

## Escaping the Vortex of Death

A colorful swarm of relentless jet skis shredded the brown water, crinkling its surface like a cheap pair of scissors through dollar store gift paper. Beyond their banal buzzing loomed the lyrical laughter of children splashing about in the reluctant little waves that rolled lazily into the shallows. I'd gamely ventured out of the conditioned air myself, fueled by the acquisition of my new ski boat.

My wife Angie hadn't wanted to come, at least not until I mentioned my little brother Heath was bringing his new fiancé Mindy. Then she got on board. (No pun intended.) She said it'd be a good way to get to know our future sister-in-law. Boy was she right.

Heath shoved us off, and I cranked that boisterous new 150 horsepower Mercury outboard. Its roar instinctively caused me to shoot a cavalier wink to no one in particular, and slam down the throttle. We jumped out of the water faster than Shamu after a bucket of fried penguin.

Soon we were skimming the surface so fast the only thing getting wet was the prop, and the host of Jet skiers skirting for cover. A crowd watched anxiously from the shore, probably hoping for that sudden gust of wind which would've sent us into a phenomenal display of aerial acrobatics.

Right off Angie's elbow found its way to my calloused ribs. Heath shot me a familiar scowl. Then I remember how they'd both asked me not to show myself as a complete jerk right off. I didn't know why they wanted me to wait.

In my defense, that Mindy girl had a frozen smile placarded across her face the whole time. It looked like she was enjoying herself to me. However, in an effort to be more amiable, I pulled to a stop, where I commenced barking orders about rigging up the ski rope and inner tube.

I declared Heath would be the first volunteer to ride since he was strutting around like a banny rooster. I couldn't take any more of his muscle flexing and courting rituals. The boat wasn't big enough for another ego. I determined to give him a ride to remember.

Heath certainly held on longer than I thought possible. I had to crank him up to almost forty miles an hour to finally throw him. Even then I had to yank a sharp left turn and sent him whipping around out in front of us until the shear G-forces finally pried him loose. His ensuing crash reminded me of the one that caused them to spend six million on that bionic fellow. That's when I noticed that feisty Mindy girl glaring at me.

"What," I asked, "We can rebuild him, better, stronger, faster."

After collecting what was left of Heath I commenced laying a heavy guilt trip on Angie. "Come on sweetie. Don't be scared. Just give it a try. I'll go easy on you."

She responded with a look that said flatly, "Homey don't play that!"

I was about to get mad when that feisty Mindy girl spoke up, "I'll take a turn."

I raised my brow, somewhat surprised. Heath furrowed his over the top of his makeshift neck brace.

With Heath over my shoulder I resolved to behave and kept it at low speeds. Then something took us both by great surprise. Feisty Mindy gave the 'thumbs up' sign. That meant she wanted to go faster!

I looked at Heath. He nodded his approval. So I bumped it up. Next thing you know she gives another 'thumbs up'! My eyes went wide. Angie snickered. Heath gave the go ahead. This routine went on until she was riding rougher than any regular ole' fellow! Obviously this was becoming a direct challenge to our manhood.

Then, without actually uttering a self incriminating word, Heath sort of indicated with his eyes that maybe it was okay to take her down a peg or two. At least that's the way I read it. Of course, he denies it to this day, his marriage being at stake and all.

With a green light, I began to put her into what I like to call the 'Vortex of Death'. Turning tight circles I began to stir the pot. Soon I had churned up the wave to beat all waves, almost of tsunami proportions. Subsequently I slung feisty Mindy right into it at full speed.

I reckon the tube itself was propelled seven or eight feet high, and *poor* Mindy, as she is now known, had a vantage point from well above that. I must admit, she pulled off some pretty phenomenal aerial acrobatics for the crowd on the way down. We'd already circled back before she finally landed with a giant belly flop. She just laid there bobbing like an old cork as we hauled her in. She was alive, but she didn't say a word. In fact, it was several years later before she finally said one to me!

I reckon poor ole' feisty Mindy, bionic Heath, and my homey Angie would all want to share some valuable information with you- If you find yourself on board with a cocky self seeking, bossy, guilt trip laying,

deranged, psycho, nut case at the helm, be looking for a way to get your feet back on solid ground! Certainly don't give him any indication that you agree with him, or be sucked into participating in any of his maniacal little games.

Jesus showed us how to deal with satan. (*"Get out of here, satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say, 'You must worship the Lord your God and serve only Him.'"* **Matthew 4:10 NLT**). What? You didn't think I was talking about me did you?

But anyway- God has created the only Ark that will carry you safely through the eternal 'Vortex of Death'. His name is JESUS. "All Aboard!"

-Guy Sheffield 4-2-07