When the World Storms In

US AGAINST THE WEATHER

> *The flood was never one of you.*
> *Stop bailing water at each other.*

Some seasons, the threat to the bond isn't inside the bond at all. A diagnosis. A layoff. A baby who never sleeps. Aging parents, money that won't stretch, a world on fire. Under siege, two exhausted people, desperate for comfort and too drained to give it, do the tragic human thing. They turn on the nearest target, which is each other.

Watch the trick stress plays. The real enemy (the illness, the bills, the grief) is too big to fight, so the frustration finds a reachable one: a tone, the spending, the dishes. Couples in crisis start prosecuting each other for crimes the storm committed. Meanwhile the storm, unopposed, takes the house.

The rescue is a pronoun. Not you versus me. Us versus this. Say the enemy's real name out loud: “We're not failing each other. We're both being flattened by the same year.” Then act like allies. Divide the load by capacity, not fairness, because capacity changes weekly in a storm. Lower the bar on purpose. Survival seasons are no time to grade the marriage. And keep one small ritual alive no matter what. A bond that stays fed through the flood is what you rebuild everything else with.

FORM THE ALLIANCE

1. Name the storm precisely, together: “The actual enemy this season is ___.” Point at it, not at each other.
2. Each answer: “The storm makes me ___ (snappy, absent, controlling, numb). That's the weather in me, not my heart toward you.”
3. Redistribute by capacity: “What can you honestly carry this month? What's crushing you that I can take?”
4. Choose the one ritual that survives the siege, even if it's six minutes and a cup of tea.
5. Start a weekly storm report: ten minutes, teammates only. What hit us, what held, what needs shoring up.

WHEN IT’S HARD

If the storm has lasted years (chronic illness, special-needs parenting, long grief), the alliance needs supply lines from outside: respite, friends, therapy, help you may feel guilty accepting. Take it anyway. No couple is built to be each other's only shelter through a permanent winter. Reinforcements are not a failure of the bond. They are how bonds survive winters.

TO SIT WITH

What is the storm getting away with by keeping the two of you fighting each other?

Think of a storm you've already survived together. What did you do right that you've forgotten you know?

OUR INTENTION THIS WEEK

Something small you can both actually do this week.

WITH YOU ON THE JOURNEY,

Dr. Mark Gregory Karris