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The Trunk of Eternity

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The Trunk of Eternity

by Marcia Aldinger

THE TRUNK sat there. . . . old and covered with dust. Its metal trim was red with age, and the once-shiny surface was now grooved and marred in the pattern of time. There was neither a latch nor a keyhole, only the square solidity of old wood.

Curiosity directed the people to the trunk, and encouraged them to examine it. He prompted each one who gazed upon it to search for an opening, and the grime was knocked away by eager fingers. But there was no opening, and the trunk remained while Curiosity beckoned more people to come try their hand. When still no opening could be found, the people were prompted to guess and assert the contents of the trunk.

A wide-eyed girl was the first to speak. "It's obvious," she said in a soft voice, "that this trunk contains a sign of love. I think it holds a diary. . . . or wait. There is a wedding gown in the trunk. A gown of the lightest, most gossamer silk. The woman who wore it knew no unhappiness in her wedded life. I'm sure this must be a magic gown that gives happiness and good fortune to its wearer." So saying, she urged the crowd

to bang the trunk open, that this happiness could be found. The people looked at each other guiltily. For although each wanted the gown of happiness, none wanted the others to be aware of a need for the garment.

Suddenly a voice was heard from the crowd, and a tall, bald man shouted, "Don't be ridiculous. There is nothing in the trunk. It's empty. We are all the victims of a hoax." And he doubled up with laughter as he pointed at the people in the crowd who could be fooled so easily. Once again the people looked at one another, feeling ashamed that they could indeed be so gullible.

"The trunk is not empty. . . . it carries the wisdom of God." And a tall man whose throat was circled with white stepped forward. "The secret of heaven is in this trunk, and it could be ours if we only had the faith to get it open." The people fell to their knees and sent prayers upwards, begging that the secrets of the trunk would be revealed to them, so that they would be assured of a resting place in the Hereafter.

Over the voice of the prayers came an angry shout, "Let's not be stupid! Secrets of God indeed! It's apparent that this is a pirate's trunk and is filled with much money. Just think, it could all be ours if someone just had a hammer to knock it apart."

Immediately the people arose. Some ran to fetch hammers, while others argued the proper distribution of their new-found wealth. A tall man with oily hair moved from person to person and encouraged them to invest this money in his company. "Let it work for you, and watch it grow!" he repeated over and over. And at the thought of even more riches, the people agreed.

Then several returned with hammers and stood poised over the trunk, ready to gather in its wealth.

"Stop! Don't touch that trunk!" came a voice from the crowd. "It's a bomb! I can tell . . . can't you hear it ticking?" The people listened, and sure enough, they could hear it ticking.

The voice rose in volume. "I tell you, it's a bomb planted by our enemies across the sea. They want to destroy us by

our own curiosity.” The people moaned and were panic-stricken. Each mother took her child’s hand, and pulled him closer to her side. Fathers gazed at one another worriedly.

“We are doomed to destruction if we stay here by this bomb. Our only hope is to escape. Run for your lives, I tell you, or you will all be destroyed!”

And the people ran to their homes, locked and barricaded their doors, and sat down to wait until the bomb exploded.

The trunk sat there. . . . old and covered with dust.



Q E D

by John Essig

“GOOD morning, class. Isn’t this a beautiful Sunday morning? I have a little demonstration of faith for you this morning.”

Mr. Garrett had a little demonstration for his Sunday school class every Sunday morning. He was a dedicated man in his own way and quite convinced that he would save the souls of our youth group.

“I have a dime here in my doubled-up fist. Now, how many of you don’t believe me? Only two? This is very good, some of you have faith in me, at least. See? I do have the dime just as I said.”