

FATHER GOOSE

by

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AKA Fly Away Home

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DEC 20 1994

COLUMBIA STORY DEPT.

December 20, 1994

FATHER GOOSE

FADE IN:

EXT. ONTARIO FARMLAND - AERIAL SHOTS - DAWN

A morning mist hugs the ground over a beautiful quilt of fields and woodland, ringed by ridges and mountains.

ON THE GROUND

It's early spring. Patches of snow remain. A bit of ice, clinging to a rock in a little stream, breaks off and falls into the flowing water.

A glass-like lake at the center of a gorgeous valley. On its shores there is new life. Fresh sprouts of green fight their way up through last year's matted brown grass. The trees are covered with buds, ready to open.

IN THE SKY

A male Canada goose flies over the fields. Shot from startlingly close, the image is breathtaking. In SLOW MOTION we see the majesty of a powerful bird in flight. Its feathers flow with the wind. Its muscles ripple.

This splendid bird is one of God's miracles. Our view of it is one of the cinematographer's. There is poetry and music in the image before us. The goose lands in the dry grass near the:

LAKESIDE

He walks over to a nesting female. The female shifts, revealing a clutch of eggs under her. The female and the male nuzzle one another.

Together, they turn the eggs, carefully rolling each one over half a turn. Then the female positions herself back on the nest. The male nuzzles her again, then starts softly grooming her with his beak.

Nearby, another pair of geese, also mated for life, goes through a similar ritual. Beyond them, another pair tends their eggs. It's springtime. Life is good.

A NOISE

The geese turn to the sound. Wary. They listen carefully. Nothing. They go back to tending their eggs.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAWN

Across the field from where the lakeshore and the nests, a car slowly pulls up, its tires CRUNCHING ON THE GRAVEL. It stops.

A man gets out. He's BUD CHASE. Cold-eyed. Coarse. He wears a dirty, stained parka. He's a bit hung-over. Neither he, nor his car is well taken care of.

He takes a twelve gauge, long-barrel shotgun and a paper bag out of the back of the car. He looks toward the lake with the practiced eye of a seasoned hunter.

He pulls a box of shells out of the bag and starts loading. The shells make hard and metallic CLICKS as they slide into the magazine. A SLIP OF PAPER, flutters unnoticed to the ground.

Bud finishes loading. He stands for a moment, getting a sense of the wind, the field and his unseen prey. Then he silently starts walking across the field toward the lake and the geese.

EXT. LAKESIDE - DAWN

A soft breeze skims over the lake drawing a shimmering, pattern on the surface of the water.

THE NEST

The big male finishes grooming the female. Fighting the morning chill, he nestles against her. They share the warmth of their bodies.

ANOTHER NOISE

The geese turn. Listen.

IN THE RUSHES

Bud raises his shotgun. He aims. Holds...

THE SHOTGUN BLASTS

Again and again and again...

The THUNDEROUS SOUND REVERBERATES...

INT. AMY'S BEDROOM - DAWN

A young girl stirs in her sleep as the sound of the DISTANT SHOTGUN BLASTS filters into her room.

She is AMY ALDEN. Ten years old. She's rugged and tenacious, yet gentle and maternal. And she's fighting a deep sadness. Her room is a mixture. A of hockey stick, skates, and other sports equipment lie among lace and old dolls.

Restlessly, she goes back to sleep as the ECHOES OF THE GUNFIRE subside. Silence.

EXT. ALDEN HOUSE - MORNING

A beautiful farmhouse stands at the top of a low hill. There are two barns, one more modern than the other. Mown fields surround the house, woodlands are beyond. The hill slopes down to the lake where we saw the geese.

A MAPLE TREE,

grand and spreading, stands between the house and the lake. It's a leaf-less sentinel, watching over everything and everyone around it. Buds, ready to burst into life, dot its branches.

INT. AMY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Amy wakes. She doesn't get out of bed. She just lies there for a moment. Then she sighs and sits on the edge of the bed, facing another day. She reaches under her mattress and takes out a picture. It's old and worn. She's clearly looked at it many, many times.

THE PHOTO shows Amy, just a bit younger, with her mother. The two of them are leaning against the maple tree, laughing. Amy's mother's arm is protectively around her.

Amy gazes at the photo for a moment, then she hears someone in the hall and she hurriedly slips it back into its hiding place.

INT. KITCHEN MORNING

Amy sits alone eating breakfast. She hears footsteps and sees her brother JIM at the door. He's twenty and is every young girl's image of the perfect older brother. Warm, smart, great-looking, self-confident and bit of a rebel.

JIM

Amy!

She smiles, happy to see him, but still a bit reserved. As if there is a core of sadness to her that even his arrival can't change.

AMY

Jim, hi. When did you get in?

He picks her up and swings her around. She endures his enthusiasm.

JIM

Last night around midnight. Dad said not to wake you. I kissed you.

Amy sees an attractive young woman standing behind Jim. She's MEG ROBBINS, Jim's girlfriend.

Also twenty, she's very bright and, though Jim's no dummy, she's the brains of the outfit.

JIM
Amy, this is Meg.

Amy and Meg shake hands.

AMY
Nice to meet you.

MEG
Same here. Jim's told me a lot about you.

Jim presses a button on a control panel next to the sink and a barrel-shaped refrigerator rises silently from the counter-top. It's a Rube Goldberg contraption, but very functional. Meg is intrigued.

MEG
Your father invented that?

Jim stands at the counter scarfing down food, taking the device for granted.

JIM
Yeah, if he'd bother getting a patent on it we'd be rich.

TOM ALDEN, their father, steps into the room, carrying a stack of scientific journals. He's in his forties. A modern day Thomas Edison, cerebral, yet physically sturdy. He's a calm and loving parent yet sometimes surprisingly out of it for someone so smart.

TOM
Morning, gang. So, what's up for spring vacation?

JIM
Amy, you feel like going into Toronto with Meg and me?

AMY
No, thanks.

He shrugs and tries to offer an alternative.

JIM
Okay, we could hang out here with you. Maybe we could...

AMY
No, you go on.

Amy turns from them and goes back to her breakfast. Jim and Tom exchange a look.

EXT. MAPLE TREE - MORNING

A melancholy Amy flies. She soars upward, hovers, then drops back toward the ground. She's on a swing that hangs from a branch of the maple tree. Again and again she flies and floats for a brief instant. But each time she's yanked back to earth. There is no joy to her flight. No laughter. No smiles.

INT. ALDEN HOUSE - MORNING

Tom stands at the window looking out at Amy on the swing. Jim steps up next to him.

JIM
How's she doing?

TOM
I don't know what to do.

JIM
Thursday is the eleventh. It'll be one year since Mom died.

TOM
It's not getting any better. She doesn't care about anything, school, her friends. I can't remember the last time I saw her laugh...not since the accident.

JIM
It'll take time...

Tom turns to Jim and sees that he, too, feels the loss. Tom puts his arm around his son's shoulder.

EXT. ALDEN HOUSE - MORNING

Amy walks toward the more modern of the two barns. A sign next the door of that barn reads: "Alden Engineering."

INT. TOM'S WORKSHOP - MORNING

A modern inventor's workshop. There's a bank of high-tech machine tools, including borers, grinders and cutters. Several work tables are covered with prototypes of engine pumps and fuel injectors. A design area, with a drafting table and an elaborate computer set-up, dominates one side of the room. A poster of Thomas Edison hangs on the wall.

Tom works on his computer, the screen of which shows a three-dimensional line graphic of a pump assembly.

Tom's two middle-aged assistant, BILL, runs a drill press.

As Amy approaches the door she speaks toward a small, wall mounted microphone.

AMY

Door.

The door swings open. Amy walks in.

BILL

(to Tom)

The patent application on the fuel injector came back.

TOM

What's the problem?

BILL

More paperwork. They want lateral break-away drawings.

TOM

I'll bet Thomas Edison didn't have to submit break-aways to get his patents.

BILL

As a matter of fact, he did.

Tom notices Amy.

TOM

Hey, Amy, what do you say you and I fire up the CD-ROM and play some Myst together.

She shrugs.

AMY

No, thanks.

TOM

I've got the new screen.

AMY

No, thanks.

BILL

Tom, how do you want me to drill this flange?

Tom reluctantly turns his attention from Amy and goes to help Bill at the drill press. Amy watches them for a moment, then she wanders out of the workshop.

EXT. ALDEN YARD - MORNING.

Amy walks away from the shop and heads toward the gentle slope that leads down to the lake. The remnants of the morning mist haven't quite burned off.

She walks to the big maple tree. A bucket is nailed to the trunk. She watches the sap drip. She notices the buds on the tree.

She looks up. High above her, she sees the contrail of a jet. She watches the plane silently etch its path across the sky.

EXT. STREAM - MORNING

Amy walks along the little stream that feeds into the lake. She explores. Some tadpoles swim in the water. A couple of squirrels chase each other around the rocks. Insects hover over some decaying leaves.

LAKESIDE

Amy walks along the shore. Suddenly she stops. She stares at:

A BRIGHT RED, WET PATCH in the grass. The color is jarring. It's far too bright for this early spring world of browns and bits of green. It's blood.

Amy sees other red streaks. A soft wind blows a few feathers along the ground. One is caught in a pool of blood.

She looks around and sees a picture of what happened in the traces that remain -- the blood, the feathers, the footprints in the mud and the fading human tracks in what's left of the morning dew.

Then she hears something:

A SOFT CLICKING

She listens. She walks to the sound, parts some dry grass and sees:

A NEST

Half-a-dozen goose eggs. Nearby, there's a pool of blood with bits of flesh and blood-soaked feathers in it.

The eggs are ready to hatch. Most are moving slightly. Some show cracks.

AMY

Hears something else. The same sound from nearby. She follows the sound and finds another clutch of eggs.

The TICKING of the eggs around her grows more insistent.

She takes off her sweater, kneels down and fashions a cradle. Then she gently starts gathering the eggs.

ON THE GROUND BEHIND HER

The SLIP OF PAPER dropped by Bud, the hunter, blows along the ground and is caught by some wet grass. Amy doesn't see it.

INT. BARN - MORNING

A shaft of light shines into the barn through the open hay doors. Amy has made a nest out of her sweater and some hay. There are eighteen eggs. A bright light shines over the nest for warmth. Amy crouches over the eggs, mesmerized.

IN THE NEST

The miracle of birth begins. Bit by laborious bit the goslings start to break their way out of their shells.

INT. BARN - DAY (LATER)

The shaft of light has moved across the inside of the barn like a giant sundial. Amy hasn't moved.

THE NEST

Several of the goslings are out of their shells. They're wet, matted, fragile and already struggling to get to their feet. Others are almost out. Still others are just breaking through the shells. They call to one other with tiny, insistent CHEEPING.

AMY

fashions her own CLUTCH CALL, combining the sound the goslings are making with an adult goose's honk. The goslings respond. Back and forth, Amy and the goslings CALL TO ONE ANOTHER.

INT. BARN - LATE AFTERNOON

The shaft of light has moved still further. All the geese have now hatched and are spilling over the sides of the nest. They are surprisingly able to move around.

Amy rises and walks over to a grain bin. Behind her, the goslings stumble out of the nest, and follow her in a perfect line.

Amy doesn't notice at first. Then, as she mixes up some poultry mash, she senses something behind her. She turns and sees the line of goslings looking up at her expectantly.

She's startled at first, then she smiles. Testing, she backs up a step. The goslings, holding their line, follow. Amy takes a few steps to the side. Again, the goslings follow.

Amy smiles, feints right and moves left. The goslings follow the feint and the move. AMY LAUGHS and the goslings all CALL BACK, as if they're laughing with her.

Then, with the glowing shafts of late afternoon light streaming in through the hay doors, Amy leads the goslings on a slow, curving dance around the barn. They weave a gentle conga line, turning, winding, circling. Wherever Amy goes, the goslings follow.

INT. TOM'S WORKSHOP - LATE NIGHT

Tom sits hunched in front of his computer screen. A three dimensional, line graphic of a fuel injector rotates. He hits a key and his printer starts buzzing.

Then he leans back, stretches and looks at his watch. Surprised at how late it is, he gets up and heads for the door.

INT. ALDEN HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is dark. Tom walks in.

TOM

Amy?

No answer. He looks around, then looks out the window and sees a light in the barn.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Tom steps to the door. He sees Amy, asleep, lying next to the nest of goslings. He's surprised to see the birds. He starts to pick up Amy, but stops. He watches her sleep for a moment. Then he takes off his heavy wool coat and lays it over her. She snuggles into its warmth. Tom gazes at her for another moment, then he heads back toward the house.

EXT. ALDEN HOUSE - MORNING

The sun rises. Frost is on the ground. Amy walks out of the barn, rubbing the sleep from her eyes.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Tom reads while he eats breakfast with Jim and Meg. Amy walks in.

TOM

Where'd they come from?

AMY
By the lake.

TOM
You can't take goslings from a nest, Amy. There're some mighty angry geese out there.

AMY
No, there aren't.

EXT. THE FIELD - MORNING

Amy, Tom, Jim and Meg stand silently looking at the patches of blood on the ground.

MEG
Is it hunting season?

Tom and Jim exchange a troubled look, answering Meg's question. Jim sees the SLIP OF PAPER on the ground. He picks it up.

TOM
What is it?

JIM
A credit card receipt for two dozen shotgun shells.

TOM
Who?

JIM
Bud Chase.

TOM
(not surprised)
That's surprising.

EXT. BUD CHASE'S HOUSE - DAY

A new, ugly house on a site hacked out of a woodland hilltop. The house looks self-built, cheap, functional. The view is beautiful. Bud's old car is parked in the driveway along with several others in even worse shape.

A truck pulls in and parks. A logo on the door identifies it as belonging to the "County Wildlife Office."

A man gets out. His name is GEORGE. He's about forty and wears a jacket with a patch identifying him as the "County Wildlife Officer." He strides to the garage.

INT. BUD CHASE'S GARAGE - DAY

Bud Chase loads six freshly dressed geese into a brand new freezer. An old, broken, half-disassembled freezer is shoved to the side. George angrily confronts Bud.

GEORGE

You know what the fine is for hunting geese off-season?

BUD

Don't blame me! My freezer broke!

GEORGE

A thousand dollars a bird!

BUD

It's not my fault!

GEORGE

Whose fault is it?

BUD

Frigidaire's.

GEORGE

I ought to arrest you.

BUD

I didn't have any choice. C'mon, you know how Mom is about having goose for Easter dinner.

GEORGE

Haven't you ever heard of a grocery store?

BUD

All they had was turkey and even if they had geese, they're a lot more expensive than shotgun shells.

GEORGE

You nitwit! This kind of thing gets around.

BUD

Lighten up, will you? No one's going to know. Stop being a such a jerk.

GEORGE

That's it! I'm gonna fine you!

BUD

Forget it.

GEORGE

I don't care if you are my
brother. I'm gonna fine you.

BUD

How much?

George eyes the geese. He points to one of them.

GEORGE

That one.

BUD

But, that's the biggest one!

GEORGE

Too bad. Maybe it'll make you
think twice next time.

Bud sighs and reluctantly hands over the goose. He closes the
freezer.

GEORGE

What's for dinner?

BUD

Oh, shut up.

Bud turns out the light and the two of them walk out together.

INT. AMY'S ROOM - EVENING

Chaos. Amy lies on the floor playing with the goslings while
Jim and Meg sit at Amy's computer terminal scanning CD-ROM data
on geese. The screen shows the image of Konrad Lorenz walking,
trailed by a line of goslings.

The goslings have changed from the wet, strange-looking, little
creatures they were at birth, into yellow fluff balls that are
among the cutest creatures on earth.

They're on the floor, the bed, the desk and in the closet and
drawers. One pecks at Amy's shoelaces, trying to un-tie them.
Another checks out the mirror, pecking at its own reflection.
One tries to carry on a conversation with an old doll. The
smallest one walks on Amy, pecking at her sweater. She laughs.

AMY

Nick, cut it out.

Tom steps to the door and sees AMY LAUGHING. He's startled at
the sound. It's been so long.

Jim and Meg refer to the info on the computer screen.

JIM

Amy, they think you're their mother.

MEG

It's called imprinting. The first moving thing they see after they hatch they think is their mom. Forever.

Amy thinks about that and likes the idea. Then one of the goslings jumps onto the back of her neck and she laughs again.

TOM

Well, Mom, have you taught them to use the toilet?

AMY

Dad...

TOM

Then out to the barn with them. I'll help.

Tom starts to gather them up. Amy laughs at her father's feeble efforts to round up the skittering goslings.

AMY

I've got them.

She gives her CLUTCH CALL and the goslings start lining up in front of her.

AMY

Nick...Claire...let's go...c'mon...Toulouse...

TOM

You can tell them apart?

She looks at him, not sure if he's kidding.

AMY

Of course.

She points out individual goslings as they line up.

AMY

That's Claire, she's kind of curious. That's Toulouse, he's a bully. That's Mr.
(more)

AMY (Cont'd)

Magoo, I don't think he can see very well, he's always bumping into things. That's Ned, he's really friendly.

(beat)

And this is Nick, he's the runt.

Amy gives her CLUTCH CALL again and walks out of the room with the goslings following in a perfect line. Tom and Jim exchange a pleased look.

EXT. ALDEN HOUSE - NIGHT

A full moon shines. Amy leads the geese out the front door and toward the barn.

A DARK AND OMINOUS FORM WATCHES

Perched on a branch of the maple tree, deep in the shadows, a GREAT HORNED OWL locks its huge, cold eyes on the goslings. Its long, razor-sharp talons grip the bark. The Owl watches and waits.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Amy settles the geese into their nest. She checks their water and mash. Then, standing in the same spot where Tom stood when he gazed at her while she slept, Amy gazes at the geese. Then as she steps out and starts to close the door behind her, one of the goslings starts WAILING and runs after her.

AMY

Nick, get a grip.

She gently puts him back into the nest with his siblings and gives him a pat.

AMY

You stay here. I'll see you in the morning.

He CHEEPS softly in response. Amy walks out, closing the door behind her. The goslings settle down into the nest for the night.

EXT. MAIN STREET - LAKEVILLE - DAY

A small town. About five thousand people. Old fashioned. Basic. Good people. Tom drives his truck down the street. Jim sits in the seat next to him.

EXT. COUNTY WILDLIFE OFFICE - DAY

A small office building on the edge of the town. A sign identifies the building as the, "County Wildlife Office." There are a few cars parked in front. Tom and Jim drive up and park.

INT. GEORGE CHASE'S OFFICE - DAY

Grey metal desks and filing cabinets. Messy. Bud plays darts while George shuffles through some papers. Tom and Jim walk in. Bud glances at them coolly and nods. George puts on a friendly face but it's clear that Tom isn't one of his favorite people.

GEORGE

Hi, Tom. What's up?

Tom takes out the credit card slip they found in the field and puts it on George's desk, then he turns to Bud.

TOM

You left that on my field.

GEORGE

What is it?

Tom ignores him and speaks to Bud.

TOM

If you want to hunt on my property, in season, no problem. I'd hope for the same courtesy...

George nervously glances at a closed door that leads from the office. Very uneasy, he tries to interrupt.

GEORGE

Tom, uh, why don't we discuss this another time when...

Tom ignores George and speaks to Bud who coldly holds his glare.

TOM

...but my daughter plays by that lake and if you ever hunt there again off-season I'll knock your lights out...

A TOILET FLUSHES OFF-SCREEN. George glances in the direction of the sound.

GEORGE

Uh, Tom...

TOM
...and then I'll report you to
someone in the Wildlife Service
who isn't your brother

The door to the bathroom opens and FRED OLIVER, George's boss,
steps out, having heard everything. He's a big, burly,
intimidating man.

FRED
You just did.

George shifts uneasily under Fred's scowl.

GEORGE
Uh...uh...I did fine him...I mean
I was going to...I just hadn't
figured out exactly how much...

FRED
How many geese?

GEORGE
(sheepishly)
Six.

FRED
Six times a thousand. You want
to borrow my calculator?

BUD
(horrified)
Six thousand dollars!?

FRED
Check, cash or money order. By
five o'clock.

Bud whimpers. Then he and George shoot deadly glares at Tom.

EXT. ROAD IN FRONT OF ALDEN HOUSE - MORNING

A school bus pulls up. The driver HONKS his horn.

INT. BARN - MORNING

The SOUND OF THE HONKING HORN is heard in the barn. The
goslings HONK back excitedly. Amy tries to get out the door
without letting them out. It's nearly impossible. It's like
trying to herd mercury. Everytime she pushes one ball of fluff
away from the door, another skitters through her legs.

AMY
No, stop. I gotta go to school!

Again, Nick, the smallest, is the most insistent.

AMY
Nick! Back...

Finally she gets them all clear. She slips out the door and closes it behind her.

AMY
I'll be back after school. Be good.

The goslings rush the door and mass there, CALLING to her. Nick is particularly distraught, PLAINTIVELY CRYING for Amy.

INT. AMY'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Amy sits in class. Her teacher, SUSAN HANSEN, an attractive woman in her late thirties, writes on the blackboard.

Amy is far away, gazing out the window. It's a lovely view of a green lawn, woods beyond, and a soaring blue sky with billowing clouds. Amy watches a big hawk gliding in wide, lazy circles.

The BELL RINGS. Amy grabs her backpack and dashes toward the door, the first one out. Susan watches her go, curiously.

INT. LIBRARY - AFTERNOON

Amy pulls books from the stacks and adds them to a pile that's already over two feet high. We glimpse some of the titles:

THE GREYLAG GOOSE by Konrad Lorenz.

FLIGHT OF THE SNOW GOOSE by Des and Jen Bartlett.

THE GIANT CANADA GOOSE by Harold Hansen

She picks up the pile of books and heads to the check-out desk.

EXT. SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Amy hurries out of the school, struggling under the huge load of books. She sees the bus pulling away. She runs after it, but she's too late. She stops in the parking lot and sighs. A moment later a car pulls up next to her and Susan rolls down her window.

SUSAN
Miss the bus?

AMY
I was in the library.

SUSAN
C'mon, I'll give you a ride home.

Amy gets in.

INT./EXT. SUSAN'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Susan drives Amy home on a country road through beautiful Canadian farmland. Amy is excited and talking a mile a minute.

AMY
...and then there's Toulouse.
He's sort of a pain in the neck,
he's always picking on Nick. But
even Toulouse minds me. No matter
what they're doing, when I do
this...

Amy makes her CLUTCH CALL.

AMY
...they line up and follow me
wherever I go.

SUSAN
So they've imprinted on you.

AMY
You know about imprinting?

SUSAN
Sure. I grew up on a farm in
Manitoba. I always had geese and
ducks and swans. And I've read
Lorenz.

Amy smiles and looks out the window, thinking of the geese.

AMY
What I'm really waiting for is
when they can fly. That's at
about ten weeks.

Susan hesitates.

SUSAN
Amy, farm geese don't fly.

AMY
What do you mean?

SUSAN
You clip their wings. It's called
a tendonectomy.
(more)

SUSAN (Cont'd)

It doesn't hurt them but it keeps them from flying.

AMY

Why?

SUSAN

That's just what you do.

AMY

Why? They're birds.

SUSAN

They're migratory birds. If you don't clip their wings, they'll fly south in the fall.

AMY

But they'll come back. Geese always come back to the place where they were born. My brother read it to me last night from the the CD-ROM.

Susan tries to be gentle.

SUSAN

Amy, these birds have no parents. Geese aren't like robins or swallows who know where to go instinctively. Geese are more like people. If they don't have an adult to show them the way, they'll...have a hard time.

AMY

What do you mean, a hard time?

Susan hesitates, then sees that there's no way around it.

SUSAN

They'll die. There are hunters and cities and highways and all sorts of dangerous things for them. Without parents to help them avoid those things and to show them the way, they won't make it.

Amy sits there stunned. Susan tries to put a better face on the situation.

SUSAN

But a tendonectomy doesn't hurt them. I'm sure of it. And that way they'll be safe and you can keep them as your pets for as long as you want.

AMY

But they won't be able to fly.

SUSAN

No, they won't.

Amy looks out the window. They drive on in silence.

EXT. ALDEN HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Tom walks from his workshop toward the house. He sees Susan's car pull into the driveway and walks over to it. Amy gets out of the car with her books.

TOM

Hi.

AMY

(troubled)

Hi.

Amy walks past Tom and heads for the barn as if she were carrying a weight much greater than the books in her arms. Tom leans down to the car window.

TOM

Hi, Susan. She miss the bus?

SUSAN

Yes. I think I screwed up. I was talking to her about her geese, it was the first time I've seen her excited about anything since...your wife died.

TOM

I know.

SUSAN

But then I told her pet geese don't fly.

TOM

Ouch.

SUSAN

She's really upset.

TOM
I'll talk to her. Thanks for
giving her a ride.

SUSAN
Sorry.

TOM
It's not your fault. It'll be
okay.

SUSAN
Good luck.

She drives off. Tom watches her go, then heads after Amy.

EXT. MAPLE TREE - SUNSET

Amy sits on the swing, motionless, her feet on the ground. The
goslings are gathered around her, CALLING and CHEEPING. Tom
walks up and leans against the tree. He watches the goslings.

AMY
Dad, what's it like to fly?

TOM
When it's good, it's really good.
It can make you feel as if you
could go anywhere, do anything.

AMY
Do you ever wish you had kept
flying?

TOM
No, four years in the Air Force
was more than enough and flying
for the airline got to be like
driving a bus.

AMY
But before that, it was really
great?

Tom digs deep.

TOM
I was younger than you when I
first started dreaming about it.
Then when I joined the Air Force
it was everything I thought it
would be and more.

(more)

TOM (Cont'd)

I remember my first night-solo
in a T-38, I shut off my radio
and did long, slow barrel rolls
all the way across Lake
Superior...I've got about a
hundred memories like that...

He smiles, then shakes himself out of it.

TOM

Then it got to be a drag. I like
what I do. I'm my own boss, I
come up with things. It was the
right decision.

The geese CALL PLAINATIVELY to Amy. She looks down at them
maternally.

AMY

Mom used to push me on this swing.
High...really high.

TOM

I remember.

AMY

Dad, it just doesn't seem right
to keep them from flying. Isn't
there anything we can do?

Tom looks down at Amy.

AMY

Please, Dad?

Tom sees her looking up at him -- up to him. He strokes her
hair once, tenderly.

TOM

Alright. Let's you and me give
it a shot, what do you say?

Her smile says it all.

INT. TOM'S WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Tom and Amy sit in front of Tom's computer. He handles the
mouse with speed and dexterity. The images on the screen come
fast and furiously. As they talk, we see flashes of CD-ROM and
on-line data as follows:

1) Geese data. Charts showing flight speed and range.

2) The migration routes. Atlantic Flyway map. Mississippi Flyway map. Secondary routes.

3) Images of imprinting. Goslings following Konrad Lorenz. Snow geese following a boat across a lake.

4) Schematic medical drawings of a goose undergoing a tendonectomy.

TOM

Let's take as a given that we're not going to clip their wings.

AMY

Agreed.

TOM

That leaves us three options. First, we pen them up and don't let them fly south.

AMY

Nix.

TOM

Agreed.

(beat)

Second, we stick them in the back of a truck and drive them south.

AMY

Nix.

TOM

Agreed.

(beat)

And third, we fly down there with them.

AMY

We can't put them in an airplane. That's as bad as driving them down in a truck.

Tom smiles.

TOM

No, we don't put them in an airplane

Tom turns back to the computer and inputs.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN

Split screen. Heading: "Overlap search." One side of the screen are the physical characteristics and capabilities of the Canada goose. On the other side of the screen are photos and performance data of one aircraft after another:

Boeing 747. No match.

F-111 fighter-bomber. No match.

C-141 cargo plane. No match.

Sikorsky Tarhe helicopter. No match.

The Goodyear blimp. No match.

These and other images of dozens of other aircraft flash before our eyes, so quickly they barely have time to register. Then:

Then images suddenly stop. On one side of the screen is a beautiful picture of a Canada goose in flight. On the other side of the screen is an ultra-light -- a fragile skeleton of aluminum and plastic hung beneath a single, cloth-covered wing.

INT. DINING ROOM - ALDEN HOUSE - NIGHT

Tom and Amy sit at the table which is covered with papers and books on geese. Jim and Meg are incredulous.

JIM

You're going to do what?

TOM

(matter of factly)

We're going to lead Amy's geese south.

MEG

How?

AMY

It's simple, Dad and I have got it all figured out. It's just a matter of buying an ultra-light and putting it together. Then Dad learns to fly it, we get the geese used to the noise, train them to follow it, find someplace in the South where they can spend the winter and then Dad leads them down there on a safe route.

AS Amy goes through the litany, Jim and Meg grow more and more wide-eyed.

MEG

This is the craziest thing I ever heard.

JIM

I'll say.

(beat)

What can I do to help?

MEG

Me, too. Jim, you and I can find somewhere for them to spend the winter.

JIM

Yeah, there must be dozens of places around Atlanta.

AMY

That'd be great!

MEG

You'll have to pin down places to stop before you leave...

JIM

And we'll need a ground crew...

AMY

Me, and you guys...

MEG

Yeah, and we need a van, a chase vehicle...

JIM

And radios, we have to have radios...

AMY

And a portable pen for the ~~geese~~...

MEG

Sleeping bags for us...

JIM

What about the ultra-light, where are you going to get that?

Tom, who has been watching them, pleased at their excitement, smiles.

TOM
I've got a friend who might be
able to help us on that.

EXT. BAILEY AIRDROME - DAY

A decrepit airplane hanger stands on the side of an old airstrip. Grass grows up between the chunks of broken cement on the runway. Machine tools, aircraft parts and hulks of old airplanes are everywhere.

TOM drives up with Amy. They get out of his truck and walk up to a couple of men. One is BARRY BAILEY, SR., in his nineties, who's working on the engine of a World War One vintage Sopwith Camel bi-plane. The other is BARRY BAILEY, JR., in his sixties, who's working on a World War Two vintage spitfire.

BARRY BAILEY, SR.
Hey, Tom.

TOM
Hi. Amy, this is Mr. Bailey and
Mr. Bailey, Senior and Junior.

AMY
Hello.

BARRY BAILEY'S
Hi.

BARRY BAILEY, JR.
Tom, that armature system you made
up for the Spitfire is working
great.

TOM
Glad to be of help. Is Little
Barry around?

BARRY JR.
Wait out on the tarmac. He'll
be dropping by any minute.

INT./EXT. AIRPLANE - 12,000 FEET - DAY

LITTLE BARRY BAILEY, whom we'll call Barry, dives out the door of a Cessna. He holds his arch for a second, stabilizes, then straightens himself into an arrow and dives straight for the ground.

Faster and faster and faster...

He SCREAMS with the adrenalin rush...

Like a bullet shot from a gun...

He cuts a hole through a cloud...

Faster and faster...

The ground approaches...

He ignores his ripcord...

He plummets, faster still...

BARRY

YEEEEEEEEEE...

The ground rushes up at him...

Closer...

Closer...

He's about to auger in...

At the last possible instant, he pulls the rip-cord...

His para-sail opens up...

He glides, in complete control...

ON THE GROUND

Tom and Amy watch him fly down, deftly handling the cable controls of his para-sail, cutting sharp turns.

He flies right toward them, pulls down on both cables, stalls and steps onto the ground as light as a feather.

He takes off his helmet and starts peeling off his jump suit. He has the wiry body of a dedicated adrenalin-freak and the soft eyes of a poet.

BARRY

Hi, Tom, how're you doing?

TOM

Not bad. Barry, this is my daughter Amy.

BARRY

Nice to meet you.

AMY

Hello. My Dad says that you sell ultra-lights.

BARRY

And hang gliders and parachutes
and para-sails and para-gliders
and hot air balloons and bungee
cords...

(beat)

...oh, yeah, and trampolines.

AMY

I guess you're into flying.

BARRY

You might say that. It kinda runs
in the family.

TOM

That's why we're here. I'm
interested in an ultra-light and
some flight instruction.

BARRY

Let's talk.

Barry motions for Tom and Amy to follow him.

INT. OFFICE - BAILEY AIRDROME - DAY

Flying paraphernalia is everywhere. Pictures of planes and
birds in flight, aircraft parts, model planes hanging from the
ceiling and a poster of Peter Pan flying over Neverland.

The three generations of the Bailey family sit across the desk
from Amy and Tom.

BARRY

Let me see if I've got this right.
You're going to try and train a
flock of geese to follow an
ultra-light and then you're going
to take them from here down to
the southern United States?

TOM

Hopefully.

BARRY

You think it can be done?

AMY

My dad thinks so.

TOM

Her dad hopes so.

BARRY

What's a goose's flight speed?

TOM

About thirty miles an hour.

BARRY

That's kind of slow...but with a few adjustments I think we could get into that range.

Barry mulls it over.

BARRY

A Higgins J-55, that's your best bet. With a few modifications, I think it could work.

TOM

What'll it cost?

BARRY

Normally around fourteen thousand but I'll tell you what, I'll give you a thirty percent discount, I'll help you put it together and I'll throw in the lessons for free, on one condition.

TOM

What's that?

BARRY

You make me part of the team.

Tom and Amy smile. Tom offers his hand.

TOM

Done.

Tom and Barry shake hands. Barry's father and grandfather look on enviously.

EXT. TORONTO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

A big Boeing 747 stands parked at a terminal, attached by a jetway, loading passengers.

INT. AIRLINE TERMINAL - DAY

Jim and Meg prepare to board. They exchange goodbye hugs with Tom and Amy.

AMY
...remember, geese like lots of
water, not too many trees, low
ground cover...

JIM
We know, we know...

TOM
Stay in touch.

AMY
...a marsh would be perfect...

JIM
Bye.

MEG
We'll keep you posted.

AMY
...or a swamp, but not too wet...

TOM
Bye.

Jim and Meg walk down the jetway and board.

INT. BOEING 747 - IN FLIGHT - DAY

Jim reads. Meg looks out the window. They fly south in the
huge, pressurized, flying bus. There's no sense of flight.

MEG
What do you think the most common
dream in the world is?

JIM
You go to class and find out
there's a final exam and you
haven't studied a bit all
semester.

MEG
Except for that one.

He sees her gazing out the window.

JIM
To fly.

MEG
Yeah...not in one of these things,
but to really fly.
(more)

MEG (Cont'd)

Like the birds...with the birds.
I'll bet there isn't a person on
earth who hasn't had that dream.

JIM

The collective unconscious.

MEG

It's something everyone shares.
It sort of ties us all together.

He touches her hand. She leans over and kisses him.

MEG

I like your family.

They both look out the window at the passing clouds.

EXT. ALDEN HOUSE - DAY

The geese, now bigger, excitedly scurry around Amy's legs. Feathers have almost replaced their fluff. Their necks and legs are much longer, making them look like gangly adolescents.

Amy, Tom and Barry watch a big flat-bed truck pull into the driveway. The truck carries three, very large wooden crates with the name: "HIGGINS ULTRA-LIGHT," stenciled on them.

The driver parks and starts working a grapple-hook to unload the crates.

INT. BARN - DAY

Hundreds of parts are laid out on tarps. Tom looks through one of several thick instruction manuals and makes a separate pile of parts, off to one side of the barn. Amy and Barry do an inventory.

BARRY

And twenty-four number four bolts
with lock washers?

AMY

Check.

BARRY

And twelve one inch cotter pins?

AMY

Check.

BARRY

Okay, that's everything.

Barry turns to Tom who is still adding cables, bolts and other parts to the separate pile.

BARRY

We should do the wing supports first.

TOM

Amy, you want to help?

AMY

Of course.

He points to the pile of parts he's just set aside and he tosses her one of the manuals.

TOM

You can do the front wheel and steering assembly.

AMY

Me? Alone?

TOM

I think most of the parts are there.

AMY

But...I've never...

TOM

Neither have I. Let me know when you're done.

He turns and walks away. Amy and Barry look after him with stunned expressions.

TOM

Barry, can you give me a hand here?

Barry offers Amy an encouraging pat on the back, then he heads over to help Tom.

AMY

stands there with her jaw on her chest, looking at the daunting pile of parts in front of her. At her feet the goslings CHEEP and CALL insistently. She looks down at them.

AMY

Alright, alright...

She sits down, opens the manual to page one and starts trying to make some sense of it.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BARN

Tom sneaks a glance at Amy, then he turns his attention to the wing supports.

BEGIN MUSICAL MONTAGE: "TEACH YOUR CHILDREN WELL."

The visuals are as follows:

INT. BARN - DAY

Amy finishes bolting together several struts of the front wheel and steering assembly. She looks at them, shakes her head and starts taking them apart.

EXT. BAILEY AIRDROME - DAY

Barry hefts a hang glider up onto Tom's shoulders and shows him how to control it.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Tom and Amy drive a tractor away from their barn, pulling a gang-mower, opening up a grass landing strip.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

Amy and Barry look on as Tom runs down the hill carrying the hang glider. He lifts off with his legs still madly pumping, comically in the air.

He's airborne for about two seconds before he stalls and plummets straight down into a muddy marsh at the foot of the hill. As Amy and Barry run to help him, he rises, unhurt, from the muck, spitting out water and swamp grass.

INT. BARN - DAY

Amy works doggedly on the front wheel and steering assembly. Several of the geese peck at her work. One picks up a bolt, about to eat it. Amy quickly rescues the bolt from the goose's mouth.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

Amy and Barry watch as Tom, once again, runs down the hillside with the hang-glider on his shoulders. He lifts off then loses altitude, hits the ground and bounces up again, and again, looking ungainly and absolutely ridiculous.

Finally he catches a good updraft and rises. Amy and Barry yell and applaud, only to see him plummet again, this time disappearing into a thick stand of bushes. After a beat, he staggers out, disoriented, but unhurt.

EXT. GRASS LANDING STRIP - DAY

Amy, Tom and Barry run, panting in exhaustion, pushing the partially assembled ultra-light. Amy CLUTCH CALLS. The geese run after, CALLING BACK, excitedly.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

Tom, once again, runs down the slope with the hang-glider. He lifts off. This time he stays up. He flies off as Barry and Amy watch.

EXT. BAILEY AIRDROME - DAY

Tom sits in an ultra-light trainer. Barry shows him how to work the controls. Amy looks on.

EXT. BARN - DAY

Amy, Barry and the geese watch as Tom gets ready to pull-start the engine which is now bolted to the frame. He yanks the cord, the engine ROARS to life and the GEESE SCATTER IN TERROR.

EXT. GRASS LANDING STRIP - DAY

Tom and Barry push the almost completed ultra-light. Amy runs along with them, carrying a BOOM-BOX WHICH PLAYS A TAPE OF THE ENGINE NOISE. The geese run after her. As she runs, she TURNS THE VOLUME UP a bit. The geese continue to follow.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

The barn is dark, except for a single light that shines over Amy, who works on the front wheel and steering assembly. She's made some real progress on it.

INT. BARN - DAY

Tom and Amy finish bolting the completed front wheel and steering assembly into place. They step back and proudly appraise the now completed ultra-light.

EXT. LAKE - SUNSET

A beautiful sunset. Amy dives into the water. An instant later, all eighteen of the geese run, stumbling along the shore and splash in after her.

As soon as they're in the water, the geese move with a fluidity they haven't shown on land. They dive and swim and circle around each other and Amy. Underwater, their grace is breathtaking.

A HUGE SPLASH

Tom CANNONBALLS into the water, swamping Amy and the geese. Amy and Tom laugh. The geese HONK.

AMY, TOM AND THE GEESE

swim, swirl and dive, sharing a wonderful, joyous waterdance above and below the surface of the water. The strength and smoothness with which they move makes it look as if they're flying.

EXT. FIELD - SUNSET

The brilliant colors of the sunset have softened but it's still lovely. Tom and Amy walk back from the lake with the geese. They're all wet and tired and happy. Amy looks up at her father.

AMY

Dad...

TOM

Yes?

She starts to speak but then says nothing. She just takes Tom's hand and they walk together toward the house with the geese following behind them.

:END MUSICAL MONTAGE.

EXT. MAPLE TREE - ALDEN YARD - EVENING

CONTINUOUS. Amy, Tom and the geese pass the maple tree which is now covered with leaves. Nick, still the runt, lags behind.

HIGH IN THE MAPLE TREE

the Owl, threatening and sinister, fixes his unfeeling eyes upon the geese. He tracks Nick. Still watching. Still waiting.

AMY, TOM AND THE GEESE

walk on. Unaware of the danger.

INT. BARN - MORNING

The SCHOOL BUS HONKS its horn as Amy finishes feeding the geese. She starts out the door, then she sees Nick, apart from the others, looking very weak.

AMY

Nick, are you sick? You look terrible.

He WHIMPERS. The SCHOOL BUS HONKS again. Amy hesitates, then heads for the door. Nick WAILS. Amy hesitates again, then decide she just can't leave him.

She steps to the door and waves the school bus on. As it drives off, she picks up Nick who HONKS appreciatively.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Tom walks toward his truck. Susan, driving by, sees him and pulls up.

SUSAN

Hi, Tom.

TOM

Hi.

SUSAN

How's Amy doing? Was she sick today?

Tom is a bit startled.

TOM

She wasn't in school?

Susan shakes her head.

TOM

Hooky. She'll be there tomorrow.

SUSAN

I heard about your thing with the geese? Pretty ambitious.

TOM

Pretty crazy.

SUSAN

I don't know.

They smile to one another.

SUSAN

Need any help?

TOM

Do we ever. Come by anytime.

SUSAN

Okay, I will. Bye.

TOM

See you later.

She drives off. Tom watches her for a moment, then notices a couple of Elderly Ladies on the sidewalk, looking at him. Embarrassed, he quickly gets into his truck.

EXT. COUNTY WILDLIFE OFFICE - DAY

The small office building on the edge of town. Bud's old car is parked along with George's truck.

INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE - DAY

George grills Bud.

GEORGE

They're doing what!?

BUD

Training a flock of geese to follow an ultra-light.

GEORGE

Why?

BUD

Don't ask me. All I know is, Amy Alden got a bunch of goose eggs and...

GEORGE

You're the one that got her the goose eggs.

BUD

Yeah, yeah, anyway she hatched 'em and now they're training them to follow an ultra-light so they can take them south in the fall.

GEORGE

They can't do that.

BUD

Well, they're doin' it.

GEORGE

They can't fly domesticated geese. It's illegal.

BUD

How much can you fine them?

GEORGE

If they fly domesticated geese,
they're likely to infect the wild
geese with who knows what barnyard
disease.

BUD

What's the fine?

GEORGE

Will you shut up about the fine?
This is serious. They could ruin
the whole hunting season.

BUD

Let him. Then you can really fine
him. Just make sure it's more
than six thousand dollars.

GEORGE

I'm not going to let him break
the law just so I can fine him.

BUD

Why not?

GEORGE

Because I'm not, that's why.

BUD

Typical. So what are you gonna
do?

GEORGE

I'm gonna stop him, that's what.

George strides over to his bookshelf and grabs a very thick
book. The spine reads: "WILDLIFE REGULATIONS." He drops the
book onto his desk with a THUD. Then he sits down and opens
it up.

INT. AMY'S ROOM - EVENING

Nick is in Amy's bed, under the covers, looking like a comical,
bird-version of a human patient. Amy pleads with Tom.

AMY

But, Dad, he was sick.

TOM

You don't skip school for a sick
goose.

AMY

But you skipped work when I had
the flu this winter.

TOM

That's different, I'm your father.

AMY

Well, I'm their mother.

TOM

You are not, you're...you're going
to school tomorrow and that's
final.

AMY

Alright, but can he sleep in here
tonight?

TOM

Alright, alright, but just
tonight.

Pleased, she goes back to tending Nick. Tom walks out shaking
his head, but smiling secretly to himself.

EXT. EMORY UNIVERSITY - ATLANTA GEORGIA - DAY

The main gate. A bronze plaque identifies: "EMORY UNIVERSITY."

INT. JIM'S DORM ROOM - EMORY - DAY

Chaos. Jammed with books, papers, food and an astonishing
amount of computer and stereo equipment. A long strip of
computer paper taped to the wall reads: "OPERATION GOOSE:
COMMAND CENTRAL SOUTH." A beautiful poster of a formation of
geese in flight is also taped to the wall.

Meg sits on the bed surrounded by papers and books about geese
and other migratory birds. Jim sits at the computer, inputing
data. The screen heading is: "ONLINE SEARCH MODE."

MEG

Alright, now do an overlap
search...

He types.

MEG

Member lists...American Audubon
Society...Department of Interior,
Registry of Wetlands...subscriber
list of Aviator magazine...

JIM
How about contributors to the
Democratic National Committee?

MEG
Okay. Now run those against each
other, see what we come up with.

He inputs. They wait for a moment, then the computer BEEPS.
Meg looks over Jim's shoulder at the screen.

MEG
What do we have?

JIM
Thirty-two locations.

MEG
That's too many.

JIM
Let's try eliminating the states
with with goose hunting seasons.

MEG
Okay, and cross-check the
landowners names against the
membership list of the N.R.A and
dump the matches.

Jim inputs. They wait. The computer BEEPS again. The PRINTER
CLATTERS.

JIM
Bingo.

Meg tears the sheet off the printer.

MEG
Here it is, DeLancey Valley, South
Carolina.

They look at each other and smile.

EXT. EMORY UNIVERSITY - MAIN GATE - DAY

Meg's battered covertable blasts out of the main university
gates at high speed. Meg drives, Jim rides shotgun.

EXT. INTERSTATE - DAY

Meg and Jim tear past a road sign that reads: "COLUMBIA, SOUTH
CAROLINA 200 MILES." They practically fly down the highway.

EXT. BAILEY LANDING STRIP - DAY

Barry does a final check on the ultra-light trainer while Tom looks on, a bit nervously. Amy notices Tom's expression.

AMY

What's the matter, Dad?

Tom tries to smile.

TOM

Nothing.

BARRY

There's nothing to worry about, Tom. It'll be easier than the first time you soloed in an airplane.

TOM

That bad, huh?

Gamely, Tom puts on his helmet and climbs into the seat.

BARRY

Control system?

Tom checks the controls.

TOM

Check. Clear prop.

BARRY

Clear.

TOM

Contact.

Barry pull-starts the engine which comes to life with a ROAR. Tom gives a final thumbs-up to Amy, then he throttles up and eases off down the runway.

Amy and Barry watch as Tom accelerates. Within seconds lifts off, wobbles a bit, then rises into the air. As he quickly gains altitude, he makes a slow turn.

ON THE GROUND

The ultra-light swoops past Amy and Barry, then soars back up into the air. Barry speaks into a hand-radio.

BARRY

Perfect! Now trim out and bank left.

The ultra-light trims and banks. Barry nods and turns to Amy.

BARRY
He's a natural.

AMY
I hope he's not too nervous.

IN THE ULTRA-LIGHT

Tom laughs madly. He's having a great time! He moves the control stick, diving, turning and lifting, flying like a bird.

EXT. BARN - DAY

Amy, Tom and Susan pour out grain into a feeding trough. The geese are on hillside near the maple tree, about a hundred yards away. Amy CLUTCH CALLS to them and they immediately start racing toward her. As the geese run, they beat their wings, taking long jumps, almost lifting off.

SUSAN
They're just about ready to fly.

TOM
Any day now.

As the geese get to the feeding trough and start eating, George Chase pulls up in his Wildlife Service truck. He gets out and walks over to them. Tom watches him coolly.

GEORGE
Tom, Susan, Amy.

TOM
George.

SUSAN
Hello, George.

AMY
Hello, Mr. Chase.

George appraises the geese.

GEORGE
Pet geese, huh?

TOM
That's right.

GEORGE
Looks like they're about ready to fly.

AMY
Almost. Just a couple more weeks.
They already have their primary
feathers and their secondaries
are almost in.

George listens to Amy with studied patience, then he turns to Tom.

GEORGE
You're planning on taking care
of them, I assume.

TOM
Taking care of them?

GEORGE
You're going to render them
flightless, right?

Amy jumps in.

AMY
Oh, no. We're going to fly them
south. We have an ultra-light.
It's already built.

GEORGE
(with mock surprise)
You do?

Susan grows impatient.

SUSAN
George Chase, you know exactly
what they're planning on doing!
Just get to the point!

GEORGE
Alright. The law's clear. You
can't fly domesticated geese.
You're going to have to give them
tendonectomies.

AMY
No! We're going to take them
south and...

Tom motions for Amy to hold off.

TOM
Amy...
(to George)
Why?

GEORGE
Because it's the law.

The geese, gathered around Amy's feet, sense her worry and become nervous.

TOM
And what's the point of this law?

GEORGE
Barnyard diseases. You ever heard of Newcastle's disease? You let farm geese fly, next thing you know all the wild geese'll get infected and die. Where will that leave the hunters?

SUSAN
Oh, George, you know as well as I do, that law was put on the books a hundred years ago. There hasn't been a case of Newcastle's disease since the turn of the century.

GEORGE
That's not my concern.

SUSAN
It's ridiculous. These birds are more likely to catch something from the wild geese.

GEORGE
I'm not here for a debate. I'm just telling you, you can't fly these geese.

Amy can't hold her tongue any longer.

AMY
But we've got it all worked out. We have the ultra-light and they're already following it on the ground and...

George speaks to Amy for Tom's benefit.

GEORGE
I'm sorry, Amy. That's just the way it is. Your father never should have let you think you could do this.

AMY

But...

GEORGE

I'm sorry.

Susan can take no more. Spitting fire, she steps between George and Amy.

SUSAN

You are not sorry!

GEORGE

The law is the law and I...

She advances on George.

SUSAN

Oh, can it! You've been a bully ever since the fourth grade! It's about time you grew up!

George backs up. Tom watches Susan, taken aback, but impressed by her attack on George.

GEORGE

I'm just doing my job and...

SUSAN

Don't give me that! I'm not going to stand around while you terrorize this girl. Now get out of here!

GEORGE

You can't talk to me that way.

SUSAN

Oh, yeah? What do you think I'm doing?

George sputters.

GEORGE

Why you...you...alright, I'll go but the law is still the law.

SUSAN

Nonsense! Now get out of here before I get mad!

George searches for a rejoinder but comes up empty. Fuming he turns and walks away. As he goes, the geese chase after him, HONKING and pecking and snapping at his pants. He scurries to his truck.

GEORGE
Get away from me!

He gets in and starts up his engine with a ROAR. The geese HONK DERISIVELY as he drives away. Tom, Amy and Susan watch him go. Along with the geese, they laugh. Tom, very impressed, looks at Susan.

EXT. PORCH - ALDEN HOUSE - NIGHT

It's a mild night. Amy sits on the steps, gazing at the star-filled sky. Tom and Susan sit together, but not too closely, on the swinging loveseat. Susan reads. She puts down the book.

SUSAN
You know, you're onto something here that's a lot bigger than these geese.

TOM
What do you mean?

SUSAN
Do you know how many whooping cranes there are in the world?

Tom shakes his head.

SUSAN
A hundred and thirty-two. One wild flock. A single storm would wipe them all out. Forever.

Amy starts to pay attention.

SUSAN
If you take these geese south and they come back on their own, you will have created a wild flock of safely migrating birds. That's never been done.

(beat)

There'd be no reason you couldn't do the same thing with whooping cranes or trumpeter swans or any other endangered species.

AMY
(softly)
Wow.

SUSAN

Cranes, swans, herons,
egrets...they're magnificent
birds...and suddenly there's be
a chance, a good chance, of saving
all of them. Think of it.

They're very quiet as they do just that.

EXT. GRASS STRIP - AFTERNOON

The ultra-light idles. Barry does a few last-minute checks of the aircraft, while Tom, sitting in the pilot's seat, prepares to take off. Amy kneels in the dew-covered grass with the geese who gather around her. Susan looks on.

AMY

Alright, guys, this is it.
There's a first time for
everything. Don't be nervous,
I know you can do it.

The geese HONK to her a bit less enthusiastically than usual. Amy gets up and, with Susan's help, starts herding the geese toward the ultra-light.

AMY

They're ready, Dad.

Tom and Barry nod to each other.

BARRY

Contact!

TOM

Clear prop!

The ENGINE ROARS and the ultra-light starts down the runway. As the little aircraft accelerates, Amy runs up alongside the wingtip, matching her speed to that of the ultra-light. She CLUTCH CALLS to the geese. They call back and run after her.

AMY

C'MON GEESE! C'MON...

The ultra-light goes faster and faster...

Amy runs, trying to keep up with it...

Tom does his best to match Amy's CLUTCH CALL...

TOM

C'MON GEESE! C'MON...

The geese flap their wings and take long jumps, almost flying...

The ultra-light pulls away from Amy...

Amy slows...

The ultra-light lifts off...

The geese watch the aircraft rise into the air. Their leaps get longer. They are almost flying...

TOM

C'MON GEESE! C'MON!

The geese find themselves rising into the air...

Then suddenly settle back onto the ground...

Stumbling and running...

They stop dead, right at Amy's feet, while Tom flies on in the ultra-light, unfollowed...

Amy shakes her head at the geese and points up at the ultra-light.

AMY

Not me! You're supposed to be up there!

The geese just look up at her, confused, HONKING SOFTLY as if to ask, "what did we do wrong?"

EXT. GRASS STRIP - AFTERNOON

Amy, Susan, Barry and the geese wait as Tom taxis the ultra-light up to them. He shuts off the engine, extricates himself from the seat and takes off his helmet. Amy is depressed.

AMY

It's not going to work, is it?

Tom mulls over their situation.

TOM

Not this way, it isn't.

As Amy starts leading the geese back to the barn Tom smiles. He has an idea.

INT. AMY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dark. Amy sleeps. The distant SOUNDS OF HAMMERING filters into her room from outside.

EXT. ALDEN HOUSE - NIGHT

No lights are on in the house but a single bright light shines from the barn. That's also the source of the HAMMERING.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

ANGLE ON TOM. We can see him but only a bit of the ultra-light. He is working on it, but we can't see just what he is doing to it.

Tom puts down his hammer. He pick up an acetylene torch and lights it. Then he flips down his welder's protective visor and goes to work. Sparks fly.

EXT. ALDEN HOUSE - DAWN

The sun rises. Dew covers the grass.

INT. AMY'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Amy is startled awake by the sound of the ULTRA-LIGHT ENGINE. She shakes herself awake, then wondering what's going on, she quickly gets out of bed and starts dressing.

EXT./INT. BARN - DAWN

Amy runs out of the house and across the yard toward the barn. The SOUND OF THE ENGINE coming from within suddenly stops. Amy runs into the barn and stops dead as she looks at the ultra-light.

IT'S NOW A TWO-SEATER

Tom stands next to it, watching her reaction. Her stunned expression gives way to an enormous smile.

AMY

Is that second seat for somebody
I know?

Tom just laughs.

EXT. ALDEN HOUSE - DAWN

A ground fog rises. The day breaks beautifully. The hills are painted with the greens of mid-summer.

THE MAPLE TREE

stands strong and full, covered with leaves.

THE DEW

shimmers on tiny blades of grass.

A GOOSE

drinks a drop of water left by the night...

It's Nick...

He dodges and darts along the ground...

Trailing after the other geese who race past him...

Stumbling over a log...

Trying to keep up with them...

Suddenly he stops...

He looks up...

AMY, TOM, BARRY AND SUSAN

push the big, fragile and strangely beautiful ultra-light out of the barn, toward the grass strip...

The craft is a little different, but no matter, Nick is more interested in the little girl helping push it...

Nick follows her...

Hurrying through the wet grass...

EXT. GRASS STRIP - DAY

Tom puts on his helmet, gets into the pilot's seat and straps himself in. Amy gulps, puts on her helmet and climbs onto the seat behind Tom, with her legs around his back, her head about a foot above and behind his. She straps on her seatbelt. Tom looks back.

TOM
Ready?

AMY
Ready.

Barry pull-starts the engine which ROARS to life. The geese turn to the noise, unfrightened. Susan double-checks Amy's seatbelt and gives her a thumbs-up sign.

Tom and Amy share a silent look, then he REVS the engine...

The ultra-light starts to move...

Amy lets loose with her CLUTCH CALL...

The geese CALL BACK...

Barry and Susan shoo the birds in the direction of the ultra-light...

AMY

C'mon geese, c'mon! Nick, Claire,
c'mon, Toulouse....c'mon geese!

The ultra-light accelerates...

Amy CLUTCH CALLS...

The geese run after her...

Trying to keep up...

The birds find themselves flapping their wings...

Running...

Stumbling....

The ultra-light goes faster...

And faster...

Nick CRIES OUT...

He can't keep up...

Amy CALLS...

AMY

C'mon, geese! C'mon Nick!

Faster...

And faster...

And faster...

The ultra-light lifts off...

The running geese look up, horrified...

Amy pulls away from them...

Higher...

And higher...

They CRY OUT to her..

Then, one by one...

They lift off...

Beating their wings...

Following Amy into the sky...

THEY'RE FLYING!!!

One after another...

Up into the air...

Until only Nick is on the ground...

Running...

Desperate...

Crying..

Beating his wings...

Harder...

And harder...

AMY~
C'mon, Nick! You can do it!
Nick!

He does his best....

But it's not enough...

He sees Amy and all the other geese flying away from him...

He beats his wings madly...

Then...

NICK RISES...

Into the air...

THEY'RE ALL UP...

THEY'RE ALL FLYING...

AMY looks back, laughing, crying, overjoyed at the sight of the geese flying behind her...

THE ULTRA-LIGHT GAINS ALTITUDE...

Tom concentrates on flying and calls back to Amy...

TOM
ARE THEY WITH US?

Amy tries to answer but she can't. She just laughs and cries and hugs her father. He knows what that means and he smiles.

TOM LEVELS OFF

He looks back...

Instead of poetry in motion, he and Amy see total chaos...

THE GEESE

fly like drunken sailors...

Smacking into each other...

Bumping their wings into one another in mid-stroke...

Tumbling and falling precipitously..

Then frantically beating their wings to catch up...

One of the birds flies SMACK into the ultra-light's wing. He nearly falls out of the sky before he catches himself...

AMY AND TOM

watch, surprised.

AMY

They're not very good at it, are they?

TOM

You should have seen yourself, when you were learning how to walk.

They laugh. In ragged formation, they fly on into the lovely, early morning sun.

EXT. GRASS STRIP - MORNING

The ultra-light swoops, touches down and rolls to a stop. Right behind it, the geese come in for their landing. They clearly have a lot to learn about that, too, as they stumble and tumble onto the ground.

As soon as the ultra-light stops, Amy and Tom hop off. Barry and Susan run to greet them. The humans and the geese celebrate wildly.

AMY

We did it!

TOM

Alright!

BARRY

You gotta let me do that! You
gotta let me do that!

SUSAN

It was beautiful!

The geese HONK MADLY...

Barry swings Amy around and throws her up into the air...

Tom and Susan find themselves hugging...

They hesitate, then laugh and hug again...

Amy drops to the ground, laughing and hugging all the geese as
they crowd around her...

EXT. ALDEN YARD - EVENING

Amy leads the geese past the maple tree as Tom, Susan and Barry
walk to the house. In the shadows of the highest branches, the
Owl watches. He scratches his long, sharp talons on the bark.
He's ready to strike. Amy shoos the geese into the barn.

AMY

Alright, guys, get in there, You
too, Jasper...Claire, stop
dawdling...Toulouse, stop picking
on Ned...

She hustles the geese into the barn and closes the door. Amy
crosses the yard. As she walks into the house, she doesn't
notice the barn door swing open. One by one, the geese
curiously wander out. Above them, the Owl tenses.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Amy, Tom, Susan and Barry prepare dinner. Suddenly they hear a
TERRIBLE SCREAM FROM OUTSIDE. A goose's cry of pain and fear.
She tears out the door, Tom and the others close on her heels.

EXT. YARD - EVENING

The Owl's talons flash as it attacks one of the geese.

AMY

NICK!

Nick fights back as best he can, hitting with his wings and
beak. The other geese join the fray, flapping at the owl. Amy
runs out.

AMY

NOOOOO!

She runs at the owl.

AMY

NICK!

The Owl rears back and raises its razor sharp talons at Amy. Susan grabs Amy. Tom and Barry run at the Owl, hollering, waving their arms.

TOM

GET AWAY FROM THERE!!!

BARRY

GET OFF HIM! GET OFF HIM!

The Owl takes wing, disappearing into the night. Amy pulls herself from Susan's grasp and runs to Nick. He's pretty ruffled but he's not badly hurt. He pulls away from Amy's grasp and HONKS DERISIVELY after the owl.

BARRY

He's a feisty, little guy, isn't he.

TOM

That was a close one.

Nick struts around, HONKING, a bit battered, but proud of the encounter. Amy tries to get her breath. She watches Nick and turns to her father, shaking her head.

AMY

I'll tell you, it's not easy to be a parent.

Tom laughs. They all start gathering up the geese and heading them back toward the barn.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - SOUTH CAROLINA - DAY

Meg drives. Jim sleeps. She crests a hill and slams on the brakes. Jim wakes up with a start. They look out at:

DELANCEY VALLEY

It's absolutely beautiful. Green and verdant. A stream meanders through a marsh and flows into a small lake. It's as beautiful as the terrain around the Alden farm up North, but wilder, more natural.

A flock of starlings takes flight from some swamp grass on the edge of the lake.

As they wing toward a grove of trees, a heron, standing in the shallows, looks up and watches them.

MEG AND JIM are awestruck.

JIM
DeLancey Valley.

MEG
This is it.

A DIESEL HORN HONKS LOUDLY, startling Meg and Jim back to reality. Behind them, a massive flatbed truck carries a bulldozer. The driver leans on his HORN again. Meg puts the car back into gear and they drive on.

EXT. DELANCEY ACRES - DAY

Meg and Jim drive through the main gates of a housing development that has no houses. Newly built streets run in every direction. Lots are marked off with little flags that flutter in the wind. It's as if they're driving on a map of a city waiting to be built -- a city that will be smack in the middle of DeLancey Valley.

A single model home stands on a perfectly manicured lawn. A sign identifies it as the: "SALES OFFICE." Meg and Jim park and get out.

INT. SALES OFFICE - DELANCEY DEVELOPMENT CORP. - DAY

A bored SECRETARY does her fingernails. A large, scale model of the planned development dominates the center of the room. It shows hundreds of houses, a golf course, tennis courts, a gym complex and a very extensive marina on the shores of the lake. On the wall is a map of the house lots. A few are colored red and marked, "SOLD." Very few. Meg and Jim walk in. The Secretary, startled to see customers, quickly sits up and pastes on a smile.

SECRETARY
Hello, welcome to DeLancey Acres,
may I help you?

Before they can answer CHARLEY OLIVER steps out of the inner office. He's in his mid-forties, with the bearing and dress of a businessman, but with strangely gentle eyes.

CHARLEY
Hi, I'm Charley Oliver.

JIM
Jim Alden.

MEG
I'm Meg Robbins.

CHARLEY
I take it you're interested in
a home site?

JIM
Not exactly.

MEG
But we do have something we'd like
to talk to you about.

CHARLEY
I'm all ears.

INT. CHARLEY'S INNER OFFICE - DAY

A painting of a great blue heron hangs on one wall. A model of a Cessna 175 single engine airplane stands on Charley's desk. Charley is captivated. He leans forward in his chair, drop-jawed.

CHARLEY
...so you mean the geese actually
follow the ultra-light...they fly
right with it...

MEG
Close enough to touch.

CHARLEY
(awed)
Wow...

JIM
My father and my sister have been
taking them up for training
flights every morning at dawn and
every evening at sunset when the
air is calmest.

CHARLEY
I'll bet that's beautiful.

MEG
Yes.

CHARLEY
Sounds great...and I love the idea
that if you're able to bring the
geese south you could try the same
thing with cranes or herons...

He takes out his checkbook.

CHARLEY

What do you say, fifty dollars?

MEG

We're not looking for
contributions

CHARLEY

No?

JIM

We're looking for a lake.

Charley laughs.

CHARLEY

That lake out there? Sorry,
there's going to be a marina on
that lake. It'd be a terrible
place for birds, there's going
to be power boats, water skiers,
jet skis...

MEG

Who says there has to be a marina?

CHARLEY

If you want to sell lots, you have
to have a marina.

JIM

Why?

CHARLEY

You just do. You might as well
suggest leaving out the golf
course.

JIM

No, geese like a lot of water.

MEG

You can keep the golf course.

Charley laughs again. He clearly likes Jim and Meg, even if he
thinks they're a bit nuts.

CHARLEY

That's big of you. What do you
two take me for, some kind of
bird-loving, tree-hugging,
knee-jerk liberal, flying fanatic?

JIM

Yeah, more or less.

CHARLEY

Alright, I'll give you that, though how you know it, I haven't a clue. But first and foremost, I'm a businessman and I have partners.

MEG

But there must be lots of people who'd like to build a house near a nature preserve.

JIM

I would.

MEG

So would I.

CHARLEY

Well, so would I. But I'm selling, I'm not buying.

MEG

Think of the publicity.

JIM

And think of all the money you'd save by not having to build the marina.

MEG

Not everybody likes to blast around on a jet-ski.

CHARLEY

My partners do.

JIM

Maybe so, but a lot of people would rather sit on their porch, have a beer and watch the birds come and go.

MEG

I know I would.

MEG

So would I.

CHARLEY

So would I, but...

Charley imagines himself sitting on his porch, drinking a beer, watching the birds come and go.

MEG

How 'bout this. Come up to Ontario, fly with the geese.

CHARLEY

I'd love to but I'm really very busy and...

He finds himself looking at the painting of the heron on his wall. Meg sees him wavering.

MEG

Consider it an investment.

Charley smiles. He's hooked.

INT. DINING ROOM - ALDEN HOUSE - NIGHT

Command Central North: Operation Goose. Tom, Susan and Barry work at the dining room table which is covered with papers, books and maps. A big topographical map of North America is pinned to the wall. Amy runs in, excited.

AMY

They've got it! Jim and Meg just sent me an E-mail! They found the place!

TOM

Where?

AMY

It's called DeLancey Valley and it's got a lake and a marsh and ground cover and it's beautiful and there's a place to land the ultra-light and the geese can stay there all winter. There's only one catch.

TOM

And what's that.

AMY

The guy who owns it hasn't said yes yet.

TOM

He hasn't?

AMY

They're bringing him up so he can
take a ride with the geese.

Then Barry smiles.

BARRY

No problem. We'll give him the
ride of his life. So where is
this place?

AMY

South Carolina, Colony County.

Susan looks for it on the map.

AMY

It's near Wherretville.

SUSAN

Here it is!

Susan sticks a pin into the map and runs a length of yarn from
that pin up to another pin which is stuck into Lakeville,
Ontario.

TOM

Alright...let's see, where would
be stop along the way...?

Barry appraises the route.

BARRY

I know of at least half-a-dozen
private strips on this route.
Grass runways, out of the way,
no air traffic...

TOM

Great.

BARRY

They're owned by old aviators.
My dad and my grand-dad know 'em
all. They'll make the calls for
us.

SUSAN

(scanning the map)

And I've got a college friend who
lives on a farm in Pennsylvania,
here, just north of Gettysburg.
She'd love to help.

TOM

Perfect.

BARRY

Now we're flying!

As Tom, Susan and Barry crowd around the map, plotting out the route, Amy stands back a bit, watching them, thoughtfully.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Amy feeds the geese. She senses that something is wrong and she starts counting. She's horrified by the number. She recounts. She looks around, growing more and more distraught by the second.

AMY

Nick? Nick? NICK!

She runs out of the barn toward the house.

EXT. YARD - NIGHT (LATER)

Amy and Susan search for Nick.

AMY

NICK!

Tom walks out of the barn, shaking his head.

TOM

He's definitely not in the barn.

AMY

NICK!

SUSAN

One of my geese once disappeared for over a week. Then he just showed up as he he had never been gone?

AMY

Did you have owls where you lived?

Susan starts to answer, then shakes her head.

SUSAN

Not that I knew of.

Even more worried, Amy continues her search.

INT. AMY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Amy lies in bed still clearly worried. Tom tucks her in, then he sits on the side of the bed.

TOM
We'll find him.

AMY
How do you know?

He hesitates for a moment, then he shakes his head.

TOM
I don't, but I hope we will.

She just looks at him.

TOM
Bad things happen...when Mom
died...

Tom searches for the words. Amy waits. But the words just don't come to Tom. He tries, but nothing. After a silent moment, Tom touches her gently on the cheek and kisses her.

TOM
Goodnight, Amy.

Amy sighs.

AMY
Goodnight, Dad.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

Tom stands alone on the porch. Susan walks out and sits down.

SUSAN
What's wrong.

TOM
Kids ought to come with an
instruction manual or at least
directions on how to assemble
them. Her mother was great at
it. She was...the mother. I just
don't have it.

SUSAN
I'm not so sure about that.

TOM

I'm like my father. I remember one time, when I was about Amy's age, one night I had a terrible nightmare. I went to him, crying, he just looked up from his newspaper and said, "it's alright, don't let it bother you. He was always saying that. "It's alright, don't let it bother you." Mothers don't say stuff like that, do they?

SUSAN

Not usually.

TOM

I'm not a complete dolt. I haven't said those exact words, but close. When my wife died I took all the pictures of her and put them away. I thought it would help us move on. I wasn't saying we would ever forget her or stop loving her but I wanted to help us compartmentalize the memories.

SUSAN

Spoken like a true engineer.

TOM

Yeah. Well, now Amy keeps a picture of her mom hidden under her mattress. She thinks I don't know about it, that I'd be angry if I knew it was there.

SUSAN

Just talk to her about it.

TOM

I try but the words just don't come.

He sighs.

SUSAN

What did you call it, compartmentalizing?

He nods, a bit embarrassed at the sound of the word.

SUSAN

Just because it helps you, doesn't mean helps Amy.

Tom looks at her as that starts to sink in.

SUSAN

What would her mother do?

He thinks about that.

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Dark. Quiet. Tom walks up the steps and turns on the single bare bulb that hangs from the ceiling. He pushes aside some boxes, opens a trunk and looks inside. The trunk holds his wife's most powerful talismans -- her hair brush, her favorite coffee mug, her wedding dress and dozens of framed photographs.

Tom takes out the photos and gazes at them, one after another. He takes a sad but loving journey through their life together. Their marriage portrait. A snap shot of the two of them with brand-new baby Jim. A picture of the family opening presents on Christmas morning, just a few years ago.

Tom struggles to keep control of his emotions. Then, he stops trying. He weeps.

INT. AMY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tom stands next to Amy's bed, watching her sleep. He reaches down, slips his hand under the mattress and pulls out her hidden picture of her mother. He puts the photo on Amy's bedside table, then he kisses Amy. He looks at her for a moment, then he walks out of the room.

EXT. ALDEN HOUSE - MORNING

A new day dawns.

INT. AMY'S ROOM - MORNING

Amy wakes. She opens her eyes and the first thing she sees is the framed photograph of her mother and herself on the bedside table. At first she's confused, then she smiles and jumps out of bed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Amy hurries through the living room toward the kitchen. She sees several other pictures of her mother around the room.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Tom reads the newspaper as he eats his breakfast. Amy walks in and kisses him. He's startled.

TOM

What was that for?

She cheerfully heads for the door.

AMY

I'm going out to feed the geese.

She walks out. Tom knows. He goes back to his newspaper with a smile.

EXT. ALDEN HOUSE - DAY

George and Bud confront Tom while Amy looks on in horror.

TOM

What do you mean you're here to confiscate the geese.

George hands him some papers.

GEORGE

It's all right there. These geese are a danger to the entire wild goose population.

AMY

No, you can't do it!

GEORGE

I can and I will.

Amy turns to Tom.

AMY

Dad, you can't let him do this.

Tom just shakes his head as he looks at the papers.

TOM

I'm afraid there's nothing we can do about it, Amy.

AMY

But...

TOM

C'mon, Amy, lets go get the geese.

George and Bud exchange a triumphant look.

AMY

But, Dad...

TOM

Amy, c'mon.

Reluctantly Amy follows Tom. George and Bud watch them walk into the barn.

BUD

That was easier than I thought
it would be.

GEORGE

Leave it to me. Just a matter
of...

TOM'S VAN BLASTS OUT OF THE BARN. The geese, by their EXCITED HONKING are clearly inside. With Amy in the passenger seat, Tom tears past George and Bud and drives off down the country road.

BUD

Leave it to you, huh?

GEORGE

Why that...c'mon!

They run to George's truck, start it up, peel out and take off in hot pursuit.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Tom and Amy speed down the road.

IN THE VAN,

Amy looks back at the agitated geese. Then she turns to her father, not sure if she's pleased at the chase or worried.

AMY

Dad, I thought you said the law
is the law.

TOM

It is, you'll see.

IN GEORGE'S TRUCK,

George and Bud follow, fuming.

BUD

Faster! You're losing him!

GEORGE

I'm going as fast as I can!

EXT. COUNTRY CORNER - DAY

Tom SCREECHES around a corner, bumps off the road and skids to a stop behind a small shed.

An instant later George and Bud blast on through the corner, oblivious.

Tom immediately puts the van into gear and heads in another direction.

IN THE VAN

Amy looks back.

AMY
We lost them!

TOM
For now.

AMY
Where are we going?

EXT. VETERINARIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Tom's van stands parked in front.

INT. VETERINARIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

The geese patiently wait in line in front DR. HAMILL, a kindly old vet. Amy and Tom watch as he examines each bird in succession. He checks their eyes and their wings and draws blood.

DR. HAMILL
Did you know there's a law on the books in Buffalo, New York that says it's illegal to eat a sandwich standing up in a public place on a Sunday?

AMY
Why?

DR. HAMILL
Who knows? And in Ottawa there's still a law on the books that says all automobiles have to be preceded by a man on foot carrying a red lantern, shouting a warning.

Dr. Hamill finishes with the last goose.

DR. HAMILL
These geese are fine. You don't have anything to worry about.

TOM
What about George?

AMY

He said the law is the law.

DR. HAMILL

Don't you worry about George Chase. I've know him since he was younger than you.

THE DOOR BURST OPEN

George and Bud stride in.

GEORGE

I thought you might try something sneaky.

TOM

Why you...

Dr. Hamill, with the power of age, motions for Tom to back off. He looks over his glasses at George who starts to sputter.

GEORGE

Newcastles disease...it's right there in volume three, section six of the wildlife regulations and...

DR. HAMILL

Do you want me to talk to your mother?

GEORGE

What do you think I am, a little kid? I'm forty-three years old, for crying out loud!

DR. HAMILL

You're not acting like it. These birds no more have Newcastles than you or I.

GEORGE

Well, I don't but you might!

Dr. Hamill rolls his eyes, goes to his desk and starts writing.

DR. HAMILL

I'm going to certify that these birds are healthy. And I'm going to send a copy of this to your boss, Fred Oliver.

GEORGE

But...but...

DR. HAMILL

No "buts!"

George and Bud start to protest again but Dr. Hamill look up at them and they swallow it. They grit their teeth and glare at Tom, Amy and the geese.

EXT. VETERINARIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Tom and Amy finish loading the geese into the back of the van. George and Bud walk out of the office. Tom walks over and offers his hand.

TOM

C'mon, guy, no hard feelings.

George and Bud just look at Tom's offered hand.

GEORGE

Speak for yourself.

BUD

I've got about six thousand hard feelings.

George gets into his truck and starts it up.

GEORGE

I'm not going to give up! You'll see.

Tom just shakes his head and puts his arm around Amy's shoulders. With misgivings, they watch the Chase brothers drive off.

EXT. LANDING STRIP - TORONTO AIRPORT - DAY

A big Air Canada 747 lands with a ROAR.

EXT. AIRPORT PARKING LOT - DAY

Jim, Meg and Charley get into Tom's car.

EXT. GRASS LANDING STRIP - DAY

Amy sits in the grass with the geese.

AMY

Alright guys, I don't want any biting or butting. Toulouse, that means you, too.

Toulouse HONKS begrudgingly.

AMY
And Claire, I don't want you to,
you know what, on his shoes.

Claire HONKS.

AMY
Ned, pay attention. This man is
very important. If he likes you
guys he may let you stay at his
lake this winter.

Just then they hear the SOUND OF WILD GEESE high above them.
They all look up and see a formation of geese heading south.
Amy's geese grow a bit agitated. Amy pets and soothes them.

AMY
I know, guys, I know.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - ALDEN HOUSE - DAY

The geese stand in a receiving line. Tom, Jim and Meg look on
as Amy introduces each of them, in succession, to Charley.

AMY
...and Ned and Claire and Spike
and Toulouse and Homer and Mr.
Magoo and Homer...

As each goose is introduced it HONKS.

CHARLEY
Pleased to meet all of you.

AMY
We used to have Nick, too, but
he's...gone, we don't know
where...

CHARLEY
I'm sorry to hear that.

AMY
I try not to let it bother me.

Tom winces.

CHARLEY
Jim and Meg have told me a lot
about you and your project.

TOM
We're really glad you're
interested.

Amy shakes herself out of thinking about Nick.

AMY

Well? What do you think? Can they stay at your lake?

TOM

Amy, let's not pressure Mr. Oliver.

(with a smile)

There's plenty of time for that later.

Charley laughs.

CHARLEY

It's an intriguing idea, I'll give you that much. But as I'm sure Jim and Meg have explained, it's not exactly my lake. I've got partners.

AMY

Are they bird nuts, too?

Jim and Meg offer Charley an apologetic smile.

CHARLEY

Not exactly. So, any chance of taking a look at this ultra-light of yours?

TOM

A look? We can do a lot better than that.

EXT. GRASS STRIP - SUNSET

Charley puts on a pair of goggles and a helmet. Then he sits in the back of Barry's two-seater, ultra-light trainer. Barry fires up the engine.

Nearby Tom and Amy are in their own two-seater ultra-light. They wave back to Charley and then head off down the runway. Susan, Jim and Meg shoo the geese after them.

Amy and the geese lift off...

Barry guns the engine of the second ultra-light. He and Charley accelerate down the strip and take off after them...

EXT. AIRBORNE - SUNSET

The sunset sky is gorgeous. Tom and Amy fly in their ultra-light, called THE GOLDEN GOOSE, with the geese in formation behind them.

They're trailed, a few hundred yards back, by Barry and Charley in Barry's trainer ultra-light.

The geese have learned a lot since their ragged first flight. Their formation is tight, stretching behind and on either side of The Golden Goose. Their wings beat strongly. Their bodies have matured. They have become grand and powerful creatures, at ease in the sky.

AMY AND TOM

swoop down through some clouds, dropping down toward the lake. The geese and Barry's ultra-light follow.

They skim over the surface of the lake, not more than a dozen feet above the surface, then they gain altitude again, re-entering the beautiful, scattered clouds.

Their flight has a wondrous, playful feel to it. The geese and the ultra-lights move as one. It's a lovely sight.

Amy looks back at the Barry and Charley. They're too far back for Amy to see Charley's expression. She leans forward to Tom.

AMY

Do you think he's having a good time?

IN THE OTHER ULTRA-LIGHT

Charley laughs joyously as he and Barry fly up and join the formation. It's a perfect moment. THE MUSIC SWELLS along with Charley's spirit. He's most definitely having a good time.

EXT. GRASS STRIP - EARLY EVENING

The Golden Goose and the geese are already on the ground. As Barry taxis the trainer ultra-light to a stop Amy hurries over with Meg and Jim. Charley is quiet. It's a bit hard to read him. Amy speaks a mile a minute as Charley takes off his goggles and helmet.

AMY

(spoken like a machine gun)

Did you like it? It's really fun but you know it's much more than that.

(more)

AMY (Cont'd)

If we can do this with my geese
we could maybe do it with crane
and swans, too. Though what
really matters is these geese.
So what do you think? Can they
stay at your lake...?

Charley, almost in a daze nods his head. Amy, on a roll,
doesn't notice his response.

AMY

...they really aren't much trouble
and...

JIM

Amy, he said, yes.

AMY

(to Charley)

You did?

He nods again, still speechless.

AMY

ALRIGHT!

Tom smiles. He offers his hand to Charley and they shake.

TOM

Glad to have you aboard.

CHARLEY

My pleasure.

TOM

What about your partners?

CHARLEY

Don't worry about my partners.
I can handle them.

INT. CHARLEY'S OFFICE - DELANCEY ACRES - DAY

Charley is confronted by his investors, PERRY, PAUL and PETE.
They are well-to-do, Southern businessmen. They're not happy.

PERRY

A bird sanctuary?

PAUL

Charley, are you out of your mind?

PETE

This is the craziest thing I ever heard of.

CHARLEY

That's what I thought when I first heard it but...

PERRY

But nothing. This kind of development always has a marina.

PAUL

You might as well suggest we leave out the golf course.

CHARLEY

No, they don't want the golf course.

They look at him as if he's nuts.

CHARLEY

Geese like a lot of water.

Now they know he's nuts.

PERRY

Look, Charley, I've invested a lot of money in this project.

PAUL

We all have.

PERRY

And I'm not going to sit by and watch you mess it up.

CHARLEY

I'm not going to mess it up. You think I don't want to sell lots? Of course I do. And I'll tell you, there are a lot of people in the world who would like nothing better than to sit on their front porch, drink a beer and watch the birds come and go.

They look at him blankly.

CHARLEY

Not everybody likes to jet-ski.

PETE

I do.

PERRY

Charley, the marina is already designed, we have a contractor, we have a start date...

PAUL

And we have a penalty clause. If we back out now, it'll cost us fifty-thousand bucks.

CHARLEY

No, it won't, the penalty clause doesn't take effect until October fifteenth. Guys, I guarantee you, we're all going to come out ahead on this.

Perry, Paul and Pete don't like it but...

PERRY

Alright, Charley, I'll tell you what. We'll give you until October fifteenth to prove this isn't going to cost us money. Otherwise, we break ground on the marina.

(to Paul and Pete)

Does that work for you guys?

PAUL

Yeah.

PETE

(not entirely convinced)

Yeah, I guess.

Charley smiles.

CHARLEY

Terrific! You'll see, everybody's going to come out ahead.

As Charley ushers them out the door, Pete shakes his head, still mystified.

PETE

I like to jet-ski.

Perry and Paul shrug. They do, too.

INT. AMY'S ROOM - NIGHT

The window is open. The curtains blow in softly. Amy sleeps. The moon is full. The autumn RUSTLES THE LEAVES outside.

Suddenly a form appears at the window. IT'S NICK. He jumps from the windowsill onto Amy's bed, walks up the length of it nuzzles Amy. She awakes with a start.

AMY
NICK! NICK! YOU'RE BACK!

She hugs and pets him wildly. Nick just HONKS and nestles down into the covers, as if he'd never been away.

INT. BARN - DAY

Amy and Tom watch as Nick stands at the center of all the other geese. They're checking him out, a bit respectfully. Toulouse, the biggest steps up to him and lowers his neck submissively.

AMY
Did you see that?

TOM
Is that Toulouse?

AMY
Yeah. I can't believe it.
They're not picking on Nick anymore.

TOM
Your boy's made good, Amy.

They laugh and watch Nick lead the other geese around the barn.

EXT. CANADIAN HILLS - AFTERNOON

The height of fall foliage. The hillsides are alive with bright red and orange. A few dried leaves blow along the ground.

EXT. ALDEN'S GRASS LANDING STRIP - AFTERNOON

The ultra-light swoops down low, buzzing Tom and Susan who stand on a hill near the strip, watching. The geese follow in perfect formation, looking very strong and very mature.

The ultra-light lands and taxis up to Tom and Susan who walk out to meet it. The geese land smoothly and join them. Amy and Barry, the pilot this time, take off their helmets.

TOM
They're looking strong up there.

BARRY
They are. They're not puffing like they were, their speed is up and they seem to be able to go forever.

AMY
Nick, Toulouse and Claire seem
to be taking turns up front...

Amy strokes the various geese as she talks.

AMY
And Herb, you're going to have
to quit bumping into everybody...

Herb nuzzles her and HONKS, asking for forgiveness. She strokes
him gently.

BARRY
It wasn't easy to get them to
land. They seemed to want to stay
up there.

They hear LOUD HONKING ABOVE THEM, look up and see several large
formations of Canada geese flying south.

Amy's geese grow agitated. They flap their wings, HONK and run
a few steps after the wild geese. Amy, Tom, Susan and Barry
watch nervously, almost expecting the geese to take off. Then,
as the wild geese fly on, Amy's geese start to calm down.

SUSAN
They're ready to go.

TOM
In two more days, we will be, too.

Amy strokes several of her geese, calming them.

AMY
Not long now, guys, pretty soon.
C'mon, dinner time.

They all head toward the house and barn.

INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE - DAY

George sits at his desk, practically buried under piles of
papers and wildlife regulation books. Bud walks in.

BUD
Any luck?

GEORGE
I've been over these regulation
books with a fine tooth comb and
there isn't anything that says
a medical certificate exempts
domesticated geese from the
section sixty-six rules.

BUD

Yeah?

GEORGE

Don't you see? That means it doesn't make a darn bit of difference what Doctor Hamill says. Legally, I can get a court order to confiscate those geese and render them flightless.

BUD

So what are you waiting for? They're leaving tomorrow.

GEORGE

There's a rub.

George hands a piece of paper to Bud.

GEORGE

It's a certificate of health for Alden's geese. Doctor Hamill sent it to me and he sent one to Fred, too. It's there on his desk. He hasn't opened it yet but it has the same postmark. That's gotta be what it is.

BUD

So what?

GEORGE

So Fred might not understand.

Bud walks over to Fred's desk, picks up the letter and places it onto a bookshelf that stands against the wall. With the tips of his fingers he gently pushes it until it falls down, behind the bookshelf. George almost stops Bud, then he just smiles. George looks around as if he's searching for something.

GEORGE

Bud, was there a letter for Fred around here? I think it was from Dr. Hamill.

Bud looks around, scratching his head.

BUD

I don't know, I thought there was, but...I guess not.

George shrugs, grabs his coat and heads for the door.

BUD
Where are you going?

GEORGE
To get a court order.

They stride out together.

INT. DINING ROOM - ALDEN HOUSE - NIGHT

Command Central North: Operation Goose. Tom, Susan, Barry, Jim, Meg and Amy work around the dining room table.

SUSAN
And we're going to need a couple
fifty-pound bags of feed.

TOM
Amy, what about the portable pen?

AMY
All set, Meg and I loaded it this
afternoon.

BARRY
We'll need to do a final radio
check. I'll be leaving right at
dawn, scouting ahead and radioing
back weather and wind.

Barry eyes the big map.

BARRY
Tom, let me show you the route
for this leg, here...

As the adults crowd around the map, plotting out the route, Amy stands back a bit, watching them, thoughtfully.

INT. AMY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Amy lies in bed as Tom tucks her in.

AMY
Dad, why do you think so many
people are helping us.

TOM
(gently)
You tell me.

She goes deep.

AMY

I think part of it is the flying...everybody wishes they could fly. But I think it's more than that.

Tom waits.

AMY

I think it's about taking care of each other. We're taking care of these geese and maybe someday we'll be able to take care of the other birds, the cranes or the swans or the herons. But we're taking care of each other, too...you and me and everybody who's helping us. It's all about taking care of each other.

He smiles.

TOM

You remind me of your mother.

AMY

I'm glad.

TOM

Have I ever told you about the moment when I knew I was in love with her?

AMY

No.

TOM

It was seventy-one or seventy-two. She had just gotten her job at the bank and had to go to Toronto on business. I tagged along. It was right before Christmas. The first night we were there we had front row tickets to see Barishnikov dance the Nutcracker. She was crazy about Barishnikov. As we were walking out of the hotel a woman, not ancient but kind of old, tripped on the ice. By the time I got there, your mom was already helping her up. She wasn't hurt but she was crying.

(more)

TOM (Cont'd)

The next thing I know we're in a little restaurant with her and your mom's holding her hand. I had no idea what was going on. An hour later she tells us her husband had died that week. No kids, no other family to speak of. How did your mother know that? I don't know, but we spent every evening of the trip with that woman, and Christmas, too. Her name was Mary Gray, she passed away right before you were born.

AMY

I think I remember Mom mentioning her.

TOM

Your mom never said a word about missing Barishnikov dance, not to Mary and not to me. And there were about twenty or thirty Mary Grays in the time we were together.

Amy looks closely at Tom.

AMY

Thanks for telling me that, Dad.

TOM

You're welcome. Sorry I waited so long.

He kisses her.

TOM

Goodnight, Amy.

AMY

Goodnight, Dad.

He walks toward the door.

AMY

Dad...

He stops.

AMY

I love you.

TOM

I love you too, Amy.

He watches her nestle into the covers, then he walks out, weak-kneed, but soaring.

EXT. ALDEN HOUSE - MORNING

A cold wind blows dead leaves along the ground. The maple tree is almost bare. Those leaves still on its branches are brown and lifeless.

EXT. GRASS STRIP - MORNING

Tom, Amy, Jim, Meg and Susan watch as Barry REVS THE ENGINE of the his single-seat ultra-light. Barry checks his watch and calls back to Tom.

BARRY

Your take-off should be in exactly ninety minutes.

TOM

Check.

They exchange thumbs up signs. Then Barry accelerates down the strip and takes off. They all watch him for just a moment before Tom hustles them off.

TOM

C'mon, we have a lot to do.

They rush off to their appointed tasks.

EXT. SHERIFF KINGSBURY'S DOOR - MORNING

A small, tidy house in town. George and Bud stand at the door, in front of a very skeptical SHERIFF KINGSBURY, a middle-aged, overweight man with a kind face, who is eating a piece of toast.

SHERIFF KINGSBURY

Can't it wait until I finish my breakfast?

GEORGE

No, it can't!

SHERIFF KINGSBURY

It's just a bunch of geese, for crying out loud.

GEORGE

They're breaking the law and I've got a court order. Doesn't that mean anything to you?

SHERIFF KINGSBURY
Alright, alright, let's go.

Sheriff Kingsbury reaches inside, grabs his jacket and walks out.

SHERIFF KINGSBURY
You two are a complete pain in the neck sometimes.

BUD
Don't forget your gun.

SHERIFF KINGSBURY
Will you shut up?

George and Bud hurry out to George's truck with Sheriff Kingsbury following behind, shaking his head.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - ALDEN HOUSE - MORNING

Jim and Meg do the final loading of Tom's van, the chase vehicle.

MEG
Here are the maps. Did you put the spare batteries for the radio in?

JIM
Yes, and the charger.

MEG
Alright, we're ready to go.

EXT. MAPLE TREE - MORNING

Amy sits on the swing with the geese gathered around her. The birds are strangely silent.

AMY
Alright, guys, this is it, the big day. This is what we've all been working toward. It's up you. I know you can do it. What do you say?

The geese just look up at her.

AMY
Well?

A few of the geese HONK WEAKLY.

AMY
(like a drill sergeant)
I CAN'T HEAR YOU!

The geese let loose with a CACAPHONY OF HONKS, like an enthusiastic platoon recruits who've just finished basic training.

AMY
That's more like it! Alright,
let's go!

Amy strides off toward the landing strip with the geese following behind.

INT./EXT. GEORGE'S TRUCK - COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING

George drives very fast down the road. Sheriff Kingsbury sits crowded into the front seat of the truck with George and Bud. He's clearly not wild about being here with them.

GEORGE
To me, it's just a matter of
respect for the law, pure and
simple.

Sheriff Kingsbury glances out the window at a speed limit sign.

BUD
You said it! I just wish you
could figure out some way to fine
him.

Sheriff Kingsbury glances at the speedometer.

GEORGE
Respect for the law, that's what
we're talking about here!

Sheriff Kingsbury rolls his eyes.

EXT. GRASS STRIP - MORNING

Amy CLUTCH CALLS, gathering the geese around the back of the ultra-light. Tom puts on his helmet, gets into his seat and straps himself in. Jim pull-starts the engine. Meg hands Tom the map case. Amy puts on her helmet and climbs into the seat behind Tom.

INT./EXT. GEORGE'S TRUCK - ALDEN DRIVEWAY - MORNING

George turns into the Alden's driveway. Bud, Sheriff Kingsbury and he see the ultra-light, its prop turning, on the hillside beyond the house.

BUD

There they are!

George floors it, driving the truck across the yard, heading toward the grass landing strip. Sheriff Kingsbury bounces up and knocks his head on the roof of the cab.

SHERIFF KINGSBURY

Slow down, will you! What are you trying to do, kill me?

EXT. ALDEN GRASS LANDING STRIP - MORNING

Tom sees George's truck coming. And, he sees Sheriff Kingsbury in the front seat. Tom revs the engine and starts to taxi. Jim and Meg shoo the geese after the ultra-light.

George's truck bounces across the field. He has a chance of cutting them off...

The ultra-light accelerates...

The geese run, flapping their wings...

The truck is almost there...

Amy CLUTCH CALLS to the geese...

AMY

C'MOM, GEESE, C'MON, NICK, NED,
CLAIRE, C'MON...

Tom gives it more power...

The ultra-light lifts off...

The geese follow it up into the air...

THEY'RE AWAY!

George slams on his brakes.

The ultra-light gains altitude. The geese fall into formation right behind.

ON THE GROUND

Jim, Meg and Susan cheer.

JIM

ALRIGHT!

MEG

YES!

George, Bud and Sheriff Kingsbury get out of the truck and look up.

GEORGE
We almost had 'em!

Bud looks at the ultra-light with the practiced eye of a bird hunter, mentally calculating speed and distance. He turns to Sheriff Kingsbury.

BUD
I told you, you should have brought your gun.

Sheriff Kingsbury, who's gazing up at the ultra-light and the geese, doesn't even hear him.

GEORGE
I can't believe it! They got away!

SHERIFF KINGSBURY
(pleased)
Yeah, they got away.

Tom, Amy and the geese fly off into the morning sun. George angrily kicks at the dirt.

GEORGE
Well I don't give up so easily.
I've still got a few tricks up my sleeve.

George strides back to his truck, muttering.

GEORGE
No more Mister Nice Guy.

EXT. THE ULTRA LIGHT - AIRBORNE - MORNING

The Golden Goose ultra-light flies with the geese following in good formation. Amy and Tom see Lake Ontario ahead. It's a beautiful, but daunting sight, a seemingly endless expanse of water.

AMY
There it is.

TOM
Lake Ontario.

AMY
It looks big.

TOM

It is.

AMY

Do you think the geese can make
it across?

TOM

I'm not worried about them. They
can land in water.

Amy looks down, a bit nervously, as they fly over the shoreline
and head out over the water.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - ALDEN'S HOUSE - DAY

Jim, Meg and Susan drive off in the chase van.

EXT. BARRY'S ULTRA-LIGHT - AIRBORNE - DAY

Barry crosses over the far shore of Lake Ontario. He clicks on
his radio.

BARRY

Golden Goose, this is Scout One,
do you read me?

EXT. GOLDEN GOOSE ULTRA-LIGHT - AIRBORNE - DAY

High above Lake Ontario. Nothing but water in every direction.
Tom speaks into the radio.

TOM

Scout One, this is Golden Goose,
I read you.

INTERCUT RADIO COMMUNICATION:

BARRY

Those tail winds I had seem to
be turning into head winds for
you guys.

TOM

Tell me about it. Our ground
speed's gotta be half our air
speed.

Tom and Barry are both worried by that.

BARRY

Good luck.

TOM

Thanks. Over.

IN THE GOLDEN GOOSE

Tom clicks off his radio. He checks his gas guage. It's less than half full. He's not happy.

EXT. SHORE - LAKE ONTARIO - DAY

Meg and Susan look out across the lake. There's no sign of the ultra-light. Jim sits in the chase van with the door open, talking on the radio.

JIM
How's your fuel?

TOM (O.S.)
(over radio)
These head winds are a killer.
Another couple of knots and we're
going to be into negative ground
speed...water speed, that is.

Jim doesn't smile at the attempt at gallows humor.

JIM
I'll call Lake Patrol and see if
they can get a boat out there.

TOM (O.S.)
Roger. Over.

A worried Jim clicks off the radio.

EXT. ULTRA-LIGHT - AIRBORNE - DAY

The ENGINE COUGHS. Less than half an inch of fuel sloshes in the translucent fuel tank. Tom feathers the throttle, trying to keep from stalling. Amy scans the horizon. She sees what she's looking for.

AMY
There! The shore!

Tom locks his eyes on the shore and they fly on.

EXT. ULTRA-LIGHT - AIRBORNE - DAY

Amy, Tom and the geese pass over the shoreline. Everywhere they look, they see nothing but heavily wooded hillsides and steep gorges.

TOM
Keep your eyes peeled for
someplace to set down.

AMY
(trying to convince
herself)
We'll find a nice big open field,
I'm sure.

TOM
I'd settle for a postage stamp.
about now.

They fly on.

EXT. ULTRA-LIGHT - AIRBORNE - DAY

They're skimming the tree-tops. The ENGINE COUGHS AND SPUTTERS SPASMODICALLY. They're almost out of gas.

TOM
We've got to set down!

AMY
Where?

TOM
Anywhere but these trees!

Suddenly, up ahead, they see a break in the trees.

EXT. PIKE AIR FORCE BASE - DAY

The might of the American Air Force is arrayed on an endless expanse of concrete runways and tarmac. There are hundreds of military aircraft parked and taxiing. Massive C-5 and C-141 cargo jets, row after row of F-16 fighters, dozens of F-111 fighter-bombers, scores of A-10 Warthogs, helicopters, spotters and trainers.

Fuel and maintenance trucks and cargo carriers speed every which way. Huge hangars and warehouses line the sides of the tarmac. And above it all, a control tower stands bristling with antennae and revolving dishes.

INT. CONTROL TOWER - DAY

Filled with controllers at their electronic stations. A YOUNG CONTROLLER speaks to a CAPTAIN, the watch officer.

YOUNG CONTROLLER
Sir, Bravo sixteen requests
clearance for take-off...

CAPTAIN
Give him runway number two, vector
east.

YOUNG CONTROLL
Yes, sir, shifting Bravo sixteen
to runway number two, vector
east...

He inputs the data into his radar screen computer.

EXT. RUNWAY NUMBER ONE - PIKE AFB - DAY

An F-16 approaches the runway, preparing for take-off. Its engine ROARS, spitting out fire, its heat distorting the waving grass that lines the sides of the runway.

INT. COCKPIT - F-16 - DAY

The PILOT, a tough-looking fighter jock, eases his powerful metal beast onto the runway. As he starts to throttle up, he does a final visual check.

He looks up and sees Tom and Amy in the ultra-light, followed by the formation of geese, swoop down over his head, miss his jet by less than a foot and land right smack in front of him. The Pilot is absolutely flabbergasted.

INT. CONTROL TOWER - DAY

The Young Controller receives a message.

YOUNG CONTROLLER
Captain, Bravo sixteen requests
runway reassignment, reports
traffic on two.

CAPTAIN
Traffic? What kind of traffic?

YOUNG CONTROLLER
I'm not sure, but he said they
were in formation.

ANOTHER CONTROLLER
Captain, I've got bogies, a lot
of them, right off the deck on
runway number two.

CAPTAIN
Defensive alert! Close down all
runways, secure the hangers, get
ground security out there, now!

The Captain hits a big red button.

EXT. PIKE AFB - DAY

An ALARM SIREN SCREAMS out over the entire base. Men and women race to implement the security lock-down. Heavily armed soldiers run to their assignments. Armed guards close up the hanger doors and take up defensive positions, with their M-16's at ready.

A squad of ground security troops jumps into a truck, which immediately peels out, heading toward the runway. It's organized madness, as the entire base goes onto full security alert.

EXT. RUNWAY NUMBER TWO - DAY

The ultra-light rolls to a stop at the head end of a ten-thousand foot runway. The ribbon of concrete is as wide as a football field and is so long it recedes into infinity. The geese land and look around, mystified at the endless expanse of cement.

Tom and Amy unstrap themselves. As they take off their helmets they look up in shock at waves of armed vehicles and soldiers bearing down on them. The vehicles SCREECH to a stop. The soldiers jump out and assume attack positions, though most of them are clearly aware that this is not an attack. A young LIEUTENANT draws his .45 automatic.

LIEUTENANT
STAY RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE! PUT
YOUR HANDS UP!

Tom and Amy raise their hands. The bewildered geese look up at Tom and Amy with their hands in the air. Confused, but compliant, the geese raise their wings.

EXT. HEADQUARTERS - PIKE AFB - AFTERNOON

GENERAL RAY PIERCE, the base commanding officer, who is all piss and vinegar, strides out of HQ and gets into a jeep driven by a MAJOR.

GENERAL PIERCE
Report! What's going on?

The Major fills in General Pierce as they quickly drive off.

INT. RUNWAY NUMBER TWO - DAY

The young Lieutenant and a few of his soldiers chat with Tom and Amy. The rest of the troops check out the ultra-light and play with the geese.

General Pierce's jeep screams up and SKIDS to a stops. General Pierce, his face red with anger, gets out, strides over and speaks sharply to the Lieutenant.

GENERAL PIERCE
Lieutenant!

LIEUTENANT
Yes, Sir.

GENERAL PIERCE
What is this? A tea party? We're
on intruder alert!

LIEUTENANT
Yes, Sir, but...

GENERAL PIERCE
I'll deal with you later.

General Pierce turns his attention to Tom, Amy and the geese who stand in front of the ultra-light.

GENERAL PIERCE
What do you think this is? A
municipal airport?

TOM
We had no choice. It was an
emergency landing. It was either
come down here or go into the
trees.

AMY
We're sorry.

General Pierce slowly turns his glare onto Amy.

GENERAL PIERCE
You're sorry? You put an entire
Air Force base on defensive alert,
you stop all air traffic coming
in and going out, you put my
entire security force on lock and
load, you create enough paperwork
to bury my staff for a week and
you're sorry?

AMY
Uh...we're very sorry.

General Pierce's glare slowly disappears.

GENERAL PIERCE
That's better.

He smiles

GENERAL PIERCE

Now how about you give me a
briefing on this mission of yours?

INT. HANGER - DAY

The ultra-light is parked among some F-16's and F-111's. General Pierce sits on a tool box, surrounded by a dozen fighter jocks, mechanics and security troops. They're all listening raptly to Amy.

AMY

...and so it's not just about these geese. If we're able to take them south and they come back on their own, then that means it could work with cranes or herons or swans or egrets or any of the endangered migratory birds...

INT. HANGER - AFTERNOON

The shadows are longer. The crowd of soldiers behind General Pierce has grown. They're still listening to Amy, entranced.

AMY

...and then there was one time, we were flying over the lake near our house, it was sunrise, and the water was like glass. We were about ten feet over the surface and I looked back and I could see all the geese reflected in the water and it was so calm that I couldn't tell which were the geese and which were the reflections...except, of course, the reflections were upside down. It was the most beautiful thing I've ever seen.

General Pierce, the fighter jocks and all the soldiers, sigh in unison. Then General Pierce looks at his watch. Startled at the time, he stands up and becomes a commander once again. He speaks sharply to the Major.

GENERAL PIERCE

Major, send out search teams and find Amy's ground crew. Then I want our best maintenance people to help them go over this aircraft with a fine tooth comb. I want it so air-worthy it could fly it to the moon. Is that clear?

MAJOR

Yes, Sir!

Nick HONKS in appreciation.

GENERAL PIERCE

And get these geese something to eat!

ALL THE GEESE HONK their thanks. The humans, including General Pierce, laugh.

EXT. HANGER - PIKE AFB - NIGHT

It's dark. The lights shine from the big hanger doors which are open. Tom, Barry and half-a-dozen Air Force mechanics work on the ultra-light. Jim, Meg and Susan hang out and talk with some curious soldiers.

AMY AND THE GEESE

wander from the hanger onto the tarmac. An almost full moon shines. Amy looks out from the glow of the hanger lights into the darkness where the shadowed forms of a dozen big aircraft beckon. She walks toward the shapes. The geese follow. As they go, the human voices, echoing from inside the hanger, become distant.

Amy finds herself drawn to the most massive form of all -- a C-5 cargo plane. It is huge beyond imagination. Two-hundred tons of steel, a wing-span of three-hundred feet, a tail assembly rising sixty feet into the air. The world's largest functioning aircraft.

Amy and the geese walk silently under the behemoth's wing. They look up in awe at the immense creature towering over them. It's strange and beautiful and oddly enchanting to see this mighty jet looming over this little girl and her birds.

The geese walk to the landing gear and look up into the cavernous opening. They peck a bit at the tires, then settle down, as if this is where they want to sleep. Amy laughs. She kneels down and pets them.

AMY

It's all kind of confusing, isn't it?

A few of the geese MURMER.

AMY

Well, I'm proud of you guys, all of you. What do you say, we just figure it out together, okay?

They MURMUR again and nuzzle up against her.

EXT. RUNWAY NUMBER ONE - PIKE AFB - MORNING

The sun rises. The air is still. Half-a-dozen big C-141 cargo jets wait in line for take off. THE CAMERA MOVES past them, one after another, until it get to the front of the line, where Tom and Amy's tiny, fragile ultra-light stands poised at the head of the runway.

INT. CONTROL TOWER - MORNING

The Captain looks out the window and speaks into his mike.

CAPTAIN

Golden Goose, you are cleared for
take-off on runway number one.
Good luck, Amy.

EXT. RUNWAY NUMBER ONE - PIKE AFB - MORNING

Tom and Amy receive their clearance and prepare to take off.

TOM

(into radio)

This is Golden Goose. Roger for
take-off on runway number one.

AMY

Dad, thank them.

TOM

(into radio)

And thanks for everything, over.

Tom REVS the engine. Amy CLUTCH CALLS to the geese who leave the marsh grass on the side of the runway and run after them. The ultra-light accelerates, with the geese running and flapping their wings behind...

DOWN THE RUNWAY

General Pierce and a dozen of his toughest fighter jocks stand in the long grass on the side of the runway. They watch the ultra-light and the geese approach and lift off. As the ultra-light gains altitude and the geese get into formation, General Pierce and his pilots salute.

EXT. MAIN GATES - PIKE AFB - MORNING

The chase van drives drive out the main gates. Jim, Meg, Barry and Susan exchange salutes with the guard.

INT. SKYSCRAPER OFFICE - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

EDWARD WEBSTER, stands at his window, looking out at the New York City skyline. He's a veteran, feature broadcast reporter in the mold of Charles Kurault, kind, insightful, a poet of the road. His secretary steps into the room.

SECRETARY

Mr. Webster, the news department wants you in Studio B to tape your next segment. And there's something here you might be interested in.

WEBSTER

What is it?

SECRETARY

It's a little article from a local paper in upstate New York. It's about a little girl who's flying down from Canada in an ultra-light with a flock of pet geese. Seems they made an emergency landing at Pike Air Force Base.

Webster reads the clipping.

EXT. GOLDEN GOOSE ULTRA-LIGHT - AIRBORNE - DAY

High above the foothills of the Allegheny Mountains. The geese look strong. The ultra-light is flying well. Tom clicks on the radio.

TOM

(into radio)

This is Golden Goose, calling Scout One, come in Scout One.

EXT. SCOUT ONE ULTRA-LIGHT - AIRBORNE - DAY

Barry flies. The soaring ridges of the Allegheny Mountains are behind him. He speaks into the radio mike.

BARRY

Golden Goose, this is Scout One, I read you loud and clear. How's it look up there?

INTERCUT RADIO CONVERSATION:

TOM

All the mechanicals are A-OK and so's the view.

BARRY

Weather report is good, but you've got the Allegheny ridge line coming up. Watch out for down-drafts, those Alleghenies don't like ultra-lights. I just had a heck of a ride.

TOM

Roger.

THE GOLDEN GOOSE ULTRA-LIGHT flies on toward the Alleghenies.

EXT. THE ALLEGHENY RIDGES - DAY

These ridges ought to be called mountains. They rise up steeply and jaggedly. The tiny ultra-light slowly approaches their looming bulk.

Tom and Amy feel themselves buffeted like a tiny leaf, carried by a strong wind. Ahead, they can see clouds and mist, literally being swept over the tops of the ridges.

AS THEY APPROACH THE CREST

the winds pick up. Tom fights the controls, trying not to show his worry. They catch a thermal and ride up higher and higher. The geese beat their wings, struggling to keep up.

AT THE CREST

they cross over the peak. The buffeting suddenly decreases. Tom smiles.

TOM

This isn't so baaaaaad....

A DOWN DRAFT grabs the ultra-light and the geese and shoots them down along the far side of the ridge as if they're on a roller coaster. They shake madly as they accelerate, faster and faster...

AMY

Dad!

Tom does his best to control the ultra-light but the little craft continues to plummet, losing altitude at a terrifying rate. They're heading for the rocks and trees below.

Tom struggles with the controls, fighting the wind. The aluminum struts strain. The cables ping, almost to a point of snapping. The hinges and cotter pins shimmy and shake.

TOM
I CAN'T FIGHT IT! IT'S TOO
STRONG!

The geese sense GEESE

Sense that something is wrong. HONKING, they fly up alongside and look at the strange thing the humans are doing. Amy looks at the geese flying just a few feet away from them. They are hardly straining. They seem to be enjoying the ride.

AMY
DAD!

TOM
I CAN'T FIGHT IT! WE'RE GOING
DOWN!

Amy keeps her eyes on the geese. They're losing altitude at the same rate as the ultra-light but they don't seem concerned. They're just riding the airflow.

AMY
DAD! LOOK AT NICK!

TOM
AMY! I'M TRYING TO KEEP US FROM
GETTING KILLED!

AMY
LOOK AT NICK!

Finally, Tom takes a glance at Nick. Then he goes back to fighting the wind with the ultra-light's controls. Then something hits him. He looks back at Nick and notes the angle of his wings.

Tom hesitates, then sees he has no choice. Tom relaxes his grip on the stick, then gently trims the ailerons. He flies with the wind, rather than against it.

Now the ultra-light REALLY starts to plummet. It takes all of Tom's courage to stick with Nick's lesson.

Lower...

And lower...

The trees rush up at them...

Twenty feet from the murderous branches and the rocky cliffs...

Ten feet...

About to crash...

SUDDENLY THE ULTRA-LIGHT SWOOPS UPWARD,

carried with the geese by the windflow bouncing up off the the ridge bottom. They're carried higher and higher. Tom and Amy are very shaken and very relieved.

AMY

Wow.

TOM

Wow, is right.

Tom waves to Nick.

TOM

Thanks, Nick.

Nick HONKS and falls back into his place in the formation.

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA FARM - EVENING

Camp is set up under the soft glow of portable gas lamps. Susan sits near the tents, talking with a woman about her age, the college friend who owns this farm. Barry, Jim and Meg work on the ultra-light.

Tom and Amy are getting the geese set up for the night. Tom finishes setting up the portable pen while Amy feeds the geese. Tom looks over at Amy. He catches her eye and they look at each other for a moment. They smile and go back to work.

A van pulls up out of the night. It has the logo of "CBS EVENING NEWS" on it's side. Edward Webster gets out followed by his crew.

WEBSTER

Hi, I'm Edward Webster...you must be the Aldens.

TOM

Tom Alden. This is Amy.

AMY

Hi.

WEBSTER

Glad to meet you. Nice night isn't it?

Amy smiles and nods.

MUSICAL MONTAGE: EDWARD WEBSTER REPORT/SHARED DREAMS:

We hear a V.O. by William Webster and see visuals as follows:

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA FARM - MORNING

Edward Webster watches as the ultra-light takes off and soars up into the sky, followed by the formation of geese. His camera crew captures it on tape.

EXT. ULTRA-LIGHT - AIRBORNE - DAY

Tom, Amy and her geese fly over the farmland of southern Pennsylvania.

WEBSTER (V.O.)

Who among us has not dreamed of flight? For how many thousands of years have we looked up at the birds and wished we could join them...?

INT. GENERAL PIERCE'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

VIDEO IMAGE: The ultra-light and the geese fly over beautiful rolling hills.

General Pierce sits in front of the television, with his wife, watching Amy and her geese.

WEBSTER (V.O.)

How many countless hours have we spent dreaming, wishing we could follow...?

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Recess. Hundreds of elementary school children play frenetically, running, jumping and SCREAMING. The ultra-light and the geese fly past, overhead. The children hear the BUZZING, look up and freeze in their tracks. They stand there silently, looking up.

WEBSTER (V.O.)

Well, right now, somewhere above us, a girl named Amy Alden and her father, Tom, are living that dream...

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

VIDEO IMAGE: The ultra-light and the geese fly over the rural suburbs of Harrisburg.

A RETIRED COUPLE sits on matching recliner chairs, eating their dinner. They watch the TV, their forkfuls of food frozen in front of them.

WEBSTER (V.O.)

Together, Amy and Tom are taking a flock of geese on a journey from Lakeville, Ontario to Delancey Valley, South Carolina. It's a journey that may hold the key to the survival of the whooping crane, the trumpeter swan and countless other endangered birds...

The Retired Man turns to his wife.

RETIRED MAN

DeLancey Valley...write that down, honey.

RETIRED WOMAN

I already did.

EXT. SKYSCRAPER - BALTIMORE

A pair of window-washers, high up on a scaffold, look down and see the ultra-light and the geese a hundred feet below them. They watch, amazed, as the little craft and its tail of birds makes its way through the glass and steel canyons of downtown Baltimore.

WEBSTER (V.O.)

There are many gifts a parent can give a child, but to live a dream, that's the most wonderful gift of all...

INT. HAROLD HIGGIN'S OFFICE - DAY

VIDEO IMAGE: The ultra-light and geese fly over the wooded banks of the C&O Canal in suburban Washington, D.C.

HAROLD HIGGINS, the middle-aged president of the company, watches the TV report along with his secretary, a couple of executives, his factory foreman and a few workers. Outside the window there's a sign visible on an attached factory building that reads: "HIGGINS ULTRA-LIGHTS."

HIGGINS

That's one of ours!

FACTORY FOREMAN

(proudly)

That's right, a J-55!

EXT. HIGHWAY - WASHINGTON, D.C. BELTWAY - DAY

Rush hour. A stationary ribbon of cars, HORNS and exhaust. Irritated commuters try to keep from going insane. Then, seen through their windshields, face after face catches a glimpse of something overhead. One after another they look up and see the ultra-light and the geese making their way south.

The faces in the windshields are all different, but they're all the same. An angry businessman grows calm at the sight. Some laughing teenagers become quiet. A couple of hard-bitten cops forget their coffee and donuts as they look up. For a moment, they all fly with Amy and her geese.

WEBSTER (V.O.)

And Amy Alden is sharing her father's gift with us. As we stand on the ground, chained by gravity and by our complicated lives, she flies past and she beckons us...

INT. BUS STATION WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Dirty, crowded and very urban. A Weary Traveler puts a quarter into a TV, attached to a plastic bench. The first IMAGE IN THE TV he sees is the ultra-light and the geese. The Traveler gazes at the image and the SOUNDS OF THE NOISY BUS STATION FADE AWAY.

WEBSTER (V.O.)

For a moment we throw off the chains and we rise up and fly with her and her geese. We join their fragile procession among the clouds...

EXT. NATIONAL MONUMENTS - WASHINGTON, D.C. MALL - DAY

The ultra-light and the geese fly along the Washington, D.C. mall, past the familiar, yet still powerful symbols of our nation -- the Lincoln Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, the Washington Monument, the Jefferson Memorial. Tourists stop in their tracks and look up.

WEBSTER (V.O.)

So to Amy Alden and her geese, this reporter says, thank you. I'm Edward Webster, earthbound, but gazing up, hoping to catch hold of a dream as it passes by.

EXT. NORTHERN VIRGINIA - DAY

The ultra-light leaves the city behind and heads toward the natural splendor rural northern Virginia.

The hills are on fire with the colors of autumn. Ahead, storm clouds gather.

INT. SALES OFFICE - DELANCEY ACRES - DAY

Al's Secretary prepares to leave for the day. Al hurries out of his office.

AL

Where are you going?

SECRETARY

Home. It's five o'clock.

AL

What about the phones?

SECRETARY

What are you talking about? The phone hasn't rung all day.

AL

Don't you watch TV? Any minute now that phone is going to be ringing off the hook.

SECRETARY

Well, any minute now, you can answer it. I'm going home.

She leaves. Al is amazed at her lack of faith. He sits down at her desk and stares at the phone, waiting for it to ring.

INT. WILDLIFE OFFICE - LAKEVILLE - DAY

An elderly CLEANING WOMAN gamely tries to tidy up the office while Fred Oliver, George boss, reads a sheet of paper. George stands in front of him, waiting. Bud hovers behind George. Fred is befuddled.

FRED

What is this?

GEORGE

It's a letter to the United States Fish and Game Department warning them about those diseased geese...

George sees the cleaning woman sweeping near the bookcase. He freezes for a moment, then relaxes as she moves on.

GEORGE

...advising them to confiscate them and destroy the nasty little things.

FRED

George, I can read. What I'm asking is, why the heck you wrote it.

GEORGE

To save the entire North American goose population from certain death from Newcastle's disease.

FRED

And you're sure your grudge against Tom Alden doesn't have anything to do with this?

George looks at Fred in shock.

GEORGE

Come on, boss, you know me better than that.

Fred eyes George skeptically.

GEORGE

It's all in the regulations. Everything's by the book.

Fred shrugs.

FRED

Alright, fax it.

George hurries off to do just that. A weary Fred sits down to do his paperwork as the cleaning woman dusts. She works her way back toward the bookcase, then she notices the letter behind it. She picks it up, reads the address and drops it into Fred's in-basket.

Fred doesn't notice. Then, after a long moment, he looks up, picks up the letter and opens it. He reads.

INT. WILDLIFE OFFICE - FAX ROOM - DAY

A converted closet holds a fax machine. George and Bud prepare to fax the letter to the United States Fish and Game Department. Fred suddenly looms behind him, reaches around George and shuts off the fax machine.

GEORGE

What...?

He turns around and finds himself face-to-face with the letter from Doctor Hamill.

FRED

You know anything about this?

George nervously gives the letter a quick glance.

GEORGE

Me? No. What is it?

FRED

It's a copy of a letter Doc Hamill sent to you saying Tom Alden's geese are right as rain.

GEORGE

You don't say. I don't know anything about that. Bud, do you know anything about that?

BUD

Not a thing.

GEORGE

(appalled)

Boss, you don't think I knew about that, do you?

Fred nods ominously.

GEORGE

You mean you think I'd do something that so, so dishonest?

Fred continues to nod ominously. He gives George and Bud a pair of very strange and threatening looks.

GEORGE

What?

FRED

George, you work for me, I can fire you. And Bud, you don't work for me, I can strangle you.

Fred advances on them. They whimper.

EXT. ULTRA-LIGHT - AIRBORNE - EVENING

A storm rolls in over the woods and fields of rural North Carolina. Tom, Amy and the geese feel the winds picking up. A big thunderhead rises up, dark and threatening, a few miles ahead of them. LIGHTNING FLASHES in the center of the storm cloud. Amy scans the ground and consults the map case. She points.

AMY

There it is! That's where we're landing!

Tom takes them down.

TOM

Not a moment too soon!

The wind blows harder.

EXT. PRIVATE STRIP - NORTH CAROLINA

The storm is raging. Rain pours down, THUNDER ROLLS and LIGHTNING CRACKS. Amy and Susan lead and shoo the frightened geese toward a small house. Tom, Jim, Meg and Barry push the ultra-lights into a rickety old hanger with the help of CASPER COLLINS, an old aviator, who's cut from the same cloth as Barry's father and grandfather.

INT. CASPER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The STORM has become even more violent. The house, literally, shakes. Tom, Susan, Meg, Jim and Barry sit around Casper's kitchen table with Casper and his wife, DORIS. Amy sits on the floor among the geese, stroking them, trying to keep them calm.

Even inside, they do not feel safe with the near-hurricane force GALES SCREAMING just outside. Their faces tell it all. The CAMERA MOVES past them, one after another, as they listen to violence of the storm.

EXT. HANGER/HOUSE - DAWN

The day breaks, calm and clear. The storm has passed, leaving behind utter and complete devastation. Amy, Tom, Jim, Meg, Barry, Susan, Casper and Doris walk, stunned, through the debris, surveying the damage. The hanger has been obliterated and:

BOTH ULTRA-LIGHT HAVE BEEN DESTROYED

Neither one is close to air-worthy. They are little more than lengths of twisted aluminum, shattered fiberglass and shredded fabric.

The geese look at the remains of The Golden Goose, very troubled at the sight. It's as if they're looking at the dead body of a friend. They peck at what's left of the wings, hoping for some response, getting none. Amy does her best to keep from crying.

BARRY

Well, I guess that's it.

JIM

What do we do now?

MEG

We could drive the geese down to
DeLancey Valley.

SUSAN

That's probably the best option.

None of them like the idea. They barely look up as Edward Webster and his crew pull up in their news van. Webster and his crew get out. Just as stunned as the others, they slowly walk through the wreckage, staring at what once was the ultra-lights. Webster's cameraman sets up his video-cam and silently starts shooting the scene.

THE IMAGE SHIFTS TO VIDEO

We now see Amy and the others, as the news video camera sees them. WE ARE WATCHING A TELEVISION SET that's showing Webster's evening broadcast.

WEBSTER (V.O.)

Not all stories have a happy ending. This week we have been following Amy Alden and her geese on their trip south...

INT. GENERAL PIERCE'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

General Pierce and his wife watch.

WEBSTER (V.O.)

But last night that trip ended as Tropical Storm David destroyed Amy's aircraft, along with her dream of taking her geese down to DeLancey Valley, South Carolina...

INT. HAROLD HIGGIN'S OFFICE - EVENING

Harold Higgins sits alone, watching.

WEBSTER (V.O.)

It was a sudden and unfortunate end to her trip, yet somehow, it's not all sadness. For somehow a dream, even one that doesn't come true elevates us, strengthens us and brings us together...

INT. CHARLEY'S OFFICE - DELANCEY VALLEY - EVENING

A very disappointed Charley sits watching TV with his partners, Perry, Paul and Pete.

WEBSTER (V.O.)

For that, Amy Alden, we thank you.
This is Edward Webster, speaking
to you from a field of broken
dreams, somewhere in North
Carolina.

Charley sighs.

PERRY

I'm afraid tomorrow's the
fifteenth, Charley. You know what
that means.

CHARLEY

I know.

Perry clicks off the TV.

PERRY

I've got to admit, I respect what
you were trying to do with this
bird thing. I don't exactly
understand it and I'm certainly
not willing to lose money on
account of it, but I respect it.

CHARLEY

Thanks.

PAUL

Cheer up, Charley. A marina's
not so bad. Those birds'll find
someplace else to go.

CHARLEY

I suppose.

Charley looks out at the fax machine and the phone on his
secretary's desk. They're silent.

EXT. HANGER/HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Tom stands among the wreckage of the hanger and the ultra-
lights. Amy, Barry, Susan and Meg sift through the debris. Jim
walks up to them.

JIM

Dad, I just talked to Charley.
He said his partners are holding
him to tomorrow's deadline.

SUSAN

I guess the only choice is to put
the geese in the van and drive
them back north.

AMY

(depressed but not
resistant)
And pen them up for the winter.

MEG

It's the only option.

Tom shakes his head.

TOM

No it's not.

All eyes turn to him.

AMY

What do you mean?

Tom pushes up his sleeves and starts trying to extricate one of
the bent pieces of aluminum from the pile.

TOM

Barry, give me a hand here. Jim,
get my tool kit out of the van.
Susan, could you ask Casper if
he has and an acetylene torch or
know where we could get one?

AMY

What about me?

TOM

You're on goose detail. Alright,
everybody, let's hop to.

AMY

What are you going to do?

TOM

You'll see.

A bit confused, they all hurry off on their assignments.

BEGIN MUSICAL MONTAGE: THE FINAL PUSH

Visuals as follows:

EXT. HANGER WRECKAGE - NIGHT

A torch glows sending sparks flying. Tom works on the remains of The Golden Goose.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Amy and Susan feed the geese as Jim and Meg finish setting up the portable pen.

EXT. CASPER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Casper and Doris carry couple of trays of sandwiches out to the Operation Goose crew.

EXT. HANGER WRECKAGE - NIGHT

Tom and Barry sweat over a wing assembly. Tom sees Amy watching them. He takes her by the shoulders, turns her around and points her to the tents. Practically asleep on her feet she's surprisingly acquiescent as she heads for the campsite. Tom goes back to work.

EXT. CASPER'S HOUSE AND HANGER WRECKAGE - NIGHT

Very late. A single pool of light glows in the night. Under its illumination, Tom and Barry work, fashioning some strange thing from the shattered remains of the two ultra-lights. The SOUNDS OF THEIR TOOLS, echo into the darkness.

:END MUSICAL MONTAGE.

EXT. TENT - DAWN

Day breaks. A DISTANT ROOSTER CROWS. The tent flaps open and Amy crawls out. Her eyes go wide at what she sees:

AN ULTRA-LIGHT -- SORT OF.

It's a strange craft indeed. Standing in front of the tents is the oddest-looking aircraft ever assembled. It's clearly a combination of the most intact parts of the two destroyed ultra-lights.

The wings are different colors. The body is patched and wired together. The entire thing is a true Rube Goldberg contraption.

Amy joins Susan, Jim and Meg who are staring at it, open-mouthed. Tom and Barry stand there proudly.

AMY
Will it fly?

TOM
Sure, it'll fly...maybe.

Amy's astonishment slowly turns to unbridled joy. She throws herself into her father's arms and hugs him. Before he can respond, she pulls away and turns to the others.

AMY
Well, what are we standing around for?

They hesitate. This ridiculous-looking aircraft doesn't exactly inspire confidence.

AMY
C'mon! Let's get a move on!

Without waiting for anyone else, Amy strides off toward the pens, giving her CLUTCH-CALL. The GEESE CALL BACK.

TOM
You heard her? Let's get a move on!

They all do just that.

EXT. LANDING STRIP - DAY

Amy and Tom sit in the jerry-built ultra-light. Barry pull starts the engine. It SPUTTERS and COUGHS and dies. He tires again. This time it STARTS UP.

At first it almost seems as if the vibrations of the engine are going to shake the little craft apart. But somehow it all holds together.

Tom exchanges a look with Barry that is as much surprised as pleased.

Susan, Meg and Jim shoo the geese toward the ultra-light.

Tom revs the engine...

Rattling madly but staying in one piece the ultra-light bounces down the runway.

The geese look at the strange craft and hesitate, reluctant to follow...

AMY
C'MON, GEESE! C'MON, GEESE!

Amy CLUTCH CALLS again and again...

The geese stop dead, refusing to follow...

Amy and Tom take off and start to gain altitude...

Amy's CLUTCH CALLS fade until they're just barely heard...

The geese look up, then they realize that Amy's really going up in this thing...

As one, all the geese start HONKING and take out after her...

Within a few running steps they're airborne and flying after the rattling ultra-light.

INT. SALE'S OFFICE - DELANCEY VALLEY - DAY

CLOSE SHOT: A fax machine sits silent. Suddenly it starts buzzing, spitting out paper. Next to it, A PHONE RINGS.

CAMERA PULLS BACK and we see that we're looking at Charley's secretary's desk. No one is around.

EXT. DELANCEY VALLEY --DAY

Perfectly quiet and peaceful. Charley stands on the shore of the lake with Perry, Paul and Pete. Charley's depressed. Perry holds some papers in his hands.

PERRY

C'mon, Charley, quit moping around. You act like not having a bird sanctuary will be the end of the world.

CHARLEY

(sadly)

In one way, it will be.

He shakes himself out of it and takes out a pen.

CHARLEY

Alright, let's sign that start order. It's marina time.

Charley is just about to sign, when a car pulls into the front gate. Then another car. And then, a veritable parade of vehicles drives through the gate. One of them is the CBS news van with Edward Webster. The other cars are filled with a variety of people -- young, old, rich and poor and everything in between.

PERRY

What in heck?

PAUL

What is this all about?

Charley turns as someone taps on his shoulder. It's his secretary. She's not happy.

SECRETARY

I thought you said you'd watch the office while I was at the doctor's.

CHARLEY

What's to watch?

She rolls her eyes and hands him about fifty feet of tangled fax paper.

SECRETARY

Faxes, requests for information, brochures, prices. And that's not all. The phones been ringing off the hook.

Perry, Pete and Paul are as surprised as Charley.

CHARLEY

It has?

SECRETARY

Of course, it has. What's the matter with you, don't you watch TV?

They see all the people getting out of their cars and looking up into the sky. Then they hear a SOUND. They look up, too.

Cresting the horizon, appearing over the trees and the lake, are Tom and Amy in the jerry-rigged ultra-light. The geese are in perfect formation behind them.

They fly across the lake toward them. The water is like glass. There's a perfect reflection of the ultra-light and the geese in the surface of the lake.

Hundreds of faces watch as Amy, Tom and the geese land. Then all the people rush toward them.

The geese see them coming, jump up and fly over the onrushing crowd of humans and land behind them.

AMY AND TOM

are surrounded by the congratulatory crowd. It's a bit like Lindberg landing in France.

PERRY, PAUL AND PETE

look on. Charley smiles to them and puts his pen back into his pocket. Perry hesitates, then smiles and tears up the start order for the marina. Charley, Perry and Paul join the crowd. Pete just stands there, mystified.

PETE

I still like to jet-ski.

AMY AND TOM

take off their helmets and hug each other. Then they turn to all the people around them, accepting congratulations.

Amy enjoys it for a moment, then she looks through the people and sees the geese on the shore of the lake. As she watches them, the SOUNDS OF THE CROWD FADE AWAY. She hears nothing but the soft breeze rustling the marsh grass and the gentle lapping of the water on the shore. She sees nothing but the geese.

THE GEESE

look back at the crush and noise of all the crazy humans. They see Amy in the middle of it all and they CLUTCH CALL to her, a bit confused but somehow at peace. Then, without another thought, as if it's the most natural thing in the world, the geese waddle through the marsh grass, ease themselves into the water and paddle out onto the lake.

CRAWL:

"The winter in DeLancey Valley was unusually mild and Amy's geese had a lovely time. And in the spring, they all left for home and arrived safe and sound. Next year, the cranes."

:FADE OUT.

- THE END -