

You Do Your Part, I'll Do Mine

A Sew Powerful Parable by Dana Buck

Once there was a family man
Living many years ago
With wife and sons and spouses
Quite like some that you may know

They farmed and planted vineyards
Nurtured crops and gardens too
And when the time for harvest came
They reaped, then sowed anew

The man was always thankful
For the gifts of earth and sod
He knew the very air he breathed
Was a precious gift from God

But what brings him greatest pleasure
Is the fountain of his joys
The fact of being father to
A household full of boys

A father's love filled up his heart
And squeezed it like a boa
This honest, prosperous family man
Goes by the name of Noah

His sons all loved their father
And he likewise cherished them
But these boys could be a handful
Names of Japeth, Ham and Shem

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Japeth, who's the oldest
Always seems to be in charge
Serious and bossy
With a voice both loud and large

He's driven and he's focused
Always striving to be better
High achiever, true believer
And the consummate go-getter

Shem, the middle brother
Is a happy, funny bloke
Always ready with a story
Or a riddle or a joke

He finds something to laugh at
In most every situation
Often to his family's merriment
And sometimes their irritation

This brings us to the youngest
Of the brothers in this clan
Unassuming, shy and quiet
Best describes the son named Ham

No paragon like Japeth
Or comedian like Shem
He never seems to measure up
Like a rock beside a gem

It's not for lack of trying
Or an absence of desire
Seems he's always judged just short of
What the circumstance requires

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Why is Ham this way regarded?
Why's he judged so incomplete?
Well perhaps you would be too if
You were named for sandwich meat

Ham idolizes Japeth
Seeks to work with him each day
He's trying to be helpful
But is mostly in the way

Till finally Japeth's had it
His blood pressure starts to climb
"Time to go now little brother"
"You do your part, I'll do mine"

Nursing his damaged ego
With hurt feelings now to stem
In the distance he hears laughter
And there he knows he'll locate Shem

Sure enough, Shem is surrounded
By a large admiring crowd
As he tells them funny stories
They all roar and laugh aloud

Ham has always wished that he
Was funny like his brother
As the laughter fades from one joke
Shem begins to tell another

"Why'd the chicken cross the road?"
He asked, a grin upon his face
He was about to share the punch line
When his good humor was erased

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For before he could proclaim it
Past the circle someone cried
“The chicken crossed the road so”
“It could reach the other side!”

Shem could not believe it
As beyond the crowd he scanned
Where a smile changed fast to horror
On the face of brother, Ham

Ham had shouted out the answer
And he knew that he had blown it
He hadn't meant to steal the joke
He'd just been caught up in the moment

Shem pulled young Ham aside
And gave his chest emphatic pokes
“Now listen little brother”
“In this clan I tell the jokes!”

“No more stealing of my thunder”
“No more stepping on my line”
“Leave the comedy to me and”
“You do your part, I'll do mine”

Now the day was truly awful
What was left for him but pouting?
Ham had just lowered his head
When he heard his father shouting

Ham raced back toward the house
Like a hound called by his master
Japeth and Shem already there
Because, of course, they both were faster

As they gathered round their father
He was acting very odd
With a voice of reverent awe he said
“I’ve been spoken to by God”

The boys all traded glances
Tried to cover their dismay
But old Noah never noticed
He had far too much to say

“The Lord is quite discouraged”
“By the evil done by men”
He’s going to wipe it clean”
“And then he’s going to start again”

“The skies will fill with rain”
“And from the earth a flood will rise”
“Till the water’s passed our knees, our waists”
“Our necks, our chins, our eyes!”

Their father stood there panting
As his boys looked back at him
All Ham could do was worry that
He’d never learned to swim

“But the Lord has made a way”
Said Noah, letting hope unfurl
“To spare me and my family”
“From his judgement on the world”

The boys just sat and listened
And their eyes with wonder filled
As he told them all about the
Giant boat that they would build

And just when they had thought
This tale could not get more fantastic
Came the part about the animals
And Japeth just went spastic

“We’re supposed to build an ark”
“And this is going to keep us dry?”
“We have never seen it rain”
“There’s not a cloud up in the sky”

“If God wants us to build it”
“He’s going to have to prove it”
“Where will we find gopher wood”
“And what the heck’s a cubit?”

Shem said “I think like Japeth”
“This is nuts, this is insane”
“Two of every animal”
“To bring in from the rain?”

“Where will we find rhinos?”
“Cheetahs, chipmunks, hares and hogs?”
“Coyotes, llamas, turtles”
“Chimpanzees and prairie dogs?”

Noah was discouraged
By these comments on God’s plan
He was about to plead for silence
When he heard the voice of Ham

“We should listen to our father”
“Trust him with our life and limb”
“If God would speak to any man”
“You know it would be him”

“The ark that father speaks of”
“I think that we should build it”
“And the animals will come”
“For God himself has surely willed it”

These words made Noah smile
And also gave his brothers pause
For they were quite taken aback
To see Ham’s passion for this cause

And they found themselves inspired
By this one they’d deemed a waif
What Ham lacked in strength or humor
He made up for with his faith

Well soon they all got started on
Construction of their ship
Wood was sawed and hammered
And went flying off in chips

Japeth took the lead and set
A rapid pace to guide them
He was angry as their neighbors
Gathered round just to deride them

But the mocking and the jeering
Was the hardest on poor Shem
For the friends he’d entertained
Were all now laughing right at him

Ham was always busy
Doing everything he could
To contribute to the building of
Their giant boat of wood

After weeks and weeks of toil
The last drops of sweat were given
The last board was now in place
The last nail now had been driven

Then Noah and his sons
Their labors now abated
Stood back and just admired
This great ark they had created

They could not have been more proud
If with ten million they had bought her
Now they just needed the animals
And they really needed water

They waited days, then weeks, then months
But nothing seemed to change
Their neighbors now avoided them
Convinced they were deranged

Japeth's patience snapped again
He called a family meeting
His agenda carried just one thing
The plan and it's completing

"We've spent months in heavy labor"
"Working hard as Santa's elves"
"It's now clear if we're to finish"
"Then we must do it ourselves"

"Shem, you get the animals"
"Work daylight until dark"
"Round them up and then we'll"
"Somehow get them in the ark"

“Ham, you gather food for we”
“Must feed each hungry critter”
“Find lots of shovels, mops and pails”
“And tons of kitty litter”

“I will take the toughest job”
“He went on to explain”
“We really need the water”
“So I’m going to make it rain!”

As if they’d felt a wizard’s spell
Or drank a magic potion
Japeth and Shem leapt from their seats
To put the plan in motion

Ham then shouted “Stop, let’s talk!”
This turn he just deplored
“We have to put our faith in God”
“Let’s wait upon the Lord!”

But neither brother heard his cries
They ran their separate ways
Shem to find some animals
Japeth storm clouds to raise

Taking drum and mallet
And putting feathers in his hair
Japeth began to dance around
Throwing dust up in the air

He danced and drummed and threw up dirt
For over seven hours
Till finally he collapsed and laid
Exhausted in the flowers

For despite his frantic efforts
All remained arid and dry
There was no rain or drizzle
And not a cloud up in the sky

And as he lay there panting
He saw Shem trudge up the road
His hair and clothes disheveled
In each hand he held a toad

“I tried to catch some squirrels”
“But I lost them in the trees”
“Then I grabbed a pair of donkeys”
“But they kicked me in the knees”

“I saw and chased a jackal”
“But I couldn’t run him down”
“Every badger I pursued”
“Just simply hid under the ground”

“So I picked up these two toads”
“But I feel just like a nut”
“Cause there’s no way that I can tell if”
“They are boys or girls or what!”

Shem sat down right next to Japeth
And they felt their failure pound them
It was here in raw frustration
That Ham and Noah found them

“I hope you boys have learned a lesson”
Said their father to his sons
“It’s the man who trusts in God who is”
“The man who overcomes”

“He doesn’t need impatient action”
“To bring fulfillment to his sentence”
“He just needs your trust, your love, your life”
“Your faith and your repentance”

Then Noah winked his eye at Ham
Hugged his brothers both in kind
“I believe what God is saying is”
“You do your part, I’ll do mine”

The truth that Noah spoke was clear
To both Japeth and Shem
And through their father’s love they felt
God’s perfect love for them

And then a little miracle
Took place upon that day
When his older brothers came to Ham
And both had this to say

“We owe you an apology”
“We know you tried to lift us”
“Above our vain and foolish acts”
“We hope you can forgive us”

“We’re sorry for our selfishness”
“Our pride and our neglect”
“Know now you have our high esteem”
“Our love and our respect”

These words made Ham feel ten feet tall
And Noah filled with pride
With love he gestured to his boys
And called them to his side

“The Lord will keep his promises”
“To all who will receive Him”
“His part is to be faithful”
“Our part, just to believe Him”

And as they stood together
Wiping tears out of their eyes
The ground began to shake
Beyond the hill, the dust to rise

They looked up to the knoll
Where the road is steep and bending
They could scarce believe their eyes
At what they saw swiftly descending

Elephants and Zebra
Armadillos, Kangaroo
Were walking down the hill
In perfect tandem two by two

Wolverines and panda bears
Camels, moose, raccoons
Porcupines, hyenas
Alligators and baboons

Amidst this great cacophony
Of roars and howls and barks
They scampered up the ramp
And disappeared into the ark

The boys stood there in disbelief
Their mouths agape in wonder
And grew even more astonished by
The sound of distant thunder

The dust began to settle as
The sky grew still and dark
With arms around their shoulders
Noah led them to the ark

They climbed the ramp and Noah paused
To survey the arid plain
And as he turned to go inside
He felt a drop of rain...

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