



# The Spy on Noah's Ark

*by the Dove*

**D**o you know the story of Noah's ark? Animals, two by two, boarded a big boat that Noah built and sailed away. The rest of the world flooded, but Noah and his family and the animals were safe. And I was there. I was one of the two doves on board.

I can just hear you now. *So what? you say. A bird. A boat. A flood. Big deal.*

Little do you know. You see, I have a secret that I've never told anyone until now.

I was a spy, working for God as a special agent on Noah's ark. I am, in fact, the first dove to have served in the FBI: The Federal Birds of Investigation. And my job was important. I

was assigned to watch all of the ark's passengers and to tell God if they needed anything. Boats are strange places, after all. How odd it feels if you have hooves and are used to soft grass underfoot, or if you have lived deep in the ground and suddenly you are on a world that rocks and moves and sloshes! God told me to comfort the animals and remind them that they were safe in his hands.

God had created the world hoping that people would be kind to each other and that all living creatures would get along. But peace did not last. People started doing bad things. Bullying, killing, stealing, you name it. Trouble was everywhere.

With a heartbreaking sigh, God made a tough decision to start the world over again. He told a good man named Noah to gather his family and two of every living thing, and to build a ship for all of them to sail on, because God was going to send a flood.

When the ark was only a plan in Noah's mind, breezes were fresh and warm, and the sky was blue with nothing but puffy white clouds. Noah gathered wood until his yard was a mountain of logs. Then, without a word, he and his family started building.



As the months went by, the sky became dark and angry. *Crash! Boom! Rumble! Bumble!* Thunder and lightning raged. Rain pounded the ground. With the water rising around him, Noah built that ark higher and higher, with giant stalls for big animals and tiny cubbyholes for little ones. At last a huge boat stood before him, longer than a football field and as tall as a four-story building!



Would the boat float? Noah wasn't a builder by trade, so it was hard to tell. But after one particularly dark night, God's voice boomed from the clouds: "IT IS TIME!" The animals then came running, squawking, squeaking, and mooing, slithering, flying, hooting and hissing, dancing and prancing, squiggling and slurping, male and female, two by two, onto the great ark.

Worms wriggled up out of the ground. Tigers bounded, roaring out of the woods. With a "Skree, skree!" hawks dove from the sky. "Tahoot, tahoot! Don't forget us," called the owls. "Snork, snork, we are here," grunted the pigs.

Tree sloths never moved so fast as they did with acorn-sized hail blinging down on their backs. It was a grand sight, with pairs of every animal on earth rushing on board. You never see cockroaches or slugs or snakes in ark pictures, but they were there, too. God didn't forget anyone.

There were so many of us that it took all day to board the ark. Scuffles broke out between a few—like the wolves who thought the coyotes had a better view of the moon—but soon everyone was cozy-comfortable in their new homes. Bedtime stories brayed by the donkeys made us laugh. Frogs chanting lullabies made us drowsy. As the fireflies lighted the dusk, we drifted off to sleep...until the giant boat, lurching and pitching, rose up and left the land behind.

In the morning we watched the lands and homes of our world disappear. Shrubs first, then treetops and meadows. As the waters rose, whole towns vanished, their tiled roofs disappearing under the waves. Not a single living thing was to be seen above the great flood. It brought a tear to my eye. Yet I had to trust that God had a glorious vision for a new world.

My work started quickly. "It's okay, little friend," I sang to a trembling mouse, "God will not let you drown."

“Coo, coo, Mrs. Elephant,” I chanted, perched on her wavering trunk. “Noah has plenty of fresh straw for you, don’t you worry, don’t worry.”

*Squeak, holler, moo.* Most of us had never been away from our homes before. It was a little scary.



We sailed and sailed, for days upon days upon days. Some counted forty days and nights on board. Others counted months and months. We rode high on those waves, not seeing anything but water and sky and each other. And it wasn’t the pleasure cruise that you might think.

Every night, just as the roosters and elephants were going to bed, the owls would wake up, all wide-eyed and screechy. Just as the lambs ventured out for their morning stroll, the boa constrictors unwound, making the woolly little creatures scramble and run for cover.

What would *you* do locked up for so long? The moose took cats and dogs for rides on their antlers, and the serpents chased things they’d never seen before, like peacocks with sparkling tails.

You should have seen the giant squids poking out their huge tentacles, trying to catch the chickens. They didn’t want to hurt anyone. They were just having fun with all of their arms.

The rain continued to pound away. Lightning, thunder, hail. *Crash, Bam, Bingle, Boom!* You name it, we heard it. That doesn’t count the groans and creaks of the ark itself as waves pushed and pulled at us, whirling and swirling, often flinging us side to side. A wild ride for all of us, until we found our sea legs—and our sea wings, tails, and fins! Even

though the ark continued to crack and shudder, it became a trusted friend.

And then one night—*bump, scrape, bam*—our ark bumped into something, something we hadn't felt in forever. Something solid. Mountain-top rocks. "Rummmpphhh!" bellowed the bears from below, angry and hungry from months of hibernation. "Squawwwkkkkkk!" went the geese. "What is this, matey? What is this, matey?" yelled parrots from the third floor. "Moooomy!" bellowed the cows. "Snnnoooooorrrrkkkkk?" asked the pigs.

Then came the sound of a door creaking open from the family rooms. Noah stepped out, nightcap on head, candle in hand. Starting at the bottom of the ark, he hummed to the llamas, petted the dogs, threw a ball for the wolves, scratched the pigs, and cheeped to the sparrows.

Finally he reached our cage and gently pushed in his arm. "Step up little one, come on out. We have things to do, you and I."

Hopping up on his wrist, I waited while he stroked my head, neck, and pin feathers. After all the storms, it was so soothing. "Leave your nest, little one," he said. "Go out and see what green places you can find. We are all ready to leave this boat."

Noah opened a tiny window, motioning me to go. I pushed against his hand, stretched my wings, and flew out. Immediately I remembered the joy of wind through my feathers. Up and down I sailed, basking in the fresh air and the light of the rising sun.

Sadly, there was no land to be seen. I flew back to the ark and reported that we were still stranded. Noah's eyes dimmed and he walked away, muttering that he would talk with God.

The animals were strangely quiet. Only the mournful howl of a homesick coyote broke the silence.



Seven days later later Noah asked me to try again. Still no land in sight, yet this time I found a floating green olive branch and carried it back. Waving it over his head, Noah danced a little jig, shouting, “Yes, Yes!” as he carried it through the boat, splashing drops of water over the goats and sheep and horses who baaed and raahhed and stamped their feet in delight. Hope was in the air.

Finally, several days later, I flew out again and returned with the joyous news. “Land, ho! It’s right over there! Lush rain forests, soothing waterfalls, high trees for making new homes, COO, COO, COO!”

The ark pitched up and down—this time not from the waves, but from all of the happy feet. *Woof! Skree! Caw! Ko-kie! Hahoo, hahoo!* As the gangplank lowered, everybody—animals, fish, birds, people—cried their delight. The beach filled with the joyous sound of crowing, barking, hooting, squawking, and singing. Monkeys did cartwheels on the sand, cockroaches skittered toward wet logs, bats flew up like playing cards tossed into the sky. We had made it! A new world to begin!

And begin it did. Within months, we were raising families, including my honey dove and me. Every so often you’d see a dog asking for a ride on the moose’s antlers, or a squid swooping up to the ocean’s surface to wave a tentacle. We’d learned an important lesson—that all of us in creation are bound together in one big story.

Now that the world had a new start, God promised never to flood it again. Marking that promise was a big beautiful rainbow in the sky. The next time you see a rainbow, look a little closer—Federal Birds of Investigation at your service. I'm flying right over the top.



### From the Bible

*God continued, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and everything living around you and everyone living after you. I'm putting my rainbow in the clouds, a sign of the covenant between me and the Earth. From now on, when I form a cloud over the Earth and the rainbow appears in the cloud, I'll remember my covenant between me and you and everything living, that never again will floodwaters destroy all life."*

— GENESIS 9:12-15



## For Children

- Why did God save Noah and his family?
- What do you think it must have been like to be cooped up in the ark for so long?
- What do you think it was like for the ark's passengers to see that rainbow? What does that rainbow mean to you?
- The animals and birds and fish were different from each other. Do you live or work or go to school with people who are different? What can you learn from the story of Noah's ark?

## For Adults

God tells Noah that he must change his life to survive—and he does. He quits his day job (presumably) and starts building the ark; he ensures his family is on board; he protects God's creation. He does not shirk from listening to God, and he is able to rise above the likely negativity of friends and colleagues.

What might God be saying to you about the direction of your life? Is it time to forge a new path? To lead others to a life-giving destination? To care for a different part of God's world? Noah constructed an ark and set sail: What steps might you take to respond to God's stirrings in your heart?