

All Aboard

Cats don't like water. So you'd think they would have been first aboard. When the world was swallowed up by water, and there stood this huge wooden ship, gangplank down and Noah beckoning the animals aboard, you'd expect the cats to be already curled up in the warmest corner of the ark.

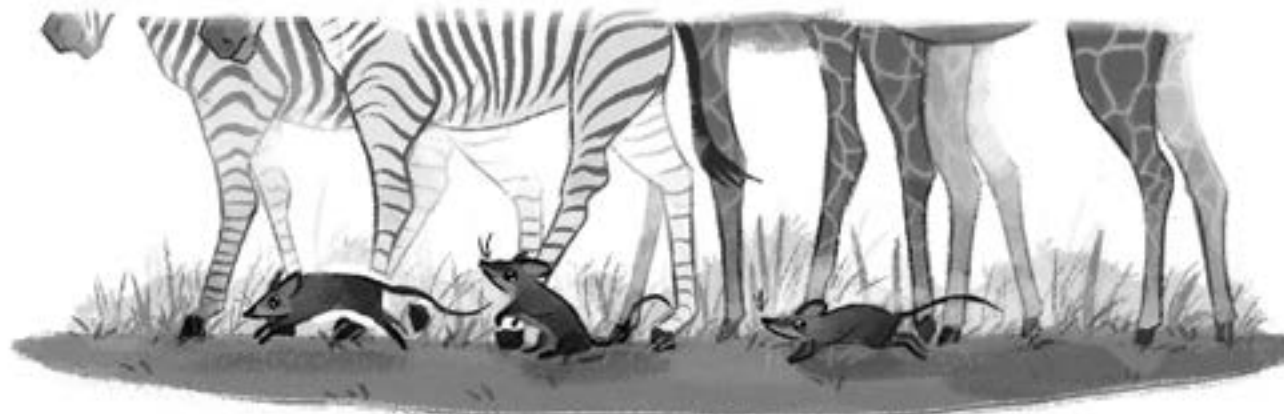
But no. Because when the flood came, there were no cats. It happened in the Pre-Cat Age. Hard to imagine, but there you are.

Noah did not pick or choose his passengers. He had been told to take two of everything.

You and I might have left behind the scorpions, millipedes, tarantulas and asps, but Noah invited two of everybody ...

Except rats.

Rats nibble and gnaw. They gnaw and nibble. They also breed. Between the first flash of lightning and bang of thunder, two rats squeezed under the door, uninvited. Before the treetops were underwater, two dozen rats were scampering and scuttling, nibbling and gnawing and breeding. They ate the food meant for other animals. They left their droppings in everyone's bed. But worst of all, they gnawed and nibbled the ark itself.



be turned into a fawn! Whoever drinks from me will be turned into a fawn!' Terrified, the girl begged her brother not to touch the water with his lips. But her pleading fell on deaf ears.

'Don't be ridiculous!' replied her brother. 'All I can hear is the bubbling of the stream as it flows over the

rocks. There is really nothing to fear. Just watch me!' he cried, cupping his hands and leaning down to take his first sip. But no sooner had the first translucent drop touched his lips, he was transformed into a fawn.

How the girl wept when she saw what had befallen her brother. Inconsolable, she set about gathering the bulrushes that grew at the water's edge and wove a rope to tether and lead the fawn. She did not want to risk losing her dear brother, now he was transformed into an animal.

Now the wicked stepmother was incandescent with rage when she saw only one of the children had succumbed to her spell. The girl was still free, but she would see to it she suffered, too. It was just a matter of time. The wicked stepmother waited for her next opportunity to inflict harm.

