

= Tabula Rasa ( Lost ) =

" Tabula Rasa " ( Latin for blank slate ) is the third episode of the first season of Lost . It was directed by Jack Bender and written by Damon Lindelof . It first aired on October 6 , 2004 , on ABC .

The character of Kate Austen ( Evangeline Lilly ) is featured in the episode 's flashbacks , showing how she got captured in Australia by the US Marshal Edward Mars ( Fredric Lane ) . In the present day events , Jack Shephard ( Matthew Fox ) and Hugo " Hurley " Reyes ( Jorge Garcia ) learn that Kate is a convict and fugitive while Jack is trying to save the marshal from the injuries he sustained during the Oceanic Flight 815 plane crash .

The episode was watched by 16 @.@ 54 million Americans and received mixed reviews from critics . It is the first episode to feature a ' Previously on Lost ' segment , a clip shown at the beginning of each episode summarizing the recent events of the show . The episode receives its name from the philosophical idea of tabula rasa , meaning blank slate , a concept which is brought in one of the episode 's final lines , when Jack tells Kate that all of the Flight 815 survivors should be allowed to restart with a new life .

= = Plot = =

= = = Flashbacks = = =

Kate ( Evangeline Lilly ) is awakened by an Australian farmer , Ray Mullen ( Nick Tate ) , as she sleeps in his barn . She introduces herself as Annie , a backpacking graduate , and Mullen offers her a job on the farm . When she later leaves the farm , Ray offers to give her a ride to the train station . On the way Kate notices a black car following them , and Ray reveals he learned Kate was a fugitive , and decided to deliver her to the authorities for the reward money . As soon as they are approached by the tailgating car , driven by US Marshal Edward Mars ( Fredric Lane ) , Kate jerks the wheel and causes Ray 's vehicle to crash off the road . As Kate is pulling Ray from the burning vehicle , Marshall Mars captures her at gunpoint .

= = = On the Island = = =

Kate , Sayid Jarrah ( Naveen Andrews ) , Charlie Pace ( Dominic Monaghan ) , James " Sawyer " Ford ( Josh Holloway ) , Boone Carlyle ( Ian Somerhalder ) and Shannon Rutherford ( Maggie Grace ) are returning from the mountains and make camp as soon as it gets dark . They decide not to tell the other survivors about the French transmission received on the transceiver , fearing that the message will cause panic among the other survivors . When a fight breaks out over who should keep the gun brought by Sawyer , the group agrees to give it to Kate . Meanwhile , at the beach , Hugo " Hurley " Reyes ( Jorge Garcia ) sees Kate 's mugshot which Jack Shephard ( Matthew Fox ) retrieved from the wounded marshal .

The next day , the hiking party returns , Kate secretly tells Jack about the distress signal , and the marshal 's condition worsens . As Jack searches the fuselage for antibiotics , Kate visits the marshal on the makeshift medical tent . He awakens and grabs her by the throat , being stopped by a returning Jack before going into shock . Kate later asks Jack to euthanize the marshal , but Jack refuses , saying that he saw her mug shot and that he " is not a murderer . " Elsewhere , Michael Dawson ( Harold Perrineau ) gets bothered by his son Walt Lloyd ( Malcolm David Kelley ) talking with the mysterious John Locke ( Terry O 'Quinn ) , and instructs his son to stay away from Locke .

The marshal 's moans of pain get worse , disturbing the other survivors . Eventually he asks to see Kate alone , and when she enters the tent , the marshal asks what Kate wanted to ask him before he was knocked unconscious during the crash . Kate tells him she wants to make sure Ray gets his reward . The marshal laughs , telling Kate that she is one of a kind , and then asks if he is going to die . Kate nods , and he asks if she is going to do it . As Kate leaves , Sawyer enters with the gun ,

and a gunshot is heard . Jack becomes angry but Sawyer claims that the marshal asked to be killed . Muffled coughs are then heard , and it is revealed that Sawyer 's shot missed the marshal 's heart and pierced his lung , causing him more pain . Jack then euthanizes the marshal , presumably by suffocating him .

The next day , Locke finds Walt 's lost dog Vincent ( Madison ) using a makeshift dog whistle , and gives him to Michael , saying that he thinks Walt 's father should be the one to return the dog . Kate offers to tell Jack what her crime was . However , he declines , stating that their past lives are not important right now and all of the survivors should be allowed to start , again .

= = Production = =

During production of the pilot episode of *Lost* , creators J.J. Abrams and Damon Lindelof got along with a team of four writers - Javier Grillo @-@ Marxuach , Paul Dini , Jennifer M. Johnson and Christian Taylor - to elaborate ideas on how the show could continue . The resulting " Writer 's Guide " plus a positive reaction to the pilot made ABC pick up the show . The season one writing begun on May 2004 , with the first episode being centered on Kate and following the guidelines of a self @-@ contained script grounded in reality . The script , credited to Lindelof , was finished by June . It was the first episode directed by Jack Bender , who came to the show following an invitation by Abrams . The episode is named " Tabula Rasa " after the Latin term meaning " blank slate " , a concept attributed to the philosopher John Locke regarding how he believed humans are born without built @-@ in mental content , then filled through their life experiences . Said concept is echoed by the final line of the episode , where Jack suggests the crash made the survivors into blank slates that could restart .

Both Joe Purdy 's " Wash Away ( Reprise ) " and Patsy Cline 's " Leavin ' on Your Mind " are featured in this episode . Josh Holloway , who portrays Sawyer , asked showrunner Carlton Cuse how Sawyer could have possibly missed in his attempt to euthanize the Marshal . Cuse notes that the writers thought this to be unlikely as well and discussed the concept of making Sawyer hyperopic , leading to him receiving a pair of glasses in " Deus Ex Machina " . This is the first episode of *Lost* to feature a ' Previously on *Lost* ' introduction , which is a short recap of the most recent episodes to refresh the viewer 's memory . The voice of the introduction was provided by Lloyd Braun , the ABC president who created the *Lost* pitch and had been fired during the pilot 's production .

= = Reception = =

16 @.@ 54 million American viewers tuned into this episode , ranking *Lost* as the ninth highest rating of the week .

Chris Carabott of IGN gave the episode a 7 @.@ 7 , praising the performances by the actors and how well characters were contrasted . The TV Critic gave the episode a rating of 63 / 100 , saying that its " good intrigue from the writers because we want to know more about Kate and what she did " , while also stating that the " lack of action may affect some who are hooked on 24 's style of relentless developments and tension . " Josh Wolk rated " Tabula Rasa " a B + , saying that " Kate 's story is intriguing , though she 's still not quite believable as a fugitive badass . "

Robert Dougherty , author of *Lost Episode Guide for Others : An Unofficial Anthology* , said that the episode is " important in establishing Kate 's past life " , but that " it isn 't that important in the grand scheme of the *Lost* design . " Ryan McGee of Zap2it called the episode a " slight letdown in comparison to the pilot episode " , but arguing that " most episodes fall short of the pilot 's brilliance " and that the use of flashbacks " demonstrated [ *Lost* ] would be a character @-@ based drama , a move that solidified its audience and let [ its viewers ] gradually know the many people that crash landed on the Island . " Dan Kawa of *Television Without Pity* gave the episode a C + .