

The Easter Disaster

By Cole Clark

On the morning before Easter, the Easter Bunny awoke with a start.

“Oh no! Tomorrow is Easter and I haven't painted any eggs. I'll have to call Santa. Maybe his elves can help.”

The Easter bunny called Santa. He impatiently tapped his foot on the floor as he waited for him to pick up.

“Come on, come on, come on, Santa, pick up already!” he muttered under his breath. Then he remembered. Santa always sleeps until noon on Saturdays.

“Great. Maybe the Tooth Fairy can do something to help me.”

He called the Tooth Fairy. She finally picked up on the 5th ring.

Finally. Thought the Easter Bunny.

“Hello?”

“Hey. It's the Easter Bunny. I need to paint 2.2 billion for tomorrow. Is there any chance you can do something to help me paint them?”

“Maybe. I will try.”

“Thanks. Call me back if you find or think of anything.”

“Okay. Talk to you later.”

“Bye.”

“Bye.”

The Easter Bunny hung up and sighed.

I should get to work. Thought the Easter Bunny. *Even if she can help me, I have a lot of easter eggs to paint.*

He ate a quick breakfast of lettuce and parsley and got to work. He went up to his attic.

Holy eggs. He thought. *I have a lot of eggs to paint.*

Then the phone began to ring. He ran downstairs and grabbed it.

"Hello."

"Hi. It's the Tooth Fairy. I have paint that we can use, but I don't know how you you want them painted"

"Okay. If you can whip over here I have something you can do."

"Okay. Bye."

"Bye."

He started to go upstairs to his attic when he remembered. This happened to his great great great great great Grampa. He had to use jellybeans from the very special jellybean tree.

Maybe that's why it's very special. Thought the Easter Bunny.

He might have to have to use some this year. He opened the door and walked in. At the back of the room he found a conveyor belt, a couple hoses, a pump, a funnel, A huge box, a whole lot of paint, a couple brushes and a couple huge tubs.

One hour later he had everything set up and the tooth fairy was there. He assigned the tooth fairy the job of dumping a whole bunch of eggs in the huge tubs and then straining the paint into another tub and putting more eggs in until all the paint was gone. Then she would refill them and do it all over again. By noon, they had half of the eggs done. The Easter Bunny put eggs on the conveyor belt which took them inside the huge box. In the box the eggs were sprayed with paint from the hoses and then funneled into baskets. They worked hard until noon. They were both hungry by then so the Easter Bunny made a delicious lunch of pb & j sandwiches. Then it was back to work.

5 hours later, they almost had all the eggs done. But they were both pretty hungry so the easter bunny went out to his garden and picked some carrots, lettuce, cucumbers and

peppers. He went in and made a huge salad. They ate as quickly as they could and they went back upstairs.

When they got up there they found that all the chocolate was melted. The sun had melted them because they were set right by a window. The Easter bunny sunk to his knees and started to cry mini eggs. The tooth fairies jaw dropped to the floor.

"You can go home." said the Easter Bunny. "I'm done. I've given up.". Then mopped down to his room and cried himself to sleep.

That night, he awoke to go to the bathroom to see his living room full of baskets of painted eggs and jellybeans. *What the...* He thought.

"Surprise!!!!" Santa and the Tooth Fairy popped out from behind the biggest basket. "There can't not be Easter." Said the Tooth Fairy. "So I called Santa and every elf painted one egg so that there were 2.2 billion and then everyone helped put them in baskets and then bring them here. We also still have a lot in Santa's sleigh to help deliver them."

"Well what are we waiting for?" asked the easter bunny. "Let's get started." They packed the rest of the baskets in Santa's sleigh and got to work. After they got back to the Easter Bunny's house, the Easter bunny gave them each a huge Chocolate bunny for their help.

"I want to thank you both for helping me. Without you, many kids would wake up to an empty easter basket and would be sad. I forgot what it was like to hide the eggs around their house knowing that they would wake up with a huge smile on their face and a giddy feeling in their stomachs. Thank you for getting me back in the spirit of Easter."

"Anytime." said the Tooth Fairy.

"What she said." said Santa with a yawn and getting up to go to the door. "Welp, I should get back to the North Pole and start making toys for Christmas so that this doesn't happen to me. Bye!"

“Bye!” The Easter Bunny yelled after him. The Tooth Fairy was right behind Santa.

“Bye! Thanks again!” He yelled after her.

She waved goodbye as he was closing the door. The Easter Bunny yawned and crawled into bed.

“Another successful Easter.” he muttered under his breath as he dozed off feeling well accomplished.

The End!



Judge's Comments:

What great storytelling! The characters are delightful and there is excellent use of dialogue and description. The action keeps going forward and there's a good pace. Love the Humour!

The Booths

By Emma Borca

There had been sunlight once.

Sunlight and... her head gave a sharp throb and she closed her eyes. When they fluttered open again, the thought was gone, as though it had slipped through a sieve.

She sat in the cold Booth. Icy metal walls closed her in. A sliver of gray light shifted through the square glass pane in the Booth's door. Time did not pass in the Booth. There was no sunlight. Sometimes, she wondered if there had ever been any.

She did not know how long it had been since the Outbreak. The terrible panic, the death toll rising to the billions, people collapsing, their eyes rimmed with reddish bruises, their mouths coated with blood. She was young, too young her parents said, to remember how dangerous the world had been before the Booths; before people communicated through glass Monitors embedded in the Booth's walls. She could not remember her parents' faces. Somewhere, beyond her Booth's confines, her parents, her older sister, were trapped in their own metal caskets. She spoke to them everyday, through the Monitors, but the distorted, elongated faces that pulsed back at her were unfamiliar. Only their voices still resembled them. Her mother had green eyes, she thought dully. But she could not be certain.

The Booths kept everyone safe, that much she had been told over and over again. It had been human contact, being outside of their confines, that had caused the Outbreak. Children had spread it with their innocent play, infecting their parents who in turn infected their friends and neighbors. Soon, it became clear: people were only safe within the Booths' confines.

There was a ping from the speakers above her, and a harsh blue light cut through the gray. A slot opened in the Booth's wall. A tray slid through, weighed down by her meal for the day.

She no longer grimaced at the gray slop. No longer struggled to swallow the three purple pills, wincing as they stabbed into her throat. The pills had become routine in the world Now. She consumed them in one, fluid move. She knew her parents and sister were doing the same.

They landed in her stomach like stones. Her chest lurched with nausea. Her thoughts grew blurry. The pills brought a thoughtless state. They erased the desperation clawing at her heart, wiped away the doubts trickling into her mind. She felt calm again. For a moment, thoughts of the Outbreak had almost disturbed her. Now, her heavy eyes fell closed and a feeling of peace settled over her.

Sleep was dull and blank. There were no dreams, only heavy darkness. When she opened her eyes, nothing had changed in her Booth but the lighting. There was a red glow cast around her. She thought it was meant to represent sunrise. Sunrise? A brief, brilliant image of a colour-streaked sky entered her thoughts. Her head gave a harsh thump and the image evaporated like everything else.

Reprieve came at an unknown time. Another slot slid open in another wall. She stood on trembling legs. She knew how sickly she looked. The glossy black screen of the Monitor served as a mirror. She was deathly pale from the lack of sunlight. Her legs were thin and shaky, her ribs and shoulder-blades protruding sharply from a translucent layer of skin. The pills were meant to keep her healthy. She found another one in the slot. Its purple coating glistened. She swallowed it and dressed for Reprieve. She had learned by now how to wriggle into the thick

bodysuit that hugged her small body whenever she was allowed out of the Booth. She stretched on thick, fleshy gloves and jammed a helmet with an opaque visor over her head.

There was a hiss as her Booth's door opened. She stepped out. She had no sense of direction. Her sight, smell, and hearing were all obscured by the helmet. Her parents could have been standing next to her and she would not have noticed. Except she knew they were not. Her parents and sister had never left the confines of their Booths since they had entered them. They were too scared of the Outbreak.

She stood for a few minutes, outside her Booth but still trapped in darkness. That never changed. With a sigh stolen by her helmet, she backed into her Booth. The door slid shut.

A small part of her, a thin whispery voice, poured dangerous doubts into her mind. Doubts that brought fresh, sickly pain to her head as she fought to grasp them. She had doubted from the beginning. Doubted the Outbreak, doubted the Booths, doubted the Monitors. But she had never voiced her thoughts aloud. Nor had she had anyone to voice them to. They were dangerous thoughts, the kind of thinking that had caused the Outbreak and let it spread so far across the world. It was the thinking of the world Then. The world Now was improved, advanced, safe.

Her next meal arrived after another unknown interval. The same tray, same slop, same pills. The same fluid motion as she slid the shiny purple pills into her mouth. Its job done, the tray retracted.

She felt the hard pills stick below her tongue. She could not swallow them, or perhaps she did not want to. She ducked her head and spit them into her palm. They lay there, tiny and round and

glistening. As though awakening from a deep slumber, her heartbeat began to thud faintly in her ears.

She would not swallow them.

Would she become infected with the Outbreak?

It did not matter. Her existence in the Booth was endless and silent, the sort of silence that absorbed the air around it. *Is it any different than death?*

She shut her eyes, as though at peace from the pills effects. To her dull surprise, she drifted off instantly, despite the blood rushing through her.

She dreamt. For the first time since she had stepped foot into the Booth.

When she gained consciousness, it was with a slow, queasy start. Her dreams – had they really existed? – disintegrated.

There was a beep to her left, from the wide Monitor embedded in the Booth's wall. She stood slowly and walked towards it. Her heart thudded. The moment she was squarely in front of it, it glowed to light. Three faces stared hollowly back at her, each trapped in a different Booth. A chill crept down her spine as she regarded her family. Their faces were disproportionately stretched, turning their cheeks into bottomless pits and their eyes into hollow sockets. They avoided her gaze, as though simply staring at her eyes could infect them. Her sister spoke first, though she only recognized her by the flapping of one of the monstrous figures jaws. The voice was droning. She felt her heart tremble, for it was not a voice she recognized despite its coming from her sister.

“Citizen 33, you have displayed signs of infection. For your safety, and everyone else’s in the vicinity, please remain within your Booth while escorts are dispatched to help you. You will soon receive medical attention. Once again, please remain within your Booth.”

The Monitor flickered shut. Her own face stared back at her. Sharp and angled with sunken eyes - eyes peppered by reddish bruises. She coughed and raised a hand to her mouth. Her throat stung. When she looked down, blood ran over her palm in thin rivulets. She looked at it uncomprehendingly. Horror, revulsion, terror filled her mind. Was it all because she had not taken the pill? A scream built inside of her. The sound of it frightened her. It was raw and hoarse. Desperate.

She continued to scream, to sob, to claw at her bruised eyes. She should have taken the pill, should have trusted the confines of her Booth. A door hissed open. Men in bodysuits poured in. They wore opaque helmets and fleshy gloves. One of them advanced, armed with a syringe. The tube glistened with a purple fluid, like the pills. She shrieked as they dug the needle into her arm, fought against the men who wanted to drag her out of the safety of her Booth. The metal chamber had kept her safe. It was her own doubts that had infected her.

The fluid in the syringe took effect instantly. Her mind emptied and her body sagged. The memory of the Outbreak was once again only distant. The blood on her hand lay forgotten.

Two men took her by the arms. They began to lead her out of the Booth, and she let them, trailing obediently behind them. They will help me, she thought. Soon, I will be cured. Hope, faded and gray with the effects of the syringe, seized her.

She almost reached the door.

Her knees buckled, dragging her to the floor.

The girl, a meek pile of skin and bones, did not move again.

A droning voice pierced the silence.

“Citizen 33 successfully terminated.”

