

The Discoverer

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Monthly Newsletter of
Lodge of Discoverers

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Greetings Brethren,

And so another year begins. Masonically speaking thoughts are now turning to the next chapter in our history with the March Installation. Another exciting year ahead is expected. In the meantime we wish you all a very Happy and Healthy New Year—may all your wishes come true. and your New Year resolutions stand the test of time.

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Membership e-mail address list

A list of current members and their e-mail addresses is available on request.

And then it is Winter

You know. . . time has a way of moving quickly and catching you unaware of the passing years. It seems just yesterday that I was young, just married and embarking on my new life with my mate. Yet in a way, it seems like eons ago, and I wonder where all the years went. I know that I lived them all. I have glimpses of how it was back then and of all my hopes and dreams. But, here it is... the winter of my life and it catches me by surprise...How did I get here so fast? Where did the years go and where did my youth go? I remember well seeing older people through the years and thinking that those older people were years away from me and that winter was so far off that I could not fathom it or imagine fully what it would be like.

But, here it is...my friends are retired and getting grey...they move slower and I see an older person now. Some are in better and some worse shape than me...but, I see the great change...Not like the ones that I remember who were young and vibrant...but, like me, their age is beginning to show and we are now those older folks that we used to see and never thought we'd be. Each day now, I find that just getting a shower is a real target for the day! And taking a nap is not a treat anymore... it's mandatory! Cause if I don't of my own free will... I just fall asleep where I sit! And so...now I enter into this new season of my life unprepared for all the aches and pains and the loss of strength and ability to go and do things that I wish I had done but never did!! But, at least I know, that though the winter has come, and I'm not sure how long it will last...this I know, that when it's over on this earth...it's over. A new adventure will begin!

Yes, I have regrets. There are things I wish I hadn't done...things I should have done, but indeed, there are many things I'm happy to have done. It's all in a lifetime. So, if you're not in your winter yet...let me remind you, that it will be here faster than you think. So, whatever you would like to accomplish in your life, please do it quickly! Don't put things off too long!! Life goes by quickly. So, do what you can today, as you can never be sure whether this is your winter or not! You have no promise that you will see all the seasons of your life...so, live for today and say all the things that you want your loved ones to remember...and hope that they appreciate and love you for all the things that you have done for them in all the years past!! "Life" is a gift to you. The way you live your life is your gift to those who come after. Make it a fantastic one.

**LIVE IT WELL! ENJOY TODAY! DO SOMETHING FUN! BE HAPPY! HAVE A GREAT DAY!
Remember "It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver."**

LIVE HAPPY, LASTLY, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING: TODAY IS THE OLDEST YOU'VE EVER BEEN, YET THE YOUNGEST YOU'LL EVER BE. SO – ENJOY THIS DAY WHILE IT LASTS.

- Your kids are becoming you.....but your grandchildren are perfect!
- Going out is good. Coming home is better!
- You forget names.... But it's OK because other people forgot they even knew you!!!
- You realise you're never going to be really good at anything.... especially golf.
- The things you used to care to do, you no longer care to do, but you really do care that you don't care to do them anymore.
- You sleep better on a lounge chair with the TV blaring than in bed. It's called "pre-sleep".
- You miss the days when everything worked with just an "ON" and "OFF" switch..
- You tend to use more 4 letter words ... "what?"..."when?"... ???
- Now that you can afford expensive jewellery, it's not safe to wear it anywhere.
- You notice everything they sell in stores is "sleeveless"?!!!
- What used to be freckles are now liver spots.
- Everybody whispers.
- You have 3 sizes of clothes in your closet.... 2 of which you will never wear again.

It's Not What You Gather, But What You Scatter That Tells What Kind Of Life You Have Lived.

BLUE—a Masonic colour

Often we speak of the "Blue Lodge" and of "Blue Lodge Masonry," but do we really understand its meaning and its origin? I am referring to the use of the colour "Blue" as used in conjunction with lodge and masonry.

We are told that the Blue refers to the Canopy of Heaven and teaches the universality of Masonry. This is true and I would not take away a bit of this teaching, but would add to and enlarge on our thinking about the colour blue and its Masonic symbolism.

Appropriately it is the colour of the Ancient Craft degrees. It teaches and is the symbol for universal friendship and universal benevolence, as it is the colour of the vault of Heaven, which embraces all the world, so should each Brother Mason be equally extensive in his virtues of friendship and brotherly love.

Among the ancient Jews the robe of the High Priest's ephod, the ribbon of his breastplate and the plate of the mitre were of Blue. The people of the Jewish nation were charged to wear a blue ribbon above the hem of their garments and it was the colour of one of the seven veils of the temple. Josephus tells us that the Hebrew word for Blue was "tekelet" and that it symbolically meant perfection. Among the ancients, to be initiated into the Mysteries was to attain perfection and how better to speak of initiation into the greatest of fraternal institutions than to use a word that signifies perfection, BLUE, to designate our symbolic lodges.

Among the Druids it symbolised "truth." The Egyptians esteemed blue as a sacred colour, signifying heavenly nature. Jeremiah tells us that the Babylonians clothed their idols in blue, and to the Chinese in their mystical philosophy "blue" was represented as the symbol of Deity. The Hindus assert that their god, Vishnu, was dressed in celestial blue, thus indicating that wisdom from God was symbolized by this colour.

Among the medieval Christians blue was considered the emblem of immortality, as red was of the Divine Love of God.

The colour Blue is used extensively in the Scottish Rite degrees, with various symbolic significations; all, however, more or less relating to its original character as representing universal friendship and benevolence.

In the Nineteenth degree of Grand Pontiff, it is symbolic of mildness, fidelity, and gentleness. In the degree of Grand Master of all Symbolic Lodges it is used with yellow and refers to the appearance of Jehovah to Moses on Mount Sinai in the clouds of azure and gold. In the twenty-fourth degree it is the colour of the tunic and apron of a Prince of the Tabernacle, whose teachings refer to our removal from this house of clay to the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Here it is a symbol of heaven, as we were taught in the Symbolic Lodge.

We learn therefore that by custom and symbolism and not by any adopted law or by-law, we use Blue in referring to the Master Mason lodge as the "Blue Lodge"

From The Educator

Are you a Mason?

Are you a Mason - You answer, YES!
Are you sure of it - or only guess,
I know you have had all the degrees,
Have many times been on your knees,
Have 'tended Lodge when you had time,
But - have you found that life divine,
That inspiration from above,
Creator of that holy love,
Which bind men as with hoops of steel
One to the other, 'till you feel
A brother's heart - throb as your own,
And hate becomes to you unknown
When you go out and seek to find
That which substantiates the mind
To force and act (unconsciously)
Of kindness, love and charity;
To heed a brother's faintest cry,
And always ready to stand by
To comfort, cheer and bravely stand
His champion, with heart and hand;
Are you sure that you can pray
At close of each departing day,....

I thank Thee Lord, that Thou hast made
It possible for me to spread
The gospel Thou has given me
While in my Lodge on bended knee;
Grant the seed I've sown this day
In humbleness of heart, I pray,
Be made to grow, and blossom where
The flowers are needed most, and there
Send forth their fragrance pure, until
The hearts of those who breathe it, thrill
With memories of home, of mother's knee,
Turned back to yesteryear, they see
Her tear dimmed eyes upturned in prayer,
Asking Thee, that Thou wouldst spare
Her boy, and guide his steps aright,
Oh may this be his dream tonight:
And e'er mine eyelids close in sleep,
I vow my vows anew, and seek
Forgiveness for mistakes I've made
This day, and may they all be laid
At the foot of Thy cross, nor chasten
Me Lord, who tries to be a Mason.

On the Square

My Brother, in the Courtyard
Each one of us have stood
Outside the tyled Temple door
Awaiting as we should.

Take heed, thou young Apprentices
The Word emblazoned there:
To meet upon the level
And part upon the square.

My Brother, at the Altar
Each one of us has knelt
With solemn Oath and Brotherhood
The Mystic Tie we've felt.

Take heed, my Brother Fellowcraft
The Word emblazoned there:
To act upon the plumb
And part upon the Square.

My Brother, in the Temple
Each one of us were Raised
And on receiving further light
Into the Light we gazed.

Take heed, my Brothers, Masters all
The Word emblazoned there:
To Live within the compass
And part upon the Square.

If all the trees were Oaks

What if all the trees were oaks
How plain the world would seem;
No maple syrup, banana splits,
And how would orange juice be?
Wouldn't it be a boring place,
If all the people were the same;
Just one color, just one language,
Just one family name!

But -
If the forest were the world,
And all the people were the trees;
Palm and pine, bamboo and willow,
Live and grow in harmony.
Aren't you glad, my good friend,
Different though we be;
We are here to help each other,
I learn from you, and you, from me.

EAST

The East has always been considered peculiarly sacred. This was, without exception, the case in all the Ancient Mysteries. In the Egyptian rites, especially, and those of Adonis, which were among the earliest, and from which the others derived their existence, the sun was the object of adoration, and his revolutions through the various seasons were fictitiously represented. The spot, there fore, where this luminary made his appearance at the commencement of day, and where his worshipers were wont anxiously to look for the first darting of his prolific rays, was esteemed as the figurative birth-place of their god, and honoured with an appropriate degree of reverence. Even among those nations where sun-worship gave place to more enlightened doctrines, the respect for the place of sun-rising continued to exist. The camp of Judah was placed by Moses in the East as a mark of distinction; the tabernacle in the wilderness was placed due East and West; and the practice was continued in the erection of Christian churches. Hence, too, the primitive Christians always turned toward the East in their public prayers, which custom Saint Augustine (Serm. Dom. in Monte, chapter 5 accounts for "because the East is the most honorable part of the world, being the region of light whence the glorious sun arises." Hence all Masonic Lodges, like their great prototype the Temple of Jerusalem, are built, or supposed to be built, due East and West; and as the North is esteemed a place of darkness, the East, on the contrary, is considered a place of light.

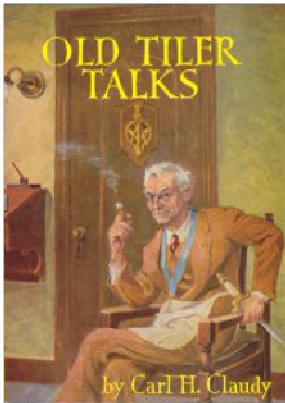
In the primitive Christian church, according to Saint Ambrose, in the ceremonies that accompanied the baptism of a catechumen, a beginner in religious instruction, "he turned towards the West, the image of darkness, to abjure the world, and towards the East, the emblem of light, to denote his alliance with Jesus Christ." And so, too, in the oldest lectures of the second century ago, the Freemason is said to travel from the West to the East, that is, from darkness to light. In the Prestonian system, the question is asked, "What induces you to leave the West to travel to the East?" And the answer is: "In search of a Master, and from him to gain instruction." The same idea, if not precisely the same language, is preserved in the modern and existing rituals.

The East, being the place where the Master sits, is considered the most honorable part of the Lodge, and is distinguished from the rest of the room by a dais, or raised platform, which is occupied only by those who have passed the Chair. Bazot (Manuel, page 154) says: "The veneration which Masons have for the East confirms the theory that it is from the East that the Masonic cult proceeded, and that this bears a relation to the primitive religion whose first degeneration was sun-worship."

Source: Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry

LESSER LIGHTS

This symbolic use of the three lesser lights is very old, found in the earliest lectures of the eighteenth century. The three lights, like the three principal officers and the three principal supports, refer to the three stations of the sun – its rising in the east, its meridian in the south, and its setting in the west. The sun is a representation of authority and hence the Master in the east is a symbol of the rising sun; the Junior Warden in the south of the meridian sun; and the Senior Warden in the west of the setting sun; and thus the symbolism of the lodge, as typical of the world, continues to be preserved. The use of lights in all religious ceremonies is an ancient custom. There was a seven branched candlestick in the tabernacle, and in the temple "were the golden candlesticks, five on the right hand and five on the left." They were always typical of moral, spiritual, or intellectual light. The custom prevalent in some localities of placing the burning tapers, or three symbolic lesser lights, in the east, west, and south, near the altar, is sometimes changed so that these are burning on or beside the pedestals of the Master and his two Wardens at their several stations. In the old Teutonic mythology, and in accordance with medieval court usage, flaming lights or fires burned before each column, similarly situated, on which rested the images of Odin, Thor, and Frey. These columns are further represented as wisdom, strength, and beauty, sustaining the "Starry-decked Heaven" roof or ceiling coloured blue, with stars.



Old Tiler Talks— Acting as chaplain

"I was embarrassed in lodge tonight!" announced the New Brother to the Old Tiler. "I don't think the Master ought to make me feel that way!"

"That's too bad," answered the Old Tiler, with ready sympathy. "Did he call you down for something?"

"Oh, no. The Chaplain was absent, and the Master asked me to act in his place."

"Why should that embarrass you?" asked the Old Tiler, still sympathetic.

"It embarrassed me horribly to say I wouldn't."

"Oh, you refused?"

"Of course I refused! My embarrassment was bad enough as it was, but to get up in front of the Altar and offer a prayer! Man, I couldn't do that!"

"You surprise me!" answered the Old Tiler. "But let that pass. Who did act as Chaplain?"

"The Master asked the speaker of the evening, some brother I never saw before. He made a beautiful prayer, too. I heard him tell the Master he didn't know the prayer in the ritual, but the Master said that didn't matter, which I thought rather odd."

"Can you remember what the stranger said?" asked the Old Tiler.

"Pretty well, I think," answered the New Brother. "It was not long. He went to the Altar and kneeled, and then said 'Almighty Architect of the Universe, we, as Master Masons, standing in a Masonic Lodge erected to thy glory, humbly petition that Thou look with favor upon this assembly of Thy children. Open our hearts that the eternal Masonic truth may find ready entry that we be enabled to make ourselves square stones, fitting in Thy sight for the great Temple, eternal in Thy heavens. We ask it in the name of the All-seeing Eye, Amen.'"

"That was a pretty prayer," responded the Old Tiler.

"But it wasn't the ritual prayer," objected the New Brother.

"No, nor it wasn't by the appointed Chaplain," retorted the Old Tiler. "What difference does it make to God whether we pray the same prayer at every lodge opening? It must be the sincerity and the thought behind the prayer which count in His sight, not the words. But in your refusal to act as Chaplain, it seems to me you put yourself in an unfortunate position. You shave yourself, don't you?"

"Why, er, yes! What has that got to do with it?"

"Tomorrow morning, when you shave yourself, you'll look in the mirror and you'll say 'Hello, coward!' and that's not nice, is it?"

"Do you think I was a coward?" asked the New Brother, wistfully.

"Scared stiff!" smiled the Old Tiler. "So conceited, so filled with the idea of all your brethren admiring you, you couldn't bear to forget yourself, lest they falter in their admiration. Sure, that's cowardly. You ducked a duty because of conceit!"

"Old tiler, you use strong words! It was not conceit. It was modesty. I didn't think I was able."

"Don't fool yourself! You told me you were embarrassed. Why is a man embarrassed in public? Because he is afraid he won't do well, won't make a good appearance, won't succeed, will be ridiculous. So you refused the pretty compliment the Master paid you, and refused your brethren the slight service of being their mouthpiece."

"But I have never prayed in public!"

"Neither has any other man ever prayed in public prior to his first public prayer!" grinned the Old Tiler. "But please tell me why a man should be embarrassed before God? We are taught that He knoweth all things. If we can't conceal anything from Him, He knows all about you! A man may be ashamed of himself, sorry for what he is and has been, but embarrassed, in prayer? As for being embarrassed before you brethren, that's conceited."

Almost any man is a match for an army if he has God with him. The man on his feet who talks aloud to God has no need to consider men. If men laugh, shame to them. In all my many years as a Mason, I never yet saw any man smile or say a word of ridicule at any one's petition to Deity out loud which touched the hearts of all present who admired their fearlessness in facing the Great Architect and saying what was in their hearts. I never heard a man laugh when a Chaplain, ordained or substitute, made a petition to Deity. Whether it was the petition in the ritual, or one which came from the heart, be sure the Great Architect understood it.

As for asking a blessing in the name of the All-Seeing Eye, what difference does it make to God by what name we call Him? That is a good Masonic name, sanctified by the reverent hearts of generations of men and Masons.

"For your own peace of mind, tell your Master you made a mistake and that you are sorry, and that if he will honor you by giving you an opportunity to pray for yourself and your brethren, you will, in the absence of the Chaplain, do your reverent best. And when you kneel before that Altar you will forget, as all Chaplains must who mean what they say, that any listen save the One to whom the prayer is addressed!"

"Old Tiler, I'll try to do it!" cried the New Mason. "Humph!" grunted the Old Tiler.

News from the South

Lodge Birthdays

Adrian Carpenter	27
Keith Fawcett	27
Gavin Struthers	12
Kevin Green	8
Jorg Schwartz	2

In December two of our NZ-based Brethren have been awarded Grand Lodge New Zealand honours—W. Bro. Brian Wakefield—Past Grand Standard Bearer and W. Bro. Gavin Struthers—Past Grand Sword Bearer—hearty good wishes and congratulations to both.

Our G.I. extends Season's Greetings— "while I missed the December meeting please convey my good wishes to the WM, officers and brethren for a happy Christmas and good health and happiness in the new year ahead".

Sad news now—Marilynn Blaikie advises me that her husband, David, passed away in the UK on Xmas Eve at the age of 67. David joined our Lodge in May 1989. Our sympathies have been sent.

AN ADDRESS TO AN INITIATE

Having been admitted to the privileges of Freemasonry, you would surely wish to be made acquainted with its principles and purposes, its meaning and significance. Let me, therefore, tell you, in a few words, something of what it stands for and what it seeks to carry out.

First, let me assure you that Freemasonry is not merely a masked pretence for empty self-glorification, as some of the uninitiated believe; nor even an opportunity for frivolous boon-companionship, as others may think. Freemasonry is a serious business of life, which, if conducted in a proper spirit and directed to the purpose which is its manifest object, cannot but prove a source of infinite good and benefit to mankind, bound up, as it is, with some of the highest hopes and interests of humanity.

According to the authorised definition of the term, Freemasonry is an art, founded on the principles of Geometry and directed to the service and convenience of mankind. Its purpose is to knit together, in one common bond, all humanity by appealing to that charity and sympathy which are innate in every healthy-minded man.

If the ancient dictum be accepted, that religion is the discharge of our duty to God and man, then Freemasonry, if not actually a religion, is certainly a very important adjunct to it, proclaiming, as it does, the law of universal love and inculcating the hatred of strife, contention and dispute. In Freemasonry, as in religion, the sentiment is all; the ritual or ceremony, merely symbolical.

It is not only a service, but a discipline. Its teachings are not to be put off with the apron at the close of the Masonic business, but must be brought into all departments of life, to ennoble and adorn it; for Freemasonry lays down rules of conduct for the working portions of our lives, as well as for the devotional periods. It embraces equally as brethren men of every race, religion, and language and speaks to each man in his own tongue. It teaches us to have reverence for the highest, to have pity for the lowest and to be charitable in our thoughts as well as in our actions. It exhorts us never to judge harshly or rashly, nor to attribute an evil motive to the actions of our fellow-man; to listen patiently to the cry of the unhappy, pity their infirmities, aid them in their weakness, and to succor their distress, even though we may know that their distress is the result of their own errors or folly, for such charity is the very touchstone of our true Masonic fellowship.

As a chain is no stronger than its weakest link and the slightest flaw in the metal may jeopardize the safety of the whole, so may your individual conduct reflect on the whole of the Craft. We, therefore, trust that by the practice of those virtues which we have adopted as our Masonic emblem, you may become a source of strength to the chain, in which this evening you have forged the newest link.

Tonight, Brother Initiate, you have been admitted to a great inheritance: some of the greatest, the wisest, and the best of mankind have laboured for you. You have been permitted to enter into their harvest. You have witnessed the rites which they once performed and you are now able to undertake the sublime task which they undertook—the task of making our common brotherhood wiser and happier. You can build forward where they were forced to leave off and so help to bring nearer to perfection the great edifice which they left uncompleted.

The above address -was delivered recently to an initiate in the Tranquility Lodge, No. 185, by Bro. John Goulston, P.M. This lodge, which is composed mainly of brethren of the Jewish faith, is one of the most renowned in England for its support of Masonic and Jewish charitable institutions.

The Master Mason - May 1927

A Philosophy on Old Age and Staying Young

If you don't read this to the very end, you have lost a day in your life.

Do you realise that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we are kids? If you're less than 10 years old, you're so excited about aging that you think in fractions. How old are you? I am four and a half. You are never thirty-six and a half. You are four and a half, going on five! That's the key. You get into your teens, now they can't hold you back. You jump to the number, or even a few ahead.

How old are you? I'm GONNA BE 16!' You could be 13, but hey, you're going to be 16! And then the greatest day of your life.....you BECOME 21, even the words sound like a ceremony. YOU BECOME 21.....YESSSS!!!!!!! But then you turn 30. Oooohh, what happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk! He TURNED; we had to throw him out. There's no fun now, you're Just a sour-dumpling. What's wrong? What's changed?

You BECOME 21, you TURN 30, then you're PUSHING 40..... Whoa! Put on the brakes, it's all slipping away, before you know it, you REACH 50 and your dreams are gone. But wait!! You MAKE it to 60. You didn't think you would! So you BECOME 21, TURN 30, PUSH 40, REACH 50, and MAKE it to 60. You've built up so much speed that you HIT 70! After that it's a day-by-day thing;

You GET INTO your 80's and everyday is a complete cycle; you HIT lunch; you TURN 4:30; you REACH bedtime and it doesn't end there. Into the 90's you start going backwards; I Was JUST 92'. Then a strange thing happens. If you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. "I'm 100 and a half!'

May you all make it to a healthy 100 and a half!!

HOW TO STAY YOUNG

1. Throw out nonessential numbers. This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctors worry about them. That is why you pay them'.
2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.
3. Keep learning. Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever.....Never let the brain idle. An idle mind is the devil's workshop.' And the devil's name is Alzheimer's.
4. Enjoy the simple things.
5. Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath.
6. The tears happen. Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life is ourselves. BE ALIVE while you are alive.
7. Surround yourself with what you love. Whether it is family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.
8. Cherish your health. If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
9. Don't take guilt trips. Take a trip to the mall, even to the next county; to a foreign country but NOT to where the guilt is.
10. Tell the people that you love them and always remember. Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

The Australian Keystone November 1888

The Three Lesser Lights.

In some Lodges a practice has crept in of the Master and Wardens rising when the three lesser lights are pointed out to the neophyte. This is most irregular; these officers are not lights, neither greater or lesser. " *These lights were formerly represented by three windows, supposed to be in every room where a Lodge is held, referring to the cardinal points of the compass, according to the antique rules of Masonry.*" There was one in the East, another in the West, and another in the South, to light the brethren *to, at, and from* labour; but there was none in the North, because the sun darts no rays from thence. The Master's place is in the East, to call the brethren *to* labor; the J.W. is placed in the South, to cheer and encourage them *at* their work; and the S.W. in the West, to dismiss them *from* their daily toils.

The Black Ball-----It is popular to denounce the use of the blackball, but nearly every day we see cases where the timely administration of the ebony cube would have saved the institution from disgrace. It is easier to keep bad men out of the fraternity than to put them out.

Solicitation Does Not Pay.

It is beyond dispute that solicitation in Masonry, even though it may bring members and revenue at the time, does not pay in the end. The writer calls to mind the administration of an energetic Master, during whose term of office twenty-one names were added to the roll of membership. At the expiration of five years twelve of that number had been suspended for non-payment of dues, and several more were hanging in the balance. That a large number of these brethren entered Masonry through solicitation is not denied, but that their affiliation with the lodge was a detriment is fully proved by the above. The rapid increase of members and consequent financial prosperity, to the exclusion of Masonic principles, will drive any Masonic institution into bankruptcy, and constitute one of the greatest Masonic evils of the day.

Food for Thought????? Has anything changed?????

The Moral of Auntie Fiona

A teacher gave her class of 11 year olds an assignment: To get their parent to tell them a story with a moral at the end of it. The next day the kids came back and one by one began to tell their stories.

Ashley said, 'My father's a farmer and we have a lot of egg-laying hens. One time we were taking our eggs to market in a basket on the front seat of the car when we hit a big bump in the road and all the eggs got broken.' 'What's the morale of that story?' asked the teacher. 'Don't put all your eggs in one basket!' 'Very good,' said the teacher.

Next little Sarah raised her hand and said, 'Our family are farmers too. But we raise chickens for the meat market. One day we had a dozen eggs, but when they hatched we only got ten live chicks, and the moral to this story is, 'Don't count your chickens before they're hatched'.' 'That was a fine story Sarah.'

Michael, do you have a story to share?' 'Yes. My daddy told me this story about my Aunty Fiona. Aunty Fiona was a flight engineer on a plane and her plane got hit. She had to bail out over enemy territory and all she had was a bottle of whisky, a machine gun and a machete.

She drank the whiskey on the way down so it wouldn't break and then she landed right in the middle of 100 enemy troops. She killed seventy of them with the machine gun until she ran out of bullets. Then she killed twenty more with the machete until the blade broke. And then she killed the last ten with her bare hands.'

'Good heavens,' said the horrified teacher, 'what kind of moral did your daddy tell you from that horrible story?' 'Stay away from Aunty Fiona when she's pissed.'

George, the newly-admitted brother, having supped too well on the occasion of his initiation, arrived home late and after his wife had gone to bed. Feeling for the banister, he accidentally kicked the bottom step with such force that the noise aroused his wife. Wife: "Is that you George?" George: "Yesh, my dear." Wife: "What was that noise?"

George: "Hic! That my dear, was the first shtep in Freemasonry!"

A couple were out doing some Christmas shopping together. The shopping centre was packed & as the wife emerged from a shoe & handbag shop, she was surprised to find that her husband was nowhere to be seen. Irritated because they had a lot to do, she called his mobile to ask him where he was.

In a subdued voice he replied: "Do you remember that jewellers we went into a couple of years ago, where you fell in love with that beautiful diamond necklace that we couldn't afford & I promised that I would buy it for you one day?"

Barely able to contain her emotions & with tears already forming in her eyes, she said: "Yes, of course I remember that shop." "Well, I'm in the pub next door."