

## The Mysterious Cruise

I faintly hear a sound in the background. As I open my eyes and they have to adjust to the bright morning sun. I slowly sit up and looked at my alarm going off at 8am. I turned it off, and get up to go use the bathroom. When I come back to my bed I noticed a light blinking on my phone. I checked to see what it was, it was a text message from Jordan saying "Don't forget that we are meeting at McDonalds to load up in the van for our trip, make sure you tell Lisa, Delaina, and Robert. See you all at 3am"

Later that day, I went downstairs to let Lisa, Robert and Delania know what Jordan said. Good afternoon I said to them, they all said "Hey" in unison. I informed them that Jordan reminded me and to tell you guys that we are meeting at McDonalds at 3am tomorrow morning. They all nodded their heads in agreement. I told them ill see them tomorrow and reminded them again to set alarms and be on time.

Around 12am I woke up screaming and covered in a cold sweat. J woke up and grabbed me asking if I was ok? I had a frighten look upon my face. I whispered to him "I had an awful nightmare about our cruise to Hawaii! It was so surreal. I thought it was real" J asked what was it about. I told him, it was about weird and strange things happening while on the cruise. The TVs coming on by themselves, No crew on the ship, lights flickering off and on and hearing and seeing things. J asked if anything else happened, I tell him I don't know because I woke up screaming. I calmed down and was able to fall back asleep.

230am vastly approached and my alarm went off again. I woke up and got dressed. I grabbed my suitcase and went outside where my trio of friends Lisa, Robert and Delaina were waiting for me. We start walking to McDonalds to meet Jordan. When we got there, Jordan was there with the rest of the group, Lindsey, Diane, Isaiah, and Diarus waiting by the van. Jordan tells us we have a 17 hour drive to reach our destination in Miami, where we board the cruise ship. We all load up our luggage and are ready to go.

Just before we load up in the van we drew straws to see who was going to be stuck driving. Jessica drew the shortest and she has been crowned the driver. Isaiah chimes in and says "Oh boy we're in for it now with a laugh. Jessica says I'm not that bad of a driver. We loaded up and took off. Jessica pulls out of the parking lot and we are officially on the road. Jessica wanted to take a short cut. We turned right onto Fair Ave and out of nowhere we are swerving and sliding sideways. Next thing you know the van is going backwards down the street. We were all yelling and screaming. The van comes to a halt. Jordan says "That's it, I am taking over, and you drive like a maniac while laughing as was everyone else. Jessica and Jordan switched seats and he says "here we go guys. Jordan takes off like a bat out of hell. He was definitely going over the speed limit. Luckily we all had our seatbelts on and van was equipped with airbags, you know, for safety!

Once on the highway we were cruising along. Jordan was driving better and the radio was playing music. Everyone was taking a snooze. Around 11am Jordan pulled over into a gas station to use the bathroom again and grab some road trip snacks. Jordan told us to stock up, we still have several

hours to go before getting to Miami. The scenery in Atlanta, Georgia was beautiful. Isaiah, Lindsey, Diarus and Jessica walked over to look at the mountains, taking in the fresh air and also took some cool pictures. Lisa, Delaina, Robert, and Jessica went into the local souvenir shop. Jess had bought some dream catchers' and a dragon statue. One dream catcher was batman themed and the other was wolves and feathers. The dragon statue was an incense burner. The others bought some local items such as key chains and t-shirts. We smokers took one last smoke break before loading back up into van. Jordan yells out "Load up guys, lets hit the road".

Jessica was in front passenger seat and she had fallen asleep. She woke up and looked at the time and it was 10:15pm. She says "Man its late" Then she saw a sign that keep right to head towards Miami. We all were excited when we saw that sign. We were making a stop at a hotel to get some rest since the cruise doesn't leave until the following the day at 11am. We arrive to Ithaca of South Beach.

This was the cheapest Hotel we could find. \$64.00 a night, not bad. Usually the cheaper a hotel is, the weirder and grosser it is. But its one night, can't be that bad. We unload the van and get checked in. Everyone gets their room keys, and Jordan reminds us that we are leaving at 8am, so be up and ready to load up and finish the long haul. The rooms were actually quite clean and beds were super comfy. Like clockwork I lay down and go to sleep and then all of a sudden the alarm goes off. I said "Damn, felt like I just went to sleep". Anyway we all get up and get dressed. We all were at the van by 8am. We decided to grab some breakfast and went to a place called Courtyard Café and Lounge.

Upon arrival to get breakfast, we go in and get seated. While waiting for food we all talked about what we wanted to do on the cruise ship. What it's going to be like and we talked about the formal event that is scheduled on the cruise. We were a little excited for that, we get to dress up. Our food arrived and it was delicious, the bill was not! But well worth it. We had some time left so we split up into groups to go look around town. Lindsey, Diane, Isaiah, Jordan and Diarus go shopping at Midtown Miami, where Robert, Lisa, Jess, and Delaina go into Hot Topic. We all just walked around killing time. We met back at van around 1045am and make the last few moments of the drive.

We arrive. We park the van where it will stay. We get out of van and grabbed our luggage. There she was, The Quantum of the Seas Luxurious Cruise ship! Written in big shiny gold letters. We make our way up the ramp to board the ship and we are just in awe of how awesome the ship looks. We knew we were going to have so much fun, or so we thought. We were greeted by a crew member named Frederick, with a big smile and a hearty Welcome aboard the Quantum of the Seas cruise. He directed us to where we need to check in our luggage, and told us that it will be delivered to our rooms. We were also directed to a table where we would be given our room numbers. We each got our tickets out when we then heard, oh crap I can't find my ticket. We turned to see Lindsey looking frantically through her stuff and checking pockets. No ticket in sight. All of a sudden Delaina bends down and picks something up, it was Lindsey's ticket. We were all relieved. Lindsey said thank to Delania like a million times.

As we gather ourselves and make away to the table. There are 9 of us and we each get our own room. We bought the expensive tickets making us First Class. We found out our rooms are actually right

in a row on the Southside of the ship. The Captain was at that the table and he handed Jordan a paper with the room numbers listed. Diane chimes in and says "I feel out of place". Just wait until tomorrow where we get to dress up in our dresses and tuxes said Jessica. We head to find our rooms. Lindsey and Isaiah say I hope we don't get lost on here. Jordan reassures everyone that we will be fine and are going to have a blast. Let's find our rooms and get settled in. Jordan said once done we will meet up and go explore the ship to see what there is to do.

We are headed to our rooms and just taking everything in. Meeting other passengers, seeing the crew member's work. It is something we know that this is a once in a lifetime experience. Jess and the others mention that they get motion sickness. Jess had her anxiety meds to help her stay calm. We have rooms number 48-57. We make way to our rooms so we can unpack and get settled in. While unpacking, the TV in my room came on by itself. I have a confused look on my face. So I go out into the hallway and ask the others if the same thing happen to them. They all in unison said "Yes" I see this horrified look on Jessica's face and I ask her what's wrong. She tells us that the night before she had a dream of weird things happening and this was the first thing that happened. We all were in disbelief. We returned to our rooms to finish unpacking.

We make our way up to the observation deck. While walking up to the main deck, the lights in the hallways started to flicker off and on several times. We all stop in our tracks and just looked around and at each other. Jessica then again said "Oh my goodness, this is the second thing I dreamed about

last night". Now we were a little freaked out. Lights came on and stopped flickering. We shrugged it off and continued our way to the main deck.

We make it up to the main deck, and are just taken away by the beauty of the Atlantic Ocean. Bluest water we have ever seen. Clear skies, and wide open ocean. Amazing view. Then we hear the loud ship horn, signaling that is time to set sail. The ship leaves dockside and we are on our way to our first destination, The Falkland Islands. 5,500 miles of Blue Ocean. We all get butterflies due to excitement. We decide to go on a self-guided tour of the ship to see what the Quantum of the Seas has to offer for its passengers.

The ship has a huge arcade room, several bars and restaurants, a huge banquet hall, and our favorite thing, a Casino. We split up to go do our own thing. Jordan, Jessica and Diane hit up the casino. The others went and did their own thing. While at the casino us three played slot machines and then out of nowhere us all three hit the jackpot on our machines. Coincidence? Maybe, maybe not, but we were not complaining. We collect our winnings and go to the next thing to do. We found a movie theatre and we decided to watch a movie. We get seated and the movie starts. Low and behold the film being shown is JAWS. How convenient! Here we are, on a cruise ship, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, watching an all-time classic about a killer shark. Luckily for us we "Have the bigger boat" After the movie, there is announcement that dinner will be served shortly.

We make way back to our rooms to get cleaned up for dinner. We then head back to the dining hall for dinner. Upon arrival we are greeted by the Hostess Emily. She politely showed us to our table and got us all seated. Our waiter Tom arrived to take our drink order first. We all had some cocktails and they were very good. We go ahead and order our dinner. We waited about twenty minutes and our food arrived. The dinner was delicious. We got stuffed. We see what we think is another crew member walk up onto a platform near front of the dining hall. He grabs a microphone and says "hello passengers, I am your cruise ship captain, Captain Morgan". He goes on to thanks us for choosing his cruise line and hopes we enjoy our trip. Before leaving he tells all passengers that there will be a formal dinner and dance tomorrow evening at 7pm in the banquet hall. We passengers are all excited.

After dinner and the announcement we all head to the arcade. Man that was a blast! They had so many games that were around when we were kids. They had Mortal Kombat, Street Fighter, Pac-Man, and so on. We played for hours on end. Jordan said he was getting tired as it was just about midnight. Jordan left the arcade and made his way to his room to go to bed.

When making his way to his room, Jordan was approached by a crew member named Hank. Hank asked Jordan if there was anything he needed. Jordan said no thank you, I am good. Hank just stood there and smiled and then just walked away without saying a word. Jordan was a little disturbed and confused by Hanks response, or should I say no response? Jordan stood there thinking about what happened and he turned around and Hank was gone. Jordan again shrugged it off and went to his room. Finally, said Jordan, in my bed and he was out like a light.

Around 4am, Jordan is awoken by a loud bang. He literally jumps out of his bed! His heart is beating so fast. He slowly opens his door and to his surprise, nothing or no one was there. Jordan is really freaked out. He shuts his door and goes back to bed. There were no other issues for the rest of the night. When Jordan woke up, he got dressed so fast, and went to talk to the others about last night. He asked if they heard the loud bang. Lisa, Jessica, Robert, Isaiah, Diarus, Delaina, Lindsey and Diane all said no. They didn't hear a thing. Jordan did not believe them, he was guys, come on, you have to had heard that bang, it was so loud. Again, they all said no. Jordan was so confused, and actually started to panic.

Later that day we all met up for lunch and talked about what we wanted to do for the day. We also talked about the formal dinner and dance later this evening. The guys decided to go swimming after lunch, and the ladies decided to go to the spa. The pool was incredible, and luckily for the guys it wasn't crowded. We swam for hours, long enough to get sunburn. The ladies had a great time at the Spa. It was time to go back tour rooms and get ready for the formal banquet. There was a dress code. Men had to wear black and red tuxedos and the women had to wear red ballroom gowns.

We all felt a little special and feeling good about ourselves. We all looked really good. Being that Robert and Delaina were the only couple in the group, the rest of us had to find dates for the banquet. Jordan went asked the bartender Rhea, and she said yes with no hesitation. Jessica asked the casino manager Erik and he said yes as well. Isaiah asked Emily who was our hostess from the previous day at dinner and she said yes and leaped for joy. She was more excited than one should be. Diarus had asked the lifeguard Wendy and she said yes as well. Lindsey got lucky and got the Spa manager Luke to be her

date. And lastly, Lisa for some reason got Hank to be her date. Jordan was still perturbed by this guy but Lisa seemed happy so Jordan didn't say anything, but was keeping an eye on Hank.

We arrived with our dates to the banquet hall. We were greeted and shown to our table. Dinner was first on the agenda for the evening. They had two options, Steak dinner and or a baked chicken dinner. We all chose the steak dinner. We all had a glass of wine with dinner. The food was so delicious. No complaints at all. It had come time for the dancing to begin. First few songs were slow, and we all danced with our dates like we were in royal ball. Then the music changed and became more upbeat and that's when the party began. It seemed that we danced for hours on end. We were having the time of our lives.

Midway through the evening, a very loud alarm went off. The lights went off, and a red like light came on. Everyone froze in terror. Jordan said "Damn it, here we go again" The ship had come to a complete stop. The crowd was chattering with their friends and dates and amongst each other about what was going on. No one knew what to do, I mean we are in the middle of the damn ocean, what could we possibly do? Jordan went to find Hank, he felt like that he had something to do with this. Something about Hank rubbed Jordan the wrong way. But to no surprise, Hank was nowhere to be found. Actually, no crew was in sight. Even our dates had basically vanished.

Nothing was making sense. Everyone stayed in the banquet hall. Again, no one knew what to do. All of a sudden like dust in the wind, Captain Morgan literally appeared out of nowhere and told everyone that all is ok, and we are getting closer to our first destination. There was no explanation of

what just occurred. The passengers were shouting and asking questions. Captain Morgan basically ignored us all and just walked away as if nothing happened. This was really trippy and all the passengers had an uneasy feeling.

We all went back to our rooms for the night. Still confused about what had happened and what the captain failed to tell us. Oh well! Not much we could do about it. We arrived to our rooms and called it a night. We were looking forward to the next day when we finally arrive to the Falkland Islands. We wake up the next morning with the cruise ship pulling into the dock area in Stanley a small town within the Islands. We get dressed for the day. There is an announcement that all passengers needed to return back to the ship by 6pm for departure.

Jessica had searched a place for us to go see. It is called Whalebone Arch. It is a giant arch made out of whale bones, go figure! And another place she found was Gypsy Cove. Lisa was all for the Gypsy cove, and everyone was else in agreement. We went to Whalebone Arch first. It was a true sight to see. I have never seen anything like it. It is a monument that was built in 1933 to celebrate 100 years of the British administration in the Falkland. It is made up of four gigantic whale bones. It's truly a sight to see. We also came across a museum called Falkland Islands Museum and National Trust. Lindsey and Diane did not want to go see the arch, they wanted to go tour the museums. Both sights were just awesome. Cannot express how awesome it is. If you ever visit the Islands, please go see this.

Next on our agenda was going to Gypsy Cove. It is actually called Yorke Bay. It is a secluded beach. The water is the bluest I have ever seen. White sand and just a magnificent view. While there we saw penguins on the beach, yes that's right, Penguins. The beach was incredible.

We decided to have a picnic lunch at the beach. Jordan and Isaiah went to get everyone drink and order food. We all ate beach side and enjoyed the gentle breeze. After lunch it was about time to head back to the cruise ship to board and get ready to make the long trip to our final destination, Hawaii. We make it back in time, and man are we wore out. Our feet are super sore from all the walking we had did on the Islands. It was a unanimous decision we all go to our rooms to rest for a while.

Jessica went with Lisa to her room, Robert and Delaina went to his room, Jordan hung out with Diane, Lindsey, and Isaiah in Lindsey's room, there was room for everyone. Jordan passed out on the floor, everyone else slept in a bed. Diarus went to his room, he wanted to be alone. While everyone was settled in here come the lights going off and on again. Yep, here we go again. Also the TVs came and it starts playing a weird video.

Diane woke Jordan up and said "the lights are out and we are going to Robert and Delainas room. We all go knock on their door so we can stay together. The video was playing and we were all glued to the TV to see what it was playing. The video was showing us being the only passengers on the ship. Where is everyone else? Asked Robert Jordan said, I don't know, it's just a video guys, doesn't mean anything. "But why do we look so sick, like deadly sick, asked Jessica" Jordan, again said I don't know, but we need to find out what the hell is going on.

Everyone gathered their flashlights and exited the room. They were all going on a mission to search the ship. It is pitch black, and our flashlights don't help us very much. We all make it back to the main lobby and hadn't seen anyone else. No other passengers, no crew, nothing! Maybe they are in their rooms said Jessica, Jordan agreed, with no lights they may just be staying in their rooms. And as soon as Jordan said that the lights came on. We all waited for a few minutes to see if other passengers and or crew members emerged from their rooms, and no one came out.

Lindsey asked "Where is everyone". Isaiah said lets go look some more and see if we can find anyone. Making our way through the ship we are not seeing anyone else. We make it by the casino, and Diane goes are we the only people on board? There is no way that's possible. Everyone got off at the Island said Jordan. We were getting pissed off and more and more confused about the entire situation. Diarus says maybe the other passengers didn't reboard. Lord, I hope they didn't miss the ship. Robert said we need to find the captain and see what the hell is going on. We all agreed.

We went on a search for Captain Morgan's room. It took us a while to find it but we did. Everyone voted that Jordan should knock on the Captains door. Jordan agreed and he knocked several times, and there was no answer. Everyone was confused. Jordan decides to open the door! Upon entering, Jordan finds the room to be empty. Our jaws drop! Lisa goes where is he at? Jordan says guys, I hate to say this but I have come to the conclusion that we are the only passengers on the ship. Delaina asks what to do next.

Jordan was pacing back and forth brainstorming on what to do. He tells everyone to go to the main deck and see if we can find anyone up there. We all make way to the deck and when we arrived, there was not a soul in sight. Now what? Asked Jessica. In unison we all said I don't know. Diarus asked if any of us had started feeling sick. Diarus said he's getting sea sick. Lisa goes, me too. Jordan asked by a show of hands who feels sick? We all raised our hands. This is weird, why get sick now when we've been on the ship for three days and have been fine said Diane.

Jordan told everyone to stay put, he was going to find the control room. Someone has to be running the ship, right? I mean the ship was making its way to Hawaii, at least we thought. Jordan found the control room and again, no one in sight. Jordan sees a radio and he is trying to radio in for help. No one responds for a few minutes. Finally someone comes through and it is another cruise line that's somewhat nearby. Jordan is explaining to them what is going on.

They do not believe him. They say they just spoke with the Captain. How is that Jordan asked, we can't find him and me and my friends are the only passengers on board. Radio contact was then cut off and Jordan could not get through. Jordan now has to figure out to run the ship and make sure we are on the right track to Hawaii. Jordan is super nervous, but he figures it out. He sets the ship on cruise control so he can go rejoin the group.

Jordan rejoined the group, and explained to them what he found, well didn't find. He also told them about the radio contact he made with the other cruise ship. The group was getting upset. Jordan was able to make their minds at ease for a moment by telling them that he figured out how to run the ship and that it was on cruise control and set straight to Hawaii.

Night time falls upon us and we are so tired. We decide to sleep on the deck in the lounging chairs. We all slowly drift off to sleep. Even with all the crap going on, we wall got some really good sleep. When we woke up, we went to dining hall to fix our own breakfast. We made one big country breakfast for all of us to eat. We brainstormed todays plan. None of us really had any idea what to do.

After breakfast Jordan and the group went to the control room to check radar and try radio contact again. Ship was still on track, which put everyone at ease. No luck with radio contact though. Diarus mentioned that we could be too far off radar, makes sense but there has to be someone out there who can hear us. But no one heard us. Isaiah was starting to go off and getting all upset. We had to work hard to calm him down.

Once Isaiah was calm, we went back to searching the ship for answers. By then everyone started to feel sicker. We weren't for sure but all signs pointed to having Covid. Even though we were all sick, we had to push through and try and solve the crazy ass mystery. Jordan noticed on the radar that we are approaching Hawaii, and have about two hours left until our arrival.

We frantically ran to our rooms to pack our stuff up. We were ready to get off this ship. With everything going on and not having a single clue of what was going on, we were ready to be in Hawaii. When we make our way back up the deck to wait for arrival to Hawaii. All of a sudden I hear a voice from behind and it was Hank, Captain Morgan and the other crew members. Jordan went off and started yelling and cussing at the captain and crew.

Jordan wanted answers, they all did. Captain Morgan told Jordan to calm down and he would explain. The captain proceeded to tell Jordan and the others that the crew and he were actually ghosts. We all were dumbfounded, but it made sense. Captain explained that they had died from a virus and were looking for a cure. They was hoping we would be able to solve the mystery of the ship and find a cure to be able to help others.

Jordan told the captain that he was insane. How the hell was we to know we were to look for a cure? We were all upset and furious. The ship arrived to Hawaii. We were relieved. Once the ship docked, everyone exited except Jordan. He stayed for a moment to talk to Captain Morgan. All the captain said was keep looking for a cure, don't give up. Jordan just said ok and left the ship.

We all agreed to stay together for our time in Hawaii. We didn't want anything else happen and if it did us would all witness it together. Hawaii was beautiful and we had a wonderful time. Time flew by and it was time to go home. We decided to fly home. We all get tickets for our flight and head to the airport. Once we arrive we make way through security and head to our gate. We get to the gate and make way onto the plane. First class was awesome and super comfortable.

The plane is making its way down the runway for takeoff. Once we hit altitude we hear the intercom and it's the pilot. We hear "Good afternoon passengers, this is your captain speaking, Captain Morgan, thank you for flying Air Hawaii. We all looked at each other with fear in our eyes. We called for a stewardess because we wanted to turn around and go back, we did not want to be on this flight. The stewardess said sorry, we are not able to turn around. We all prayed that we make it home safely.

Luckily we made it home, and on our way back to Hamilton we were all quiet. We had to take in what we thought would be a wonderful trip, but ended being a bit of a nightmare. Everyone got home and we agreed to never speak of this trip again.

**THE END**