaven, his hair a mess.

MEMPHIS

Get me out of here! Get me out of here! ... Get me out of here...

Memphis collapses at the door.

Memphis sits on the bed and works on his forearm.

OVERVOICE MEMPHIS

To keep from going crazy, I counted the hairs on my arms during the day, but at night I escaped into the sphere of freedom with the DO-X.

Memphis is lying on the bed, his arm over his eyes. The sound of the door being locked is heard. Memphis jumps up. Three soldiers enter and lead Memphis out.

214) INT., PRISON CORRIDOR, DAY

Memphis is led through the corridors. At first, he is held by the arm, but Memphis resists vigorously.

215) INTERROGATION ROOM, DAY

Memphis is led through the door. A table is in front of him, and behind it is an officer. The officer is an old, fat man with a bald head. His gaze is energetic. He lights a cigar and blows the smoke toward Memphis.

OFFICER
They sat down.

MEMPHIS
(energetic)
Why are they holding me for weeks?

OFFICER
It's obvious. They invaded the territories of the Roman Empire in an English flying boat.

MEMPHIS
I am a German citizen.

OFFICER
(leans forward)
You have the identity of a German citizen - nothing more!

At that moment, a shrill, loud voice is heard from the next room. An energetic pilot comes in. He takes off his aviator cap, long blond hair falling down - Cristina Bellodi.

We see Memphis with his mouth open.

CRISTINA
You idiots! That's not an English spy, that's Memphis Gettmark!

OFFICER
A false legend.

CRISTINA
I know this man, I vouch for him.

OFFICER
(energetic)
That is not within their area of responsibility!

CRISTINA
Either he'll be released immediately or I'll report it. The slightest thing is a diplomatic incident, and heads will

roll. - And yours will certainly be
among them!

The officer considers this. He stubs out his cigar.

OFFICER
Take him to the hospital!

Memphis looks through his exhausted eyes.

MEMPHIS
Cristina...

216) EXT., VERANDA OF THE OFFICERS' MESS, DAY

Memphis is sitting at a bistro table. The other tables are empty.
He's drinking a beer. Cristina enters the frame.

CRISTINA
May I?

MEMPHIS
Cristina!?

Memphis stands up and offers her a seat.

CRISTINA
Thank you. - And are you feeling better?

A light breeze comes up and combs her blonde hair with a
flourish.

MEMPHIS
I'm surprised to see you here.

CRISTINA
I belong here.
(She points confidently to
her epaulettes.)
I am Italy's only female military pilot.

MEMPHIS
Fighter pilot, right?

CRISTINA
(laughs)
I've already shot down 20 Britons. - And
you, also a cargo pilot for the German
Air Force?

MEMPHIS

Better, sea rescue pilot - I fish out fighter pilots shot down in the English Channel.

CRISTINA

We have them too, but we don't consider them real pilots. Now tell me, how did you get on in an English reconnaissance aircraft?

MEMPHIS

Oh - that's a long, boring story: shot down over Malta, captured, escaped - and now I'm here.

CRISTINA

The attempt to free the German ship failed. There were many dead and many injured.

MEMPHIS

(thoughtfully pondering)

What would have happened if someone else had flown?

CRISTINA

What do you mean?

MEMPHIS

All right. - What about my co-pilot, Eitel? Nobody wants to tell me where he is?

CRISTINA

You don't know yet?

MEMPHIS

No, what?

CRISTINA

Eitel died from his injuries.

MEMPHIS

Damned!

CRISTINA

You'll be picked up tomorrow. The dead pilot will also be on board.

(She now intensely seeks eye contact.)

Why haven't we seen each other again?
What happened, Memphis?

MEMPHIS

The world has become complicated...

217) INT., CARGO COMPARTMENT - AIRCRAFT, NIGHT

Memphis sits in front of a coffin. He runs his hand over his face.

We follow Memphis as he moves into the cockpit.

218) INT., COCKPIT - AIRCRAFT, NIGHT

Memphis stands between the pilots' seats.

Through the windows we see the moon. On Earth, the lights of large cities shine.

CO-PILOT

But it's true. A friend of mine, a
gunner on a He 111, saw it.

PILOT

Without a piston engine, without a
propeller - a ghost plane, propaganda to
deceive the English.

CO-PILOT

(to Memphis)

What do you say about this?

MEMPHIS

(looking over the instruments)

I belong to the biplane generation. Jet
engines aren't my thing.

Many small flashes of light can be seen on the horizon.

PILOT

Not again.

CO-PILOT

Why, what is it?

PILOT

Wilhelmshaven is bombed - the submarine
bunkers and the shipyards.

We see Memphis' eyes, reflecting the lightning.

MEMPHIS

Change course and divert to Nordenham.

PILOT

My orders are to take them to
Wilhelmshaven!

MEMPHIS

You can't land there.

PILOT

I have my orders!

MEMPHIS

Are you crazy? We're reaching the anti-
aircraft line! And we're
indistinguishable from the bombers at
night.

Suddenly, several explosions rock the aircraft. The inner
starboard engine catches fire.

The co-pilot operates a switch.

CO-PILOT

The extinguishing device does not work.

The pilot is frozen, increasingly unable to get the situation
under control.

MEMPHIS

As a senior officer, I take command!

PILOT

You are just the passenger.

Memphis grabs the pilot by the collar and lifts him out of his
chair.

CO-PILOT

What are they planning?

MEMPHIS

A dive to extinguish the fire and escape
your own hunters.

CO-PILOT

You're not serious?

Memphis smiles slantingly at the co-pilot, as if he feels
transported back to his prime.

219) EXT., SKY, NIGHT

We see the plane falling and hear a howl.

220) INT., AIRPLANE, NIGHT

The plane vibrates.

MEMPHIS
Height?

CO-PILOT
Four thousand meters, three thousand.
(He grips the steering wheel more
and more tightly.)
Two thousand five hundred - pull the
machine up, otherwise we won't make it!

MEMPHIS
Is the fire out?

221) EXT., AIRCRAFT, NIGHT

We see the fire in the engine getting less and less.

222) INT., AIRPLANE, NIGHT

CO-PILOT
Fire out!

Memphis and the co-pilot now pull the steering wheels towards them with all their might.

The plane is calm in the air again.

The co-pilot takes off his cap and wipes the sweat from his face with a cloth.

CO-PILOT
In case anyone is interested, we went
down to 130 meters.

The cockpit is illuminated in orange-yellow. An oppressive silence descends as a burning city is visible through the port window.

PILOT
My God!

Quietly and thoughtfully, Memphis turns east.

223) EXT., RUNWAY, NIGHT

The plane lands.

224) INT., TRAIN STATION - DORTMUND, DAY

We see Memphis walking through the station in his uniform. He heads for a phone booth and makes a phone call. We only hear the station noises, but we see Memphis taking in some bad news. Deeply saddened, he hangs up the phone.

225) EXT., CEMETERY - DORTMUND, NIGHT

It's early morning, a light mist hangs over the ground. Memphis walks past the graves until he finds Günter Galant's. The grave is in immaculate condition.

Memphis reverently takes off his peaked cap and holds it together with both hands. He is inwardly agitated.

MEMPHIS

Hello Gigi... - it's been a long time since I've been here. They say if you travel far enough, you'll find yourself again in the end. Now I'm back here, at the place where your journey ended and my journey, my odyssey, began. Now, after 23 years, I've returned to the place where our paths diverged - it's good to have you close again, it's so good, old friend.

It starts to rain. The raindrops hit his eyes. He wipes his face with the palm of his hand.

MEMPHIS

Sorry. The past, which I thought was far behind me, has caught up with me again. It's as if it happened only yesterday. I still remember well when we, in the postal service, flew the most dangerous routes because no one else wanted to deliver mail to Oslo in the winter. We braved the cold, wind, and weather and simply followed the call of freedom. - We were heroes, Gigi, heroes!

The rain is falling harder. Memphis wipes his eyes again. Suddenly, his whole body shakes, trembling with the force of the memory.

After a while, he felt better. He put his cap back on.

MEMPHIS

I commanded the DO-X, the world's largest flying ship. That was always your dream, wasn't it, Gigi? - I dreamed it for you! But times have changed. The flying machines of our time are in museums. Now, monstrous war machines rule the skies, capable of wiping out entire cities.

Memphis turns up the collar of his aviator coat and pulls his flat cap far over his forehead.

MEMPHIS

Gigi, did you know that Masha has a son named Günter? She named him after you. I want to visit Masha, but this morning I learned that he's missing over the Atlantic. He was about your age when you died. And now he's met the same fate. It's so sad, Gigi, it's so sad.

Memphis tries to light a cigarette, but both the cigarette and the matches are damp. He throws the cigarette to the ground. Finally, he buries his hands deep in his pockets.

We see Masha walking along the path. She's holding an umbrella in front of her and at first can't see that she's running straight toward Memphis. But then she sees Memphis. Her breath catches. Then she drops her umbrella and bag and runs toward Memphis.

MASHA

(calling longingly)
Memphis, Memphis!

Masha throws her arms around Memphis's neck and squeezes tightly.

MEMPHIS

Masha - finally!

MASHA

I won't let go - I won't let go, I won't let go...
(She cries bitterly.)

226) EXT., FIELD PATH, DAY

Memphis and Masha walk side by side, arm in arm. We see the cemetery in the background.

MEMPHIS
When did you find out?

MASHA
(sad)
A telegram arrived yesterday. My husband's body cannot be repatriated.

MEMPHIS
That...that's what I'm sorry about.

MASHA
I don't know how to tell Günter - how is he?

Memphis stops nervously. Masha turns to him. She looks Memphis deep in the eyes. Memphis looks evasive.

MASHA
Oh no, not Günter too, not Günter, please!

MEMPHIS
He is missing. He never returned from a mission over the Atlantic.

Masha's face is filled with the pain of humanity. Her world collapses.

MASHA
(in a voice devoid of all hope)
I always looked after him so well, keeping him away from anything that had to do with flying.

Then she stops, holds back her tears and takes a deep breath.

MASHA
Memphis, now that my husband and possibly my son are dead... there's a truth I never told you...

Memphis looks as if he is expecting an unpleasant surprise.

MASHA
(hesitantly)

Memphis... my son, have you never noticed his resemblance to you? He loves flying as much as you do.

MEMPHIS

Does that mean... does that mean... does that mean that Günter is my biological son?

MASHA

That's him!

Memphis opens his mouth to speak, but at first he can't get a word out.

MEMPHIS

Why did you keep this from me all these years? If I had known...

MASHA

I couldn't... I couldn't - I wanted to get married, have a family.

(She turns to the side.)

And after Gigi died, I couldn't tell you anymore.

Memphis takes her in his arms again.

MEMPHIS

Masha, Masha! I'm sure your son - our son - isn't dead! I'll bring him back for us!

MASHA

Memph, what if I lose you too?

MEMPHIS

I will come back, with Günter - I promise you.

227) INT., COMMAND, DAY

The commander's office is sparsely furnished. The commander sits behind a desk, taking notes in a folder.

There's a knock at the door. Memphis comes in.

The commander jumps up in astonishment.

COMMANDER

Gettmark... they're on leave. What are they doing here again? - Anyway, they're just what they need.

MEMPHIS

I ...

COMMANDER

The Ufa studio needs a pilot for a film.

MEMPHIS

I should be in a movie? - I'm not an actor.

COMMANDER

They are not supposed to play Hamlet, they are supposed to advise a film.

MEMPHIS

A film about a pilot?

COMMANDER

With Heinz Rühmann - Quax, the crash pilot.

MEMPHIS

With Rühmann? Well, judging by the title, he doesn't really need to be able to fly.

COMMANDER

You're the best flight instructor. - Show us some spectacular flight maneuvers.

MEMPHIS

(shaking head)

Isn't it easier to end the war than to teach Heinz Rühmann how to fly?

COMMANDER

(laughs)

Good joke. - Just don't let Göring hear it.

MEMPHIS

Seriously, I can't take on the task.

COMMANDER

Gettmark, what's going on?

MEMPHIS

I need a plane, immediately.

COMMANDER
For what reason?

MEMPHIS
Günter Schindel - I want to save him.

COMMANDER
Yes, it's unfortunate, but it's
hopeless. He's been missing for days,
somewhere in the Atlantic.

MEMPHIS
The chance that he's still alive is
vanishingly small, but I have to find
him.

COMMANDER
Rejected!

MEMPHIS
Commander, Günter Schindel is my son!

COMMANDER
Even though I understand them, I've
already lost too many aircraft. I can't
risk another flying boat.

MEMPHIS
Commander ...

COMMANDER
I'm sorry, but they're grounded until
further notice.

Furious, Memphis leaves the room.

The commander opens a drawer. He takes out a photograph of a
young man in a pilot's uniform and a stack of telegrams.

MULTI-OVERVOICE THAT
CONTENT OF THE TELEGRAMS
READ ALOUD

It is with regret that we must inform
you... We are sorry to inform you...
that your son... fell heroically... for
the party and the fatherland...

The commander throws the telegrams onto the table. Tears fill his
eyes.

COMMANDER
For what? For what?

228) EXT., PIER, NIGHT

It's raining. Lightning and thunder can be seen and heard. Memphis runs toward a DO-24. He's nervous and looks around several times. When he thinks he's alone, he turns on a flashlight and opens the cockpit hatch.

A shadowy man can be seen in the darkness.

MILCH
You know the old man's command.

Memphis looks uncertain.

MEMPHIS
Milch...?

The light of the flashlight falls on milch.

MILCH
Do you want to be executed as a deserter?

MEMPHIS
Don't tell me that. I don't have a second to lose.

We see Milch pull out his gun and point it at Memphis.

MILCH
You're an excellent pilot, and I'll stop you from doing anything foolish. If you give in now, this incident will never have happened.

MEMPHIS
Milch, my son is out there. And I know he's still alive. If they don't want me to look for him, then they have to shoot me right here and now!

We see Milch think for a few seconds. Then he puts his gun away.

MILCH
Get in. I'll accompany you. Four eyes see more than two.

MEMPHIS

Then let's go!

229) INT., COCKPIT - DO 24, NIGHT

Memphis and Milch sit in the cockpit of the flying DO 24.

Memphis pins a photo to the hub of the steering wheel. Eis gives it a small, intimate touch. Then he focuses on flying again.

MEMPHIS

Thanks, that's a nice gesture.

MILCH

Just so you understand me correctly, if we come into contact with the enemy, we will turn back immediately.

Memphis looks at Milch out of the corner of his eye.

230) EXT., SEA, DAY

Günter and a second pilot lie exhausted and motionless in a small yellow inflatable boat. Günter's lips are chapped, his eyelids crusted with salt.

231) INT., FLYING BOAT, NIGHT

Memphis and Milch look intensely at the surface of the sea.

MILCH

We've been searching the sea for hours - it's hopeless.

MEMPHIS

As long as we still have gas, I'll keep going.

MILCH

He's dead. The crew has been missing for four days; no one can survive this.

MEMPHIS

I'll keep going!

MILCH

Gettmark, it doesn't make sense anymore!

Memphis doesn't respond.

Milch pulls out his gun and points it at Memphis.

MILCH

Turn away, immediately!

MEMPHIS

(looking into the mouth)
War is inhumane - won't we become
inhumane too?

Resigned, Milch puts the gun away again.

Memphis looks out the side window and jumps.

MEMPHIS

I have them!

Milch looks ahead to the horizon.

We see two black, fast dots appearing.

MILCH

Spitfires ahead!

MEMPHIS

Damned!

Memphis applies the thrust lever to full power.

MILCH

What are they planning?

MEMPHIS

Let's fly into the clouds - the Spitfire
isn't a carrier-based aircraft. They
can't stay here for long.

232) EXT., SKY, DAY

The DO 24 rolls and evades the first machine gun fire. Then the flying boat dives beneath the Spitfires and then performs a steep dive.

233) INT., SPITFIRE, DAY

In the cockpit we see Finne looking around in amazement.

FINNE

Where did that go - damn, how can a
flying boat outmaneuver two fighters?

(to the wingman via radio)
Where is he?

VOICE WINGMAN
Let's turn around, I'm running low on
ammo and fuel.

FINNE
One more try.

Finne does a loop and has the DO 24 in front of him again. He fires.

234) EXT., SKY, DAY

The DO 24 flies a steep turn. Machine gun fire and Spitfires roar past. The flying boat flies back into a cloud.

235) INT., DO 24, DAY

We see tracer bullets whizzing past through the windows.

MEMPHIS
That was close.

236) INT., SPITFIRE, DAY

Finne presses the button for the onboard cannons, but nothing happens.

FINNE
How about you?

VOICE WINGMAN
Barely any ammunition or fuel left. -
Let's go back.

FINNE
I want to see who this pilot is first.
Judging by his flying skills, I think I
know him.

237) INT., DO 24, DAY

We see through the port window how Finne's Spitfire approaches. Finne looks over. With surprise in their eyes, Memphis and Finne recognize each other.

MEMPHIS

Olof Finne, my co-pilot on the DO-X. Now
that's what I call a surprise.

Finne waves happily.

238) INT., SPITFIRE, DAY

FINNE

Captain Gettmark! - What a crazy world
we live in.

239) EXT., SKY, DAY

The 2nd Spitfire approaches the DO 24 from behind and fires a
salvo.

240) INT., SPITFIRE, DAY

FINNE

(into the microphone)
Cease fire immediately!

VOICE WINGMAN

Why, what's going on?

FINNE

I know the pilot, ... he's a friend.

Finne waves apologetically to Memphis.

241) EXT., SKY, DAY

The two Spitfires turn away.

The DO 24 waters and slowly approaches the dinghy.

The cargo hatch opens. Memphis, half-undressed, jumps into the
water and swims over to the dinghy. Memphis shakes Günter by the
shoulder.

MEMPHIS

Günter ... Günter!

Günter doesn't respond.

Memphis swims back to the flying boat in the dinghy.

Milch helps at the cargo hatch.

MILCH

Are they still alive?

MEMPHIS

I think so, but you need to go to the hospital immediately.

242) INT., THU 24, DAY

In the cargo hold, Günter and the second pilot are lying on beds covered with blankets.

Memphis comes in. He first goes to the second pilot. He's asleep. Then Memphis goes to Günter, who is on the opposite side of the plane. He sits down next to Günter, who is still unconscious.

MEMPHIS

I don't know if you understand me, or if you understand why I'm your biological father. I barely understand it myself. Your mother had good reasons for hiding the truth from you and me.

Memphis touches his hair with passionate compassion. Günter's eyes are closed, his breathing calm and even.

MEMPHIS

Back then, before your birth, your mother, I, and a mutual friend whose name you bear were inseparable friends. Your mother and I loved each other very much. This love continues to this day, a love to which you owe your very existence.

We see the second pilot, who continues to lie there calmly. His eyes are open, and he is crying.

243) INT., HOSPITAL ROOM, DAY

Five wounded men and Günter are lying in a six-bed room. Günter is lying in bed by the window. He already looks stronger.

Visitors for the five wounded are present, and there is babble. Children are arguing.

Memphis comes in.

MEMPHIS

How are you, my son?

GÜNTER

(his thin, dry lips barely moved)

Thank you for everything!

(hesitating)

Forgive me, until now I assumed I knew my father. Now everything is different. I want to be happy, but I can't.

MEMPHIS

Once you're home, everything will fall into place. Your mother will be very happy.

Memphis supports Günter as he gets up from the bed.

Memphis opens the door to the terrace.

244) EXT., TERRACE, DAY

It's a beautiful spring day. The sun is shining from a cloudless sky.

GÜNTER

When did your mother tell you?

MEMPHIS

Just before I found you.

GÜNTER

And father...

(he seems confused)

... Mr. Schindel ... is he dead?

MEMPHIS

As far as I know.

GÜNTER

Despite everything, he means a lot to me.

MEMPHIS

I can understand that well.

Engine noise can be heard. Memphis briefly looks up at the sky.

GÜNTER

Tell me about yourself, I know practically nothing about you except that you're a damn good pilot.

MEMPHIS

The reason you only know me as a pilot is because I'm only a pilot. I've never been a father, and I feel so... so awkward.

GÜNTER

That's okay. - I can certainly claim to have the most unusual father.

They hugged each other lovingly.

Other sick people and their visitors come onto the terrace.

MEMPHIS

(worried)

Let us back in. The morning air is quite fresh.

GÜNTER

Now you speak just like a father.

They laugh relaxedly.

245) INT., HOSPITAL ROOM, DAY

GÜNTER

What happens to you now?

MEMPHIS

I was spared a court martial - thank God the second pilot was the fleet admiral's son.

GÜNTER

Four crew members did not make it.

MEMPHIS

In a few days you'll be out of here and we'll visit your mother.

246) EXT., IN FRONT OF MASHA'S HOME, DAY

Memphis and Günter enter the access path, and Masha comes running out of the house and takes Günter in her arms. The burden of despair falls from Masha. A burst of relief fills her. She frees

herself from the torrent of immense, deep pain, of which she now becomes aware.

MASHA
Father is dead...

GÜNTER
I know, father told me.

They laugh and cry at the same time.

Masha now hugs Memphis.

MASHA
Thank you, Memph, thank you for bringing
our son back!

MEMPHIS
Masha, it's time we were a real family.
(falls to her knees
before Masha)
Masha, will you marry me?

MASHA
There is no doubt about it, not the
slightest!

All three hug each other.

247) INT., AVIATION MUSEUM, DAY

Overlay: Berlin, February 3, 1945

We see the large station hall where the DO-X is on display.
Memphis stands motionless in front of the DO-X, watching.

OVERVOICE MEMPHIS
After our wedding, Masha and I moved to
Berlin. My good relationship with the
Fleet Admiral, whose son I had saved,
helped me get a position as Technical
Director at the Lehrter Bahnhof Aviation
Museum. The special thing about it was
that MY DO-X was on display there. I
could now see and experience it every day
- just not fly it.

248) INT., DO-X, DAY

Memphis sits in the cockpit. As usual, he pins the photo to the steering wheel's inscription. Then, reverently, he takes the steering wheel in his hands and pulls it toward him. He smells the aviation fuel, feels the vibrations, hears the noise of the mighty engines, and in his mind's eye, he sees the DO-X rising above this world and plunging into the black, endless universe.

MEMPHIS

You fulfilled my dreams, satisfied my longings. I discovered the world through you - oh, those were such wonderful moments - and for that, I love you as only a pilot can love an aircraft!

At that moment, a siren sounds - air raid. Memphis is torn from his dreams.

249) INT., AVIATION MUSEUM, DAY

Memphis jumps out of the DO-X's hatch. He runs through the partially cleared compartments, up a large central staircase to the main entrance. Masha enters through a side door.

MASHA

(hectic)

It was announced on the radio that a major air raid was imminent on Berlin.

MEMPHIS

Into the bunker!

250) INT., UNDERGROUND, DAY

Memphis and Masha walk through the underground area of the museum.

251) INT., BUNKER, DAY

Memphis and Masha stand in the small concrete room. A table, two chairs, and a double bed. Memphis closes the heavy door.

Memphis is looking for something within itself.

MEMPHIS

I forgot the photo.

MASHA

Which photo.

MEMPHIS

The photo I've carried with me for
twenty-five years.

MASHA

The old me?

MEMPHIS

You can't imagine what it means to me.

MASHA

(horrified)

You don't want to go back upstairs, do
you?

MEMPHIS

I have to.

MASHA

(fearful)

That's crazy!

Memphis gives Masha a kiss.

MEMPHIS

I love you.

252) EXT., SKY, DAY

From above we see the roaring bomber planes heading towards
Berlin.

253) INT., AVIATION MUSEUM, DAY

Memphis walks through the museum into the main hall to the DO-X.
We hear the sound of the bombers' engines.

Memphis climbs in through the hatch.

254) INT., DO-X, DAY

Memphis stands in the cockpit and takes the photo. Then he looks
up, worried.

MEMPHIS

Something big is coming our way. - I
hope nothing happens to you!

255) EXT., SKY, DAY

We see the planes releasing their bombs.

256) INT., AVIATION MUSEUM, DAY

As if in farewell, Memphis touches the aluminum body of the DO-X. One last, worried look.

Then he hurries back towards the bunker.

257) INT., BUNKER, DAY

Masha waits impatiently in the bunker. A dull rumble can be heard, and the first tremors can be seen.

The door opens. Memphis enters and immediately closes the door. Masha immediately goes to Memphis and hugs him. They remain in this position for quite some time.

OVERVOICE MEMPHIS

We couldn't have imagined that a cellar could sway like a ship on the high seas.

We see original footage of the burning and destroyed city.

OVERVOICE MEMPHIS (continued)

Berlin experienced the inferno. In two waves, a total of 1,017 Allied bombers attacked Berlin. In less than an hour, 8,000 tons of explosive and incendiary bombs were dropped on a vibrant metropolis of four million people. Like a giant rake, the rain of bombs cut wide swathes of destruction through the heart of the city. The bombardment lasted less than an hour, and a thousand years of urban culture were wiped out. With the arrival of the first bomber, humanity's greatest dream lost its innocence. The symbol of freedom and adventure mutated into a filthy instrument of death.

258) INT., AVIATION MUSEUM, DAY

Memphis runs through the destroyed building. Then, horrified, he stands before the destroyed DO-X. The mere sight of it causes Memphis terrible pain. The fuselage is ripped open, burned out. The aluminum skin hangs like rotten scraps of skin, exposing the

supporting structures, the bare skeleton of the aircraft. The cockpit's glass has also melted, remnants hanging from the frame like frozen tears. The wooden propellers are still burning, the engines lie scattered around the hangar.

Memphis falls to his knees, crying.

Masha enters the frame. She looks at the remains of the DO-X. She understands and places her hand on Memphis's shoulder.

MEMPHIS

The DO-X is dead, murdered by an infernal machine!

259) EPILOGUE/ EXT., TEMPELHOF AIRPORT, DAY

SUPER: June 1958

Memphis and his co-pilot are running towards a Lufthansa Super Constellation.

OVERVOICE MEMPHIS

After the war, Berlin lay in ruins. Once, while walking through the devastated Wilhelmstrasse, I discovered the wreckage of a B-17 bomber. An Me 109 fighter lay destroyed next to it. Strange as it seemed, this heap of rubble held a certain aesthetic appeal; it symbolized the rise and fall of an entire generation of aviators who represented their own, unique worldview, and who would never again be. The aircraft had evolved, but the pilot had fallen by the wayside.

Memphis and the co-pilot walk up the gangway. A stewardess approaches them at the top.

stewardess

Good morning, Captain.

MEMPHIS

Good morning

OVERVOICE MASHA

For a long time, Memphis stopped flying for my sake. We had gotten married. Shortly afterward, our son Günter also married. And although we were happy, I sensed that something was weighing on Memphis's soul. Just a few years after

the war, Lufthansa remembered Memphis again. He was to take over the postal service, which had to be rebuilt. I agreed immediately. Even though it was difficult for me, I realized that a Memphis Gettmark who didn't fly was not the man I loved more than anything.

260) INT., SUPER-CONSTILATION, DAY

Memphis takes his place in the cockpit. He professionally checks the instruments and then starts the engines.

261) EXT., TEMPELHOF AIRPORT, DAY

One engine after another roars to life, revving up to high revs in a fit of power. Black clouds of exhaust fumes swirl behind the racing propellers. The plane rolls slowly down the runway and stops in its takeoff position.

262) INT., SUPER-CONSTILATION, DAY

Takeoff clearance arrives from the tower. Memphis hesitates. He looks as if he's missing something.

CO-PILOT
Captain?

Memphis takes out a photo and pins it to the hub of the steering wheel.

MEMPHIS
Let's start!

Memphis puts the engine on full throttle. The engines can be heard. The entire cockpit vibrates.

263) EXT., TEMPELHOF AIRPORT, DAY

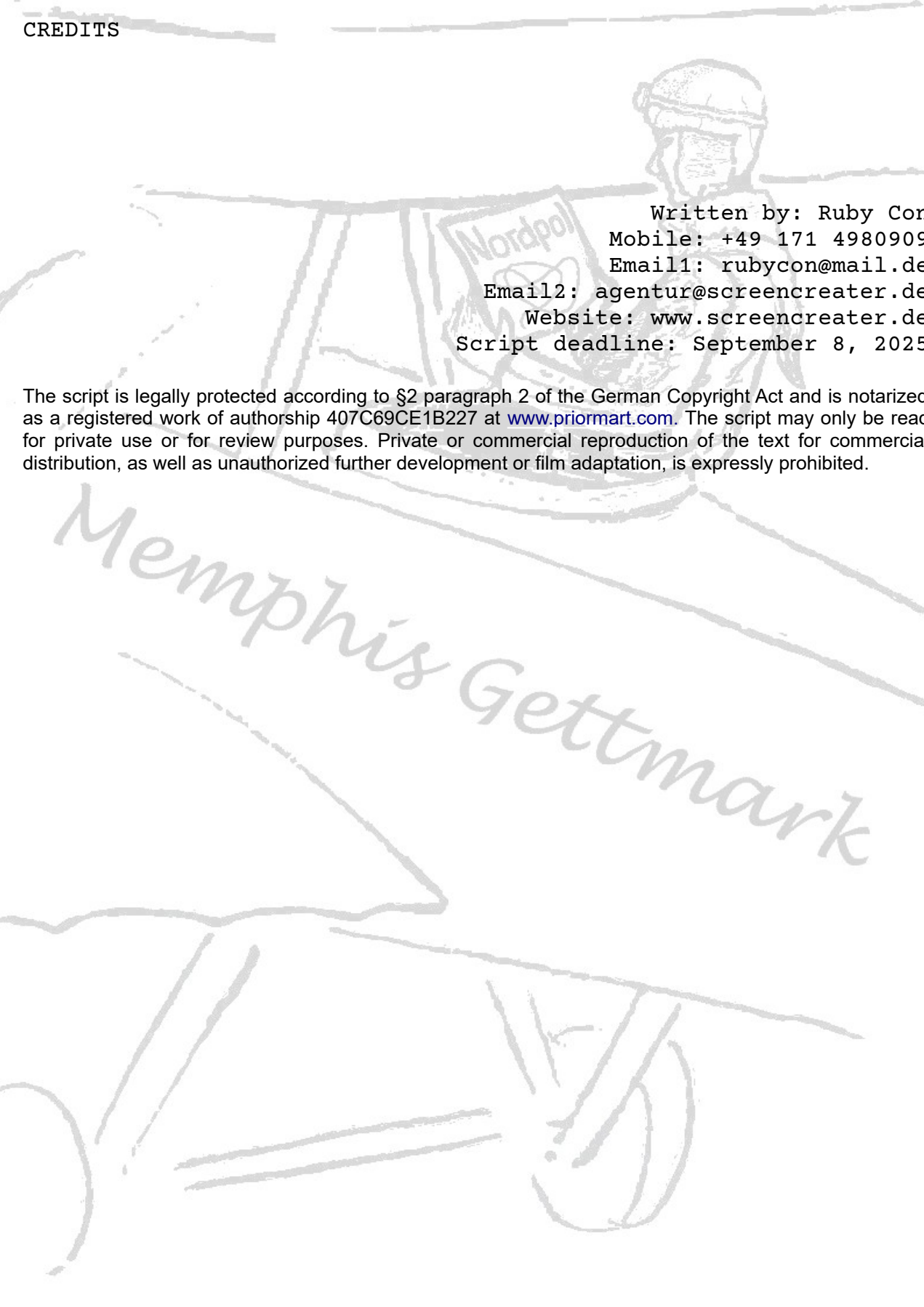
The Super Constilation takes off. The landing gear is retracted. The aircraft begins to climb.

264) EXT., SKY, DAY

Over the Atlantic, the Super Constilation flies towards the sun.

End

CREDITS



Written by: Ruby Con
Mobile: +49 171 4980909
Email1: rubycon@mail.de
Email2: agentur@screencreator.de
Website: www.screencreator.de
Script deadline: September 8, 2025

The script is legally protected according to §2 paragraph 2 of the German Copyright Act and is notarized as a registered work of authorship 407C69CE1B227 at www.priormart.com. The script may only be read for private use or for review purposes. Private or commercial reproduction of the text for commercial distribution, as well as unauthorized further development or film adaptation, is expressly prohibited.

Memphis Gettmark