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BOATS

by Finegan Kruckemeyer

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Original Production

The first performance of *Boats* took place at the Goulburn Street Primary School, Hobart in June 2008 in a production by Terrapin Puppet Theatre. The cast was as follows:

JOF	Quinn Griggs
NICHOLAS	Jeff Michel

The play was directed by Frank Newman, composed by Mathew Fargher and designed by Greg Methé. All artists were involved in the initial creative development, inspired by a study of nautical objects and sound equipment as suggested by Frank Newman.

Productions Since

2008	Tasmanian Regional Tour
2009	Wooden Boat Festival, Hobart, Australia
	Come Out Children's Theatre Festival, Adelaide, Australia
2010	IPAY Invited Showcase, Pittsburgh, USA
	The Arts Centre, Melbourne, Australia
	Victorian Regional Tour
2011	American Tour
	Australian National Tour

Scene One – introduction

A sound scape is made, of the sea and a boat upon it. Slowly, allusions to future events are recorded within it. Finally Jof stands and turns it off.

NIC: The surface of a boat is covered with lots of things. And a boat covered with lots of things – some that are still here, some that have been washed away – belongs at sea. And a man with a beard and the face of a woman tattooed on his arm, a man who sits on a boat while it goes out to sea... The boat is rolling back and forth on the waves.

Jof begins rocking.

NIC: It creaks.

With the leather of his belt, he makes creaking sounds.

NIC: And when a man such as this man, such as Jof the Younger, son of Jof the Elder, grandson of Jof the Ridiculously Old, when he works at sea, he hums.

Jof does.

NIC: Not very good, is it? The tune is one that Jof made up – it's called 'The Day That The Sea Brought My Sweetheart To Me'. Roll up your sleeve, Jof. That's his sweetheart, Eliza Turk. She waits for him at the end of an ocean.

JOF: Eliza – a – a [*echoed*].

Jof makes a bird from rope, and together Nicholas and Jof make it fly around the space.

Scene Two – the gull soars

The sense of a storm, of lightning.

NIC: Above the waves, soars the gull.

Jof was born on his parents' boat, in the middle of a storm, under a blanket of lightning. But not below, in the cabin. Oh no. And not even on deck. Jof was born right up... in the crow's nest.

The crow's nest is at the very top of the mast, and in a storm it rocks side to side, and in his mother's belly, Jof was rocked too, sloshed left, and sloshed right. Until finally he looked through the porthole (her belly-button) and called out:

'I'm ready to be born now'.

And so Jof shouted to his mother Matilda, and mother Matilda shouted to her husband, and her husband climbed the rigging, and little Jof, he was born... in a storm... safe and warm... in the arms of his parents.

Watched over by a gull who sailed on the harsh winds, weaving between the lightning bolts. And the gull has been there, over Jof's head, ever since.

A kettle begins to whistle.

NIC: When Jof looks up, he knows he is safe.

JOF: Tea's ready.

NIC: The tea's ready. My name is Nicholas. I sail with Jof.

They make tea.

Scene Three – Eliza Turk

The pair drinks tea in silence. Nic lifts Jof's sleeve a little.

NIC: I should tell them how you met Eliza Turk.

JOF: Sure.

NIC: You don't mind?

JOF: It's fine.

NIC: So where do you want to begin?

JOF: With the sinking.

NIC: Jof – I hate the sinking.

JOF: So do I, Nicholas... We'll do the sinking.

Nic sighs, and puts on a lady's shawl. Jof packs his sleeves with rope – muscles.

NIC: *[Referring to Jof]* Jof's father. *[Refers to self]* Jof's mother... Rocks!

A crash. They are thrown sideways.

NIC: The boat is going down, my love.

JOF: I know it is, my love. Where is little Jof? Jof/ Ahh!

NIC: The boat splits fair in two. Half starts sinking one way, and the other...

JOF: I am so strong, me the father of Jof. I try to pull the wood back together, to pull us together, but... *[They begin floating separately]* I love you, my love.

NIC: And I you, my love also.

They get lower, almost sinking. But – a lighthouse appears. Jof loops a rope.

NIC: And here the magic of the child! As everyone else panics, Jof takes action. He makes knots – it is the sailors' gift.

JOF: In the distance, a lighthouse winked at me – and I winked back.

He throws a lasso and it lands upon the lighthouse. Mother tightropes along the rope. Father carries Jof, swinging on one huge arm.

JOF: And we were safe.

NIC: For now...

JOF: But our boat was gone. And so we had to work, on land.

A circus is depicted.

NIC: Roll up! Roll up! A penny to enter, a million pounds if you are not amazed. Inside this, O'Reilly's Tent of Wonder and Stupendousness, you will gasp until your tongue rolls out your mouth. You will stare until your eyes swell up like balloons. You will say 'No!' And we will reply 'Yes'. Behold: Mr Invincible! And see here, Mr Invincible's wife... Matilda, the Conqueror of Heights!

JOF: And me – I knotted. I tied the ropes. I plaited Mother's hair. When my father finished lifting horses and elephants, I massaged his sore back, undoing the knots under his skin. And then one day, which was like any other day... except it wasn't, a girl came to the circus and sat in the front row.

Her eyes were closed.

NIC: Jof – how do we make Eliza?