

# It's a Small World

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“Welcome to ‘It’s a Small World’”, you hear the tinny voice cheerily blast out of speakers nowhere to be seen, as the boat lurches forward. “For your safety, please remain seated throughout your voyage keeping your hands, arms, feet and legs inside the boat, and please watch your children.” You check that your possessions are secure in your lap, then look up in anticipation of the show that is about to take place on the banks lining the shallow canal of water. The familiar tune starts playing, just as it has countless times before:

*It's a world of laughter,  
It's a world of hopes,*

To the left, pairs of animatronic dolls rotate in circles along an oval track, with plastered smiles and bright clothes. The faces of carefree innocence. A princess in a fabulous gown of soft pink twinkling lights rotates her metallic wrist slowly in greeting. Bright trees stand rigidly straight as two chipmunk figures move up and down the trunks on built-in tracks. A white rabbit holds up a clock in front of a blue-dressed Alice. Rows of well-dressed children in costume form a choir and their jaws unhinge repeatedly in joyous melody. From the invisible ceiling, steel ropes suspend a magic carpet, atop which sits a prince on an airborne adventure. The fairy godmother waves a wand and a pumpkin becomes a carriage, rags become a magnificent gown.

Despite the pre-ride warning, you reach out to dip your hand in the water. It's cool and refreshing, you can almost feel the vitality of Fantasyland coursing through your veins. You think to yourself,  
*I'm never going to die.*

*A world of tears.  
And a world of fears.*

To the right, a man sits in front of a desk, hunched over and staring blankly at his screen, wondering when he'll be able to pay off his student loans. A girl stands in front of the mirror, sucking in her cheeks, casting shadows across her face. *Not Instagram-worthy.* Thick black smoke pours out of the chimney of a power plant, and mother nature shudders. A patient in the psych ward grins and whispers *We're all mad here.* Clusters of empty beer bottles litter the floor, and a haggardly man is passed out on a couch. Tangled plastic IV tubes deliver saline, electrolytes, and morphine to sustain the patient lying still on the hospital bed. The doctor holds the X-ray, examines the tell-tale mass slowly hijacking the spine, and grimly shakes his head.

Despite the pre-ride warning, you reach out to dip your hand in the water. It's surprisingly warm and viscous, and your stomach turns when you find your fingers coated in blood. You realize with horror,  
*I'm not prepared to die.*