

"ACROSS THE SEA"

by

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Based on

"Los buques suicidantes" by Horacio Quiroga

FADE IN:

ANNOUNCER
Welcome to Anthology

The THEME MUSIC FADES IN.

The MUSIC THEME ENDS, replaced with the sound of TORRENTIAL RAINFALL. Occasional THUNDERCLAPS ring out through the rain.

NARRATOR
Boy, it's really coming down,
isn't it?

You hear that? That's the glass in the windows rattling, the wind's so bad. And that lightning can't be more than three or four miles off. I haven't seen it this bad in years. I think you came in right on time, you don't want to be out in that soup on a night like this.

Me? I'm a reporter. Well, I was a reporter, I mean. It's all behind me more or less, nowadays I mostly just hang around here, keep the boys company.

Have you - have you met the boys? They're around here somewhere.

(calling out)
Hey! Boys! You there?!

(back to the listener)
They're a bit shy, takes them a while to warm up to strangers.

(calling out)
Hey! We've got company!

There's no answer. Outside, the rain continues to fall.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
Well, they must be busy with something downstairs. You'll meet them later.

Sit down, please.

It's going to take a bit for you to dry off, and that storm's not going anywhere for a while.

I was saying, I used to work as a reporter. I never had much of a head for numbers, but I could put one word in front of another. I could get other people talking too. And I was ruthless. Work like that, you can't be afraid to get your hands dirty. You gotta smell trouble everywhere you go, and you gotta stir it up where there isn't any to find.

And I was good at it too. Time was, you couldn't get into hot water without me being there to tell the folks at home about it. The Wall Street Crash, Peg Entwistle and the Hollywood H, Wally and Windsor's ring around the rosy, Sam Seabury's boy scout troop, Mahatma's Poona Pact - I was there for all those parties.

Thing is... you spend two years, four years, six years going around with a rusty typewriter in your handbag, three cocktail dresses in your suitcase, and your paychecks always one post office behind you... You take the trans-europe express, and the orient express, and the trans-siberian express, and the just-get-outta-town express enough times and it starts to feel like you're running out of railroad track. Suddenly the world's not as big as it was before your passport got stamps from every continent. You kind of wonder if you're just done being surprised.

If you're ever gonna find
something that you never seen
before.

Oh, I found something all
right. It was raining that
night, too. Let me tell you
about it.

The sound of RAIN and THUNDER FADE AWAY, replaced with the
HUSTLE AND BUSTLE of a CITY STREET.

(NOTE: for clarity, when we are hearing the narrator
character speak to other characters in the story, she'll be
referred to as "Jackie," but when she is addressing the
listeners directly, she'll be referred to as "Narrator.")

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

I'd ended up in Hong Kong in
1935. I was covering a...
difference of opinion between
the police force and the local
labor union. It was good,
dirty work, but I could feel
something bad was on the way.
Everyone was starting to look
at foreigners with a funny
twitch in their eye, so I
figured it was time for one of
my trademark abrupt
departures.

*

That's how I ended up
wandering through the docks at
dusk, asking about any ships
that were taking on
passengers. And *that's* how I
met...

CAPITÁN GONZÁLEZ

Capitán Ernesto González, a la
orden. Mucho gusto.

JACKIE

Mucho gusto. Me llamo
Jacqueline Chapell. But
please, call me Jackie.

NARRATOR

The capitán was in charge of an Argentine cargo ship that had been making the rounds through every seaport in Southeast Asia, ferrying goods back and forth.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
Now they were...

CAPITÁN GONZÁLES
Now we are getting ready to make the return trip to South American waters.

CAPITÁN GONZÁLES
Right now my crew is loading up a shipment of spices that we'll be delivering to Ushuaia, and then we'll be continuing up the coast to Buenos Aires. We set sail at 10 o'clock tonight, and we might be able to offer you a... cabin on board our humble ship. You get comfortable accommodations and excellent food.

NARRATOR
I didn't say, "You mean I'll be stuck in a tiny cupboard three floors bellow deck, starving my way through on moldy bread."

CAPITÁN GONZÁLES
Best of all, though, you get a, uh, peaceful cruise. We like... easy, restful journey. We value our... what is the word I am looking for?

GARCÍA
Privacy, capitán.

CAPITAN GONZALES
(snaps fingers)
That one. Yes. Better to sail with, uh, discreción. Less neighbors, less questions. You understand?

JACKIE
I think I do.

CAPITÁN GONZALES

Excelente. There is, of course, the small matter of compensation, no? First Officer García, what do you think?

Under the following, we hear the sounds of a PENCIL SCRATCHING on a NOTEPAD.

GARCÍA

Well, we'll need to account for the various increased costs to the expedition. Food rations, use of the facilities, the various amenities that are on board the María Margarita, the extra work for the crew... Say about... 82 pesos per day on a 65-day journey, comes out to a total of... 5,330 pesos.

CAPITÁN GONZALES

But since we are among friends, by all means, let's call it 5,000 even. Sounds fair, no?

JACKIE

For that much I could *buy* my own cruise ship.

NARRATOR

I didn't say *that* either. Instead I just said,

JACKIE

That sounds perfect. What time should I be at the docks?

NARRATOR

González and his crew were a bunch of slimey cheapskates who'd do anything to make money. Naturally I liked them from the start.

I knew they were chiseling me with that fare, but I didn't care. If I waited much longer I probably wouldn't get to leave Hong Kong at all.

And they weren't asking why I was in such a hurry to raise anchors, and that was worth its weight in gold.

I guess they didn't want me asking questions either. I don't know what González's crew was loading onto his ship, but it sure *wasn't* spices. They wouldn't be setting sail in the middle of the night if it was, and they wouldn't be stopping over at a middle of nowhere rock like Ushuaia either. No, whatever was going into that hold was already burning a hole through the capitán's hull, and we hadn't even set sail yet.

Not that I had a problem with any of that. The capitán wanted *discreción*? That worked just fine on my end.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
There was, however, one more thing.

CAPITÁN GONZALES
Oh, uh, one more thing, Ms. Chappell:

CAPITÁN GONZALES
Make sure you bring warm clothes.

A LOUD WAVE CRASHES against the hull of a ship. The sounds of the ocean continue under:

NARRATOR
At first, I thought he was kidding. November in the South Pacific? The suffocating humid season was just going into full swing. But as it turns out, we'd only get about a week of that weather.

The way that First Mate García put it:

GARCÍA
Well, there are many ways to get from Hong Kong to Argentina.

You can try to cut your way through the Estrecho de Magallanes, or weave in and out through the Tierra del Fuego archipelagos if you're in a hurry.

But if you're trying to avoid seeing any other ships - if you want to slip by - you go south. You ride along the edge of the polar circle. The ocean there... well, it can be a little rough.

NARRATOR

He's putting it gently. Sailing through those waters is like navigating through something out of the Devil's nightmares.

GARCÍA

There's enormous sheets of ice that drift along the waters, crashing into gigantic icebergs. You can never tell how big something is underneath the surface, so you can't take any chances.

NARRATOR

But that's not the bad part.

GARCÍA

Then there's the fire. Volcanic vents run all along the ocean floor. Hot geysers and rocky debris are constantly shooting up from the waters.

NARRATOR

But even *that's* not the bad part.

GARCÍA

The problem - the *real* problem - is that you can't see anything because garbage is constantly falling from the sky.

On any given day you can shovel snow in the morning, then volcanic ash in the afternoon, and by nighttime you can't even tell the difference anymore. And all the while you are trying to find your way through a landscape where everything is either frozen or *on fire*.

NARRATOR

That's the bad part. No one in their right mind goes there.

GARCÍA

Unless you're trying to avoid running into *any* other ships. If you want to slip by, it's the one place no one is looking. You just need to make sure you have a damn good navigator.

There is a HORRIFYING CRUNCH as WOOD is TORN APART by a GLACIER.

NARRATOR

Unfortunately... we only had a *good* navigator. It must have been a little after two in the morning when the ship hit the iceberg.

There's a HURRICANE of activity suddenly.

FEET run in every direction, DOORS are opened and closed, EQUIPMENT clangs up and down, all punctuated by GUSHES of WATER.

Over it all there's a RUSH OF OVERLAPPING VOICES

CREW

Muévanse! Rápido! / No hay tiempo, déjenlo! / A los botes salvavidas! / ¿Donde está el capitán? / Apúrense! No se pueden quedar bajo cubiertas! / Vamos, pelotudos, esto va en serio! / Etc, etc, etc.

Finally, the whirlwind of activity ABATES, replaced by the steady back and forth of OCEAN WAVES.

After a BEAT -

NARRATOR

There were six of us left after the María Margarita sank. Contrary to popular opinion, the captain doesn't always go down with the ship - Capitán González was the first one on the lifeboat. First mate Garcia made it too. Then there was the ship's steward, a tall glass of water called Sábado. There were two deckhands, Martínez and Castro. Neither one of them could have been a day over seventeen. They'd been at the bow of the ship when we hit the iceberg - García pulled them out of the water and they spent all night shaking like frightened rabbits.

And there was me. Six of us, floating adrift in the Antarctic Ocean. No supplies to speak of, no port less than a week's journey away, and a hundred nautical miles between us and the nearest shipping lane. And nothing to do but wait to see whether it was the hunger or the cold or the fire or the ocean that killed us first.

We made it through the rest of the first night mostly on shock, and starved our way through the following day. But then, right after the sun set, we ran into trouble.

GARCÍA

Listen - I don't like the look of those clouds on the horizon.

CAPITÁN GONZÁLEZ

What clouds? It's too dark to see clouds. It's too dark to see anything.

GARCÍA

Listen to me. Those were anvil clouds - cumulonimbus. There is a storm coming, and it's probably going to get here soon.

CAPITÁN GONZÁLEZ

We have a lifeboat and three oars, García. All we can do is wait and hope that somebody finds us.

JACKIE

But nobody's going to find us. You wanted discreción, remember?

NARRATOR

I honestly don't know whether I said that one out loud or not.

GARCÍA

Well, we can't just sit here. We need to -

CRA-KOW! In the distance a THUNDERBOLT rings out, echoing slightly.

García STOPS DEAD IN HIS TRACKS. After a moment -

SÁBATO

García? Are you all right?

MARTÍNEZ

What's the matter?

García STAMMERS for a moment, then SWALLOWS HARD.

GARCÍA

There - there's a boat right there!

We hear five bodies TENSE UP IN ALARM

MEN

¿Qué? / What? Where? / How can you see anything? You're going loco.

GARCÍA

I am not going loco! In the flash, from the lightning, I saw the outline of a ship. Couldn't have been more than a mile away. It was -

CRA-KOW! Another THUNDERBOLT. Without missing a beat -

GARCÍA (CONT'D)
THERE! LOOK! It's right there!
Did you see it?

NARRATOR
Oh, we saw it. Gliding silently through the ice. I don't think any of us believed our eyes at first, but then there was another lightning bolt-
(BOOM)
- and another -
(BOOM)
- and another -
(BOOM)
- and finally none of us could deny there really was another ship with us, sailing through these hellish waters.

SÁBATO
Why would anyone else be in this place?

JACKIE
And why would they be sailing without any lights on?

GARCÍA
Smugglers? Or pirates, maybe? They could be hiding from a patrol -

CAPITÁN GONZÁLEZ
No.

He speaks slowly but assuredly. Something is dawning on him.

CAPITÁN GONZÁLEZ (CONT'D)
No one would go dark in these waters, no one is that loco. There's no one on that ship. That's a ghost.

CRA-KOW! A THUNDERCLAP punctuates that pronouncement, much LOUDER than any of the others we've heard.

NARRATOR

There are few things that are more dangerous than running into an unmanned vessel at sea. In the daytime, the danger is smaller, but at night they're deadly.

These ghosts, abandoned for this or that reason, just keep sailing for as long as they can stay afloat, going wherever the currents take them or the winds blow them.

Every now and then unlucky sailors run afoul of them. In the daytime you can at least try to keep your distance, but at night they fly through the waters without a single light to alert anyone of their presence. They're impossible to spot until they're right on top of you. That's how dead ships often end up dragging living ones to a watery grave. Every sailor worth his salt dreads running into one of these terrors.

Unless, of course, they are lost at sea, in a frozen wasteland of an ocean. In that situation, a ghost ship might just be your last shot at salvation.

The sound of FURIOUS PADDLING fades into the soundscape. Over this, we hear:

CAPITÁN GONZÁLEZ

Adelante! Fuerte! Ya casi
llegamos! Vamos!

And so on and so forth. His screams continue, softly, underneath -

NARRATOR

It took the better part of an hour to row the lifeboat all the way to ship. We made the journey through the darkness, stumbling blind. You think you've been cold? No, you've never been cold. Dark? You have no idea how dark it can get. Every minute of the journey I feared that we would lose the ship and it would disappear just as easily as it emerged from the depths. But every time that I started to lose hope, there'd be another lightning flash-

(BOOM)

- and I'd see it looming closer and closer, almost as if it was waiting for us.

DRIP. DRIP. DRIP. DRIPDRIPDRIP. RAIN starts to fall.

From this point onwards, there is a storm raging around the characters. Assume near constant sounds of RAINFALL and THUNDERBOLTS, even when not specified.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

García's storm was starting by the time we finally reached the abandoned ship.

GARCÍA

I have a bad feeling about this... (alt line: I'm... I'm not so sure about this...)

JACKIE

Why? What's wrong with it?

CAPITÁN GONZÁLEZ

When's the last time you saw a boat made entirely out of wood, Ms. Chappell? That's a galleon. Ships like this one haven't been used for... over a hundred years.

JACKIE

And it's just been floating out here all this time?

GARCÍA

How has it not sunk? The foundation should have rotted through by now.

CAPITÁN GONZÁLEZ
Concéntrese, García. You can play at being Sherlock Holmes after we get out of the water.

SÁBATO
And how do you expect to do that?

(BOOM)
We cannot climb up the hull.

GARCÍA
No, look! Right there, there's a rope coming down from the main deck.

CRA-KOW! Another lightning bolt.

CAPITÁN GONZÁLEZ
García, get us closer.

As the MEN and the NARRATOR PULL THEMSELVES UP THE ROPE, we hear -

NARRATOR
Somehow, we'd made it onto the ship. It was an old decrepit thing, but when my feet finally hit the deck -

We hear the narrator's FEET LAND on the DECK.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
- I could have kissed every plank on that floor.

The capitán wasn't taking any chances, though. As soon as we were all onboard, he had his men check every inch of the ship. But when half an hour later García came back up from below decks...

GARCÍA
I am sorry, capitán but... it's strange. This ship is very, very old, but she is in remarkably good condition.

She seems to be in perfectly good working order.

SÁBATO

Then what happened to the crew? Why is the ship sailing by itself?

At that moment, an ENORMOUS WAVE CRASHES onto the side of the ship. A moment later, there's another THUNDERCLAP. CRA-KOW!

BEAT.

CAPITÁN GONZÁLEZ

We'll solve that mystery later. We have an huracán to get through.

GARCÍA

Si, capitán.

CAPITÁN GONZÁLEZ

García, reef the sails and get us ready to heave-to. Martínez, get to the bitt. You're on anchor detail, I want us set in the next five minutes. I'll take care of the rudder, and Castro you - Castro?

(beat)

Where is - ?

JACKIE

Look, over there. At the stern.

CAPITÁN GONZÁLEZ

Castro, get back here! No es hora de estar perdiendo tiempo!

(beat)

Didn't you hear me, I said - DIOS SANTO!

SPLASH!

We hear RUSHING FOOTSTEPS.

MARTÍNEZ

Did - did he just jump overboard!?

GARCÍA

Quick, get the rope! Get the rope!

NARRATOR

But it was no use. By the time the men got to the stern there was no trace of Castro. He sank into the freezing waters like a rock.

GARCÍA

He's... He's gone.

SÁBATO

Why would he do that? We'd finally made it onto the ship and -

CRAAAAASH, another WAVE SMASHES onto the side of the ship.

CAPITÁN GONZÁLEZ

Figure that out later, la tormenta está apunto de undirnos! Posiciones!

NARRATOR

And that was pretty much all there was to say about it.

Various sounds of FRANTIC ACTIVITY and YELLING continue over:

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Me and Sábato the steward didn't actually know anything about manning a sail boat, so we were told to stay out of the way. García ended up sticking us in the ship's main cabin, right off the deck. It was a dark room with a small window, and we sat there, useless and terrified.

An hour passed. Then another. And finally -

A DOOR OPENS.

GARCÍA

Where is Martínez? We need him up on the deck.

BEAT.

SÁBATO

Why are you asking us? We haven't seen him in hours.

GARCÍA

What? He said he was going to look for more rope below decks - that was more than an hour ago.

(beat)

He hasn't been through here? At all?

No.	SÁBATO	No.	JACKIE
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SÁBATO

We haven't seen him.

GARCÍA

But then... where is he?

BEAT. Outside the door, the WIND HOWLS.

NARRATOR

We searched every room of the ship for Martínez. We went through most of the box of matches that García had brought with him from the María Margarita. No luck. By the time that we made it back to the deck...

GARCÍA

Capitán González, sir... I have... I don't know how to say this, but Martínez seems to have vanished. Nobody has seen him in over an hour, and he is not in any of the rooms below decks. I... I don't think he's on board anymore, sir.

CAPITÁN GONZÁLEZ

Todos, sin saber lo que hacían, se habían arrojado al mar...

Only he's not saying it to García. He's softly muttering to himself, lost in his thoughts.

CAPITÁN GONZÁLEZ (CONT'D)

... envueltos en el
sonambulismo moroso que
flotaba en el buque...

GARCÍA
¿Capitán? Are you feeling...
all right?

CAPITÁN GONZÁLEZ
Hmmm? Oh, I am sorry, García.
I... I was just remembering a
story that the old sailors out
in Valparaiso used to tell.
About a ship that sailed
through the southern seas. And
her crew. Her crew of drowned
men.

BEAT.

GARCÍA
Capitán... maybe you should...
sit down for a moment.

CAPITÁN GONZÁLEZ
Yes... yes, that's a good
idea.

GARCÍA
Yes, please. Come with me.

CAPITÁN GONZÁLEZ
Yes, yes. There's just
something I need to do first.

GARCÍA
No, let's come over here and -

CAPITÁN GONZÁLEZ
I need to go for a swim.

CRA-KOW! A thunderbolt rings out.

NARRATOR
And at that moment, an
enormous wave fell upon the
ship.

CRAAAAAASSSSHHHHHH!

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
It must have been at least
twenty, twenty-five feet tall.
It hit the hull like a hammer.

The entire ship tipped to the side, and icy water swept through the deck.

As the deck rocked back and forth, I saw First Mate García and the steward clutching the railing on the other side of the ship.

But Capitán González was gone.

After that, García joined us below decks in the cabin. He couldn't run the ship by himself, and with the waves so high he didn't want to risk getting swept off the boat.

Like the captain had been. That's what we kept telling ourselves.

So we put our lives in the hands of fate, and waited for the storm to take its course. We sat in the dark of cabin, feeling every wave that crashed against the hull of ship, sure that any minute now they would tear the ship apart, or smash us against the icy peak of an underwater mountain.

A LIGHTNING STRIKES. BOOM!

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Well, the almost dark. Every now and then a lightning would strike, and in the flash I'd see the two scared faces sitting next to me.

Two hours must have passed like this when, suddenly -

A CHORTLE of LAUGHTER RINGS across the cabin.

GARCÍA

Sá... Sábado? Is that you?

For another moment, Sábado just LAUGHS weakly. Then -

SÁBATO

Ahhhh, caballeros. Muy buenas noches. No saben lo aliviado que estoy de verlos. De ver a cualquier persona.

GARCÍA

... Sábado, ¿a quién le estás hablando?

SÁBATO

¿Qué han hecho con los otros?
¿A donde los enviaron?

JACKIE

García, what's he saying?

GARCÍA

I'm... I'm not sure. It doesn't make any sense.

We hear Sábado GETTING UP and WALKING about the cabin, still GIGGLING to himself.

SÁBATO

Por favor, por favor, caballeros, abran paso. No puedo creerlo, que... curioso que es encontrarlos a todos ustedes en este lugar. Muy curioso!

He LAUGHS MANIACALLY.

GARCÍA

Sábado... cálmate, why don't you calm down a bit? And speak English, so Miss Chappell can understand y-

SÁBATO

Shhh, shh, shh... Quiet García, I can't hear what the gentlemen are saying. Disculpen la interrupción, señores, ¿qué dijeron?

(beat)

Por favor, señores, espacio, denme un poco de espacio.

(beat)

¿Quieren que vaya adonde? ¿Ah-ha? ¿Y que haga que? Por favor, señores, más fuerte!

He listens for another moment, then breaks into another FIT OF GIGGLES.

SÁBATO (CONT'D)
 Me parece una *excelente* idea!
 Si ustedes me acompañan, por supuesto.

GARCÍA
 Who are you talking to?

SÁBATO
 ¿Siiii? Pues, manos a la obra!
 Ya no quiero estar solo, ya no quiero... ¿Ustedes vendrán?
 ¿Todos ustedes? Entonces...
 VAMOS! VAMOS AL MAR! AL MAR!
 AL MAR! AL MAR! AL -

We hear him TAKE OFF INTO A RUN, OPEN A DOOR, and EXIT.

SÁBATO (CONT'D)
 (softer, receding)
 Al mar! Al mar...

GARCÍA
 Where are you going?! What are you doing?!

García runs after him, hot on his heels. After García exits the room, there's silence.

BEAT.

There's a DISTANT SPLASH.

BEAT.

We hear FOOTSTEPS reenter the room, and SHUT the DOOR.

GARCÍA (CONT'D)
 He... he jumped overboard. He went into the ocean. The same way that Castro did.

JACKIE
 García, what was he saying before he ran out? What was he telling you?

GARCÍA
 He - he wasn't talking to me. It was like... like there was someone else here.

JACKIE

But we're the only ones on
this ship. There's no one
else.

GARCÍA

I know, I know, but... He
definitely wasn't talking to
us.

There's a SILENT BEAT as that sinks in. In the distance, a
THUNDER CRASHES. - CRA-KOW!

NARRATOR

First Mate García was a very
brave man. He talked me
through every excruciating
minute of darkness.

GARCÍA

It's gonna be all right, Ms.
Chappell. Storm's not going to
last forever, and after that
we just need to make it to the
dawn. We're gonna be all
right.

JACKIE

I hope so.

There's a LONG SILENT BEAT. Then -

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Where are you?

GARCÍA

I'm right here.

JACKIE

Where?

CCSSSHHH! We hear a MATCH being STRUCK.

GARCÍA

You should save those. We
don't have many of them left.

JACKIE

I know, I just... I wanted to
make sure you were still here.
I don't want to be alone.

GARCÍA

I'm still here.

The match BURNS OUT.

GARCÍA (CONT'D)
It's all gonna be all right.

BEAT.

JACKIE
Could you please stand still?

GARCÍA
I... I *am* standing still.

JACKIE
I thought I heard you moving.

GARCÍA
No, no, I'm right here. You
all right, Miss Chappell?

JACKIE
Fine, fine.

GARCÍA
Right. Good.
(beat)
It's just... when Mr. Sábado
was talking at the end, didn't
it sound like - where are you
going?

JACKIE
I haven't moved.

CCCSHHHH! Another match is struck.

GARCÍA
Oh.

JACKIE
See? I'm right here. I haven't
moved.

GARCÍA
Oh. Right. I just -

The match BURNS OUT.

GARCÍA (CONT'D)
I thought I felt your hand on
my shoulder.

JACKIE
No. Just sit still.

GARCÍA
I am. I promise.

JACKIE
No, really, Mr. García, please
just stop moving.

GARCÍA
I'm really not, I promise you
I'm right -

CCCSHHHH!

GARCÍA (CONT'D)
- here.

JACKIE
I'm telling you, I heard
something move.

GARCÍA
There's no one else here.

The match BURNS OUT. BEAT.

GARCÍA (CONT'D)
Was that the last match?

She doesn't answer. There's a LONG SILENT BEAT, then -
SOMETHING MOVES.

JACKIE
García! Stop moving.

GARCÍA
I'm not -

JACKIE
Please! Just... don't go.
Don't go anywhere. I don't
want to be alone.

GARCÍA
You're not alone.

NARRATOR
At that moment, a lightning
bolt crashed outside the ship
(boom!)
- and for a moment there was
light and I could see him
sitting next to me.

GARCÍA
You're not alone.

NARRATOR
And a moment later, another
lightning flashed -
(boom!)
- and he was gone.

And there was nothing but
silence.

And silence.

And silence.

And then I felt a cold hand
fall on my shoulder, and I
screamed in terror.

CRA-KOW!

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
But the hand was soft, and it
didn't push or drag - it just
guided me through the
blackness of the creaking
ship. And I followed, until
suddenly I felt rain and wind
on my face. And I felt the
hand let go of my shoulder,
and I was alone on the deck.

Except I wasn't.

In that moment, another
lightning bolt crashed -
(BOOM!)
- and I saw First Mate García
standing in front of me. And
then a moment later there was
another flash -
(BOOM!)
- and now I saw Capitán
González and the other three
men from the lifeboat standing
behind García. And then -
(BOOM!)
- behind them, there were more
men, men I'd never seen
before.
(BOOM!)
A dozen men.
(BOOM!)

*

Three dozen.

(BOOM!)

A hundred.

(BOOM!)

Men of all walks of life.
Young and old, some dressed in
naval uniforms, some in rags,
some of them looking like
they'd just stepped out of a
history book.

(boom!)

Like they'd been sailing for
over a hundred years. There
was one final, lightning
bolt...

KRAAAAA-KOOOOOOW!!! It CRASHES and ECHOES, LOUD ENOUGH TO
WAKE UP THE DEAD.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

And in the flash, I saw one
hundred silent figures hold
out their hands and take a
step towards me.

For a LONG BEAT, we hear nothing, but the RAIN FALL.

Finally, even that FADES AWAY...

BEAT.

We hear the Narrator let out a LONG SIGH. Slowly, the sound
of RAIN fades back in, only it's different rain. It's the
rain we heard back at the START of the piece.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

That was four years ago. I
don't work as a reporter
anymore. Nowadays I mostly
just keep the boys company,
help them out now and then.

I'm not... the sort of person
they usually work with, but...
well, they decided it might be
a good idea to have someone
that knows how to put one word
in front of the other. It
might help with the
recruitment process.

We hear a CHAIR being PUSHED BACK. The Narrator STANDS UP.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Anyway, I've taken up enough of your time, so we should really get down to business, don't you think? I know the boys are very eager to make your acquaintance. There's just a tiny formality we need to take care of first.

We hear her OPENING a DOOR. Outside, the RAIN FALLS, the WIND HOWLS, and WAVES CRASH against the hull of the ship.

An enormous THUNDERCLAP rings out - CRA-KOW! - as the storm builds and builds.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Ready to go for a swim?

And as storm RAGES ON and MUSIC FADES IN, we -

FADE OUT.