

A CAT, A TSUNAMI, A DISEASE
By Molly Burke

CHARACTER LIST:

GERALD: Has Benjamin button disease. Naturally grows younger during the play.

STEVE: Talking cat.

LISA: Talking cat.

NELSON: Voodoo vampire guy, Australian.

Time

Late Spring, '70s

Place

Hawaii

(Late '70s. Hawaii. A mist engulfs the stage, then fades off, revealing Steve, 6 year old cat center stage under a spotlight.)

STEVE

(Drinks out of a glass of scotch.) I'll never forget the day I saw her. She was the bee's knees, the coolest cat in the alley. But just like the ocean, she was too vast for me to comprehend.

(Black out. Lights go up on an alleyway. STEVE is licking a piece of pizza.)

LISA

(Smoking a cigarette.) You gonna finish that piece of pizza all by yourself?

STEVE

(Drunk) Maybe I will, what's it to you?

LISA

It isn't much to me. I just needed a reason to talk to you so as to begin the relationship that will develop throughout this story.

STEVE

Huh. (Passes out.)

(Black out. Lights go up on a busy city street. Cars are crossing from both sides.)

GERALD

Ohhhh man! How am I going to cross this road? Excuse me miss, will you help me cross the road?

GIRL

Yeah, but the crosswalk is this way.

GERALD

I don't want to go all the way over there. I need to get across the street to that barber's shop (pointing). It's like crossing an ocean.

GIRL

Well, old man, you're going to have to use the crosswalk like everyone else. You ain't that special. (She spits on him and exits.)

GERALD

(Ten years younger.) Ahh, man. (He jumps on the moving cars to get to the other side of the street. He walks into STEVE.)

STEVE

Hey, watch it, old man!

GERALD

A talking cat!

(A tsunami hits the stage and washes everyone off and into the audience. GERALD and STEVE crawl back on stage. It takes STEVE a couple of tries to hop back on stage, but he fails and GERALD, now ten years younger helps him back up.)

STEVE

Fuck this, I'm going to find a sunny spot to lie in.

GERALD

(Now in his 30s) How are you, cat?

STEVE

Been better. You know how it is. But, that's life. It's like the ocean.

GERALD

Which ocean?

STEVE

Eh....

GERALD

Probably Atlantic?

STEVE

Yeah, probably. Life's like the Atlantic ocean. What's the point.

GERALD

Makes sense.

LISA

Hey, there, Gerald!

STEVE

You know this guy, Lisa?

LISA

Of course, it's Gerald!

GERALD

Hey, Lisa!

LISA

Hey, Gerald!

GERALD

It's Lisa. I know Lisa!

LISA

And I also know Gerald.

GERALD

We know each other!

LISA

Ain't that the truth!

STEVE

How do you guys know each other?

GERALD

I'm sure glad I bought this Snapple!

LISA and STEVE

What's Snapple?

GERALD

It's this great iced tea and juice brand! Snapple. Made from the best stuff on Earth.

(GERALD pauses for twenty seconds, presenting the bottle of Snapple in his hands to the audience.)

STEVE

If I'm being honest, I love Gold Peak iced tea. (He somehow opens a bottle of Gold Peak and drinks out of it.) Gold Peak. The taste that brings you home. (He presents the bottle to the crowd for twenty seconds.)

GERALD

You don't have a home, Steve. You're a homeless cat.

STEVE

Shut the frick up, Gerald. You have Benjamin Button disease.

GERALD

What did you just say?

STEVE

You have Benjamin Button disease.

GERALD

Why don't you take a swim in the ocean?

STEVE

Don't you dare speak about my mother that way!

GERALD

You don't have a mom.

(LISA gasps.)

STEVE

What did you just say?

GERALD

I said you don't have a mom.

STEVE

What?

GERALD

I said you don't have a mom.

STEVE

Oh, yeah. I know.

(Another tsunami hits the stage and everyone is washed off again.
GERALD carries the two kitty cats back onto the stage.)

LISA

What's with all these tsunamis?

STEVE

It's tsunami season. Tsunami... they're like the ocean. Wet.

GERALD

(Now in his mid 20s) How's life as a cat?

STEVE

Oh, let me tell you, Gerald, life is hard.

LISA

You eat out of the dumpsters every day.

STEVE

You sleep for fourteen hours a day.

LISA

It's a hard knock life for us.

(They perform the song and dance from It's a Hard Knock Life.)

STEVE

Does that answer your question?

GERALD

Yeah, that covered it.

STEVE

Gerald, what are you doing with your life?

GERALD

With my Atlantic ocean? Well... when I grow up, I want to be a movie star.

STEVE

That's a pretty lofty dream.

GERALD

Says who?!

STEVE

Says me. You should be a dentist or something. Get a solid income, before you –

GERALD

I don't want to be a dentist!

STEVE

You're giving up your dream!

GERALD

No, cat. I'm giving up *your* dream.

STEVE

What are you going to star in? Gerber's commercials?

GERALD

Maybe! Watch me! I'm youthful. People love youth.

STEVE

Sure, sure.

GERALD

(Now 10 years old) Watch me live my dream!!! (Moonwalks into the ocean.)

LISA

We shall never see him again.

STEVE

That's for sure –

LISA

We shall never see that man again. Gerald, the brave but naïve man. May he walk this Earth and pursue his dreams. May we never see him again. Let us celebrate his willpower. Doth Gerald go unto this Earth alone? Thou thinkest not. Gerald shall wallow in the fountain of youth that you and I so envy. For life is like the ocean.

STEVE

Lisa?

LISA

Meow.

STEVE

Lisa?!!! Lisa!!!

LISA

Meow?

STEVE

Lisa, can you not talk?!

(LISA starts purring.)

STEVE

Noooooo!!!!!! We have to take you to the Aloha Spirit!

LISA

Meow.

STEVE

Follow me, Lisa!

(They run over to a grass hut where a man dressed as a vampire is cooking something in his cauldron.)

NELSON

Ello, mate.

STEVE

You gotta help us!

NELSON

What's the problemo, here?

STEVE

She... she can't talk (starts crying.)

NELSON

Yeah... she's a cat. Cats don't talk. It's actually kind of weird that you're talking right now.

STEVE

But... but you're supposed to have magic!

NELSON

Magic? You mean my soup? It's chicken wild rice!

STEVE

Oh, nice.

NELSON

I am a vet, though. And I should tell you, it looks like she only has four more months to live.

STEVE

Noooooo!!!! (Lightning flashes.)

NELSON

I'm so sorry. But, as you know, life is like an ocean. It's big, blue, and full of fish.

(Black out. A spotlight shows on STEVE, still licking out of his glass of scotch.)

STEVE

That was the end. She was the bee's knees. Little did I know, bees don't have knees... (pause.)
Four months later, we prepared for the end.

LISA

Meow.

STEVE

Lisa, it's been a short while, but you gave me an infinity within a finite number of days...

LISA

Meow.

STEVE

(Checks his watch) any minute now, you'll be gone.

LISA

Meow.

STEVE

Hm... it should be any moment now.

LISA

(Purs.)

STEVE

Okay, something's off.

(They walk over to the grass hut.)

STEVE

She's not dead yet.

NELSON

I said four months, right?

STEVE

It's been four months!

NELSON

Well, gol darn, not human months, mate. Four cat months, that's about... five human years.

STEVE

Oh.

LISA

Meow.

STEVE

Huh. Well, I was kind of looking forward to being on my own.

NELSON

I understand, mate. I can always take her.

STEVE

Would you? Really?

NELSON

Of course, mate.

STEVE

Does that sound good, Lisa?

LISA

Meow.

STEVE

All right, Nelson, let's do –

(Another tsunami hits. Everyone is washed off the stage and gets back on.)

NELSON

I hate those things!

STEVE

Anyways, here's Lisa. She'll need to be fed twice a day.

NELSON

Twice a day. Alright, mate. Got it.

STEVE

Great, thanks!

(Black out. A spotlight shows on STEVE, who is eating some Fancy Feast, reading Cat Fancy in an armchair.)

STEVE

Well, that's the story. (He rolls over for a belly rub.)