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Opening extract from

Noah's Rocket

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Do you know the story of Noah's Ark, which happened a long, long time ago?

Have you ever wondered what might have happened to Noah if he was living today?

This is the story about Noah and his amazing adventure, a story that happened not so very long ago . . .

CHAPTER 7

The day for blast-off came. Noah, Ethel, their sons and their wives met at the office block just before midnight.

Noah's first task was to fix the rocket fins onto the bottom of the building.

"Hope the animals get here on time," thought Noah.

He had just finished putting on the last fin when suddenly there was a loud roar. Around the corner came the first lorry followed by another lorry, and another and another. The driver

of the first lorry got out and spoke to Noah.

"Are you Noah?" asked the lorry driver.

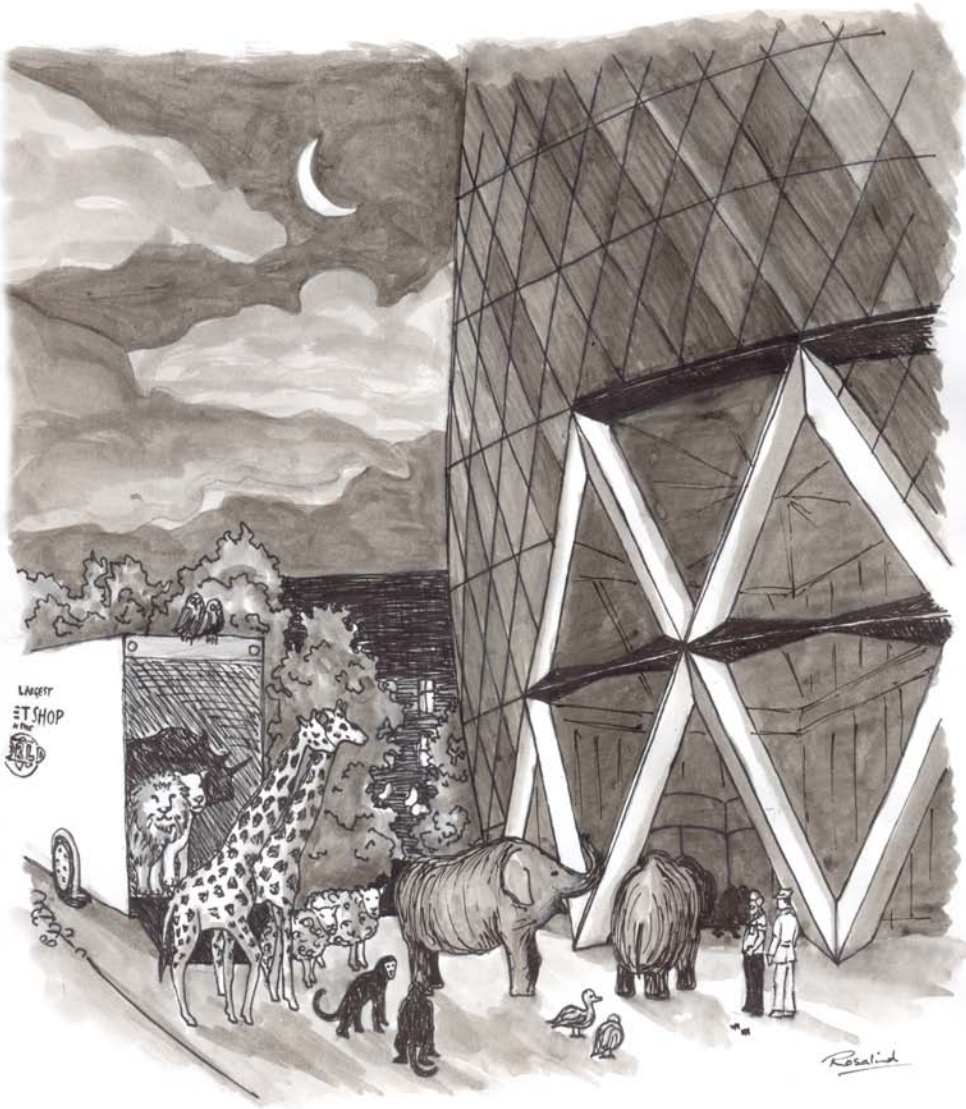
"I am," replied Noah.

"Sign here please – where do you want all these animals?"

"We are putting them into this office block," replied Noah.

"Fine," said the driver, "let's get on with it then."

The first animals came off the lorry and Noah guided them to the front entrance of the office block. Noah opened the door, but to his surprise, the security guard with the white uniform wasn't there. Instead, there sat a different security guard dressed in a black


LARGEST
ET SHOP
Rosalind

uniform. The man got out of his seat to see what was going on and was nearly knocked to the ground by a pair of gorillas followed quickly by a pair of sea lions. “Oy! What do you think you are doing?” he shouted to Noah.

“You can’t bring your gorillas in here - it’s not allowed - and get the rest of these animals out of here or I’ll get the police.”

Noah, helped by Ben, Joseph and David, was too busy getting all the animals into the building to take any notice of the security guard. Two eagles flew in and knocked the security guard’s hat off.

"That does it," said the security guard, "I'm off to get a policeman."

Before too long, Noah had got all the animals, all the supplies, Ethel and the rest of the family into the building. He closed the front doors then shouted across to Ethel.

"Take the lift to the top floor. I'm going to connect the wires to the engines and bring the control panel up to the top floor office. See you there."

Noah connected the wires from the engines to the control panel and took the lift to the top floor.

"Right," said Noah. "No point in waiting any longer. That security

guard may come back with a policeman. Let's blast off now- everyone put on your woolly space suits."

"Can I do the countdown?" asked Ethel.

"Of course you can," said Noah. "In fact, let's all do it!"

So Noah, Ethel their sons and their wives all shouted out together:

"TEN, NINE, EIGHT, SEVEN, SIX, FIVE, FOUR, THREE, TWO, ONE,

BLAST OFF!!"

The powerful rocket engines roared into life. The office block broke free from the ground and started to slowly rise up into the

night sky. Then, with a burst of speed, the rocket disappeared up beyond the clouds on its way into space.

Meanwhile, back on the ground, the security guard finally found a policeman.

"Come quickly," said the security guard. "A man and seven other people forced their way into my office block – you know, the one that looks like a giant cucumber. Not only that, he's brought hundreds and hundreds of animals with him, and he's put them all into my building."

"Calm down sir," said the policeman. "You are telling me that a man has put hundreds of

animals into your building - now why would he want to do a ridiculous thing like that?"

"If you don't believe me, come back with me now to the office block and I'll show you," said the security guard.

The policeman followed the security guard back to the building. Turning the corner, the security guard suddenly stopped and stared.

"It's gone! The building's gone!" cried the security guard. "It was here five minutes ago, I know it was, I know it was. I must be going potty. What am I going to tell the boss when he comes in to work in the morning?"

“Best report this to the police station,” said the policeman. “Can you give me a description of the building?”

Soon the call went out. “Calling all cars, calling all cars. Watch out for a tall office block shaped like a giant cucumber. Reported stolen at 2a.m. this morning by eight people and hundreds of animals.”

CHAPTER 8

Noah's rocket was now in space and orbiting around the Earth.

"I'd better take a look down below to see if the animals are alright," said Noah.

He opened the door to the control room office and had to duck his head back in very quickly as an elephant was floating past the door.

"Weightlessness – I'd forgotten about that," said Noah.

"Well I didn't," said Ethel. "You and I, and the rest of the family aren't floating around because I

knitted us some heavy woolly boots."

"Well you'd better knit a few more for some of the animals," said Noah. "I'm sure some of them aren't happy floating around all over the place."

Noah tried again to get out of the office door to check on the animals. This time, only a pair of kangaroos was floating down the corridor. Noah got into the lift and checked every floor. All the animals seemed to be fine even though all of them were floating around everywhere. He took the lift back to the control office.

"A bit chaotic down there," said Noah, "but they all seem fine."

Then Noah heard a lot of barking at the door. He opened it to find two dogs.

"See, I told you it was a good idea to knit the dogs some space suits. Now you can do what they want you to do," said Ethel.

"You mean take them out for a space walk?" said Noah.

"Exactly," said Ethel. "Pop their space suits on, twice around the rocket – I'll have your tea ready by the time you get back."

Noah opened a window, and climbed out of the rocket. Ethel handed him the two dogs and off they went.

Half an hour later, they were back.

"Nice walk?" asked Ethel.

"Not bad," replied Noah. "I suppose the dogs will want to go for a walk every night now – it's a good job I don't need to take the fish out for a swim!"

"Very funny," said Ethel. "But I hope we can go back to Earth soon before all the other animals start wanting to do what they usually do - then there'll be trouble Noah."

"You could be right," said Noah. "I wonder how long it will be before we'll be able to go back."

CHAPTER 9

Just when Noah was thinking that life on board the rocket was getting a little boring, he heard the sound of laughter that seemed to be coming from the floor below.

"What's going on down there Joseph?" he asked his son.

"It's Mum, she decided to go and tickle a gorilla."

"Well I hope she doesn't tickle an elephant or a whale, the noise will be terrible! What are the others up to?"

Joseph told Noah that Ben had gone down twenty floors to

organise a football match between the creepy crawlies and the winged insects.

"I hope you're not going to tell me the old joke about the centipede delaying the start of the match because it took hours to put on all of his football boots."

"I'm afraid to say, that is exactly what happened," said Joseph. "Anyway, I'm going to go down and join David who is organising a talent contest – last I heard he had got quite a few entries. We have a rabbit magician who promises a great trick by pulling a hat out of the other rabbit's ear, a singing tiger, a monkey who does a trapeze act, and a musical double

act - a giraffe who plays the piano for a fish who plays the violin."

"Sounds like good fun," laughed Noah.

Joseph left the top floor control centre to join David, and Ethel came back from tickling the gorilla. Noah was wondering what wonderful games he could play with some of the animals.

"What would it be like to make friends with the hedgehogs and have a game of spot the leopard with them?"

"Had enough?" he asked.

"Certainly not," said Ethel, "I'm off to have a dance with a penguin."