

Bourne toWrite...

creative writing
workshops

Secrets

A timed exercise

by MaryPat Campbell

Several of us on the boat had secrets. The aardvarks, for instance. I had watched them slowly wending their way up the gangplank, a couple, both male, with no hope of being able to reproduce.

The two giraffes, tall and stately, looking like they knew exactly what was going on, turned out to be a mother and daughter. Again, no hope of reproducing.

The stick insects, got lost among the piles of hay and straw. You couldn't tell if there were there or not.

No one saw this, Noah was busy counting and writing it all down, while his partner looked anxiously at the sky for signs of rain.

The two baboons chased the cats round and round the big wooden boat, making a hell of a racket. It looked like at least one of the cats had been seriously bitten by the baboons. Would the cats survive the journey? And if not, what then, a world without cats?

I kept quiet. What could I do about any of it. My job was to survive as best I could. The safest place for me and my partner to be is up here, high on the rigging, where the best view is.

Noah told me he may call on me to help out, once the flood has passed. This is my secret. I must not tell anyone. None of us knows what will happen. We've been told, men, women, beasts and birds alike, to go forth and multiply, repopulate the earth. A big responsibility. My flying prowess helps in situations like this, I could also get away from it all if I wanted to, fly away and never come back.

Noah tells us, repeatedly, that the earth is dying, drowning under the weight of the floodwaters. Almost nothing and nowhere is left for birds or animals to live on. Humans have destroyed it all, and now we are being asked to help out. At least they think we are worth saving, even if some of us have given up having babies.

My partner will lay her eggs when it's time, and if we are lucky we will have gone forth and multiplied.