

Elisheva's Diary

Dear Diary,

Tonight I fear for my life. The corruption of this valley is so rampant I cannot comprehend how good will survive much longer. I confess my fears only to you, Diary. I sometimes feel that Eden is only a myth and that goodness never did reign on the earth.

Oh, I know of the angel emanation that remains at the gate but I cannot comprehend how it is that in so very few generations we could have come from the hand of God and deteriorated to such a level as I observe every day. (And that says nothing about the night when the darkness falls, for at that time it is not safe for a man to venture out alone, let alone a woman. It seems as though that when the light retires men also lose all inhibitions and they revel in their element of darkness. Perhaps they believe that God does not see their preposterous deeds when the light recedes.)

I fear for my children. I fear for my world.

Oh God, I am growing so very frightened. If you are God, can't you do something?

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Dear Diary,

Evil prevails, but not so for my husband, Noah. I confess that his faith in a God of goodness is so much greater than mine- so very much greater.

When he approaches the shrine he erected near our home I sense that he really does believe that there is a God who notices and cares. I can see in his face that there is not one shred of doubt in his heart. He feels God appreciates his entreaties and sacrifices.

Yet, though we've been married for scores of decades I still do not understand how he can look up to a blank sky in a world gone insane and have such an unshakable faith. How can he have such confidence that there's a Power behind all of this and that this God cares about our dying little earth.

But Noah does and I feel that I do, usually.

Still, at times it seems Noah's faith seems inconsequential for if God is in His heaven He surely doesn't seem concerned about us. I see nothing but greed and violence.

Sometimes I feel sorry for my dear husband. His faith is so simple and he is often ridiculed for trusting as he does. What if he is wrong? What if God doesn't care? What if this world is out of control and no one is there to take notice or intervene Who will step in to stop the deterioration before this world destroys itself?

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Dear Diary,

I don't know what to think. I love Noah and I hope that I trust him too, but this is all a complete surprise. I am astounded and my head is swimming.

It all started two days ago. Lamea, the young lad whose family lives near the juncture of the river, was taken by a drunken mob. They blasphemously put him upon a cushion atop an altar. He was raucously proclaimed to be "God" and then taunted and teased and abused by men and women alike in every vile manner. The poor child was degraded by pleasure and then pain as his "worshippers" laughed themselves into a frenzy.

I am so thankful that I was not there to witness this simple boy's humiliation. It is rumored that his last terrified screams were drowned out by the chant and dance of his adherents. These loathsome creatures created a god for themselves and then murdered it.

My gentle Noah was so horrified at that act that I observed him at our altar, pleading, far into the night. He was imploring Heaven to intervene, to stop the tide of evil that will surely drown us all. He was so intense and, at the same time, so powerless.

This good man is not without fault, but he surely is the most innocent man I've ever known. I ached as I observed him in the falling darkness, pleading into an empty sky. After interminable hours I fell into a fitful sleep only to have him turn my world upside down in the morning.

It is not my place to question my patriarch, but I can hardly believe his claim. He says that he invoked the name of God and God finally responded. I do not yet understand but he claims that God has sworn that He will act in a most momentous manner. He will step into history to stop the tide of evil in this world. Noah says that God will overwhelm the blasphemy of this age with a flood or His own creation.

What might this mean? When will He act? It is all so very unclear to me.

Tonight, my diary, I do not know whom to fear more-
a vicious and evil generation,
or a God that I cannot see and do not know who now threatens.

Diary, tonight I'm frightened.

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Dear Diary,

I told Merid today that if Noah is not truly hearing the voice of Heaven then he has surely lost his mind. He has taken our sons- yes, even young Japeth, into the primal forests and they have begun to fell massive trees in order to drag them to our valley floor. There, he claims, he will create a craft that will withstand the wrath of God.

Merid wondered if I should remain with a man who sees visions of a valley completely decimated by water. I do not know. I do not know.

When I've asked my husband what spring shall provide the volume of water such as he tells of he only shrugs his shoulders and returns to work. He has no answer. He only believes.

I long to trust that good man, but his obsession may be the death of us all.

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Dear Diary,

What a horrid world this is. There is hardly a taint of civility left anywhere. Just yesterday Shem's precious wife, Merid, was attacked by a group of young boys as she took food to the men at the project site. She will recover but I am a bit angry at God.

Why would he ask my husband to put our family at such risk? Why would He not see what a hardship this has become for us all? I try to believe but it seems our resources are becoming more and more strained.

If God sees and knows, why would He not grant special protection to those who are striving to obey Him? Why Merid? What did she do to deserve this brutal treatment at the hands of such vermin of society?

Diary, I admit that my faith is weak as I view this project lingering on and on, but some of me wonders if I don't have a bit of a case against God.

I suppose He's reading this over my shoulder right now. Tonight I don't care.

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Dear Diary,

The work on the craft is continuing, and for what purpose? I see no change in the climate at all. I sense no swelling of the rivers that will fill the valleys. The only evident change, if any, is that people pay less attention to the project than they used to. Once upon a time I thought we might make an impact and there was some marked curiosity. That seems to have faded with the passage of time.

Decades ago, when this project began, at least people took notice. Once in a while some would appear to understand and believe, but as the years have continued to roll on and on (with no flood in sight!) most appear to see this effort as the crazy fixation of a very eccentric family.

Once in a while, when something particularly horrific occurs, some will approach and help but only for a few days or weeks. Soon the intensity of the moment and its threat fades and they all go back to life as normal. Then, we alone remain. Just one single family building a great wooden monstrosity in a world that does not care.

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Dear Diary,

This infernal project is nearly completed and I've only recently realized the ache I have inside. I long to hold grandchildren but it has not been my privilege.

I've wondered why? Do my sons not do their duty as husbands because of their preoccupation with this boat? Has God sealed up the wombs of their wives in order to keep my innocent grandchildren from this present, wicked world?

Perhaps that is so, and if it is so it may be for the best. It is probably selfish of me to want them now for if I truly had the children's best interests as my highest priority then I'd not want them to breathe the poison of this world as it is.

Still I wonder, will I live to see the fruit of my soul and my womb in my lifetime?

Oh, I suppose that it's really true that I have no real desire to have children brought into this world- not as it is. No, not at all. What a dilemma...

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Dear Diary,

I fear for father Methuselah for he is growing so very frail. The years of faithful on this never ending project have taken a heavy toll on his ancient frame.

Through the rolling years he has been unshakable in his faith that Heaven is behind this task. (And, if the truth be known, I suppose only Noah has remained so very confident and so singularly determined to see this thing through. I, admittedly, have had many periods of doubt. But this is not at all true for my husband and not for old father Methuselah.)

I am amazed at his tenacity for the old man has told me many times that he is convinced that he will never board this vessel. He says he labors, hoping that many may yet come to trust the promise, put their shoulders to the work, and capture a vision of what the world might become when Heaven ordains that this present reality has run its course.

Still, it seems so very unfair. How could this good man work so long and endure so many decades of derision only to miss the sailing while others who have continued on with life in its unvarying search for pleasure may choose to step on board at the very last moment and receive the reward of this man's labor? Apparently Heaven is more merciful than I am. To me, they should pay for their insufferable taunting and jesting toward this faithful old giant.

But Methuselah is not at all troubled at this unbalanced prospect. No, he seems energized at the thought that his years of labor will someday bear fruit, even among those who have abuse him for so very long.

I know I'm bitter, but tonight I'm bitter for him and not just for myself. I'm not particularly ashamed of that.

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Dear Diary,

This night I am exhausted. I've grown so impatient with the un-endingness of this obsession that I've left the bring of food and other provisions to the men to my sons' wives and I've joined in the construction labor myself. Someday this surely must end.

The frame of the craft is complete. Now we are hauling vast amounts of pitch and various compounds to seal the seams of the vessel. This is heavy, hard work. My arms,

back, neck, and shoulders ache insufferably. Were I not able to soak in the springs at the end of the day I fear I'd not be able to rise to face the morning again.

Noah protests but I will not hear of it. I am tired of this project and tired of the toll it has taken on my husband, my family, and old Methuselah.

I am tired to death of what this vision of Heaven has cost my life. If this project is going to kill my husband I will die beside him. I want this thing finished and then I challenge Heaven to keep its end of the bargain.

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Dear Diary,

Today the old man died. We were sealing near the front of the craft when I heard him moan softly- his words were not clear. He may have been calling the name of his father, Enoch, I cannot know.

But in this, the 120th year of this project, so very near completion, old Methuselah ended his labor.

I will miss him. He was such a pillar. His ancient wisdom and simple faith shamed my bitterness and wavering. I will miss how his goodness seemed to be a luminescent beacon in a very dark and deteriorating world, perhaps about the only reminder that once upon a time nobility and decency ruled this earth. This ancient old man seemed to be our last link to a time that is nearly extinguished from the world.

I wish I had clearly heard his last utterance. Perhaps he did call out to his father. Perhaps, for that last moment, he thought of the legend that his father was among all of us and yearned for that same clarity.

Many times, through the tide of years, the old man would remind us, "My father walked to embrace God." That truth seemed to give him such peace. "My father walked to embrace God."

From my earliest childhood I knew of this legend. I knew of the man who so yearned to know the purity of Heaven that he lived, everyday, increasingly in its atmosphere.

He grew to breath the air of God Himself until one day the Heavenly Father proclaimed, "Enoch, I've visited you at your home for so long that I'd like you to come visit me in mine."

I dreamed that someday I would have such confidence, such an unshakable security about heaven and the little speck of life named Elisheva. I ached to know the experience of Enoch.

Perhaps that is why Methuselah never wavered in his confidence in the God of this boat. He knew his father as his father. He also knew that the God that his father embraced had commanded this project. That was good enough for Methuselah.

Tonight I feel that is good enough for me.

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Dear Diary,

Well, the never-ending project is done- and for what purpose? No one has changed, my family, alone, cares and we have not seen one drop of evidence of any approaching flood.

Even old father Methuselah has now died and he never rode on that boat. Years of work and sweat and accepting the jeers and assaults of multitudes for decades, that's all Methuselah knew. And now he is buried beside the vessel, a craft he'll never sail on.

I'm sorry, tonight I am again aware of how bitter I am. I hardly see the purpose of 120 years of labor. This project has seemed incredibly strained from its inception, but the last few weeks' exhausting labor of bringing hundreds of baskets filled to overflowing with grass and seeds and grains for a zoo of creatures who couldn't read a road sign if you pointed it at them seems even more preposterous.

Diary, just when I feel my faith settling a bit, the irrationality of this comes back to assault me. Tonight I don't know where I'm at. I am just tired of it all.

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Dear Diary,

I repent of my cynicism. Truly there is a God in the heavens.

Just this day, as we stood at the door entreating passersby to join us on our long-awaited journey, we suddenly viewed a most amazing procession. Creatures of every description and species were marching toward the open door. It was as though dumb animals had more sense than the awed populace who stood and observed the parade of creatures.

I wonder what they speak of tonight in their homes. They saw them come, seven by seven and two by two. Those sinners watched them all. I saw their eyes as they stood dumbfounded as the procession of animals made the serpentine route directly up the ramp into the vessel that we have worked on for so very many years.

How could they not be amazed? How could they sleep tonight with the memory of that sight confirming what we have said for decades? I know it has broken my doubt.

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Dear Diary,

Seven days have passed and we've busied ourselves caring for our enclosed menagerie. I sense no approaching flood but I know that, so very long ago, God spoke to my man and that whatever comes my precious family is safe in this place. And so we wait and we stay busy with our charges and their needs. The taunts and the laughter don't bother me anymore. I've set my confidence in the One who designed this vessel and who shut us up safely by His unseen hand.

Seven days ago, with the procession of the beasts, the laughter ceased but now we are hearing it again outside the craft. Their taunting and blasphemous profanities increase with each passing day. Last evening we even heard them shouting of a fiendish plot to set this craft afire. "A sacrifice to your crazy god!", they shouted. "He should be appeased by animal carcasses and the screaming agony of eight deluded people!"

It's curious, diary, but I am not afraid. I cannot explain how that for so many long decades I found my courage wavering and now I no longer have that sense at all. I am

no longer timid with regard to this God's plans. If He redeems this world through the salvation of my family I will rejoice but I also am resigned to His will even if He chooses that we should become His living sacrifice and this ark becomes His altar. I know that...

Wait, I hear a sound and the animals are becoming excited! They are beginning to bray and prance and flutter. Are those wicked people making good on their threat of destruction? Yes, I definitely hear a rhythmic sound on the wood above...

But as the days of Noah were, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.

-Matthew 24:37