

HOLD THE BOAT!

by Ken Bradbury



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MIRIAM: *(enters ranting, speaking to an unseen family member)* Don't complain to me, he's your father! I know it's a mess! No, I don't know who's going to clean it up! Talk to him! Talk to your father! Why do you always have to complain to me? Believe me, this isn't my idea. You can't talk to your father? I know! I can't talk to him either! If I'd had any idea on the day we married that I was going to be stuck on this stupid boat ...!

NOAH: *(entering)* Miriam, you are a ninny.

MIRIAM: What?

NOAH: I love you, but you are a ninny. You're scaring the penguins again. Do you remember what happened last time you scared the penguins? It wasn't pretty, Marian. I had to clean it up.

MIRIAM: You! You of all people to be talking to me about problems! You, who takes his family on a three-year fun vacation with 2000 animals! Noah, if I could get off this boat, I'd divorce you!

NOAH: Miriam, you're upset.

MIRIAM: I'm upset? I'm not upset! I'm livid! I'm enraged! I am furious!

NOAH: Go lie down a while. It will pass.

MIRIAM: Storms will pass! Kidney stones will pass! My anger ... no passing on this one, Noah! I can't take any more!

NOAH: *(sitting)* Okay, tell me about your day.

MIRIAM: My day?! How about my week! My year! My entire life with a man who hears voices, builds boats, and neglects his family!

NOAH: Okay, I mean other than that.

MIRIAM: Noah!!!

NOAH: Kidding. Just kidding, sweetheart. I just thought it might help to talk things out.

MIRIAM: I have talked them out! I have screamed them out! I-have-cried-them-out! The nights I've laid awake in bed while you're down tending a giraffe's hoof! But, does my husband listen to me? No! He just brings on more animals! I'm about to lose my mind!

NOAH: I'm not surprised. You've been giving me a piece of it all morning. Miriam, I've given you the best years of my life.

MIRIAM: If those were the best, then I'd hate to see what's coming up. Noah, I've got to get off this boat.

NOAH: So, what's stopping you?

MIRIAM: That's not funny. If you don't find land soon, we're all going to go nuts.

NOAH: In God's time, Miriam. In God's time.

MIRIAM: What about my time? What about the years I've worked like a slave to get this boat ready ... a short little cruise you said! Just a few months!

NOAH: God will provide.

MIRIAM: Most men would be sending out scouting parties. Most men would be making rowboats! You! You go up every morning and let a bird loose. You call that trying? I mean God knows, we could stand to lose a few birds. In fact, why don't you send out a rhinoceros next time?

NOAH: That's ridiculous, Miriam. He'd drown.

MIRIAM: So? Teach him to swim! God knows we've got the time!

NOAH: Miriam, you're my wife, I love you, I understand your frustrations ...

MIRIAM: ... finally ...

NOAH: ... and I don't want to hear any more about it.

MIRIAM: Noah!

NOAH: No. No more. I've decided and I will stick by my decision. It's in the Lord's hands. You mustn't doubt the Lord, Miriam. It could be very, very bad for your health.

MIRIAM: Oh, now it's a guilt trip, right? Blame poor old Miriam just because her family's going stir-crazy cooped up

on a stupid boat for a year. How silly of me! I should have known it was my fault!

NOAH: I didn't say it was your fault, Miriam. I simply said you had to trust. Trust!

(Marian is truly miffed. She stares at him a moment then slams down into a chair, folds her arms and fumes.) (after a bit of this) Miriam? Miriam, you're being childish. Miriam, you can't sit there forever. It's almost time for supper. Don't hold your breath like that, Miriam. Blue is not your color. Miriam? Miriam, can you hear me? *(speaking to God)* Just look at that, Lord! What am I supposed to do? She won't speak! *(Miriam, still defiantly silent begins to peek around to see who Noah is speaking to.)* I did? I prayed for that last night? Oh. Sorry. You see, Miriam. Even in that He is faithful.

MIRIAM: *(letting out a huge breath, nearly having passed out)*

Oi! What's happened to us, Noah? We used to be such good friends. Remember when we were little? I'd see you playing in the back yard ...?

NOAH: *(smiling)* With my toy boats.

MIRIAM: Don't remind me.

NOAH: And you'd be over in your yard making mud pies. Remember our first kiss?

MIRIAM: It wasn't on a boat, was it?

NOAH: It was underneath your father's porch. Remember? I didn't know how to do it. We kept bumping noses.

MIRIAM: The noses I remember. You nearly poked my eye out.

NOAH: We've had a good life, Miriam. A very good life.

MIRIAM: Mostly.

NOAH: What?

MIRIAM: Back in B.B. Before the boat. I'm tired, Noah. I'm tired of it all. You ... you've got somebody to talk to ... God. He tells you things. Build a boat! Poof! We got a boat! 2000 animals? No problem! Anything you say, Lord! But me? Who do I talk to? For three months I've wanted a clothes line ...

NOAH: ... oh ...



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