

THE F WORDS

by Donna Lagerquist

GENRE: Drama

SYNOPSIS: On a cruise to celebrate his 50th birthday, a man struggles with where his life has gone, what it means and the emptiness he feels. He considers whether to take a new risk at this stage in life.

DIRECTOR'S TIP: Help the audience get a sense of the sea air, the wind or sun in his eyes and the other people off in a distance on the ship. Music should be playing quietly in the background during most of the scene. It can be louder just before the "group" dances by, as if a door has opened and they are coming out on deck from a party. If a "group" is not used or available, the man can just make reference to them off in a distance by waving. He should refuse their offer to join at first and at the end act as if they have called him over again and this time he has decided to join them.

TIME: Under 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 1

TOPIC: Spirituality, Purpose

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Philippians 3:13-14, Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Any

SUGGESTED USE: General Church Service

CHARACTERS:

A man who is turning 50. He is depressed but has the ability to hide it.

A group of young, party-loving cruise ship guests (optional)

PROPS: 1) A lounge chair or deck chair like you would find on a cruise ship

2) A glass of iced tea

3) Beach towel

COSTUMES: non-specific

SOUND: One wireless mic, Island music to be played over P.A. system

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: General Stage

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Scene opens with a man sitting on a lounge chair on the deck of a cruise ship, sipping an iced tea. We hear island music playing in the background.

Ah, yes. On our way to Barbados. Blue skies, 85 degrees, balmy breeze ... can you stand it? Yeah, well somebody's got to do it ... you know, keep the cruise lines in business. Oops, I said the "b" word ... business. Not supposed to mention it at all for the next six nights, seven days. Nope, pure pleasure. Relaxation and pleasure ... that's what this is all about. Relaxation and pleasure and rest. *(gets up, paces a bit)* Rest and Relaxation. A little "R & R" as they say. Yep. *(it's obvious that he cannot relax. Music is a little louder as "Don't Worry Be Happy" is played and a group of young people goes dancing by. He waves, cheers them on a bit)* Yep, don't worry. Be happy. Easier said than done. Maybe it's because they are young. No, this can't be an age thing. Midlife crisis is at 40, right?

I turn 50 on Tuesday. 50! A half century. *(pause)*

My wife booked this cruise for us ... well, for me, for my birthday ... well, that's what she said anyway. She probably needed to get away more than I did. Except what she needed to get away from was ... me. I'm sure I've been driving her nuts. I've been driving myself nuts. Thinking and rethinking and wondering and doubting and ... am I making any sense?

While Barb's been off getting massages and facials and Macarena lessons ... I've been trying to make sense of this growing black hole, this void I've been feeling for awhile now. I don't want it to be because I'm turning 50 ... but maybe it is. And, if the truth be known, all this R & R is uncovering all my F & F — Fakes and Fears.

I've been faking it. Fifty years of falsehood. Okay, maybe not 50 ... but for a good deal of time now I've been faking happiness. Faking satisfaction. I've been doing the same job for 18 years ... and was 10 years at an entry level job before that. There's pressure now and then ... you know, end of the quarter stuff, but it's not the rat race that I hear about from other guys ... guys with careers, guys with passion, guys who have done something with their life. I have a job. It pays the bills. I do it because I learned it, it's safe and ... well, I'm afraid to try anything else ... that is, if there is anything else to try. Barb thinks there's a lot of pressure at work these days. Thinks I'm working too hard ... which is why I seem depressed and exhausted. But what I'm working so hard at ... is "this" *(refers to self)*.

But the truth is that I'm miserable and can't seem to shake it ... or fake it, much longer.

One of the other guys at work left the company a couple of years ago to start a business with his brother. You know what they're doing? Designing amusement parks ... what a kick! He said it was something he always wanted to do. He's having the time of his life.