

# Laurie

“Have you seen what he’s built in his back yard?” She carefully drew her nosy pointed face in from the shadows and slowly closed the window overlooking her neighbour’s fence.

“Bit hard to miss,” he replied from his seat in the next room, “Bloody thing’s enormous.”

He was comfortable, reading a book and really didn’t want his wife’s interruption. When the mood took her she was incessant. He cringed a little at the thought, shrunk down and tried to deafen himself with absolute concentration on the written word.

“Well, I don’t like it.” Her words drifted by, cast out like bait, looking for a bite. They tickled his ears. “I just don’t like it.”

He knew that the vacuum that was silently forming would have to be filled by him eventually and after finishing the page he was on he closed the book with a loud slap of old pages and an audible sigh.

“I don’t think there’s a law against it. It is his back yard.”

“I know, I know. But I still don’t like it.”

He stretched and scratched the back of his neck. After a moment to gather his thoughts he set off in the direction of his wife. Together they peered through the crack formed by the closed wooden windows at the monstrosity in their neighbour’s yard.

“How long he’s been at it now,” she inquired.

“Jeez, I don’t know, must be a year at least,” he replied counting back time on his fingers. “Maybe more, he’s committed I’ll give him that.”

“He’s a loonie and I’ll give him that,” she added. “Where does he get these crazy ideas from?”

He mused and finally, “God apparently.”

“God,” she exploded. “Which god?”

“Well.... His I spose.”

“I’d get myself another god,” she sternly offered. “The one he’s using at the moment is clearly of his rocker.”

He suppressed a giggle. “He’s a dedicated guy Noah, strange but truly dedicated.” “Yeah,” she begrudgingly agreed.

Through the thin crack they watched silently as Noah feverishly beetled about his monumental ark.

Involuntarily she gave the sky a quick glance. “Better get the washing in, looks like rain.”

Between boiling waves Shem braved the sea and leaned over the railing. “It doesn’t look good,” he called ominously his voice drifting and blowing with the pitching rolling ark.

From the relatively dry safety of the deck Ham replied matter of factly, “Well, that’s bad news.”

“Like I said, it doesn’t look good.”

“How Bad?”

“Like I said, not good,” replied the voice from over the railing.

“Mmmm. Bad.”

“Mmmm. Not good.”

“We’d better tell the old man. He’s going to be cranky.” Ham turned on his heel.

Shem retrieved his head and together with Ham they stole back inside to the dry warmth of the ark’s vast interior.

“Do you think he got his numbers wrong,” Ham breathed from behind his hand.

“Maybe,” Shem replied without colour.

The boys were looking for Noah, their dad and novice ark constructor.

“You know what he’s like. Before this ark thing the only thing he hit with his hammer was his fingers and he’s next to useless with numbers.”

“Maybe,” Shem replied.

“Could be God got it wrong, you know picked the wrong Noah there’s probably more than one. After all, if I was God Dad wouldn’t be my first pick.

“Maybe,” Shem replied soullessly. He didn’t like speculating about imponderables.

They spied Noah in the distance tending some animal pens and, as usual, looking incredible busy.

“Not bad for a man in his six hundreds,” both boys thought as one.

In the near distance their father cut a very impressive figure, rugged, windswept and undoubtedly tough. He had endurance and stoic correctness written into his every line, angle and fibre. He was rarely wrong, particularly in matters of the faith. This was the sole reason the boys hesitated.

“My boys,” called Noah happily as he spied them in the distance. “What is the news from outside on the deck?”

“Well,” Ham started reluctantly. “Things could be better.”

Noah looked from Ham to Shem.

“It doesn’t look good.”

“What do you mean it doesn’t look good? Are we sinking?”

“Maybe,” Shem replied using up all his vocabulary.

“The ark itself seems fine structure wise but there’s very little freeboard. The seas rolling a lot. It all adds up to bad news. We’re taking on too much water,” Ham added boldly from the side.

In Noah’s gaze Shem just sagely nodded in agreement.

Noah drew his hand through his great white beard, slowly and all the way down. He looked to the heavens. “God will provide a way,” he fiercely rejoiced.

“I think it’s his fault we’re in the mess in the first place,” both boys thought simultaneously.

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“Well, how do you explain this Professor?”

The professor dramatically blew out his ruddy cheeks. “Your guess is as good as mine. I’ve never seen the like.”

Both men looked up from their find and looked out to sea. They were on a tiny speck of an island in the midst of the vast Black Sea. Their seaplane rocked gently on the waves, the only way to get to this particular spot. Water streamed off in all directions and land itself was well out of view. The old professor and his young assistant sat on the rubble from their dig. Their tools, small shovels and picks lay strewn about.

“There is this theory,” the professor offered.

“Theory?” the assistant queried.

“According to some the flood story in the bible can be attributed to the Mediterranean Sea finally breaking through near Istanbul flooding a vast area and producing the Black Sea. For the local tribesmen it must have been catastrophic, Hand of God catastrophic.”

“Sounds plausible.”

“Oh I think that it actually happened is beyond doubt. Whether the flood story is connected to that event is another matter. But it is a common theme across many religions.”

“Certainly answers a few questions.”

“But, young man, the question is, does it answer ours?”

Down at their feet, nestled like long lost lovers laid two skeletons.

Two perfectly formed horse skeletons possibly three to four thousand old and almost identical in every way to a modern horse. Although this was surprising in itself and it could change the current horse history it was the difference between this horse and its modern equivalent that was really startling. This fossil horse had a horn on its forehead. It was a unicorn.