



OK, as an experienced world traveler, here I am from Funsy Travel, with a recommendation for your next vacation. You should definitely go Nowhere. Here's why.

There I was at home, in the midst of practicing my trombone, when Simon interrupts to announce that we've been invited to go on an all-expense-paid cruise to Nowhere! We would be guests of the Royal Caribbean Line, to inaugurate their brand new ship, the *Allure of the Seas*. It's the world's largest

cruise ship, so large that it would fill the entire duck pond in Lincoln Park (this is just a hypothetical, because if they really put it there, all the ducks would get squashed). In fact, if enough of these ships were laid end-to-end, the line would stretch across the entire United States! (Naturally, I would get to be in the ship at the very front of the line).

Now, I've visited lots of places all around the world (the 156 bus stop is right outside our front door, so we travel often), and I like to get my passport stamped at exotic places. But I don't recall ever having been to Nowhere before (although Norwood Park comes close). Apparently it's located off the Miami coast, right near the Bermuda triangle.

Simon said we're only going for two days, and we're only taking carry-on, so I got my Daffy Duck suitcase to pack just the bare essentials.



(Simon, being super cautious, wouldn't let me take my cannon, or my harpoon. He said there aren't many whales in the Caribbean, and the cannon might raise eyebrows with airport security.)

So, we flew to Ft. Lauderdale, and these real nice people from RCL picked us up in a fancy bus and brought us to the ship. This is a REALLY BIG SHIP! It's a 16 story high hotel, plus several vertical shopping malls, and two multi-story atriums, and a 1400 seat Broadway theater, and an ice-skating rink for ice shows, and a movie theater, and a video arcade, and umpteen gyms and spas, and four night clubs, and a comedy club, and three stories of dining rooms (just in case you might want to eat something), and a billion more restaurants and snack places (just in case the dining rooms don't fill



you up) and bars everywhere (that served me juice!) – and it all floats (hopefully) – and that's just a few of the places on the INSIDE!



But there's even more on the OUTSIDE -- for all sorts of physical activities that scare Simon: there's a jogging track that goes around the entire ship; it's so long that Simon got exhausted just looking at it. (He looked at it twice, so he considers that two laps). And a zip line at the top of the ship, and two rock climbing walls, and even a boot camp workout program (needless to say, Simon was too busy at the restaurants). And lots of swimming pools – some for adults, and some for kids, and some for spa people with hot tubs and bubbles. And there's a giant outdoor theater where they do diving and dancing shows, and a lot more.

Simon says a picture's worth a thousand words (too bad lawyers never realized that) so I will now save you from reading several thousand boring words.









OK, back to the words. Because I know you're wondering: what was the best part? Lots of best parts, so it's hard to decide. One definite candidate: free pizza, all the time! There's a pizza parlor, with four different kinds of pizza, and whenever you want, you just walk up and take as many slices as you want! (That's because it would be real hard for Domino's to guarantee a 30-minute delivery to the middle of the ocean). So, if you get tired of the dining room's prime rib, or their roast duck (probably an accidental casualty of my hypothetical, where it got squashed by the ship in the duck pond) then the free pizza can serve as an appetizer.

But maybe the BEST part was the entertainment (because at home, we NEVER go out, anywhere). We strolled into the nightclubs and heard jazz people play the piano (just what Simon does at home, but he's not very good at it). And just when we're about to reach Nowhere, right in the middle of the ocean, what do we find? Chicago! The musical – a 90 minute Broadway full-scale production, with singing, dancing and murder (just what Simon does at home, but he's not very good at it). I kept looking to find ME in the show, because I live in Chicago, but somehow they forgot me (Simon says it would be difficult for an actor to capture all my nuances, whatever those are).

Chicago wasn't the only city on our boat – so was Hollywood. A bunch of famous movie stars like Al Pacino, Adam Sandler and Katie Holmes were filming a new movie, *Jack and Jill*, on the ship, but they were only real actors, not imaginary stars. I didn't want to be hounded by them, or be stalked by other autograph seekers or paparazzi, so I traveled incognito. Apparently it worked, because they didn't even have an inkling that I was there. This allowed me to relax and meet some of the best people: other imaginary characters.

Because you'll never believe how smart Royal Caribbean's marketing is: they're targeting a hitherto untapped demographic – imaginary people! RCL now partners with Dreamworks, so who should be on the ship with us, but all of Dreamworks' imaginary characters, from all their movies! For instance, back at home we had just recently watched the animated movie *How to Train Your Dragon*; so, would you believe: right on the ship is a full ice skating show of *How to Train Your Dragon*!





And the Dragons actually flew around, (because the ice skaters waved giant colored Dragon kites. But the dragons didn't breathe fire like in the movie. Simon says fire isn't one of the special effects that ships favor, so these probably weren't real dragons).

But that's just the beginning, because the Dreamworks characters joined me in lots of shows:



And then the CEO of Dreamworks Animation Jeffrey Katzenberg (who's only a real person) announces that the latest Dreamworks movie, *Megamind* will be premiering on board – and, get this, it's in 3-D! Now this is a new world for me (you've probably already noticed that I happen to be in 2-D, because Simon has a stunted imagination), so I wanted to view these imaginary 3-D guys. Simon says all they do is jump out of the screen, and I already do that, all the time (how else can I get to the kitchen?) Simon and Ginny preferred to spend the afternoon on deck in the sun, relaxing. So we compromised: we'll watch the movie just for the first half hour, to see what a 3-D imaginary person is like.

It looks something like this:



Except that it's MY idea to have a pickle jump out in 3D; Dreamworks hasn't thought of that one yet. (Simon says I should patent it.)

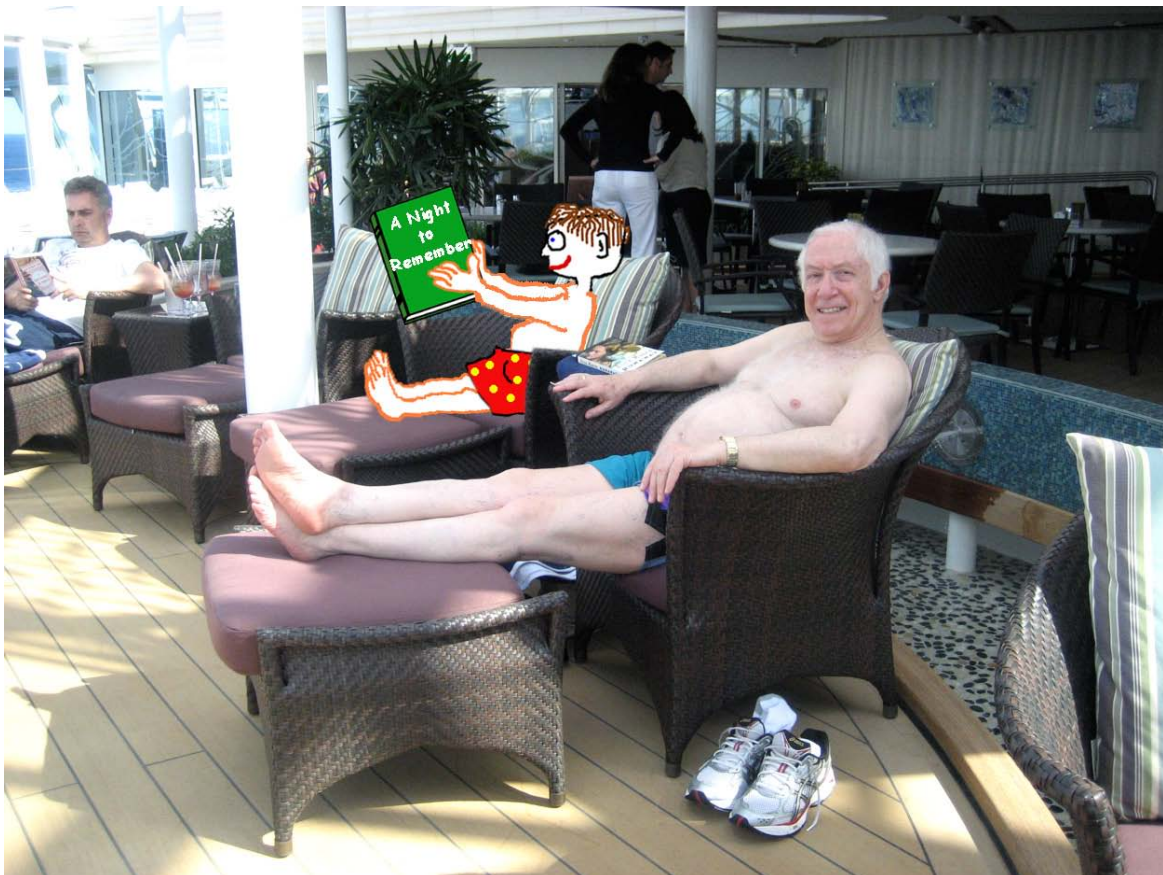
Now, the fact that this cruise was tailored to imaginary people is serendipity (I found that word on Google). But this next coincidence gets downright coincidental. As my fans already know, my favorite game is Monopoly. In fact, since my last birthday I'm the permanent owner of Boardwalk (because Simon made me a giant Boardwalk deed which I keep in my closet). So, imagine my surprise (actually, that's Simon's job) at discovering one entire deck of the ship called "Boardwalk" – with all sorts of neat old-fashioned Boardwalk-type places, stores and events. There's an arcade, a penny candy store, an ice cream parlor, a hot dog stand (with four kinds of hot dogs, all free), a fortune teller, and a full, working 18 horse carousel! And, then, believe it or not (I don't) that evening the ship presented another ice show, which was (get this) modeled on the Monopoly board game!







So, with all those events, what did Ginny and Simon like best? Relaxing, lying in the sun, looking at the ocean, and basically doing nothing (and they did it slowly).





So, it all ended too quickly.

And if you're wondering, how can *you* get on a cruise to Nowhere, I think they're pretty rare. But you can still book a cruise on this ship – if you're willing to go to Somewhere.

But don't worry, even when the ship goes Somewhere, they still serve free pizza.

