

EXT. CRUISE SHIP POOL DECK - PRESENT DAY

OVER SOFT MARIMBA AND STEEL PAN DRUMS:

An upbeat 30-something GAY GUY leads a water Zumba class.

Old women play shuffleboard and laugh.

A woman in a one-piece swimsuit overloads a plate with shrimp

On the pool deck, a MOTHER (40s) vigorously rubs sunscreen into her DAUGHTER's (11) back. She turns to her HUSBAND.

MOTHER

Greg, the excursion is in one hour, and you haven't packed your day bag. *When* you want a snack, I'm not letting you take Alana's Cliff Bar.

HUSBAND

Okay, I hear you.

MOTHER

You *say* you hear me, and yet we were the ones that held up the boat at Key West.

The mom is still rubbing sunscreen.

DAUGHTER

Mom, can I go to the kid's zone?

MOTHER

Not now Alana!

(breathes)

Wait, I'm being crazy. The Schwartz Christmas vacation is halfway over, and I'm yelling at my family.

FAMILY

(sighing in unison)

I love you.

A WHISTLE rings and the music cuts out. CRUISE DIRECTOR GINA (49, Southern) stands on a small platform with a megaphone. She masks her deep alarm with positivity.

GINA

Hey, y'all... Programming director Gina here! Like at Aruba, we unfortunately cannot stop for our excursion at St. Thomas.

The happy passengers "Awww" understandingly.

GINA (CONT'D)

I know. Bummer. But due to that kooky business with the ongoing turtle flu, we're still looking for somewhere we can gain government access to, uh, legally dock...

The passengers murmur, confused.

GINA (CONT'D)

But before y'all get the cruise blues, there will be karaoke in the seashell lounge tonight, and I'll be your fabulous emcee!

Concerned chatter. Soft STEEL PAN MUSIC returns.

GINA (CONT'D)

So while we figure out which governments are, uh still
(under her breath)
operational

PASSENGER (V.O.)

What?!

GINA

(Overcompensating)
Prepare to settle in for two extra days in paradise!

The crowd panics. The STEEL PAN music swells. A BOOMING CDC missile FLIES overhead, silencing everyone.

GINA (CONT'D)

Maybe three more days.

SMASH CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SUPER: 100 YEARS LATER

A man repels down the boat's hull, scraping a mass of barnacles to reveal over the faded cruise logo,

TITLE: "THE ARK"

On balconies, women send seagulls off to sea from their forearms. A seagull carrying a huge fish in its mouth lands on the arm of MYRTLE BEACH (40s). She pumps her fist and runs a hand through her silver crew cut.

People dressed in handmade TOGAS mill about the ship's deck: a bustling public bazaar.

A young SCHOOL MARM teaches KIDS at a blackjack table. She points to a wooden plank that reads BOW vs. STARBOARD.

Crowning the ship is a huge SAIL made from sewn-together bathing suits.

INT. DINING HALL.

Families fill out 100 round tables. Two regal PAINTINGS of the VICE EMPEROR (30s) and the EMPEROR (ancient) loom.

Celebratory BUNTING hangs. WORKERS hang a sign reading, "HAPPY COMMEMORATION DAY: 100 years in paradise!"

SOLOMON (40s) – meek, shrimpy, and currently giddy – returns to his assigned table with a plate of food. He joins his family: Myrtle Beach, MARGARITAVILLE (RITA) (17), and Jimmy Buffet (JB) (11).

SOLOMON

Myrtle, honey, the fish at the buffet is amazing.

MYRTLE

Baby, we're sailing through bountiful waters, today. The tuna look like freaking dolphins.

RITA

(Under her breath)
They don't taste like dolphins.

SOLOMON

Hey, now!

MYRTLE

Hon, you'll have plenty of sweet, sweet dolphin meat tomorrow for Commemoration Day.

JB

And you'll get to hear my speech! I'm learning so much from Grandma. Did you know they didn't harvest turtle treadmill power until Ark year 15?

RITA

I can't believe you want to participate in this whole charade, JB. This holiday is urchin shit.

SOLOMON

Margaritaville, language! Just be proud of your brother? It's a huge honor that he's going to present on the history of the ark to everyone alive in the world.

RITA

(playing with her food)
Yeah, well, I'm not going.

SOLOMON

Like hell you're not going!

MYRTLE

Rita, this is very important to your father.

Rita rolls her eyes.

SOLOMON

And to all of us! If this event goes well, I could stop being just some midlevel bureaucrat and become-

RITA

Assistant to the Vice Emperor. We know.

SOLOMON

Well even if you don't care, this would mean we'd all move classes. The nice dining hall. Bigger cabins!

MYRTLE

Dolphin meat every day... Oh honey,
I'm so proud of you.

RITA

Well as you all uphold our deeply
unequal class system, I'm meeting
with my friends at the Teen Zone.

MYRTLE

Say hi to Margie for me.

She leaves the table and kisses her Mom on the forehead.

RITA

I will.

She weaves through the cramped buffet.

SOLOMON (O.S.)

Remember, we're seeing the
shuffleboard game this afternoon!

EXT. TEEN ZONE

Rita stands outside the TEEN ZONE, avoiding the gaze of the
nerds inside. On the walls, a faux-graffiti "Teenz rule" is
preserved like a Roman fresco.

An overeager girl, MARGARITAVILLE (MARGIE)(16), pops out.

MARGIE

Riti, is that you?! Hey, girl! You
never come by anymore!

Rita is pissed she was spotted.

RITA

Oh, hey, Margie.

MARGIE

I assumed your invite for the
Commemoration Day teen crafting
event got lost in the mail! My
messenger gull flew into that
window so he's still concussed.

RITA

Oh, God. I'm sorry.

RITA (CONT'D)

(Mournfully)

Yeah, he's different now

(MORE)

RITA (CONT'D)

(Peppy)

But come join! We're making clothes
they'd wear in Ark year 1!

She holds up a crudely sewn "BILABUNG" shirt.

RITA (CONT'D)

I can't. Piña and I-

MARGIE

Oh, fun! Piña! She scares some
people, but she can come too.

PIÑA (16), Rita's outspoken best friend, enters while sucking
the meat out of a CRAB LEG. She puts her arm around Rita and
points the crab leg in Margie's face

PIÑA

No. Bye!

Piña smiles and drags Rita away.

RITA

If anybody asks, I was here,
crafting!

(to Piña)

Where were you?

PIÑA

Eating the tuna. Did you see it? It
was as big as dolphin!

The girls enter a staircase and head down to the ship's murky
lower levels. The wood paneling and warm light give way to
water-stained concrete walls and tiki-torch sconces.

RITA

Catch anything good today at
seagull huntress training?

PIÑA

Don't even talk to me about it.
Girl, krill.

RITA

Don't sweat it. It took my mom
years to develop a bond with her
bird. Kokomo even sleeps in my
parent's bed now.

They walk through the narrow budget-class hallway, now a
crowded shantytown. OLD MEN shoot dice. A MATRONLY WOMAN
stirs a pot of eel stew and growls.

PIÑA

You lucked out getting that swanky job at the archives. No chum and guano to deal with.

RITA

I am grateful to read the great authors – Danielle Steele, Tom Clancy – but it's stuffy.

They look over their shoulders and descend a forgotten crew staircase to enter the dank, abandoned engine room.

PIÑA

You must be getting excited to see Zephyr...

RITA

What? No, I'm excited about the meeting but–

PIÑA

You talk about him all the time–

RITA

No, I talk about his dedication and his values–

They reach a metal door marked "engine room."

PIÑA

Dedication and Values? Try Dick and Balls.

RITA

(whispering)

I don't want to see his balls.

PIÑA

So you just want to see his dick? What, like he'll thread it through his fly?

A panel opens on the door to reveal a pair of eyes.

ATTENDANT

Code?

RITA AND PIÑA

Divergent.

The door swings open.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. EMPEROR'S QUARTERS - DAY

Solomon sheepishly enters the Emperor's office (rococo tiki bar) holding a large OBJECT under a white cloth. He approaches BUREAUCRATS huddled around a table.

On the other end, the fit, stern, and smarmy VICE EMPEROR runs the meeting. The decrepit EMPEROR (90s) sits in a lifeguard chair, slack-jawed.

VICE EMPEROR

Where are we at with the slideshow?

BUREAUCRAT 1

The waterslide has been greased,
and the acrobats are limber.

VICE EMPEROR

And the dolphins are...

BUREAUCRAT 2

In their holding tanks-

JULIE (late 30s), an evil Julie Bowen type and Solomon's rival, cuts in.

JULIE

And ready be cooked and eaten, sir.

She leers at Solomon. "Top That"

VICE EMPEROR

Thank you, Julie. Solomon, five
minutes late.

SOLOMON

Deepest apologies Vice-Emperor,
sir.

VICE EMPEROR

How are we on seating?

SOLOMON

I'm thrilled to present to you...

He takes off the cloth to reveal: a detailed DIORAMA of a seating chart in the shape of a shell.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

My idea for a whole new venue! Note
that the shrimp tails represent -

VICE EMPEROR

Great enthusiasm as always, but your job was "get folding chairs."

SOLOMON

That it was, but -

VICE EMPEROR

This looks like the layout of one of the Emperor's ballrooms.

SOLOMON

Yes, your excellency. I thought that this could be a special venue for the 100th Commemoration Day. Plus no one ever really uses it -

JULIE

You don't use it.

VICE EMPEROR

Damn Julie, burn. But she is correct. The event will be on the main deck, as always, as this is for

(disdainfully)
the public.

SOLOMON

Understood. I just thought this way we wouldn't have to clear the bazaar of merchants, and -

Vice Emperor is visibly annoyed.

VICE EMPEROR

Why don't we ask our Emperor? What says your wisdom, oh Emperor?

The Emperor is clearly not lucid.

EMPEROR

(barely intelligible)
I think the lobster and the crab are the bests of friends. Say, why do they pinches?

Vice Emperor nods as if he can understand the old man.

VICE EMPEROR

Mhmm, mhmm. He said no. But thank you for your unwavering enthusiasm. Why don't you and Julie get to clearing the deck?

The Vice Emperor slowly pushes the diorama off the table like a cat. It shatters. Solomon nods, defeated.

SOLOMON

On it. I shouldn't have imposed.

EMPEROR

(barely intelligible)

"Clam, Clam, Clam went the trolley"

VICE EMPEROR

Well, our Emperor's reached his wisdom for the day. Boys!

Vice Emperor claps. Four ATTENDANTS lift up the Emperor's chair which doubles as a palanquin.

VICE EMPEROR (CONT'D)

Where are we at with the entertainment? Isn't some boy talking to a hag or something?

INT. GRANDMA'S CABIN

A narrow room with a circular porthole teems with trinkets: dolls made from whale vertebra, a yellowed copy of *Little Fires Everywhere*, a needlepoint that reads "Ark = Home."

A sweet, wise old woman, GRANDMA (90s) sits on the foot of her quilted bed, while JB sits cross-legged, taking notes on seaweed papyrus.

JB

Wow! So you actually remember the war of the dueling captains?

Whenever Grandma talks, still images (à la Ken Burns) take up half the screen. Steel Pan covers of sad Civil War music underscore the images.

GRANDMA

I was just a little girl then. People were scared, JB, they still remembered a time before the Ark.

JB

Wow.

GRANDMA

I was only the third baby born on the ark, you know.

JB
Yeah, but the first to be conceived
aboard!

GRANDMA
(proud)
That's right! But ten years had
passed since land became disease
world. And the captain was
challenged by the insurgent
(ruefully)
Brian Higgins.

JB instinctively BOOS and HISSES, as is custom on the ark
when anyone says the name Brian Higgins.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)
His followers wanted to return to
land – disease world! – but our
brave captain knew better.

JB
And he defeated the evil Brian
Higgins –

GRANDMA
(Sweetly)
Boooo! Hiss!

JB
By forcing him to de-ark and die in
the murky depths of the sea!

GRANDMA
Using the last remaining gun. Of
course, now The Emperor rules with
the consent of the governed. And
orca bone sword.

JB
Then, he declared himself First Ark
emperor and the great ocean
shepherd of all humanity!

Ken Burns photos slide away.

GRANDMA
I tell ya, school wasn't this good
when I was a girl. We were still
learning about "math" instead of
harvesting guano to grow crops in
an old swimming pool.

JB

"Math?" Is that a type of eel?

GRANDMA

Oh, who can remember, dear. Now, what's next?

JB

My presentation's gotta have the great storm of Ark Year 16!

Ken Burns photos reappear.

GRANDMA

The day began beautifully. We just learned how to brew alcohol that didn't make you blind. We were *not* ready when it started to drizzle-

INT: BOILER ROOM

Piña and Rita mill about the base of the RESISTANCE. Blueprints of the ship are drawn atop excursion brochures. An old turtle with its shell painted black munches on leaves.

Rita stares at the brooding ZEPHYR STORM (18), poring over a schematic with his advisors. An archetypical dystopian YA love interest. His hair is swoopy. He's a very hot teen.

PIÑA

If you're gonna stare at Zephyr all day, why not talk to him?

RITA

No, he needs to study the schematics.

Piña yanks Rita up by the collar and drags her toward Zephyr.

RITA (CONT'D)

Okay, okay. We're just gonna say hi, that's all.

PIÑA

Don't worry, girl, you look straight-up mollusk.

This is a good thing.

Rita smooths her hair and fixes her shirt, shakiness poking through her mock confidence.

RITA

Zephyr, salutations. We're excited to hear the big Commemoration Day plan.

ZEPHYR

Afternoon, recruits. Piña, and, reminded me of your name -

Rita is hurt.

RITA

R-Rita Nelson. I joined last year-

One of his advisors, LYP SO (19) sneers. She's the stereotypical tough girl. She sharpens a fishbone knife.

LYP SO

Don't you remember Z? Riti here is beauro-brat who got a cushy life assignment at the library. Isn't that right?

PIÑA

(under her breath)

Squid.

This is a bad thing.

RITA

So you think I'm not committed to cause, Lyppo?

ZEPHYR

Don't mind her, Rita. We're happy to have you.

Rita has a burst of confidence. Lyppo scoffs.

RITA

Because I *believe* in the cause. I've read all the revolutionary literature. Hunger Games. The communist manifesto. Divergent.

(Bluffing)

We actually have an idea to share for the demonstration tomorrow.

Piña glares but Rita can't help but dig herself deeper.

RITA (CONT'D)

I think that we should chop off the Emperor's hands and feed it to his wife.

LYPPO
Oh, that's not -

RITA
And then feed his wife's hands to
their granddaughter, and shove-

PIÑA
She means metaphorically.

RITA
(Back to normal)
Exactly. But I think we should do
something *bold* for Commemoration
Day. Maybe not hands but -

ZEPHYR
You're intense. I like that.

Zephyr walks away, approaching a dais.

LYPPO
You do?

ZEPHYR
Recruits! Tomorrow is Commemoration
Day. Or as we like to call it
around here, Commemoration Don't.

Everyone laughs. This is hilarious.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)
This is the year we make our cause
known to the Ark.

The crowd cheers.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)
While exploring the bowels of The
Ark, I found a relic of the old
world, a bottle of land water. It
spoke of an Eden, a lost city of
hope: "Poland Spring."

He pulls out the water bottle. People cheer.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)
Tomorrow, we will unfurl this
symbol on the ship's mast and
announce our revolution against the
corrupt regime. For tomorrow is
nothing to celebrate. Just ask
Brian Higgins.

Everyone cheers at the sound of his name.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)

We will also be dumping stinky bird
poop on the emperor.

Less assured clapping.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)

And there is one recruit who has
shown the passion needed to lead
our Commemoration Day revolution
hard launch. Rita Nelson!

Rita gulps.

ACT TWO

EXT: BAZAAR

Bustling patrons mill about as they look for last-minute Commemoration Day gifts.

A woman sells chunky bird-feather jewelry. A man hawks Piñatas of Brian Higgins with devil horns. A woman sells more attempts at Ark Year One clothes – "OL DNAVI" "LOOLU LEMON" "TWINKSILVER"

Solomon holds a stack of papers with a large "NOTICE TO VACATE". He talks to an adult woman with a bowl cut at her shop, PAM (47). She displays carved bones.

SOLOMON

I'm sorry Pam, you have to pack up your shop.

PAM

What?! You said Commemoration Day would be in that ballroom, man.

SOLOMON

I'll help you put it back the day after tomorrow-

PAM

My carvings always sell like hot clams before the holiday.

He leans closer and lowers his voice

SOLOMON

Plus, I shouldn't even be letting you sell your art at the bazaar.

PAM

Ornate whalebone carving is an art reaching back hundreds of years!

SOLOMON

The problem is *what* you're carving.

Solomon turns over the carving to show an obvious drawing of Pam as a siren, her breasts covered with anchor.

Solomon sees Julie grinning. She finds his problem delicious.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
 (under his breath)
 Jiminy Buffet.

He hands Pam a VACATE PAPER and walks to Julie

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
 What can I help you with, Julie?

JULIE
 I just finished clearing my
 quadrant and wanted to check in on
 my favorite colleague.

SOLOMON
 You're done already?

JULIE
 I'm nothing if not efficient. Boys!

Two government GRUNTS carry a hose and a makeshift
 loudspeaker.

SOLOMON
 So you're hosing them?

JULIE
 Sorry, how many kiosks have you
 cleared? Because by looks of it, no
 that can't be, zero?

SOLOMON
 My message is sinking in gradually.
 The Ark works best when we work
 with the people. You know, gentle
 hand.

JULIE
 Uh-huh.

She grabs the loudspeaker.

JULIE (CONT'D)
 Pam!

PAM
 What's that?

JULIE
 Pack up your whalebone porn

PAM
 Scrimshaw is an ancient -

Julie gives her helpers the nod. Water erupts out, ruining the kiosk. The entire market stands still.

JULIE

On the Emperor's command, clear up
and clear out!

The market-goers quickly vacate. Vice Emperor passes by and assesses the scene.

VICE EMPEROR

Damn Julie, crushing it.

The emperor passes by, carried in his palanquin,

EMPEROR

(barely intelligible)
I think Schrimshaw nice, but why is
there no meat on them bones? I like
my women thick all the wrong places

JULIE

Absolutely sir.
(to Solomon, quietly)
When I'm promoted, you can use that
gentle hand of yours to wipe the
Emperor's old ass.

She saunters away with the hose, triumphant.

INT. ATRIUM

In a sunny glass room atop the ship, a reading room is now an aviary, where noisy seagulls roost.

Rita and Piña use the ends of shovels to collect guano, scraping it from off the ground and into bags.

PIÑA

Frankly girl, ew.

RITA

How are you not used to guano yet?

PIÑA

I don't mind the shoveling, it's
what we plan to do with it.

RITA

It's supposed to be gross. Zephyr
knows what he's doing. We're
sending a message in a language
that just happens to be fecal.

PIÑA

(Sarcastic)

Right, dumping a bucket of bird
shit on an elderly man is the mark
of true diplomacy.

RITA

He's not just an elderly man, he's
a dictator. Plus he's the reason
you even have to work as a seagull
huntress, instead of a first-class
job like priestess or being on the
improv troupe.

PIÑA

(Earnestly)

Like I could ever do improv, the
most respected of all art forms.

Piña wistfully rests her head on the back of the shovel.

Myrtle enters the atrium, carrying her seagull on her forearm
like a falcon and whispering to it like a baby.

MYRTLE

(Sweetly)

I know, honey, but I'll see you
tomorrow. Rest up, big guy.

(Commanding)

Kokomo. Roost!

The bird launches into a perfect loop-de-loop and lands in
his cubby hole.

MYRTLE (CONT'D)

Brava!

She salutes the bird and spots Rita and Piña.

MYRTLE (CONT'D)

Oh! Girls. What are you doing in my
office?

RITA

(flustered)

Hi, Mom! Oh, we're just...

PIÑA

Rita is helping me with my
apprenticeship tasks.

MYRTLE

That's nice. Wait, Piña, aren't you on guano duty on Poseidonday, the day that falls between Wednesday and Thursday?

RITA

Why would you say it like that? We know the days of the week.

MYRTLE

(suspicious)

Say, you girls aren't collecting bird doo for mischief, are you?

PIÑA

No, I just want to get a head start on work for next week.

MYRTLE

(Sweetly)

Well, I was gonna say that I'd be happy if you were collecting bird doo for mischief. You girls need to have more fun. Play with shit!

PIÑA

You seem chipper, Miss Nelson.

MYRTLE

What can I say? Commemoration Day brings out the girl in all of us. You know, your brother's happier than Kokomo in a tuna school about his big presentation tomorrow.

RITA

(avoiding eye contact)

That's great, Mom.

MYRTLE

I'm just so proud. It would crush him if anything went wrong. He'd be sadder than a tuna school 'neath the talons of my mighty Kokomo.

Piña glances at Rita, noticing her mounting guilt.

PIÑA

I'd imagine.

MYRTLE

I mean, if I found out someone was trying to ruin his speech, I'd be madder than Kokomo's peers when-

CUT TO:

INT: GRANDMA'S CABIN

Grandma continues to recount the history of the ark to JB. He now has pages of notes scrawled. Phrases like "Rain vats," "Tortoise Power," and "Eel madness" are underlined.

Sepia-toned historical images superimpose behind Grandma.

GRANDMA

Once we learned to make peace with seagulls, and counted our dead, everything went back to normal.

Grandma looks out of her porthole, sneers toward the sky

GRANDMA (CONT'D)

Now, there's no confusion about who owns the sky.

JB

Grandma, tell me more about the great performance of ark year 53?

GRANDMA

Yes, the improv group so delighted the Emperor that he bestowed upon them great riches. With doing improv on a cruise being one of the world's most lucrative jobs, everyone wanted in.

JB

Then what happened? Did they have a big audition?

GRANDMA

No, dear. The improvisers wanted to keep wealth in the family. So now, it's purely heredity. Much like eel madness.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)

Let's move on to the first Shuffleboard Olympics.

JB

But it's my dream to be a cruise
ship improviser. If it's
hereditary, then...

GRANDMA

I'm sorry dear.

JB gets choked up.

JB

I bet on land, you never got ahead
in entertainment by having a
connected family.

JB fights back tears. Grandma doesn't want to crush his sunny
perceptions of The Ark.

GRANDMA

I forgot that one thing. If, If you
try hard enough, you can achieve
anything.

JB

Really?

GRANDMA

Sure. Let's say that.

JB hugs her.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)

Now where was I? Did I ever tell
you how I drowned a girl?

EXT. SHUFFLEBOARD COURT - EVENING

Rita squeezes past spectators at a row of wooden bleachers to
join Solomon, who carries two bags of kelp chips.

SOLOMON

You missed the first shot, Rita.
The game is off to an explosive
start.

The crowds are watching a game of shuffleboard played
leisurely by two elderly people in sun hats. The crowd
watches and reacts as though it's an NBA game.

RITA

Sorry, sorry. But I'm here now.

DAD

It's alright.

(beat)

I just don't get to spend all that much time with you. You're always at that teen club.

RITA

I'm not just gonna spend all day with you and Mom running drills with Kokomo.

Solomon smiles and lifts his forearm. It's lashed with talon marks.

DAD

I understand. You're growing up! Next year, my little girl is starting her life assignment.

Rita rolls her eyes. She scoffs

RITA

The prison I'm assigned to for the rest of my life.

DAD

Or the privilege to contribute knowledge to the last ark of humanity.

They sit silently. The crowd roars at the slow-moving game.

RITA

Plus shuffleboard is boring.

DAD

Margaritaville. This is our culture!

RITA

You know, I read about sports they used to play on land. In Quidditch, people would fly in the air.

DAD

I'm sorry we can't fly Rita. The best we can do is keep the ship afloat. I'm sorry that's not meaningful enough for you.

RITA

Not to be a total squid, but all you do is wipe the emperor's old ass. Is that your life's meaning?

SOLOMON

If Commemoration Day goes well-

RITA

You'll get promoted? You've been saying that ever since I learned to count at the preschool roulette wheel.

SOLOMON

Why don't you support this family? If you hate the class system so much, why don't you do something about it? 'Cause to me, it looks like all you do is bum around with Piña and roll your eyes at the dinner table.

RITA

(visibly upset)

You're spineless.

SOLOMON

Rita, you said you "not to be a squid" with every intention of being a squid. So I'd like to watch the rest of this very exciting game alone. I'll see you at Commemoration Day.

RITA

Fine.

One of the elderly shuffleboard players screams in success. I'll just stand a few rows up. The

second half of this game has proven

to be quite exciting.

Another old man lines up a perfect shot. In the background, someone hangs a "100th COMMEMORATION DAY" banner.

ACT 3

EXT: DECK - THE NEXT AFTERNOON

PAN down from the large "COMMEMORATION DAY" banner, now illuminated by the bright afternoon sun.

A children's choir on driftwood rafters sings a triumphant, choral rendition of a song we soon realize is Escape (The Piña Colada Song) in perfect 4-part harmony.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR

If you like piña coladas and
 gettin' caught in the rain / If
 you're not into yoga / If you have
 half a brain If you like making
 love at midnight In the dunes on
 the cape / Then I'm the love that
 you've looked for write to me and
 escape

Over their singing, various shots show the transformed Bazaar.

An unburned effigy of Brian Higgins sways in the wind

Budget Class passengers stand at the back of the deck, crammed. A young girl jumps to get a peek at the stage.

A woman sobs. She salutes, patriotically.

JB looks out from behind a curtain, anxious to go on stage.

On the side of the stage, an ASSISTANT funnels cubed dolphin meat into the Emperor's mouth as he sits on his throne.

A reedy CHOIR DIRECTOR (50s), ends the performance with a flourish of his crab-leg conducting baton. The crowd applauds. The Vice Emperor takes the stage.

VICE EMPEROR

Thank you, children, for that
 beautiful performance of our
 national anthem. Now, who here is
 ready for a very special
 Commemoration -

CUT TO:

EXT: BEHIND THE STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The on-stage action is faintly audible, as the rebels slink towards the ship's mast, ready to unfurl the group's logo and announce the rebellion to the Ark.

Nearby, Piña dumps guano into an empty oxygen tank, while Rita paces around her, nervously.

PIÑA

Do you think guano would be a good name for a girl?

RITA

This is a good idea, right? The Emperor is a fascist dictator and we need to humiliate him the way he's humiliated us. Right?

Piña senses that something is amiss.

PIÑA

Are you okay?

RITA

Totally, totally, I'm just kicking off a revolution.

PIÑA

Because it's a lot of pressure. And you don't have to do this if you don't want to.

RITA

And what? Prove my squid-faced Dad right? And let down the resistance? No, I'm a doer. A doer who does stuff.

Piña seals down the GUANO TANK.

PIÑA

Well, if anyone could destabilize a government with bird shit, it's you.

Piña hugs her friend. Rita smiles, then gets a whiff of Guano. Background applause swells.

CUT TO:

EXT: STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The IMPROV TROUPE performs a scene to rapturous applause in long, ornate robes, carrying themselves like wisened jesters.

IMPROVISERS

We word we hath heard was "shell."

The improvisers clap and get into a tableau.

IMPROVISERS (CONT'D)

Shell!

IMPROVISER 1

Hello, sir, welcome to my shell emporium.

The entire cruise ship erupts with laughter. The emperor has no idea what's going on but claps with glee.

EMPEROR

More cubes!

An assistant puts a handful of dolphin cubes in his mouth.

EXT: NEAR STAGE - CONTINUOUS

From a small platform near the stage, Julie and Solomon monitor the event. They are buckled over in laughter.

JULIE

Shell emporium, that's gold!

SOLOMON

This has to be scripted!

An ASSISTANT runs over to them. She has a horrified expression. Julie shoots up straight.

ASSISTANT

I must inform you that there are reports of insurgents planning to defile Commemoration Day.

Julie and Solomon blanch. They look at each other for a beat then break into a sprint.

EXT: BEHIND THE STAGE- CONTINUOUS

Rita struggles to affix the bird guano tank to her harness as she prepares to shimmy herself up the ship's mast.

RITA
 (Muttering)
 You are a doer. A doer who does
 things.

Zephyr walks up behind her.

ZEPHYR
 The trick with those harnesses is
 to put them on right-side-up.

Rita turns around and blushes.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)
 Let me help you with that.

He puts his arms around her to attach the guano tank to her
 harness. He maintains eye contact.

RITA
 Oh thanks, all the bird shit was
 giving me a nasty headache. Haha.
 No, I mean thank you for trusting
 me with the mission.

ZEPHYR
 You're a true asset to the
 revolution. We'll unfurl our flag
 as soon as you release the muck
 onto the Emperor.

Rita gulps.

ZEPHYR (CONT'D)
 You know, everyone sees you as this
 plain girl, but I think you're
 beautiful, Margaritaville Nelson.

RITA
 Well, You're not so -

ZEPHYR
 And, I mean a lot of people share
 this opinion. But hey, call me
 crazy, because I think you're
 beautiful. Call me in the vast
 minority of -

RITA
 Hey, when this is over, would you,
 I don't know, want to go on a date
 or something?

The guano tanks CLICK into place in the harness.

ZEPHYR

If this goes right, we can go
wherever you want.

Rita smiles and makes her way toward the back of the stage.
The sound of applause swells.

CUT TO:

EXT: STAGE - CONTINUOUS

JB stands in the middle of the stage. He wears his finest ceremonial garb: a Hawaiian Shirt and slacks. Behind him, other children act out his report.

JB

100 years ago, an evil and horrible
man named Brian Higgins -

A cacophony of BOOS comes from the audience.

JB (CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

Created a disease called the turtle
flu. He destroyed all of the great
civilizations: FLORIDA, MIAMI,

PUERTO VALLARTA, PORT-OF-BALTIMORE,

before he snuck onto the last

vessel of humanity: the Ark! We

would have perished if not for the

herald of our salvation:

activities director Gina!

The crowd CHEERS.

INT: CRUISE HALLWAYS - CONTINUOUS

Solomon and Julie bolt down the hallways, desperately looking
for any sign of the rebels. Julie keeps throwing things
behind her to make Solomon fall.

JULIE

Of course, you let a rebellion
happen under your watch.

SOLOMON

My watch? You were too busy power-washing those porn merchants to notice anything.

JULIE

When I'm assistant -

SOLOMON

Julie, if Commemoration Day is ruined neither of us will be promoted.

JULIE

No, Solomon, I've already been promoted, Vice-Emperor told me this morning.

Solomon stops for a moment to be upset but pushes past it to keep running.

EXT: STAGE - CONTINUOUS

JB

And after they counted the dead and made peace with the seagulls, the last of the great ship conflicts ended. But that doesn't mean there weren't fashion disasters!

The crowd laughs heartily. JB is killing it.

JB (CONT'D)

Now Let's show some trends

Children model the clothes.

JB (CONT'D)

Big shorts little shirt, turtle skin, little shorts big shell, inside-out...

EXT: DECK - CONTINUOUS

Grandma sits in a roped-off section near the stag with other old people beneath a wooden sign reading "THE ANCIENTS." She turns her head to see another OLD WOMAN.

GRANDMA

(quizzically)

...Didn't I drown you?

EXT: BEHIND THE STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Rita shimmies up a high pole directly above the middle of the stage. She's nervous but makes herself climb higher and higher...

JB
(faintly)
Turtle flu couture, bags of
seawater...

She smiles and watches, proud of her brother, but her resolution returns and she climbs higher. Soon her ascent is interrupted by a bird circling her. She tries to swat it away but gull won't be deterred. Rita has a flash of recognition...

RITA
Kokomo?

Kokomo caws, as if to agree. Rita notices a SCROLL wrapped around his leg. She unties it. She sees that it's a note from her Mother.

MYRTLE (V.O.)
Hey Kiddo. Saw you shimmying up the pole with my eagle-eyes. You get that forearm strength from my side of the family. Ha ha. Anyway, I don't know what you're doing up there, but I wanted to say that I love you. We all have to make our own way on the Ark, and I admire you for going against the current. I hope you know that you'll always have your family behind you. PS: If this isn't Rita, disregard. PSS: Please reward Kokomo with the sardine I've attached to the bottom of this scroll.

Rita is surprised to find a FISH at the end of the scroll. She feeds it to Kokomo who dives in appreciation. She flicks the fish oil off her hand.

Rita uncaps the guano tank and takes a deep breath as she watches JB bow and the crowd cheers.

JB
Wait, before I go. I, uh, also wanted to thank my Grandma, who gave me great advice.
(MORE)

JB (CONT'D)

And my Mom, and Dad, and my Mom's
bird who donated so many of the
feathers embroidered in my shirt.
Also, my sister, Rita, who's
totally mollusk even when she acts
like a squid. Ok, bye!

Rita looks down at Zephyr and some rebels, eagerly awaiting
her to dump the guano on the Emperor. She looks at the
Emperor. Then looks back at her brother.

Silently, she realizes that she has to do the right thing and
set aside her beliefs for the sake of her brother. She re-
clips the guano to her harness and starts shimmying back down
the pole.

ZEPHYR

(yelling up)

Hey, what are you doing?

RITA

Today isn't the right time.

EXT: DECK - CONTINUOUS

Myrtle, Grandma, and Solomon hug JB closely. Behind them, a
caricature artist draws the emperor to immortalize the event.

MYRTLE

Honey, I'm so proud of you.

JB

Thanks, Mom.

Rita appears from the crowd, as though she's been there all
along, and hugs JB.

RITA

That was a pretty good speech up
there. Let's all have some dolphin!

Solomon is genuinely touched to see Rita show up for JB.

SOLOMON

Thank's for being here, Rita. I'm
really happy you came.

RITA

Happy commemoration day, Dad.

GRANDMA

(To JB)

Great job, Dearie.

(MORE)

GRANDMA (CONT'D)

When you're older, I'll tell you
the really dark shit that went
down!

Grandma's voice fades as we ZOOM OUT on the Ark until it's
just a colorful dot traversing the empty sea.

GRANDMA V.O.

It was really sad for a while.
Everyone's family died, and a lot
of people starved. And then it got
kooky all of a sudden. Who knew all
that could happen in 100 years?!
Well, best not to dwell on the
past. Onwards and upwards, lots of
crazy adventures ahead...

STEEL DRUM cover of Jimmy Buffet's Margaritaville.

END