

# ESCAPE

One Act Play

By Lionelle Hamanaka

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Time: 2030

Settings: Bare stage. Props are movable and impressionistic.  
Crows Island, Long Island Sound, Offices of Congressman  
Hollowbrook, Wendy, living rooms of Eleanor and Eugene

Beaumont, Pierogi and Palmer, outside the Turtle Wildlife Preserve and Germ Lab.

"This play is fictional and any resemblance to characters or real life events are totally coincidental."

## CHARACTERS

This play can be performed by six (6) actors doubling

1. ELOISE BEAUMONT-60's a forklift operator on Crows Island and lifelong Long Island resident
2. PALMER-Worker, 60; works in Germ Lab  
Doubles as EUGENE
3. EUGENE BEAUMONT, her husband - early 60's, a civil service worker.
4. PIEROGI-Worker 60, works in Germ Lab  
Doubles as GUST
5. GUST- 45-the boss of Crows Island's Germ Lab.
6. Deputy Area Director DANIELA (female 40's) Gust's Assistant. Doubles as KATIE in Pier scene.
7. KATIE- ELOISE & GENE's daughter, late 30'S
8. WENDY OH- Journalist-female 50's  
Doubles as NARRATOR & TV ANNOUNCER female any age
9. CONGRESSMAN HOLLOWBROOK-40's  
Doubles as Pilot
10. PILOT-30's-Male or female

SCENARIO

ACT I

1. Scene 1 Eloise on Crows Island-late afternoon
2. Scene 2 Pierogi's Home on Long Island-evening
3. Scene 3 Director Gust's Office, Germ Lab-day;  
CROSS FADE TO: Outside parking lot the same day
4. Scene 4 Eloise's Home the same night
5. Scene 5 Congressman Hollowbrook's office
6. Scene 6 Germ Lab on Crow's Island-early evening
7. Scene 7 Pier outside Eloise's home-early morning
8. Scene 8 MacArthur Airport-Noon the next day
9. Scene 9 The Germ Lab on Crow's Island-day
10. Scene 10-outside hospital WENDY picks up ELOISE;  
CROSS FADE TO: site of ELOISE's former house. CROSS  
FADE TO: Wake

## Scene One

AT RISE: Crow's Island, late  
afternoon. DS

NARRATOR

September 1, 2030. The world has inched closer to disaster -- What's a few degrees? What if trees burn, If bees are extinct, will we all melt? A lone Long Island housewife, puts her finger in the dyke.

CROSS FADE TO: ELOISE BEAUMONT, a  
forklift operator, is  
waiting for the night crew  
at the Germ Lab,  
where germs are bred for  
warfare. It is windy, we  
hear bird calls.

NARRATOR

Eloise Beaumont, a forklift worker's last day. She waits on Crow's Island for the night crew. Tomorrow the Germ Labs will move to Kansas.

(ELOISE calls CONGRESSMAN  
HOLLOWBROOK. HE sits US at a desk)

ELOISE

Hello, Congressman Hollowbrook?

CONGRESSMAN

You are?

ELOISE

Eloise Beaumont, your constituent. I'm from South Helm, a town in your district. I finally reached you. I've called every day for 8 hours a day. I'm a senior worker at the Germ Lab.

CONGRESSMAN

Germ Lab?

ELOISE

You know, the Germ Lab at Crow's Island.

CONGRESSMAN

I heard the Germ Lab's leaving us, off to--

ELOISE

Manhattan, Kansas. I'm calling about Hurricane Z2!

CONGRESSMAN

Thank you . . .

ELOISE

Have you heard of Traub?

CONGRESSMAN

No.

ELOISE

He was a Nazi who ran US germ warfare.

CONGRESSMAN

I don't have time for Nazis. We're barraged by calls on the storm.

ELOISE

Crows Island's Germ Lab is a BSL-4. Germ warfare is more dangerous than nukes.

CONGRESSMAN

Now you're juggling apples and oranges!

ELOISE

Don't hang up! A Wall Street guy owns Crows Island and rents the Germ lab--and a Turtle Preserve.

CONGRESSMAN

Could you call back after the Hurricane?

ELOISE

People may die if we don't do something! If the Germ Lab explodes it can harm folks. Do you remember Hurricane Bob?

CONGRESSMAN

Wasn't on earth yet.

ELOISE

Something must be done before the storm hits!

CONGRESSMAN

Are you implying the hurricane will explode the Germ Lab?!

ELOISE

It happened in Hurricane Bob! The germs can infect the turtles, who spread it to the mainland. Lyme's Disease spread from ticks swimming on red tailed deer from Plum Island.

CONGRESSMAN

Hurricanes have increased. I read up on Long Island storms.

ELOISE

A miracle! A politician who cares. Not just, 'Blah, blah, blah.' If the power's cut, Crows Island floods with germs. In Hurricane Bob, two guys almost died. I'm on Crows Island waiting for those same guys.

CONGRESSMAN

Do they need to be there?

ELOISE

The boss doesn't care about us. Tomorrow's closing day. GUST cares about meeting moving deadlines. But PIEROGI and PALMER could die!

CONGRESSMAN

We've modernized since 1990. Think positive, Eloise.

ELOISE

I became a skeptic the hard way. I'm terrified Hurricane 2Z means death. Congressman, we've got to do something now!

CONGRESSMAN

I've really got to go. But thanks for being a concerned taxpayer.

ELOISE

Why can't we do something about it now?

Sound of phone disconnecting.

End of Scene One



PALMER

Made out my Will too.

PIEROGI

Damn! I forgot.

(HE goes into a box; and pulls out  
a pair of wrinkled old boots)

Here they are! A pair of good boots can save your life!

PALMER

Know what's been jangling in my head, all day long? 'Only stupid people do the same thing twice.'

PIEROGI

Does that makes us Dumb and Dumber?

(HE sits down and puts the boots on)

PALMER

Do you think we should pray or skip town?! If those new pipes break, we may not make it.

PIEROGI

If they break, we'll be swimming in germ stew. The 'save a dime, lose a dollar' mindset. The same thinking almost killed us in Bob.

PALMER

Weren't the new liners tested?

PIEROGI

For winds up to 100 MPH. But what if they're 140? Enough germs can escape to wipe out the US food supply.

PALMER

We're doing this just to make a living.

(HE stands up)

Maybe I should sell the house and move.

PIEROGI

I thought of high tailing it out myself.

PALMER

We can just-not show up. Why are we suckers for the big guys?

PIEROGI

But . . .Eloise. Gust would make her do our shift.

PALMER

Let's hit the road.

THEY both stand up and exit.  
Sounds: Harsh wind  
currents and bird calls.

CROSS FADE TO:

Crows Island. PIEROGI and

PALMER meet ELOISE.

PIEROGI

Eloise! We're here!

ELOISE

You made it!

PIEROGI

Get home now! The winds are whipping out there.

ELOISE

Hope those pipes and tanks hold.

PIEROGI

Private companies tryin' to save a buck.

ELOISE

Do you think I'm going to forget about you? I won't keep my mouth shut!

PIEROGI

That boat is the last one out! Get aboard!

ELOISE

I'll call you as soon as I can.

End of Scene Two

## Scene Three

AT RISE: GUST's Office. Mr. Gust, Chief Administrator of Crows Island, And Deputy Assistant Director, DANIELA. TV is on.

GUST  
Why can't you get Eloise to quit?

DANIELA  
She can't lift 50 pound boxes. We can fire her for incompetence.

GUST  
Let's bring her up on charges.

DANIELA  
There's no union. She's the Lone Ranger.

GUST  
She has no appreciation for my innovations! The world famous scientists I've brought in. I've gained international recognition for the Germ Lab. Improvements always cost money. Why are we talking about a forklift operator, for Christ's sake?

DANIELA  
She's not relocating to Manhattan Kansas, that's for sure!

GUST  
About the storm—just batten down the hatches. I'm not to blame for Mother Nature. After tomorrow, we're out of here forever.

DANIELA  
The new pipes haven't been tested yet.

GUST  
What do you mean? The company tests them for 10,000 hours!

DANIELA  
Real life sometimes contradicts tests. Otherwise, why recall a million cars? After the so-called company tests?

GUST  
I don't want lawsuits. You checked with our lawyer?

DANIELA  
He said they can't prove Crows Island Germ Lab caused any aftermath of Hurricane 2Z.

GUST

That's a relief. If the power lines and underground cables break, we fall back on the pipes. Even if they break, we're not the company that made them. All right!

On the TV, we hear WENDY and ELOISE's voices. WENDY stands in front of a weather Map.

WENDY

Good evening, this is Wendy Oh with breaking news on Hurricane 2Z. Long Islanders are busy putting up protection against storm surges that may rise to 12 feet.

(SHE points to green and yellow markings on the Map tracking the predicted course of the storm)

Hurricane 2Z will sweep through the Long Island area, predicted to be a Category 2 storm, winds from 96-110 miles per hour. In 1991 Hurricane Bob winds rose to 115 miles per hour. Only now is Hurricane 2Z predicted to be a storm of this magnitude. Today, we have a survivor of Hurricane Bob, Eloise Beaumont.

GUST

My God! It's Eloise!

ELOISE

People of Long Island, this is an alert. Germs may escape on Crows Island. Do you remember epidemics of Rift Valley Disease, Lymes Disease, African Swine Fever in 1983, Nairobi Sheep Disease? Hundreds of thousands of people got sick for years.

GUST

Listen to that! She's incriminating us! Get rid of her!

DANIELA

I'll do it Monday.

GUST

Do it now! What if someone dies? What if the investigation reveals that Eloise warned us? Go to her house! Fire her for incompetence. She can't lift those 50 pound boxes, can she?

DANIELA

She's managed to get other crew members to help her.

GUST

Say we're not insured! Go to her house now, with a Final Notice!

CROSS FADE TO:

DANIELA exits. ELOISE gets out of WENDY OH's car, to where her car is parked. The wind is howling. GUST

packs up his valise and walks out,  
bumping into ELOISE.

ELOISE

Mr. Gust! We were just coming to see you. This is Wendy Oh, of Top of the Hour News!

GUST

I just saw you on her show.

WENDY

How do you do, Mr. Gust.

GUST

You cut my company up on the News. You came to finish the job?

WENDY

That's a somewhat hostile take on the situation.

GUST

Eloise is our most senior employee. Despite the fact she's unqualified we provided her with a decent living for 30 years! The first chance she gets she attacks us on network TV.

ELOISE

I feel like a sailor spitting into the wind! You know that if Germs escape Crows Island they'll kill a lot of people!

GUST

Where's your measurable evidence?

ELOISE

Hurricane Bob!

GUST

It has to be compared in studies. That's what scientists do, Eloise. Or do you have a magic crystal ball?

ELOISE

I have personal experience. A lot of people have gotten sick or died from germs that escaped.

GUST

We have the best equipment.

ELOISE

Our night crew's there, but if the pipes break, the freezers will break down. The germs will spill over.

WENDY

The power lines?

ELOISE

The Germ Lab just installed new pipes and pipe fittings.

WENDY

Government?

ELOISE

Private.

GUST

They're the best in the business! I pay top dollar!

ELOISE

In Hurricane Bob the pipes broke, from 100 miles an hour winds.

GUST

You're no meteorologist! And furthermore, you're fired!

ELOISE

What?!

GUST

You heard that, didn't you?

ELOISE

I was here during Hurricane Bob. If germs escape the Germ Lab, they seep into the grounds. The Wildlife Preserve—

GUST

Now you're trying to use Mother Nature against me. Keep it up! We'll bring a lawsuit against you for slander!

ELOISE

Get Pierogi and Palmer off the island! Please!!

GUST

They've got to finish their shift! We're closing tomorrow. I'm calling my lawyer as soon as I get home!

(HE exits)

ELOISE

We've got to get help. Pierogi and Palmer may die out there.

WENDY

I'll follow up.

ELOISE

Have you talked to Congressman Hollowbrook? He wants to protect the Community.

WENDY

My parents live here. I've got skin in the game, too, Eloise.

ELOISE

Full disclosure: My daughter Katie was a champion swimmer. She might have a chance at the Olympics. But she went swimming in the sound, caught an infection and died. I could never prove it was germs that escaped from the Germ Labs! She could have been a champion!

WENDY

I'm so sorry. I don't know what to say.

ELOISE

I could never prove it.

WENDY

I was born here and I'm not moving. My parents are here. I'll call Congressman Hollowbrook. Talk to you later.

ELOISE

I'll wait for your call.

(THEY exit)

End of Scene Three



GENE

I don't know why I still love you.

ELOISE

I must be a habit.

GENE

You're still the prettiest woman on Long Island.

TV ANNOUNCER

Major Hurricane warnings for coastal waters. Winds 150 miles per hour. Storm surge warning for the entire coast.

GENE

Why did I marry the most fanatical environmental activist on Long Island?

ELOISE

The germs at the lab can kill the US food supply.

GENE

Oh, you love to dramatize situations!

ELOISE

It's true, honey.

HE grabs her and they tussle.

GENE

Why didn't you become an actress? You're always exaggerating! Let's forget about the outside world! I've had enough of it to last forever.

(HE kisses her neck)

ELOISE

I have something important to tell you. You're retired. And now-

GENE

That's the point! Can't we enjoy ourselves for once?

ELOISE

I'm worried about Pierogi and Palmer, our town, Long Island, New York.

GENE

In other words, the whole world. Come here, you!

ELOISE

I haven't even eaten dinner.

GENE

Well, eat up. And then, I'll have you for dessert.

ELOISE  
That's so corny, Gene.

GENE  
Corny's what you're stuck with.

ELOISE  
I got fired today!

GENE  
Hurray!

ELOISE  
What's wrong with you?

GENE  
You're done! I've been waiting patiently for this to happen!

ELOISE  
You forgot the hurricane's coming.

GENE  
We can be like everybody else and hunker down, watch TV, and forget about the outside world. You've got nothing at stake now!

ELOISE  
How can you say that!? After what happened to Katie?

GENE  
Didn't I go to every swim meet with Katie? Wasn't she the light of my life? No one adored her like I did. But would she want us to be miserable the rest of our lives? You've become a fanatic since then.  
(HE gets on his knees and prays)  
Why, Lord? Give this woman some guidance.  
(HE turns to her)  
We're just two little people nobody's heard of. You're no big shot! They don't care two cents about us. Here-I went out and got extra water, batteries, candles, food. We can snuggle together, and ride out the storm, that's our best bet.  
(HE gets up and lights a candle)  
We may get stuck in the dark if the power is cut. This is the best I can do.

Knock at the door. GENE gets up to answer it. DANIELA stands there, holding the notice.

DANIELA  
Sorry to bother you. You must be Mr. Beaumont?

GENE  
Yes. What do you want?

DANIELA

I work with Mrs. Eloise Beaumont. Is she home?

GENE

Yes, just a moment. Eloise?! Someone here for you.

ELOISE walks forward.

ELOISE

What are you doing here?

DANIELA

I regret this, but here.

(SHE holds out the notice)

This is notice of your immediate dismissal from the Crows Island Germ Lab.

ELOISE

Gust beat you to it.

DANIELA

(SHE continues)

You haven't lived up to the job specifications of forklift operator.

ELOISE

Don't you ever listen? I talked to Gust.

DANIELA

You did? Your last check will be mailed out Wednesday.

ELOISE

You won't climb very high on the corporate ladder if people have to repeat things four times.

DANIELA

Things in your locker can be mailed to you.

ELOISE

After 30 years this is what I get!

DANIELA

I'm delivering the notice before the Hurricane. So you wouldn't be in harm's way if you tried to come in tomorrow. I may be saving your life!

ELOISE

Pierogi and Palmer are out there now. Should I thank you for that?!

DANIELA

(SHE turns)

That's not what you're known for. Good night.

ELOISE

(SHE yells)

To you, we're expendable. Gust couldn't care less if his workers are killed in the storm. As long as he meets his deadline!

ELOISE turns to GENE and weeps.

End of Scene Four

## Scene Five

AT RISE: Early Evening: CONGRESSMAN  
HOLLOWBROOK's office. WENDY  
enters.

WENDY  
Congressman Hollowbrook? Wendy Oh, from Top of the Hour News.

CONGRESSMAN HOLLOWBROOK  
stands. They shake hands.

WENDY  
Thanks for talking to me about your campaign. Sorry this Hurricane  
interrupted it--so close to the election.

CONGRESSMAN  
It might be an advantage. If I can live up to the moment.

WENDY  
I heard you're an environmentalist.

CONGRESSMAN  
I'm on the House Subcommittee on the Environment. We have to care  
about the world we're leaving the next generation.

WENDY  
What do you think about Hurricane 2Z?

CONGRESSMAN  
I'm very concerned. We've had more and more hurricanes. I bring it up  
in the House Committee, and everyone agrees it's terrible. But getting  
a bill passed? We're fighting lobbyists from the richest corporations  
in America. And then to get laws enforced--another quagmire. Even  
though California and the western bread basket have been swallowed up  
in fires. Oregon, Washington, and parts of Texas, Arizona--all burnt  
out. It's unbelievable!

WENDY  
There's a germ lab on Crow's Island. And a Wildlife Preserve.

CONGRESSMAN  
That's right. A constituent called me up about it.

WENDY  
Eloise Beaumont?

CONGRESSMAN  
You know her, too? She gave me a lot of information.

WENDY  
Eloise's a lifer on Long Island. She's a whistleblower. She doesn't  
get paid for what she does. We do. That's the main difference. I've

covered Long Island before Lymes Disease. Before Nairobi Sheep. Do you remember Plum Island?

CONGRESSMAN

I've heard the name. By the way, who's against us on this issue?

WENDY

Ultra, a private company that put in new valves set to break tonight. And the US Dept. of Agriculture—

CONGRESSMAN

The USDA? They always groan about their budget.

WENDY

We breed germs to destroy enemy food supplies. Then they cut the budget of the Dept of Agriculture.

CONGRESSMAN

I see it now. This is war. My political future's on the line.

WENDY

Congressman, this is your District. You have exposure here. On Plum Island, Hurricane Bob destroyed their germ lab, germs escaped. Power lines and cables--cut.

CONGRESSMAN

They'll hold my feet to the fire.

WENDY

Exactly.

CROSS FADE TO:

Press Conference in Congressman Hollowbrook's office the next day.

CONGRESSMAN

I've declared an emergency for the people of Long Island Sound, New York and Connecticut. Hurricane 2Z, with winds over 100 MPH, may devastate Long Island if power's cut. On Crows Island, the Germ Lab can destroy an enemy's entire food supply, or even our food supply. Crows Island has a Turtle Wildlife Preserve as well. The environment committee in Congress is asking for federal intervention.

WENDY

Stay tuned to your local stations for more complete coverage of the hurricane.

End of Scene Five

## Scene Six

AT RISE:

Crows Island, the Germ Lab.  
The sound of refrigerator  
Parts falling, the crash of  
Glass, cows mooing and pigs  
Squealing.

Got double gloves on?

PIEROGI

Yup. What's going on out there? Sounds like the end of the world.

PALMER

Focus. Take these.

PIEROGI

Sound of glass crashing. Test  
Tubes fall on the floor.

There's so damn many tubes breaking!

PALMER

Take your time. We're getting paid by the hour.

PIEROGI

You're sick.

PALMER

Must be, to stay here.

PIEROGI

The sound of a big crash of  
Machinery is heard. Lights out.

Damn! Can't see my own hands!

PALMER

Hope that don't mean what I think it does.

PIEROGI

Power lines cut!

PALMER

Yeah.

PIEROGI

PIEROGI's phone rings.

My cell phone's alive! Hello? Eloise!

PIEROGI

ELOISE

I'm trying to get you guys out. With the coast guard, the Navy. Not me, I'm nobody. Congressman Hollowbrook is calling them.

PIEROGI

I ain't goin' out in that wind. I'd be blown clear across the channel.

PALMER

Tell her thanks for me, P.

PIEROGI

Palmer said thanks.

ELOISE

Brothers from another mother, don't give up. Did the lights go out yet?

PIEROGI

Just now.

ELOISE

You can't save the test tubes. You can only save your own skins. Gust and the Deputy Area Direction knew this was coming. They fired me, by the way.

PIEROGI

Dumb people do dumb stuff. You were the rock here for 30 years.

ELOISE

That means so much to me, coming from you, Pierogi. They can pass the buck to us privates, but we know the truth! Did the pipes hold?

PIEROGI

It's up to our galoshes now.

ELOISE

Get out! You'll die trying to hold those pipes together.

PIEROGI

You're probably right.

ELOISE

You got lucky with Hurricane Bob, but this one's a barracuda. Make your way outside, shut the door. I'll stay on the line. By some miracle we're still connected.

Sound of the door shutting. Howls of the wind.

PIEROGI

Hello, Eloise?

ELOISE

See anything?

PIEROGI

We're outside the eye of the storm, and right of the right-front quadrant. The storm surge looks about 8 feet high on the edge. Palmer?

PALMER

Yeah?

PIEROGI

Palmer made it. The wind is pushing us against the wall of the Germ Lab. On your way, Eloise?

(HE laughs)

ELOISE

You bet I am. I'm waiting for a submarine.

PIEROGI

What?

ELOISE

A submarine. The Congressman is getting us one from the Navy. I'm on shore waiting, and then we'll pick you guys up.

PIEROGI

Have you got the reports from Hurricane Hunters who are measuring waves and sea foam on wind strengths?

ELOISE

Hold on a sec. What?

Sound of an electric crackle and a telephone dial tone.

PIEROGI

Hello? Eloise? Hello?!

The sound of wind and waves.

PALMER

What's going on?

PIEROGI

Hello? Hello?!

End of Scene Six

## Scene Seven

AT RISE: The Pier outside ELOISE's house. ELOISE'S husband, GENE has gone out into the storm and comes behind her on the Pier. ELOISE sits on the edge of the Pier, looking down. US, on a higher level, her daughter KATIE appears, as if swimming in a mist.

KATIE  
(SHE waves her arms in a gentle circle)

Mom.

ELOISE  
Katie, Katie! I wanted to talk to you. I hope you're at peace.

KATIE  
Don't worry, mom.

ELOISE  
My heart cracked apart when you passed away. You loved the water so much, that's why I stayed here. Whatever happens, I'm doing this so no one else dies before their time.

KATIE  
Be careful.

ELOISE  
If only it had been me. Why do people take the sky and the rain for granted? Until it turns around and destroys them.

KATIE  
Goodbye, mama.

ELOISE  
I love you, Katie.

GENE comes up behind her and touches her shoulder.

ELOISE  
Gene! Katie was here.

GENE  
You're seeing things. You've got to see a psychiatrist. I've come to get you. You won't survive if you go to Crows' Island.

ELOISE

I can't leave the men there.

GENE

You can't fly a plane, or handle a boat. You have to leave something to the experts, no matter how smart you are.

ELOISE

I'm supposed to guide the submarine.

GENE

The Congressman is playing along with you. He wants your vote, that's all. You think the US Navy has nothing better to do than pick up stray passengers on Long Island in an emergency? Eloise, you've carried this too far. Your own life comes first. Don't you love me more than the night crew?

ELOISE

Of course I do.

GENE

Then why don't you act like it?

ELOISE

And be like everyone else?! If you see a sin, and do nothing, you become part of the sin. If I saw a murder on the street and didn't stop, didn't report it. I'd be as guilty as the murderer.

GENE

Maybe you'll take time away from people who are trying to rescue hurricane victims!

ELOISE

I've worked in the Germ Lab all my life! I know what they're up to there! If those germs escape, the whole food supply of this country could be wiped out.

GENE

You're fantasizing.

ELOISE

Oh I am? They've got 14 other Germ Labs spread out around the country, BSL4 labs. You know why? The germs are so lethal. They destroy food supplies, some are aimed at different species. And they always make mistakes!

GENE

You're talking mumbo jumbo, like a science fiction movie.

ELOISE

This is not science fiction! I'm not making this stuff up.

GENE

Who ever heard of such a thing? And stop putting down ordinary people who are worried about their own families. We've got what we always wanted: our own place right by the water.

ELOISE

I can't help thinking about others, Gene. Pierogi, Palmer—they came to work because they were relieving me. They could have driven off in the opposite direction! That's what other people do in a storm. They get out of Dodge! But those guys love me, and I love them. We face the same dangers so we stick together. I'm not going to leave them to get smashed by the storm. Hold on, I'm going to check up on him.

A foghorn sounds far away.  
ELOISE dials her phone.

ELOISE

Hello? Congressman Hollowbrook. What?! There's no submarines available?

We see CONGRESSMAN's face US.

CONGRESSMAN

I did call to inquire. No nuclear subs are available on such short notice.

SHE hangs up the phone.

ELOISE

This is an emergency?! Wait! Aren't there people who race into the eye of a hurricane?

GENE

Don't tell me.

ELOISE

Aren't Pierogi's and Palmer's lives worth it? Isn't the survival of the last Hammerhead turtles worth taking a chance?

GENE

Now it's turtles! You can't fly into the eye of a Hurricane! Let someone else do it. No, you'll find another fanatic like you!

ELOISE

Eugene, what if I was on Crow's island in the Germ Lab.

GENE

What about us?

ELOISE dials her phone.

ELOISE

Hello Wendy? I'm trying to get in touch with an airport where there are storm chasers on the East coast.

WENDY

Try Lakeland Lindner International Airport. You going to try and hitch a ride?

ELOISE

Yes.

WENDY

Good luck.

Her phone disconnects from  
WENDY and she dials Information.

ELOISE

Hello, operator? Can you get me Lakeland Lindner International Airport in Florida, please? Thanks.

(SHE glances back at GENE)

Hello Lakeland? This is Eloise Beaumont from Long Island. Do you have any Storm Chasers headed to Hurricane 2Z in Long Island Sound? We're expecting Hurricane 2Z any hour now. I know the area like the back of my hand. I could be of use to - you'll ask? Germ Lab workers are stuck on Crows Island. MacArthur airport is on Long Island. Could one of your Storm Chasers stop off and pick me up? Thank you! You've got my number now. I'll wait right here.

SHE hangs up the phone.

GENE

You've lost your mind. You've been infected by the Germs at the Germ Lab.

ELOISE

Hello? Yes, this is she. You will? I'll meet you at MacArthur's airport in two hours. I have a bright yellow Storm shield on.

ELOISE hangs up. SHE goes to GENE  
and kisses him.

ELOISE

This is the last time I'll do something like this, honey.

GENE

I don't think you'll get another chance. You know, you're spoiled, Eloise. I've spoiled you, your parents spoiled you.

ELOISE

I know I'm lucky, having a man like you. You put up with me.

GENE

I really think you've been infected by the Germ Lab. I think you need to see a doctor.

ELOISE

I'll be back soon. And I'll go to the doctor then.

GENE

I may not be here. I've put up with you and your obsession with Crows Island for 30 years! At least Katie's not around to see you make a fool of yourself!

ELOISE

It's because of Katie I'm doing this!

GENE

If nothing else good came out of our marriage--

ELOISE

Oh, now our whole marriage is no good! Remember when Katie got infected with bacteria swimming in the Sound! That was no accident! But no one would believe me, not even you.

GENE

I'm not a scientist and I don't pretend to know all the answers. I put up with you long enough!

ELOISE

You're just scared I won't come back. If I can hitch a ride with a storm chaser, I have to take the chance. I can't let them die there. I'll come right back.

GENE

It won't be up to you!

Sound is magnified of footsteps  
crackling through pieces of  
wood.

End of Scene Seven

## Scene Eight

AT RISE: MacArthur Airport.  
Wind sounds and thunderclaps.

ELOISE  
I thought you'd never make it.

PILOT  
My name's Mike.

ELOISE  
Hi Mike. I'm Eloise. You can barely see through the windows.

PILOT  
We use GPS, radio and radar systems to guide the plane.

ELOISE  
Thought I'd be able to help you.

PILOT  
Who knows? Lakeland said you worked there?

ELOISE  
All my life. Trying to get my co workers. I understand you're in love with Hurricanes.

PILOT  
Yup. This is my childhood dream!

ELOISE  
There is something magnificent about a hurricane.

PILOT  
Mother Nature!

ELOISE  
There's something magnificent about guys who'd risk their lives for something bigger than themselves. You're like someone from another planet.

PILOT  
I've been told that before. And it wasn't a compliment. So your buddies are stranded there?

ELOISE  
Yes.

PILOT  
Were you brought up religious?

ELOISE  
A God-fearing Catholic.

PILOT

So was I. But somewhere along the way, I decided God is not in the image of man, but in the image of woman, and her name is Mother Nature.

ELOISE

That's an interesting theory.

PILOT

A lot of people would kill me for even thinking that. But I think I can tell you, because you're . . . different.

ELOISE

Only a special kind of person questions authority.

PILOT

And some of them are madmen or rebels.

ELOISE

And some fly into the eye of a hurricane.

PILOT

That's why I haven't married. I could break someone else's heart, tying them to my mission. A long time ago I decided, I have to do this. Or life wouldn't be worth living.

ELOISE

I don't like lies. Keeping lies bottled up for appearances. So they go on forever.

PILOT

Maybe we're talking this way because we're risking our lives, and this may be our last trip anywhere. Pardon me, but what if you get stranded? Do you have a family?

ELOISE

Yes. But . . . I love my co workers too. The other reason is--I want to free the turtles.

PILOT

Turtles?

ELOISE

The Crows Island Sea Turtle Center is next to the Germ Lab. There's Loggerheads, Green Turtles, Leatherbacks, Kemp's Ridley and Hawksbills there.

PILOT

Are you a naturalist?

ELOISE

No. But I think all the creatures on the planet deserve to be here, even though we've done what we could to upset the balance. All

creatures want to live. Mankind will be lucky to survive. Man thinks he's superior, but does he act like it?

PILOT

The human species doesn't own this earth.

ELOISE

Some people are heartless. They strut around like they're big stuff. Trample over anything to get what they want. They don't care how many little people die. Gust is having his cognac, while my co-workers fight for their lives. If germs escape, turtles will be trapped. I'm opening the Gates to free them. Because the Hurricane could destroy a species.

PILOT

What about your co-workers?

ELOISE

(SHE holds up rubber tubes)

See these? They're rubber tubes to wear until they get rescued. I'm giving these to Pierogi and Palmer.

PILOT

Better than nothing. Funny how man thinks he can disregard Mother Nature. It's all chance at this point.

ELOISE

It should help them in the surge.

PILOT

I hope you've used a parachute before.

ELOISE

Yes. I've taken flight lessons too. Just on a single engine. But this is a real thrill!

PILOT

We're almost there. You have to unbuckle your seat belt, and hold on to the braces on the wall.

ELOISE unbuckles, and walks unsteadily along the wall.

PILOT

The chute's below you. See it?

ELOISE

Yes.

PILOT

I'll open the chute, but you'll have to jump quickly.

Got it.

ELOISE

ELOISE tightens the Inner tubes  
on her Storm Shield outfit.

Thanks a lot.

ELOISE

Sound of a door opening and  
shutting. The Sound of Wind.

End of Scene Eight

## Scene Nine

AT RISE: Outside the Germ Lab on  
Crows Island. The door of  
the Germ Lab shuts. PIEROGI  
and PALMER with their backs  
to the building.

PIEROGI

Same as 1990.

PALMER

Yup.

PIEROGI

Those specimens will be oozing through the floor by now.

Sounds of wind and animal cries.

PIEROGI

These winds will kill us.

PALMER

We'll die faster inside. I hated hearing the animals dying.

PIEROGI

Déjà vu.

PALMER

Yeah. When will they ever learn?

SOUND: A BIG THUMP.

PALMER

Hear that?

PIEROGI

It wasn't a bomb, or thunder.

ELOISE tramps through muck.

PIEROGI

Eloise! I don't believe it.

PALMER

You're kidding.

ELOISE

Nope. I made it. Here.

Sound of rainwater.

PIEROGI  
 These are rubber tubes.

ELOISE  
 For us to wear if we get swept away in the surge.

PALMER  
 Eloise, thank you!

ELOISE  
 Couldn't leave you guys here.

PIEROGI  
 You know you're crazy, right?

ELOISE  
 You know what? I don't care.

PALMER  
 God bless, Eloise.

ELOISE  
 Gust and the Deputy Area Director know you're here. Wendy's going to call them on the evening news. Excuse me, guys, I've got to go to the Turtle Preserve and be right back.

PIEROGI  
 Hold on to that hedge of trees on the side.

ELOISE  
 Will do.  
 (SHE exits)

PALMER  
 Will our houses still be there after the surge?

PIEROGI  
 If we make it.

PALMER  
 We may have a chance now. The wind has died now.

PIEROGI  
 We just missed the eye of the hurricane.

PALMER  
 If we can just hold out a little longer.

CROSS FADE TO: US we see photos of Crows Island Turtle Wildlife Preserve. ELOISE unlocks the gate and pulls at it, and struggles as the gate grates

against a rock.

ELOISE

I can't believe this.

Sound of gate scraping rocks.

ELOISE

Come on, my lovelies. Watch out for the surge.

The clapping sound of multiple turtle legs, rushing through the gate. US a shot of turtles moving.

ELOISE

If this is my last day, it's the way I want to spend it. Some of those turtles will make it. Pierogi and Palmer may make it. I gave them a chance. I don't know if the whole world will come crashing down. Most of our world is untamed. Why do people think we have to conquer? Why do we have to be at the top of the heap? I don't know if I can make it back to the guys. Maybe they'll find me under a pile of leaves, or washed up on the shore somewhere, or floating in the Sound.

(SHE tramps away)

CROSS FADE TO:

The news studio of Top of the Hour News. Wendy Oh is doing a Breaking News Update. GUST is on the phone.

WENDY

Hello Mr. Gust? Wendy Oh of TOTHN. Do you know three of your employees are stranded on Crows' Island in the hurricane?

GUST

We have to provide 24 hour security for the Germ Lab. Of course we pray with their families for their safe return.

WENDY is in front of storm  
Chart showing currents on map.

WENDY

Winds have risen to over 110 miles per hour. It's a Category 3 storm now. And what if the power goes down and your workers drown in storm surge? What then, Mr. Gust?

GUST

I'm a scientist. I don't control Mother Nature.

WENDY

What if the pipes break and your germs seep into the land and the Wildlife Preserve?

GUST

I didn't manufacture those pipes. Call the company!

WENDY

Did you prepare for this Hurricane? If someone dies—

GUST

Many people have died to advance science. People die in floods and natural disasters, and that's above my pay grade.

WENDY

We're going on the air, Mr. Gust. I'll speak to you again soon. Wendy Oh, of Top of the Hour Evening News. The winds of Hurricane 2Z have ravaged Long Island with winds over 111 miles an hour. Storm surges have drowned the towns of South Helm, Murrayville, and Buzzard's Bay on Long Island and hundreds of homes and businesses, and multiple small islands between New York and Connecticut. A State of Emergency has been declared.

End of Scene Nine

## Scene Ten

AT RISE: Outside a hospital on Long Island.  
WENDY interviews ELOISE, PIEROGI  
and PALMER. ELOISE, PIEROGI and  
PALMER emerge from the entrance.

WENDY  
This is WENDY OH from TOTH News. Here are ELOISE BEAUMONT, PIEROGI and  
PALMER, all workers at the Crows Island Germ Lab, who miraculously  
escaped Hurricane 2Z. Welcome home.

PIEROGI  
Thank you. It feels so good to be alive.

WENDY  
Mr. Pierogi, you and Mr. Palmer were also trapped inside a Germ Lab  
during Hurricane Bob in 1991.

PALMER  
We're the luckiest guys on the planet.

WENDY  
Congratulations on coming home!

PIEROGI & PALMER  
Thanks.

THEY Exit.

WENDY  
And here's Eloise Beaumont, who went back to Crows Island to help  
rescue her fellow workers.

ELOISE  
Mike, the stormchaser pilot, notified the helicopters where to land.  
Pierogi, Palmer and me were against the building. I did was nothing  
special. We're all in this together.

WENDY  
You've been an activist in the Environmental movement in Long Island  
for over 25 years.

ELOISE  
We've got to stop ruining the environment. Or we'll leave more and  
more hurricanes, tornados and fires to our kids and grandkids.

WENDY  
Thanks for taking a stand, Ms. Beaumont.

SHE signals to the camera crew.

WENDY

Eloise, I told the doctor I'd take you after you were discharged.

WENDY and ELOISE walk towards  
WENDY'S car and sit in the front.

WENDY

It's so good to see you.

ELOISE

Thanks for picking me up.

WENDY

Your rescue from the hurricane was incredible.

ELOISE

I had to do everything to get those guys out. I've been trying to reach Gene and get no answer.

WENDY

I don't know how to tell you this. Did you hear my broadcast with Gust?

ELOISE

Yes.

WENDY

Remember I said storm surges drowned the town of South Helm.

ELOISE

Yes, I remember.

WENDY

Nothing's left. South Helm was wiped out. Your neighbors are in shelters.

ELOISE

But where's Gene?

WENDY

The emergency crew found his jacket in the water..

ELOISE

No! Take me there.

WENDY

We moved what we could salvage. There's a cot waiting for you.

ELOISE

I've got to look for him!

WENDY

Here we are.

CROSS FADE TO:

The pier where ELOISE and GENE stood when she waited for the Stormchaser plane. Yellow tape stretched across stage.

ELOISE

(SHE runs ahead DS)

Gene! Gene! Why wasn't it me? He begged me to stay! All he ever wanted was a house on a pier, near the water.

WENDY

They combed the area for days. Don't blame yourself.

ELOISE

Why wasn't I told? Maybe he was waiting for me.

CROSS FADE TO:

WAKE. PIEROGI, PALMER,  
WENDY, PILOT. GENE has been cremated.  
ELOISE holds an urn.

ELOISE

We're here to give Gene back to the water he loved so much. Katie is here. They can share their love. Until it's my turn. I'll protect all natural things from those who'd try to destroy the balance of the earth. I won't let anything stop me!

(ELOISE throw ashes.)

End of Play