GET IT RIGHT

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by Donna Gordon

poem by Janet Bingham

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Characters

The Voice of God : Most important

Noah: An old and devout man

Sarah: Keeps the family together, Noah’s wife

Shem: Noah’s oldest son

Bellah: Shem’s wife

Rebecca: Shem’s oldest child

Jacob: Noah’s neighbor

Animals: A variety to keep their

species going, male and

female

**Scene**

At Noah’s stone hut, then in his yard, and, finally, in Noah’s huge ark.

Time

Only briefly removed from the Stone Age.

Production Note

The songs that are played are country western, to follow that theme for the play.

Scene 1

AT RISE: Noah is tossing and turning on the floor. He keeps trying to keep his blanket over him. The wind can be heard at the window. He gets up and closes the flap.

THE VOICE OF GOD

(heard only by Noah)

I am not pleased with my children.

NOAH

What is this I hear? Is it the wind?

(He quickly gets up. The tune “They Call the Wind Maria” can be played.)

THE VOICE OF GOD

It is I, the Almighty God and I am speaking to you, Noah.

NOAH

It is true. No one else in the house hears you.

THE VOICE OF GOD

Noah, my son, I am not pleased with the people in your town.

NOAH

Why? What have we done? Or what have I done?

GOD

No, Noah, you are not one of these people. You are my son and my chosen one. You are a good man, and a good father.

NOAH

But, Dear God, we try, don’t we?

GOD

Noah, my child, you plead well for your friends, but they are sinning continually.

NOAH

Yes, I have often thought that I didn’t want my sons to grow up in this city.

GOD

You are right. People no longer place me at the center of their lives. I thought man would always remember the garden I made for him in the beginning, and the lessons learned there. Instead, he eats, drinks and makes merry with no thought of tomorrow. I am deeply grieved.

NOAH

Why is the world full of such wickedness? – what is going to happen – can I do anything about the sinfulness?

GOD

I will bring an answer to that prayer. Noah, I am going to wipe all mankind from the face of the earth.

NOAH

What have I caused with my questions? Do you mean we will all die?

GOD

No, I will save you and your family from the massive flood I will send upon the earth.

NOAH

A flood? How can a flood destroy everything? I am afraid for all of us – my family and my entire town.

GOD

This is one time when prayers for the human race will not change my mind. I will, however, save you and your family from the flood. I also want to keep some plants and animals from being destroyed.

NOAH

What can I do to help myself in such a disaster?

GOD

Do not despair, my son. Build yourself an ark, a large vessel to protect you and your family from the flood. When you complete the ark, put every plant and animal you can think of, along with its mate, into the ark. And get yourselves inside.

NOAH

Can this really be happening? But how?

GOD

Water will fall from the sky. This is not a condemnation of the whole world, because your family is excluded from this disaster. I will supply the wood for the ark and the time to build it. Do as I say.

NOAH

Yes Lord, I will do as you say. I can’t see how I’m going to do it but I trust in you.

GOD

It will rain for forty days and forty night…”rain” is the word for water from the sky. If you keep the door of the ark closed it will be completely dry inside. Everyone outside the ark will die.

NOAH

It’s going to be so difficult to tell my family about this. And how I grieve for those who do not know.

GOD

But they know they are not acting in ways that benefit the community. Some, unfortunately, learned these ways from their youth and are set in bad ways. I am the judge.

NOAH

May I tell them what I’m doing and why I’m building the ark?

GOD

I want you to tell them every time they see you building the ark.

NOAH

I will tell them. There is always hope. Maybe they will realize what they have been doing.

GOD

But that won’t change my mind. I have tried to speak to these people but their eyes and ears are closed.

NOAH

Thank you for saving my family. I will do as you say.

GOD

You will eventually return to land. Now I will let you sleep.

(The light goes out. The wind rushes through the window once more and NOAH pulls the hide down. The scene ends with the poem “Get It Right”:)

GET IT RIGHT

If you’ve got something to say, say it right

Don’t tell me that black is white.

When you hear from the Lord, say it right and don’t confuse.

Say it right, say it right, say it right.

If you say it all wrong, it’s a lie.

Don’t provoke me and say you don’t know why.

Don’t call floods a little joke when the whole world may go broke.

Tell it straight, no mistake, say it right.

Parents spend more time with their toys

Than they do teaching little girls and boys.

Every freedom must be earned or the rights will be burned.

Say it right, say it now, say it right.

Music and seduction help you sleep

But one day you’ll see that you’re sheep,

You’ll drown like a bum, left without a crumb.

Tell it right, it’s getting late, tell it right.

(Chorus)

If you don’t tell it right one day

Your life may soon go another way.

You won’t like it I’m sure

You’ll lose what you thought your freedoms were.

Tell it straight, make no mistake, say it right.

(END OF SCENE)

**Scene 2**

AT RISE: NOAH is sitting with his wifeat the table. He tells all about the coming flood and begins to build the ark.

NOAH

Mother, I’m going to build a huge boat, an ark.

SARAH

What are you saying, Noah?

NOAH

I have heard from the Lord. Don’t be scared. I will tell you what He said to me last night

SARAH

What could come so late…a voice?...the voice of God? How could this happen in our house?

NOAH

Why not us? We are God fearing people. God speaks to all kinds of people: he is no respecter of persons.

SARAH

I don’t want to discuss this – just tell me – what did He say?

NOAH

The news was both good and bad.

(BELLAH, the wife of NOAH’S son SHEM enters. SARAH gestures for her to be quiet.)

SARAH

Your father has heard something prayer. He has heard from God.

NOAH

It is true.

BELLAH

Well, what are you waiting for? Tell us.

NOAH

I can’t say this nicely: there’s going to be a flood. Many people will drown.

(The women hug each other and cry.)

BELLAH

Oh no…oh no…what about us?...what about the children?

NOAH

I have been told to build an ark for all of us to enter when it begins to rain, that’s what God calls water from the sky.

BELLAH

I do not doubt that you have heard from the Lord, but why would he curse our land?

NOAH

I too asked this, and He told me that everyone is sinning continually. He must put an end to this behavior as it offends him.

(NOAH’S son SHEM enters. He sees the women crying and moaning.)

SHEM

What is it? What has happened?

BELLAH

Noah has told us there is going to be a flood…many will drown. What about the children?

SHEM

Now wait a minute – how could you know such a thing Father? Who told you this?

NOAH

I heard the voice of God. I didn’t believe it at first, but there was an unearthly wind after His every word.

SHEM

But why this message – why to us? – we live a good life.

NOAH

He is offended by the people around us. They eat, drink and make merry while the rest of us work for them.

SHEM

We sure have spoken about the sinful lifestyles of people around us. It has seemed like a hopeless situation. Could God be giving us a solution?

NOAH

I know in my heart that the same God who told us about Adam and Eve has also given me a warning. We are told to build an ark to save our family and plants and animals. What do you think, Shem?

SHEM

I must believe this or else I would be calling you a liar.

NOAH

This matter is settled. Now we must decide how we will build the ark.

BELLAH.

Not so quick, Father. We can’t let the children know.

NOAH

The children will find out as children do. Now, we are a big family with more than enough for each of us to do.

(We see NOAH outside his home cutting wood. REBECCA, a child about eleven years old begins singing “Noah’s Ark Song. She is joined by the women.)

NOAH’S ARK SONG

The Lord said “Noah,

There’s going to be a floody, floody.”

The Lord said “Noah,

There’s going to be a floody, floody

Get those children out of the muddy, muddy,

Children of the Lord.”

(Chorus after each stanza)

So rise and shine

And give God your glory, glory.

Rise and shine

And give God your glory, glory.

Rise and shine

And give God your glory, glory,

Children of the Lord.

It rained and poured

For forty daysies, daysies,

It rained and poured

For forty daysies, daysies,

Almost drove Noah’s little wife

Crazy, crazy,

Children of the Lord.

NOAH

Now, Rebecca, I have something important to say. God has spoken to me.

(The wives cover their mouths in surprise.)

BELLAH

Father, she already knows and sings the song.

NOAH

God says we’re the right ones, and that includes you.

(He points to REBECCA. SHEM enters.)

SHEM

Father, our wives will be obedient. I don’t think the children understand.

NOAH

(sitting down to tell a story)

It will pour water from the sky for forty days and nights. We will take two of every animal and plant into the ark. When all of this is done, we will shut ourselves in.

REBECCA

How can we survive in an ark with so many plants and animals? How can the ark be large enough?

SARAH

Trust, trust, trust in God.

NOAH

Now, will everybody follow me into the ark?

REBECCA

If it will pour water that long, what choice will we have? How can the sky pour water? It never has before.

NOAH

We don’t have to understand. Did you understand why He made Eve from just a rib?

REBECCA

I am afraid. I know I must follow, but how will you build the boat?

NOAH

All I need is the wood, and the time to build. The boat will be big enough to hold whatever food we want.

SHEM

Of course, I will help.

SARAH

We must be prepared for this disaster.

NOAH

Be prepared, also, for the comments of other citizens. They have not believed our ancestors, and they are not going to believe us.

BELLAH

All of our friends will be gone.

SARAH

They were not really our friends. We have had a warning. We must act right away.

SHEM

I am going to cut and bring in the first load of wood. The women can check our storehouse to build up our food supplies.

NOAH

Bless all of you. I will be here with Mother while I am collecting my tools.

(NOAH is outside his home, working on the frame of the ark. His neighbor JACOB is paying him a visit.)

JACOB

Why, on God’s green earth, are you building an ark?

NOAH

I have heard the voice of God. There’s going to be a flood.

JACOB

How? Will water fall from the sky?

NOAH

Yes, yes indeed, that will happen. And it will happen for forty days and nights. You’d better get right with God because there’s going to be a flood over all of the earth.

JACOB

Why are you the only one who knows this? We are working, earning our way, and raising families. God favors us too.

NOAH

God doesn’t need any help. He wants your heart. As soon as I’m finished with this ark, God will destroy everything outside of it.

JACOB

You stupid old fool. You have no common sense. First, you start building a ship that is too large for anything, and then you tell us God doesn’t like us. Have you lost your mind?

NOAH

Most of what you do is work with the least effort, and eat and drink in your spare time.

JACOB

We provide for our families. What’s so bad about enjoying the fruits of our labors? We’re not doing anything wrong.

NOAH

You aren’t getting the point. Go ahead, do what you want but it will be too late for you and your family.

(JACOB lunges toward NOAH but SHEM breaks up the fight. SARAH pulls NOAH away.)

SARAH

Noah, you’ve said enough. Let him go. There is nothing we can do. (She begins to scream.)

Leave us alone. If he’s building an ark, he isn’t hurting you, is he.

JACOB

If that’s the kind of God there is, we don’t want any part of him. (He walks away.)

NOAH

I want to pity him, but I can’t. It’s too late to change him.

SARAH

God warned us this wouldn’t be easy.

SHEM

Let’s stop talking and bring some more wood into the yard. (looking at the whole family)

Everyone just do their work.

BELLAH

This might be dangerous. I am worried about our children. What if this is a false warning?

NOAH

Bellah, don’t talk that way again. I am the head of this household and I didn’t lie to you.

SARAH

(placing her arm around BELLAH)

This is so sudden and confusing for all of us.

NOAH

None of us will ever be the same. God’s word changes everything. We must stay very close to one another and put all of our energy into building this ark. It will be our salvation.

(The song “Don’t Forsake Me, Oh My Darling” is sung. At the end of this song, they hug each other.)

**Scene 3**

AT RISE: The entire family is outside the home looking at the completed ark. Only one side of this needs to be shown, with a ramp and door. The inside is seen for a few actions. And you can use puppet animals. or animals can be walked into the ark in shadows.

NOAH

Again, I have heard from the Lord. Today is the day we must move ourselves and these animals onto this ark. Then it will rain for forty days and nights.

JACOB

(voice offstage)

You aren’t going to get into that relic, are you? What are you expecting: a waterfall from a cloud?

SARAH

You go your way and we’ll go ours.

JACOB

(runs out with fist raised)

We aren’t going to put up with this lunacy any longer. We’re going to organize and pillage your ark. What right do you have to hoard all that food?

NOAH

We worked for this ark and its contents.

SARAH

Hurry up and get those animals. Bring them in quickly before they are harmed.

(SHEM begins to march the animals up the gangplank.)

SHEM

(feeling the first rain drops)

Water is coming from the sky. I can’t believe this. We must hurry, Father said it will soon flood.

JACOB

It’s raining, it’s pouring, the old man is snoring. Noah, you crazy old man. We’ll get to you tomorrow. (He leaves.)

NOAH

(The rain is getting heavier.)

Hurry, hurry, are all the animals inside now?

SHEM

Yes, Father, everything is placed inside. We did the best we could…all the larger animals are standing on hay and straw and the smaller birds and mammals are in wooden cages, as you ordered.

SARAH

How can we live with these animals? Oy vey…

BELLAH

(pushing REBECCA up the ramp)

Please don’t scare us. Just get going. The rain is falling, we have to get inside.

(SARAH, BELLAH AND REBECCA go up the ramp into the ark. Left behind are NOAH and SHEM to make sure the boat is steady.)

SHEM

I have never seen so much water. Now we know you were completely right. We’d better get inside, because this water is up to my knees.

NOAH

To have this kind of flooding cannot be ordinary. This is God’s judgement.

SHEM

Will there be enough to float this ark? Maybe the neighbors were right.

NOAH

Son, if you don’t trust me then trust God. Even if Adam were here to talk to the neighbors, they wouldn’t listen. Now, come on son, it’s time to get inside: the boat is beginning to move.

(NOAH and his son go up the ramp. As soon as they get inside the ark the song “Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head”. Jacob, up to his waist in water runs toward the ark, begging and pleading to get in the ark. NOAH shuts the door and then leaves.)

JACOB

Help, help me old man. You have brought a curse to all of us. You and that crazy ark have brought disaster. You have prayed this water on our heads. Let us in - let us in.

(A wave overtakes him and he goes down into the water.)

SHEM

Did you see that? The water is so high we are beginning to rise. Hang on to a giraffe’s neck if you want to look.

SARAH

Have no fear. The donkies rest in their stalls, the birds are in their cages. We can make it too.

SHEM

I’m going to end up under a horse’s belly. I’ll probably have to sleep there.

BELLAH

No, you won’t. Father has already cleared a space for the whole family in the bow of the ark. It’s warm and cozy there.

SARAH

Father fell asleep there as soon as the ark began to float. He’ll hear more birds in the morning than he hears at home.

SHEM

We’re not far from home. We might be on top of it. Father was sure right about this flood. I hope this ark will stay watertight.

BELLAH

All you do is worry. If it hasn’t leaked through this launch, then it won’t. Let’s light a candle and have something to eat.

SHEM

She’s right. We might as well settle in for the night. It’s going to be a long time before we see the sun. Mother, you go get some rest. There’ll be a rooster to wake you in the morning.

SARAH

I’m glad we have that rooster to keep the hens happy. We do have a few windows. Imagine. We’ll be floating on top of the ocean.

REBECCA

(crying) We’re scared, Grandma, we’re scared.

(The wives gather around the children and hug them as they sing a lullaby. They leave. They enter with NOAH. Morning is here and every-one re-enters with hay in their hair.)

SHEM

So, Father, you got up when the cock crowed. Let’s assign tasks for feeding the animals since we are going to be here forty days and nights.

BELLAH

(looking through a small window)

It’s all water out there. A few mountains aren’t covered. Hoards of animals and people are clinging desperately to rocks or trees.

SARAH

The only ones who will look out for the first week will be the adults. Rebecca and the other children are not to look.

(The ark is dark again and we hear the soundof people snoring. SHEM is seen looking through the window lit by moonlight. His wife is by his side.)

BELLAH

How can we make it through forty days and nights? Days and nights all run together. It’s even darker out there. All I can see is endless water.

SHEM

What choice do we have? At least we are alive. We’d better get back to our hay. Watch out for elephant feet.

(The candlelight goes out as we hear a horse neighing.)

(END OF SCENE)

**Scene 4**

AT RISE: It is light in the ark and everybody is around the table in the main room of the ark Noah, half-asleep, has a few cats on his lap.

BELLAH

I wish you kids wouldn’t let those birds loose. They are driving me crazy.

SHEM

Don’t worry, Bellah, this ordeal will soon be over. The sun is getting brighter every day.

NOAH

Did someone say sun? Yes, the sun is coming out. I expect a sign from the Lord any day.

REBECCA

Father, Mother, when can we run and play again? We’re so tired of taking care of animals.

SHEM

Wait patiently. Come on over here and look through this window. I see some mountains beginning to appear.

REBECCA

(looking through the windows which are made with slats of wood.)

I can see the mountains. I want to get out of here as soon as possible.

SHEM

Yes, yes, we have to get out of here before this old boat caves in on us. Let’s pack up our things and try to swim.

NOAH

Have you gone mad? How can you talk about swimming? Be patient. Don’t be foolish like those who have drowned.

(A huge jolt is felt inside the ark, dishes slide off the table and REBECCA cries. BELLAH grabs REBECCA and the men run to the window to see what is happening.)

NOAH

I think we have hit something. We’re probably on top of a mountain.

SHEM

Come on and get that raven ready to send out. If he doesn’t come back, then we’ll know he’s found dry land.

SARAH

(entering with a raven in her arms)

Here’s our messenger. Open the window and let our little messenger fly.

NOAH

(reaching to the window)

Now give me the raven

(Everyone looks on expectantly)

There, he’s off and flying.

(It is night again and the family sits in their sleeping room. Some are sleeping and some hold their heads between their hands.)

NOAH CONT’D

Don’t get discouraged family. The raven did not return. But in a week we’ll send the doves, which are real land lovers. If they don’t come back, we’ll know they’ve found dry land.

SARAH

Good plan. We must be sure we are safe. When we are most tired we must pray for a sign.

(It is morning again. It is time to send out another bird. The family sings the John Denver song “Sunshine on My Shoulder”.)

NOAH

I know that one dove has returned but a week has passed and this is our final test.

(The family watches NOAH release the dove. SHEM looks from time to time, for the dove to

return.

REBECCA

There’s no use looking. The dove is never coming back because it has drowned.

SARAH

Don’t be so sure little daughter. The dove did not return so where did it go? I am going to release the last dove and see what happens.

(SARAH releases the last dove. The family sits closely together among the hay stacks, and they pray.)

SHEM

(waking everybody)

Here comes the dove. He has something in his mouth.

(He runs to the window.)

He’s bringing a…an olive branch. What does that mean Father? Wake up.

NOAH

An olive branch has always meant peace. And now we have peace of mind. The dove has found the branch on dry land. I’ll release this dove so it can settle on land.

(He releases the dove.)

Now we can embark from our fortress. Don’t be afraid. Push that door open and free all the animals.

(The family sings the John Denver song “Country Road Take Me Home” as they look around. REBECCA begins to dance and play as some of the animals are freed. Suddenly a rainbow appears in the sky. They all look up in astonishment.)

VOICE OF GOD

This Noah, is the sign of our covenant. You will be guardian of all plants and animals, but you are not to take the blood of animals or the life of your fellow man.

NOAH

Will there be another flood if someone does this?

VOICE OF GOD

No, I will never again destroy the earth with water.

(The family cheers and runs about. They may also dance.)

THE END