

A "Grandfather Todd of Old Cape Cod" Easter Story for Children

The Magic Easter Egg

by Joseph E. Hanson

It was Easter morning, a long time ago, up on Old Cape Cod. Before daylight a soft white snow had fallen like an errand cape over everything.

The sand dunes were white. The church steeple was white. And the long arms of the giant windmill were gloved in white frost.

Then the sun came out and everything was like magic, glistening with golden rays. The rabbits ran out of their burrows and blinked their eyes in the glorious sunlight. The birds began to sing in the shrub oaks. Two grey squirrels started chattering in a locust tree.

It was a heavenly day. Grandfather Todd woke up the two children in the "Cranberry Goose" cottage, and said, "Come, sleepy heads! It's time for Mass. Up, my little darlings. This is Easter Day."

After breakfast the children wanted to go out into the snow to see if they could find what the Easter Bunny had left for them. But Grandfather Todd said, "No, children! Not until after Church."

So they all went to Mass in Grandfather Todd's rickety old car. This was fun because the car had no top, and the children could look up at the sky and watch the sea gulls flying across Cape Cod Bay. So much better than being shut up in a closed car, don't you think?

With the organ music still ringing in their ears, after the beautiful Easter Mass was over they drove back to the cottage.

"Now!" cried the children, who were twins and only five years old. "Now, grandfather, may we look for the Easter Bunny's gifts?"

"Please, may we?" asked Meg.

"Please! Please! Please!" cried Marie, who was impatient.

Then Grandfather Todd, who was a very magic old gentleman, said, with a sly wink, "Look over there. Near the bayberry bushes. Surprise!"

The children rushed over, very excited. At first they could see nothing. Then, all at once they spied a Bunny who poked his head out of a hole in the snow-bank and said, "Hello children!"

"Do tell us," said Meg and Marie together, "where are the Easter gifts you have hidden for us?"



"Why right there!" said the Bunny, pointing in two directions at once. He was being very funny.

"Stop fooling us!" said Meg and Marie. "Grandfather Todd says you have a surprise for us. Now, where is it?"

"Why, right behind you," said the Bunny.

The children turned and there, right before their eyes, was the most magic Easter Egg they had ever seen.

"It's a giant Easter Egg!" the children cried. Indeed it was a giant egg about as tall as Grandfather Todd's chicken house. But a most beautiful egg.

It was made of snowy white sugar crystals, which sparkled like diamonds. And it was decorated with peaches and plums, tangerines and grapes, and apples and oranges. And it was tied with a piece of broad blue ribbon, with a rosette bow at the top.

In the very front of the Magic Easter Egg there was a small glass window. Of course the two children peeked into the window. It was like looking into a magic new world.

"What do you see?" asked Meg standing on tiptoe.

"I see tiny Pilgrims," said Marie. "Look! There is a sailing ship. The Pilgrims are going to land."

The ship in the harbor, of course, was the "Mayflower." It had just landed at Cape Cod, having come all the way across the ocean from England. As they looked through the Magic Egg's window Meg and Marie saw Pilgrim boys and girls, in their tall hats and colored coats, walking on the beach. Cape Cod seemed very strange to them.

"You remember," said Meg to Marie. "Grandfather told



us about the Pilgrims landing on Cape Cod, even before they sailed for Plymouth Rock."

They watched the tiny Pilgrims for a while, when suddenly all of them rushed back to the boats, in fright, and sailed away.

"Oh, dear! What happened?" asked Marie.

"Look! Oh look!" cried Meg, still peering into the Magic Egg.

Right before the eyes of the children, ten fierce Indians, painted red and green, and wearing turkey feathers in their black hair rushed out of the woods. The Indians had bows and arrows and they shouted terrible "War whoops!" It was very scary.

"Now, they've frightened the poor Pilgrims away," exclaimed Marie.

"Oh, dear!" said Meg. "How mean of them to do it!"

Then the children heard a voice behind them. It was the Funny Bunny, again. He said, "Quick! Press that button. More magic."

There was a red button beside the Magic Easter Egg's window, and Meg pressed it. Now, what do you think the children saw? Right inside the Easter Egg there was a big school of whales. They were spouting water into the air. And behind the whales there was a tall sailing ship filled with men.

"The whaling fleet," said Marie. "They are hunting whales."

The sea was filled with big waves and covered with white caps. The wind blew, and the white clouds scurried across the sky. Huge sea gulls flew through the air shrieking.

The whales were afraid of the ship. They kept thrashing the water, and swimming with all their might to escape. The men in the big ship kept shouting at the whales. Then they tried to sail the big ship up beside the huge animals. But the whales were very clever. They were not going to be caught. They flung their tails into the air, and dived down to the bottom of the sea. No one could catch them now.

"Good!" cried Meg. "They escaped."

"Press the button again," said Marie. "This is fun. Where will the Magic Egg take us next?"

So Meg pressed the red button, and they found themselves looking into Bunny Land. The Egg was filled with flowers and trees and little blue and white Bunny houses. There was a Bunny Church and a Bunny School. Baby Bunnies were playing with hoops. Some were roller skating. One was sitting on a fence eating a cookie. Another was flying a kite. And a Papa Bunny in a bright, purple jacket was riding through the streets on a Turtle's back.

And, as the children watched, the Church door opened

and a Bunny Bride and Groom walked arm in arm down the steps, as the organist played the Wedding March. Then all the other Bunnies threw rice at them, and everybody was laughing and happy.

"Goodness!" cried Marie, quite delighted with the Bunny wedding. And then she said, "Goodness me!" again.

Meg said, "I'll press the button once more. Dare me!"

"I dare you!" said Marie.

The two children put their faces up to the glass window in the Magic Egg and looked. At first they could not see a thing. Everything looked very greenish.

Then they saw! Then they knew where they were! They were at the bottom of the sea. As they looked through the glass in the Magic Egg a little Sea Horse swam up, wiggled his tail, and swam off again.

Then a Star Fish came up to the window, winked at them and sparkled as a Star Fish always does. Then a Baby Lobster swam up, and would have kissed them only the window was in the way.

Next they saw a dozen big Oysters lying on the seaweed on the sandy bottom. One of the Oysters opened his mouth. Then another Oyster opened his mouth. And a third Oyster did the same.

When the Oyster shells were wide open out of each Oyster walked a small boy no bigger than a thimble. Each was dressed in green, with a yellow sash, and red slippers.

"What are they doing in the Oysters?" Meg asked Marie, who had never seen little boys working in Oysters before.

"I don't know. Ask them," said Marie.

So they tapped on the Magic Easter Egg window and cried, "What are you doing, little Oyster Boys?"

One of the little boys came up, put his face to the glass, and said very loud, "Silly question! We're making Pearls, of course! How did you think Pearls got into Oysters anyway?"

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"We did not know," said Meg and Marie together. "But thank you very much."

The little Oyster Boys went back to work making Pearls, and after a while, the children, tired of watching them, pressed the red button again to make more magic.

But this time, before they could see anything they heard the sweetest music coming out of the Magic Easter Egg. It was such Heavenly music.

Then they saw a blue sky and hundreds of Angels blowing on trumpets. Next they saw a beautiful garden. It was filled with roses and hollyhocks, pansies and petunias, and daffodils and daisies. And they could even smell the delightful perfume of the garden. It seemed to come right through the window glass.

"It's like Heaven!" said Marie.

"And so beautiful!" said Meg.

Then, walking toward them they saw a Man. His face was shining like the sun, and his garments were white as snow.

He came closer and closer. The music grew louder and more beautiful. The sky became brighter and bluer. And the Angels sounded their trumpets in a mighty blast.

And then the children heard a multitude of voices chanting, "He is risen! He is risen! He is risen! Glory to God, in the Highest!"

The eyes of the children became like bright stars. Their hearts were filled with great happiness. The heavenly music now seemed to fill the entire earth as the tall Man, Whose face shone like the Sun, raised His hand and Blessed them.

Suddenly the Magic Easter Egg vanished, and the children were alone. They ran back over the snow covered sand dunes to where Grandfather Todd was waiting for them.

They clung to him, quite speechless. "I know," he said holding them in his arms. "I know all about it. I looked into the Magic Easter Egg myself one Easter, when I was a very small boy."

Wishing You All a Happy Easter

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