

BOATS



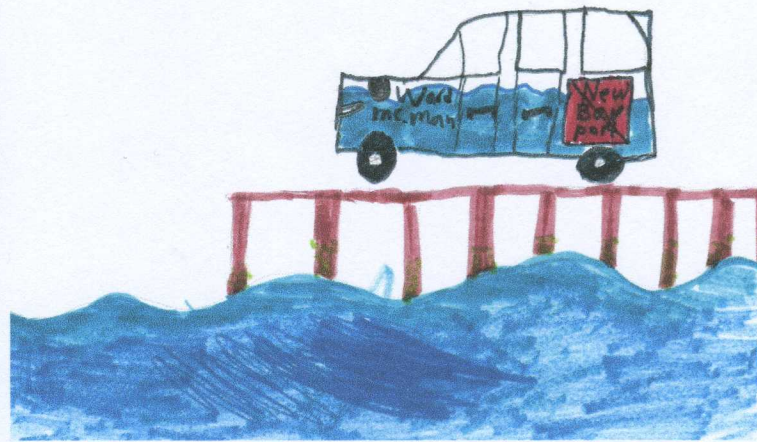
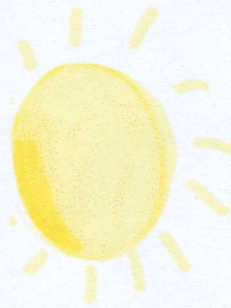
It was bright and sunny in New Bay City, and the boats were busy working in the harbor. The grumpy steamboats were lugging their wares to the docks, not minding the passenger boats around them. Sam the trusty tugboat, ignored their mood, as he merrily tooted hello and passed the time putting around the harbor until his cruise ship pick-up that night.



On the other side of the harbor at the Nautical Museum, Max a retired lightship sat docked, counting the seagulls perched on his poop deck. He longed to be back in the action, pounding against the towering waves as he guided ships safely into port. He was once nicknamed "Guardian of the Seas," having saved countless ships from wrecking on the shallow shoals outside of the harbor. His most important job had been steering ships clear of the dreaded Hectoramus Dark Rock of Doom.



Sadly, during a monster storm last December, Max was carried out to sea. Luckily, his best friend, Swift Sylvie, a clever Clipper had been racing home when she spotted Max adrift. She sent a mayday to the Coast Guard and Max was rescued from a tragic fate in the bottomless deep. After that, the harbor master patrol truck, Ward McMann, decided it was time to build a permanent lighthouse on the shoals, and Max became a retired museum ship.



The shiny new light house, Mooney, was completed by spring, with all the latest features, he was the pride of the harbor. He constantly bragged about his sturdy iron frame and Superwatt2000 light that would never go out. Sometimes Max felt sad and lonely there by the museum and wished he hadn't been replaced.



Luckily, tugboat Sam had a lot of free time during the day to keep him company and always made him laugh. Today, Sam spotted Max looking especially glum and rushed to cheer him up.

"Well, I'm glad I got you to smile," said Sam after telling Max a few jokes, "but it's almost dusk, time for me to head out for the cruise ship."

"Who's coming in tonight?" asked Max.

"Only the biggest cruise ship of the seas," said Sam proudly, "The SS Karl!"

"Well, be careful out there, looks like a storm might be rolling in. Today's the start of hurricane season, better be cautious." Max warned.

"Will do, mate!" Sam said as he chugged out of port.



As Sam exited the harbor he noticed that Mooney's light seemed to be looking a little dim.

"Hey Mooney," Sam called, "Your light doesn't look as bright as normal."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Mooney, "the Superwatt2000 will never go out!"

"Okay," Sam replied uncertainly, "but you might want Ward to check it before a hurricane comes."

"No need! Ward commissioned me and he only gets the best," boasted Mooney.

"I hope you're right," Sam muttered as he puffed away.



Night arrived and Sam was past the shoals watching SS Karl get closer. He realized a big storm was rolling and he saw the first strike of lightning appear. Sam sounded a friendly toot signaling he was ready to take him into port. Karl responded with his loud fog horn that rippled across the rising waves. The winds picked up and Sam looked around for Mooney's light, but it was nowhere to be seen. With Karl quickly approaching the shallow shoals, Sam had to do something fast. Frantically, he radioed Max at the museum.

"Come in Max!" Sam shouted urgently, "Mooney's light is out! We need your help! SS Karl is heading straight towards Hectoramus. You know these waters better than anyone, come now or we'll be sunk!"

"I'm on the way," Max said reassuringly. "Hold tight, make sure Karl doesn't get any closer to port."

"Roger that!" Sam replied following command.

"Karl! Hold your position and hook up to me!" Sam yelled, "Lighthouse Mooney is out and you are in grave danger of steering straight into Hectoramus! Our trusty lightship Max is on his way. I'll tug you in once he's here to guide us."

"I'll do my best!" Karl said, as he sounded the alarms on deck and prepared to attach to Sam.



Meanwhile, Max had broken free of the dock and the old museum ship was rocketing out of the bay. He reached Karl and Sam in record speed.

"Follow me!" Max called with authority. "There's no time to waste. The storm is getting stronger."

"Thank you!" Replied Karl and Sam in unison.

Sam tugged Karl with all his might and followed close behind Max. As they approached the harbor they could hear Mooney yelling, "I've gone dark, you were right Sam! Thank you, Max! Looks like there's a need for both of us after all!"

"I think you're right," Max smiled as he safely brought the ships into port.

