

CRUISE LINE IS IT ANYWAY PILOT

Written by

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FADE IN:

COLD OPEN

INT. NEWS ROOM

A NEWS ANCHOR is sitting at his desk reading the news. He is attempting to maintain his composure but he is very obviously terrified.

NEWS ANCHOR

As I am sure many of you are aware, at 6:03am this morning, there was an outbreak in the United States. A mass epidemic. It is spreading extremely fast and it's symptoms have made humans, for a lack of a better term, "zombies." The Pentagon has reached out to every news outlet to inform people to stay inside at all costs. No one should leave the safety of their home.

He gets choked up, shifts his eyes around, and checks his watch.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

At this point, scientists are working around the clock to find out how the outbreak started, how it is spread, and any potential cures. So far, they are in the dark.

Beat.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

God help us all.

Suddenly there is a scream from behind the camera. The news anchor looks behind the camera. He becomes terrified and begins to run. The news station is now in complete chaos. The camera tips over and statics out.

END OF COLD OPEN

THEME SONG (very upbeat)

ACT ONE

INT. STAGE-DAY

A woman, CAPTAIN LISA WATERS, stands on a stage in a large room. Inside the room are circular tables with white tablecloths on them. The tables are set with gold silverware, white plates, and crystal clear wine glasses. It looks to be an event space which serves as a theater and a dining area.

Lisa is tap dancing on the stage. She is wearing a navy blue captains suit and a captains hat. She has a huge smile on and is flailing her arms like a tap dancer in a 1950s movie.

LISA
(singing/warbling)
There's no business like shoow
business, there's no business I
know!

She stops tap dancing.

LISA (CONT'D)
You hear those acoustics? Just
incredible sound. Cruise Ship
Magazine named the David Henderson
Memorial Stage and Dining Room the
fifth greatest stage on a cruise
ship in 2015.

Beat.

LISA (CONT'D)
(frankly)
David Henderson died of a heart
attack in this room. But the
acoustics were phenomenal! C'mon!
Let me show you the crew!

INT. GREEN ROOM-DAY

Lisa makes the camera men follow her through the backstage area into the green rooms where there are several people.

VELMA, a woman in a long black gown is holding a comically long cigarette holder. She is sitting on top of a grand piano. MARTIN, a man who looks to be about 105 is sitting at the piano. He is eating a ham sandwich.

LISA
Oh! Velma! This is the camera crew
I was talking about.

Velma speaks as though she is the femme fatale in a 1930s film noir movie. Her eyes light up when she hears the word camera.

VELMA

Yes yes! How exciting. Y'know, camera boy, when I was about 6 months old, my parents told me they knew I was destined to be a star? I crawled up on the kitchen counter and began to perform what can only be described as my rendition of "The Hills are alive" from *The Sound of Music*.

LISA

Yes. And this is Martin, Velma's piano accompaniment. He's a dream.

Martin eyes the cameras with disdain and goes back to his ham sandwich.

A normal looking man in his 30s, DALTON, walks into the green room. He is wearing workout clothes.

LISA (CONT'D)

Oh! This is Dalton. The greatest circus performer on any boat EVER! He was almost on the cast of Cirque de Soleil. Why did you decline again?

DALTON

I am currently not allowed back in Canada. Some people considered my street art to be "offensive" and "not suitable for children's eyes" or "anyone's eyes for that matter."

Dalton uses big air quotes when speaking. He rolls his eyes.

DALTON (CONT'D)

I'm gonna go practice Lisa. I need to shut out the negative thoughts in my head.

He leaves the green room.

LISA

Okay! And over here we have Jill and Eric.

Lisa gestures to two people sitting on the couch. Both JILL and ERIC look to be in their 20s. They appear to be the most normal out of the bunch.

JILL
Hi guys.

ERIC
Hello.

LISA
So these are the camera people I was telling you about.
(addressing the camera crew)
These guys are our comedy team! They're insanely funny. Honestly it's dangerous for me to go to one of their shows cause I always end up busting a darn rib! Tell them a joke, guys.

JILL
Okay. Um Eric, why did the man throw the clock?

ERIC
Why Jill?

JILL
He wanted to see time fly.

Lisa bursts out laughing. She is doubled over. No one else is laughing.

DUEL TALKING HEADS

Jill and Eric are being interviewed in a talking head.

JILL
Lisa loves that joke.

ERIC
Yeah, whenever she asks us to tell a joke we always use that one.

JILL
She always reacts that way.

ERIC
I wish I could like *anything* as
much as Lisa likes that joke.

CUT BACK

INT. GREEN ROOM - DAY

Lisa is still laughing. Jill and Eric eye the camera.

LISA
(wiping away tears)
If the performers on this ship were
any more talented, it would
probably be illegal! ONWARD! To the
control room!

Lisa puts her hand up like she's holding a sword. She is posing like George Washington in the Delaware crossing painting. Everyone else is just staring at her.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Lisa is squatting and is crossing her arms. She is surrounded by her crew.

LISA
MTV, welcome to my crib.

She laughs and gets up.

LISA (CONT'D)
Just kidding! But this *is* where the
magic happens. You saw the
entertainment but now you want to
see where the bread and butter is
MADE! These guys keep the darn ship
running!

Lisa gestures to the far back corner where an extremely old man, EZEKIEL, is standing looking scared. He looks ancient and is wearing clothes from the 1700s. He is holding a mop and a bucket.

LISA (CONT'D)
(pirate voice)
This is Ezekiel. Hardest workin'
swabbie I ever seen.

EZEKIAL
What are those?

LISA
Oh, those are cameras, Zeke.

EZEKIAL
Not a fan. Not at all.

LISA
Sorry matey but I need to document
this gorgeous ship. Speaking of
gooooorgeous...

Lisa gestures to a man dressed very similarly to Lisa, minus
the captains hat. He looks to be in his late 40s with salt
and pepper hair and a very well-trimmed beard.

LISA (CONT'D)
This man.
(she gets choked up)
This man is the real MVP. My first
mate. My first man. My first kiss.
JUST KIDDING.

She laughs too long.

LISA (CONT'D)
This is Howard!

HOWARD adjusts his glasses and does an awkward wave.

HOWARD
Hi.

LISA
Oh come on! Don't you have more to
say?

HOWARD
Hello.

LISA
(holding her hand to her
mouth, whispering)
He's shy.
(louder)
But he's the greatest darn dang
dabbit first mate in the 7 seas.

Howard smiles.

LISA (CONT'D)
Okay, just give the boys one
interesting fact about yourself,
Howard. Just one.

Howard hesitates.

HOWARD
I guess, it's my birthday today.

A quick cut to Lisa shows that her mouth is on the floor. She is absolutely appalled that she didn't know this about Howard before.

LISA
Are you...KIDDING ME? Birthday??
And I didn't...know?

HOWARD
I didn't really think it was
important.

LISA
(very quietly and close to
Howard's face)
This is the most important goddam
day in the entire world. I hope you
like chocolate cake, buddy! Cause
it's all the cake batter we have.

Before Howard can even respond Lisa is running away on a mission.

HOWARD
No Lisa please!

Howard lets out a long sigh and walks back to the steering wheel.

CUT TO:

INT. SUITE-DAY

A family is standing around a room unpacking their suitcases into drawers and closets.

HOLLY
Abbi! Enough. Turn off the witch
music.

ABIGAIL
It's Kate Bush, Mom.

HOLLY
Bush WHO?

CUT TO: TALKING
HEAD

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM-DAY

HOLLY and MITCH are being interviewed in a talking head. Holly looks distressed.

HOLLY

I got our family a tropical cruise as a college graduation present for Lance, our youngest boy. Turns out all he wanted was a new keyboard and a Crunchyroll subscription.

MITCH

What is Crunchyroll?

HOLLY

It's an anime subscription website.

MITCH

What is anime?

Holly just looks into the camera and shakes her head as if to say "I couldn't tell you."

CUT BACK

INT. SUITE-DAY

HOLLY

(chanting)

Cruise! Cruise! CRUISE!

MITCH

Who wants a Bloody Mary?

HOLLY

Oh me! Ben?

Holly is addressing their oldest child, BEN. He looks to be a very hip 26 year old man. He is wearing a t-shirt for a cool underground band.

BEN

Uh, sure.

MITCH

Abbi?

ABBI

What *time* is it?

HOLLY

Bloody Mary time!

Mitch checks his watch.

MITCH

10:30am.

ABBI

(sighs)

Sure why not? I mean what else do you do on a cruise except get drunk?

HOLLY

And bond with your family! Your squuuuaaaaaa!

Holly hits a dab and does double peace signs.

ABBI

Mom. Absolutely not.

HOLLY

Whateves.

Mitch looks around the room and gets confused.

MITCH

Where's Lance?

HOLLY

Yeah where is that boy? This trip is for him.

BEN

He said he was going to the bathroom about an hour ago.

CUT TO:

INT. BROOM CLOSET - DAY

LANCE is sitting in a dark, tight broom closet. He is nerdy looking with glasses and keychains. He is playing on his Switch.

CUT BACK

INT. SUITE-DAY

Mitch and the kids look concerned.

MITCH

Well I guess we should look for him.

HOLLY

Ooooh! Family adventure. I'll get the compass!

INT. STAGE-DAY

Velma has taken a camera man and forced him to follow her around. Like she was when we first saw her, she is sitting on the piano, singing loudly as Martin plays softly.

VELMA

Make it jazzy, Martin. And a one a two a threefourfive and six.

Velma begins to scat. It's really hard to watch. While playing, Martin takes a bite of a new ham sandwich.

Suddenly, Lisa runs through the door.

LISA

Emergency! NOT GOOD. Staff meeting. Now.

INT. CONTROL ROOM-DAY

Lisa has gathered around all the crew we've met, except Howard, and a few other people. She looks determined.

LISA

Okay. We all know Howard right?

DALTON

Who?

LISA

C'mon guys! Howard! The first mate? Handsome handsome face?

Most of the crew looks confused.

LISA (CONT'D)

He's our brave, valiant first mate and, well, it's his birthday today and nobody knew.

JILL

Lisa we were rehearsing. Is this really important?

LISA
Is your mom important, Jill?

JILL
(mumbles)
My mom is dead.

LISA
Oh god...sorry Jill. But yes. Yes
this is important. What are we
gonna do? That man can't just spend
his birthday with no one
acknowledging him! He needs to see
he's loved.

DALTON
I could sculpt Howard as a naked
Grecian God.

LISA
Interesting...interesting. I don't
not like that idea.

VELMA
I know! We should put on a show!
With acts! And intermissions! And
it's all about Howard! A Howard
Hootenanny Variety show!

Lisa ponders for a while.

LISA
Yeah! Yeah! That's what this boat
needs. A show!

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

A New York City street is in complete chaos. People are
running and screaming. A zombie is chasing after a young
woman. Maybe someone shouts "I'm walking here!"

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN

INT. CASINO - DAY

Mitch and Abbi are in the casino looking for Lance. There are very few people in the casino, as always.

MITCH

Y'know, have you ever put any thought into moving back home?

ABBI

Dad. Please. Not now.

MITCH

I'm just letting you know that your mother and I wouldn't be opposed. Life's tough out there for a 20 something hard-working artist like yourself.

ABBI

I'm not that hard-working.

MITCH

I don't know. When I was your age I was on the streets selling sappy love poems.

Abbi stops walking and looks at her dad. She smiles at him. He looks embarrassed.

ABBI

Are you serious? Mr. Project development. Data data data.

She does a fake robot voice and hands as she says this.

MITCH

Funny. And yes! I had feelings. Still do. In fact, I cry almost everyday. I just cry all the time as I've gotten older. I cried at a picture of a sunset, at an episode of Price is Right. Heck, I cried just staring at a Target ad. Not even a commercial, a billboard.

Beat.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Life's hard, Abbi. You have the rare privilege of parents who truly care. Don't forget that.

ABIGAIL

Thanks pops.

Ben comes jogging into the Casino.

BEN

Hey guys. Mom's Titanic-ing on the front of the ship. It's pretty funny but also a bird shit on her.

MITCH

Aw shoot, I knew that was gonna happen eventually, didn't know it would be so soon. Coming.

Ben, Mitch, and Abbi leave the Casino.

CUT TO:

INT. STAGE - AFTERNOON

Lisa is walking around as the entertainers rehearse their various acts for the variety show.

Lisa walks up to Jill and Eric.

LISA

Heyyyyy what are the two funniest people in the world working on?

JILL

Well, neither of us have actually seen Howard laugh so we're not sure if he knows what humor is.

ERIC

So we decided to just do "The Roast of Howard."

Eric and Jill get in "yo mama" poses.

JILL

Howard's so boring that when he reads "War and Peace" the book falls asleep.

ERIC

Howard is so bland, people eat him when they're getting over a stomach flu. That one's not great.

LISA

Okay okay I got it. So like...
Howard is so beautiful, my stomach
hurts when I see him...because his
face is just so nice to look at.

Beat.

LISA (CONT'D)

No not good. Sorry. I'll leave the
comedy to you two! But seriously,
don't be too mean because Howard
has a soft heart. Do not hurt him.

CUT TO:

TALKING HEAD

Jill and Eric are being interviewed in a talking head.

JILL

Howard's so boring they were going
to put him down when he was born
but the doctors literally forgot
about him.

ERIC

Howard is so boring when he started
talking to a Sloth, it ran away.

JILL

Howard's so boring he spoiled the
end of "The Last Airbender" movie
for me cause he actually watched
it...cause he's so boring.

CUT BACK

INT. STAGE - AFTERNOON

Lisa continues to walk around.

She stops at Velma and Martin.

LISA

(bad shaggy impression)
Jinkies, Velma! Let's see what you
got.

VELMA

Hm. Alright this is what I have so
far.

(MORE)

VELMA (CONT'D)

(singing)

Howard. Oh Howard. You're a man and
you were born today. Howard Oh
Howard.

Martin plays a little tune to accompany Velma's singing. He
cuts the piano off abruptly.

VELMA (CONT'D)

That's all we have. Sorry, Lisa we
just don't know much about the guy.

LISA

Yeah me neither. He's from Ohio?
Cleveland? Oh! And once I heard him
listening to Serial the podcast.

VELMA

Alright. Well I'll see if I can
work with that.

A loud crash is heard from the stage area. Lisa runs over.
Dalton is on the stage in an emergency sail boat. The kind
that they have ready on the deck of the ship.

DALTON

Sorry Lisa I dropped an oar.

LISA

Is that one of our emergency
lifeboats, Dalton. That is very
illegal you can't take those from
the ship.

DALTON

Art has no limits Lisa. I need it
for my piece. You see, I'm taking
inspiration from the book "Life of
Pi" in which a young man is trapped
on a boat with a Tiger but I am
the little boy and Howard is the
Tiger. Both misunderstood beings,
trapped on a ship. A ship within a
ship. Beautiful really.

LISA

Bring it back to where it belongs,
Dalton. What if there's an
emergency?

CUT TO:

INT. NEWS ANCHOR DESK

It is the same news anchor as in the cold open reporting the latest update. He is dressed in disheveled clothing and looks horrible.

NEWS ANCHOR

EMERGENCY. The world is ending. Please, hug your loved ones if they are still human. And because I feel like it's the perfect opportunity to say whatever I want: I ran over a cat in eighth grade. I stole my dad's car and was going on a joyride.

Beat.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Oh God it feels good to get that off my chest.

Suddenly, a zombie runs and attacks the News Anchor, ripping his chest to shreds.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Nooooo Karmaaaa killed me in the ennnndddd...

His voice slowly fades out.

CUT BACK

INT. BROOM CLOSET - AFTERNOON

Lance is still sitting in the broom closet playing video games.

Suddenly, Ezekiel opens the door.

EZEKIAL

Child. What are you doing in my room?

LANCE

You live in here?

EZEKIAL

I don't *live* anywhere.

LANCE

What does that mean?

Ezekiel's eyes dart back and forth.

EZEKIAL

Nothing...Your family is looking for you. I heard them talking about it.

LANCE

I don't care.

EZEKIAL

A scallywag, I see?

LANCE

Are you from the 1500s?

EZEKIAL

Not quite. But close. Do you want to see something cool?

LANCE

Uh, sure. I got nothing else to do.

Lance gets out of the closet and follows Ezekiel. Ezekiel's wooden mop bucket is sloshing around.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOW - AFTERNOON

Holly is standing in the very front of the ship with a pina colada in her hand.

HOLLY

I'm *QUEEN* of the world! Yeah you heard me! I'm the queen. This ocean is a Matriarch! Take that Blackbeard!

Mitch, Ben, and Abbi come running to find Holly.

MITCH

Sweetie, could you get down from there?

Holly gets down from the very front of the ship and goes over to Mitch, Ben, and Abbi. She puts her hand on Abbi's face.

HOLLY

Oh Abbi. My little princess. We will rule the ocean.

(MORE)

HOLLY (CONT'D)
(with her hand to her
face, in a whisper to
abbi)
With an iron vagina.

Abbi smiles.

ABBI
Totally, mom.

BEN
Did you guys make an headway on
finding Lance?

MITCH
No, we can't find the boy. He
probably just wants to be alone.

ABBI
Yeah but this trip was supposed to
be about the family. C'mon guys we
can find them.

Abbi starts to lead her family out. She turns around to her
mom.

ABBI (CONT'D)
And mom, let's get you some food.

HOLLY
GOD yes.

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DUSK

Lisa and Howard are staring out of the front of the ship. The
sun is setting.

LISA
This is my favorite time of the day
to stand here. The ocean always
looks so impossibly beautiful.

Howard smirks.

HOWARD
Sometimes I come out at night when
the lights are off. That's my
favorite time.

A couple moments pass.

LISA
Say, Howard, where are you from
again?

HOWARD
Long Island.

Lisa gives him a confused look.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
I know, I know. I don't seem like
the Long Island type. Well we're
not all guidos and cops.

LISA
No it's not that. I just thought
you were from Ohio is all.

HOWARD
That's where my father was from. We
had his funeral there. That's why I
had to miss work that week.

LISA
Ah ah. My mistake. I'm sorry.

Lisa tries to laugh off the awkward encounter.

CUT TO:

TALKING HEAD

Howard is being interviewed for a talking head.

HOWARD
Well. I watch court and cop dramas.
I ski sometimes. I go grocery
shopping to clear my mind. I have a
weakness for crossword puzzles if
they're put in front of me. I read
a lot. I run a pretty successful
internet forum about the *Fast and
the Furious* franchise. It's called
"The Speed Boys."

Howard smiles.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Did that answer your question? What
I do for fun? Why is everyone
trying to get to know me lately?

CUT BACK

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DUSK

Howard and Lisa are still standing in the control room.

LISA

Okay, one last thing Howard. Why didn't you tell anyone it was your birthday today?

Howard sighs.

HOWARD

Well, to tell you the truth, Lisa. I had a very traumatic birthday in eighth grade. My cat was run over by a mysterious self-driving car. I always just associate my birthday with that experience and the pain comes back every year. I loved that cat.

Beat.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Also my parents got divorced on my 10th birthday. On my 3rd birthday I saw a man have a heart attack and die. On my 18th birthday Gwen broke up with me before we went off to separate colleges. Just recently on my 31st birthday someone threw a baseball at my head.

LISA

...So you typically don't celebrate your birthday?

HOWARD

I hate birthdays. Well, no, they hate me.

Lisa makes a nervous face. And looks at the camera.

CUT TO:

EXT. SWAMP - DUSK

The world is still in complete chaos. A group of people are standing in a circle. They are wearing overalls and are covered in mud. They are holding torches and pitchforks.

There is one WOMAN sitting in a large wicker chair.

WOMAN
I AM THE QUEEN OF FLORIDA. Bow
before me!

The group of people bow.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Yes...yes...chaos.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Lisa is speaking into a microphone. She is giving an
announcement to the whole ship.

LISA
Attention passengers. A mandatory
meeting will be held at the stage
today.

CUT TO:

INT. SUITE - NIGHT

Abbi, Mitch, Ben, and Holly are in their suite. Abbi is
reading a Fantasy book. Ben is showing Holly how to post on
her Instagram story and Mitch is shoving his socks into a
drawer.

Lisa's announcement continues into this room.

LISA (V.O.)
(over intercom)
There will be dinner and a SHOW! So
don't forget to wear your bowties
and garters. Don your favorite
cane. And if you've got a diamond,
why not show it off?

CUT TO:

INT. STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

Ezekiel is showing Lance the surprise thing he mentioned before. They are in the storage room that houses all the booze.

Lisa's announcement is just finishing up.

LISA (V.O.)
(over intercom)
I repeat, this is mandatory.
Everyone needs to come. Especially
if your name starts with an H...and
ends with an oward. Wait shoot.
Okay. Bye.

EZEKIAL
A strange woman, indeed.

Lance can't take his eyes off the amount of booze.

LANCE
Damn dude. We got enough liquor on
this ship to last a lifetime.

EZEKIAL
Exactly. It's like we're preparing
for the apocalypse or something.

Lance sees something in the corner of the room.

LANCE
Oh sweet! Unlimited Red bulls!

EZEKIAL
Red...bull?

LANCE
It gives you wings dude.

EZEKIAL
But I already can levita...wait no
nothing. I said nothing.

LANCE
Hold on. Are you a g-g-ghost??

EZEKIAL
You better not tell anyone kid. I
need this job.

LANCE
What?

EZEKIAL

Well not for doubloons but this boat is keeping me tied to the Earthly realm. I'd rather not go to the next life...not yet at least.

LANCE

Whatever dude. You're secret is safe with me.

Lance checks his Switch to see the time. It's 7:30pm.

LANCE (CONT'D)

Aw geez I guess I'd better meet up with my family. I'm sure they're getting semi-worried. Thanks for the tour, Zeke.

Lance leaves the storage room and heads back to his family leaving Ezekiel alone.

EZEKIAL

Zeke...I- I like that.

Ezekiel smiles to himself.

CUT TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Lisa is giving a pep talk to the performers.

LISA

Okay so I'll start out with a little speech, then it's Dalton. And Dalton, you've got 10 minutes. That's it. I don't want another 30 minute long rant about Monsanto, okay?

Dalton has his eyes closed with his head looking down to the floor. He is rocking back and forth. He silently, without looking up, holds up 10 fingers then does a thumbs up sign.

LISA (CONT'D)

Alright. Then it'll be Eric and Jill.

Eric and Jill nod their heads.

LISA (CONT'D)

Then Velma and Martin.

VELMA
 (singing)
 Yeeeeessss.

LISA
 Right. And then I'll close it all
 up with a little heartwarming
 speech that will most assuredly
 make Howard burst into all the pent
 up tears he's had inside him that
 he's never let out.

Lisa puts her hand out.

LISA (CONT'D)
 Howard on three?

They rest of the crew puts their hands in the center.

ALL
 One, two, three... HOWARD!

CUT TO:

INT. SEATING AREA - NIGHT

Lance is wading through the large groups of passengers getting tables for the show. He spots his family and saunters over to them. Holly, who has been surveying the area for Lance spots her son and practically tackles him with a hug.

HOLLY
 Baby!!! I wish you wouldn't do
 that!! We really missed you.

LANCE
 Sorry mom.

MITCH
 I was starting to have visions that
 you made a raft and went overboard.

ABBI
 College really didn't change much
 about you, Lancey.

LANCE
 Mas agora eu sei falar Português.

His family gives him confused looks.

LANCE (CONT'D)
I said "But now I can speak Portuguese." So...that's something.

BEN
Pretty cool, lil bro.

LANCE
Don't call me that.

The family settles down into a table.

MITCH
So what's this show about? Does anyone know?

ABBI
Not a clue.

Just as she says that the lights go down and there is a spotlight on stage. Lisa appears in a full tuxedo, with a cane and Captains hat that has the height of a top hat. She receives polite applause.

LISA
Beloved passengers, I am your Captain Lisa Waters. Let me get one thing clear, I love each and every one of you. Something inside of you desired to see the world. Not by plane, not by car, but by boat: the most superior mode of transportation. You're here because you love the salty seas just as much as me...s. But I know what you're asking. Why are you *here*? Well we're gathered here to pay homage to a very special person. A person who rarely receives any attention. My First mate Howard Goldstein!

A spotlight appears on Howard who is standing by the door in the back of the hall. He shields his eyes from the bright light and looks confused. The audience shifts their attention to him and politely claps again.

LISA (CONT'D)
This is for you Howard!

Lisa walks backstage and Dalton comes out. He is wearing a skin tight black morph suit with only his face exposed. He has his hands behind his back.

DALTON

Because my original idea was turned down, I have been forced to go a more cliched and safe route. My apologies if what you are about to see is too postmodern.

Dalton pulls his hands out and reveals he has two grotesque sock puppets. One is a hideous portrayal of Howard and one is a cloud-like being with pink scars and oozing green puss.

He puts on a very masculine voice for Howard's puppet.

DALTON (CONT'D)

(as Howard's puppet)

God. Is that you?

Dalton changes to a terrifying voice for the "God puppet."

DALTON (CONT'D)

(as the God puppet)

Tis I. What is my child?

CUT TO:

INT. BACK OF HALL - NIGHT

While Dalton's performing, Howard is watching. He is extremely embarrassed because of what's happening and because there is attention on him as people go back and forth in looking at him and looking at Dalton in disgust.

Lisa runs to Howard.

LISA

Howard! Are you surprised?

HOWARD

Honestly, no. You did really kinda give it away in the announcement.

LISA

Yeah...shoot. That's my b. Well are you happy? Birthday boy.

She nudges him. Howard struggles with whether or not he should let Lisa down. He doesn't want to disappoint her after all the trouble she's been through.

HOWARD

Yeah. Lisa this is great. Thank you.

Lisa throws on a huge grin.

LISA

Good.

Without another word, Lisa runs back stage. Howard smiles as she leaves.

CUT BACK

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Meanwhile, Dalton is still going. He is screaming.

DALTON

(as Howard puppet)

GOD GOD WHY? Why have I been cursed
with a tongue but no voice.

Dalton is screeching as the God puppet. People look concerned.

Lisa comes out on stage to stop this nonsense.

LISA

Okay!!!! Big round of applause
for...that. Dalton, please get off
stage.

There is a smattering of applause.

LISA (CONT'D)

That was GOOD. Okay onto the next
act. Truly the two funniest people
in the world: Jill and Eric!

Jill and Eric walks out on stage.

JILL

Hey Howard! Happy birthday! Y'know
it's funny, I didn't know drying
paint had birthdays!

The audience lightly laughs.

JILL (CONT'D)

Because he's so boring! Like
watching paint dry!

The audience laughs a little more.

ERIC
We're kidding Howard. You know we
like you.

CUT TO:

INT. SEATING ARE - NIGHT

Ben leans over to Abbi.

BEN
Who is that beautiful woman?

ABBI
The one telling the horrible jokes?

BEN
Uh huh.

ABBI
I don't know dude. Either Jill or
Eric? Didn't you just break up with
Sydney? Didn't you guys date for
like 2 years?

BEN
Yeah...but there's nothing more
romantic than a cruise ship
romance.

Mitch breaks out into uproarious laughter and startles his
whole family. He laughs for about a minute and wipes the
tears from his eyes.

MITCH
Oh god...paint drying...shoo wee.

Abbi and Ben rolls their eyes at each other and smile.

CUT BACK

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Eric and Jill are on the stage laying on their backs.

JILL
And then Howard's like:

Jill and Eric both start doing bicycle kicks. The audience
breaks into huge laughter.

ERIC
 Alright that's our time! Happy
 birthday, Howard!!

The audience breaks into huge applause.

LISA
 Give it up one more time for Jill
 and Eric!

The audience keeps cracking up and applauding.

LISA (CONT'D)
 Next up, the very very beautiful
 vocal stylings of Miss Velma
 Sinclair and the Ivory tickling of
 Mr. Martin McDonald!

A disgruntled Martin slowly wheels his Grand Piano on stage while Velma sits on top of it holding a very dramatic stage pose. She breaks her pose and speaks into the microphone.

VELMA
 Ladies and Gentlemen, what you're
 about to see is a once and a
 lifetime opportunity. Except I sing
 on this ship every Thursday,
 Friday, and Saturday from 7pm to
 midnight but STILL, this song is an
 original. From our hearts to
 Howard's ears, this is "First mate
 of my heart" by Velma Sinclair.

Martin clears his throat.

LISA
 (sighs)
 And Martin McDonald. Okay! A one a
 two a three and a four.

Martin begins to play a soft and tender tune. Lisa closes her eyes and begins to really feel the music. You can tell she's about to croon a real tune.

Suddenly Ezekiel runs on the stage. He looks frazzled.

EZEKIAL
 Stop this nonsense! Lisa, there's a
 man in a boat who's overboard.

Lisa runs in from backstage.

LISA
 What?!

EZEKIAL
On the Port Bow!

Lisa runs to help the man outside. Howard follows her out.

While they are gone the crowd is getting concerned. There are mutterings and concerned whispers.

VELMA
Ezekiel! You *had* to wait until it was my turn to run up on stage?

EZEKIAL
(sarcastically)
Oh did I stop you from singing your Devil music? I'm deeply sorry.

Velma crosses her arms in anger.

CUT TO:

INT. FAMILY TABLE - NIGHT

The Toplin family is sitting around the table chatting.

HOLLY
Oh gosh I hope that man is okay.

MITCH
Don't know why he would be out on the Atlantic at night in a Sailboat.

ABBI
Hey, whatever *floats* your boat.

LANCE
Boo.

Suddenly Ezekeil appears out of thin air.

EZEKIAL
Did you call me?

The rest of the Toplin family looks surprised but Lance just shrugs his shoulders.

EZEKIAL (CONT'D)
Nah Zeke you're good.

INT. BACK OF HALL - NIGHT

Lisa, Howard, and a man in a yellow rain hat and coat come running back into the Dining hall.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Howard, Lisa, and the RAINCOAT MAN come running on stage. They all look terrified.

RAINCOAT MAN

I have a horrible announcement.
Doom! Destruction! The world is in
tatters! A disease has broken out.
Apocalypse. Chaos.

The man slowly crumbles to his knees on stage. Dalton is peering from behind the curtain to the stage.

DALTON

(whispered to himself)
Beautiful performance. And he used
a sailboat. Incredible.

The audience becomes extremely confused and eventually erupts into chaos.

LISA

Please! Please, Passengers! It'll
be okay!

Lisa looks at Howard with concern. They share a moment.

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

INT. TALKING HEAD

Howard is being interviewed for a talking head.

HOWARD

On my 15th birthday my younger
sister won a dance competition and
everyone forgot about me. Oh and on
my 32nd birthday the world ended.

Howard stares at the camera for a while.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

I hate birthdays.

END OF PILOT