1. In 1991, a teenage girl joins her HIV-positive, gay father on a mostly gay Caribbean cruise. Among a community reminiscent of Fire Island, she contrasts public stigma with private belonging, feels seen, befriends Claire, and experiences a tender, chaste attraction to Tom. Initially hesitant to dance, she recognizes the dance floor as sanctuary. On the black-tie finale, as Laura Branigan sings and a storm rocks the ship, she finally dances with her father—an ecstatic, elegiac last dance before his death.

2. A coming-of-age elegy where joy and mortality co-exist. Themes include belonging versus concealment; chosen family and solidarity amid the AIDS crisis; the dance floor as church—art, music, and community transmuting fear into grace; intergenerational love between a gay father and daughter; the ethics of visibility in a hostile culture; memory as sanctuary. It’s about claiming selfhood within and alongside queer community, finding beauty in a besieged world, and honoring the fleeting present when the future is foreclosed.

3. 5

4. The cruise reads as a rite of passage: a floating sanctuary/ark where queer kinship offers protection and initiation. The dance floor functions as liturgy, transforming stigma and anticipatory grief into communal exaltation; the storm externalizes turbulence. The “last dance” is both benediction and rehearsal for mourning. Tom mirrors the narrator’s emergence into womanhood and truth-telling. Laura Branigan’s “Gloria” invokes glory/recognition. More broadly, the ship embodies a temporary utopia—an ethics of witnessing and joy under siege.