

# Amelia Earhart and the Powder Puff Derby

Marilyn Warsofsky



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Readers Theatre: *Legendary Ladies and their Gents* by Marilyn Warsofsky is a collection of five plays based on historical women characters. For ten years, she toured the shows throughout her community. Actors and audiences loved the combination of rich history with solid theatre. We think you will too! The book includes:

[\*Molly Brown She Was Unsinkable\*](#). Full of spirit, this is Molly Brown's tale of rags to riches and her courage when the *Titanic* was sinking.

[\*Amelia Earhart and the Powder Puff Derby\*](#). This is the story of Amelia Earhart and nineteen other female aviators who competed in the harrowing, first All Women's Transcontinental Air Race in 1929. What a story!

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# AMELIA EARHART AND THE POWDER PUFF DERBY

by

Marilyn Warsofsky

## CAST

REPORTER 1: Follows the race.

REPORTER 2: Explains the competition.

REPORTER 3: Helps set up the photo shoot.

REPORTER 4: Explains the judge's opinion about stopping the race.

CITY OFFICIAL: Welcomes the contestants.

PANCHO BARNES: Daredevil female flyer, outspoken, enjoys cigars and whiskey.

RUTH NICHOLS: Close friend of Amelia, excellent flyer, crashes into a tractor.

LOUISE THADEN: Expert flyer, sure of herself.

AMELIA EARHART: Most publicized and glamorous of the female flyers and the most daring.

GEORGE PUTMAN: Slick publicist and conniver, Amelia's husband.

WILL ROGERS: Well-known humorist, journalist, and lover of flight.

## Place

From Santa Monica to Cleveland.

## Time

1929.

## Production Notes:

Several of the roles are short so the actors can very easily be double cast.

STORY: Amelia Earhart and 19 other female aviators gather to reminisce about their harrowing adventure in the first All Women's Transcontinental Air Race in 1929. They flew from Santa Monica to Cleveland in rickety planes, stopping to fuel 14 times over nine days. They questioned their sanity but not their love for flying.

REPORTER 4: It was the 1920's.

REPORTER 2: On the East Coast sophistication was blossoming.

REPORTER 3: The Flapper, short skirts, bobbed hair.

REPORTER 2: Prohibition made drinking more fun because it was illegal.

PANCHO: (*laughing*) We women even carried hidden flasks under our garters. We were pretty brazen.

REPORTER 1: The dance craze was the Charleston.

REPORTER 4: Yes, it was a time to be frivolous.

REPORTER 1: Until the Stock Market Crash of 1929. Some people lost everything.

RUTH: But it was still a great time for women.

LOUISE: We could speak our minds.

PANCHO: And we could smoke in public. (*The CAST reacts to this.*) You know, if it was up to me, I can smoke a cigar anytime.

RUTH: Sure. And finally we could vote.

PANCHO: I was an aviatrix. I flew solo in a rickety plane in the most publicized race in America. You remember the Powder Puff Derby?

LOUISE: What are you talking about Pancho? The Powder Puff Derby?

PANCHO: Yeah. But it does sound like a car race, doesn't it.

PUTNAM: It was the first All Women's Transcontinental Air Race. I wanted Amelia to be part of it. She was certainly one of the best flyers.

RUTH: It became part of the Aeronautical Exposition.

PUTNAM: Sure. But that was a while ago.

AMELIA: Not so long ago. We remember, don't we?

PANCHO: Amelia, we could never forget flying 2,800 miles from Santa Monica to Cleveland, stopping to refuel 19 times, could we?

AMELIA: It was exciting and dangerous--we didn't realize how dangerous.

REPORTER 3: It was the first Cross-Country Air Race for Women.

REPORTER 4: You remember what the papers called it...A Thrill for the Nation. The 1929 National Air Races and Aeronautical Exposition in Cleveland, Ohio.

REPORTER 3: The final destination in Cleveland included fireworks, 5,000 pigeons—

ALL: Uh-huh. We remember the pigeons.

REPORTER 3: And Charles Lindbergh in person!

AMELIA: The heat was almost unbearable in those open cockpits. We flew nine tough days over deserts, mountains, and plains. What were we thinking?

LOUISE: Amelia, you know we were daring. We had courage.

RUTH: Maybe we were just a little bit out of our minds!

PANCHO: You're right, Ruth. I remember Will Rogers saying--

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