

*Welcome*

## WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?

The title of this short message is not merely a catchy phrase that I dreamed up for effect. I am very serious when I ask, "What did you expect when you joined the Order of the Eastern Star and what really induced you to present your petition for membership?"

Before I begin the body of this message, I'd like to preface it with a story - a serious story with a moral and with some humor. It has to do with being a Mason but since our Order is so closely related to this great fraternity, I believe you will see how it fits into our picture. I wish to give credit to Mr. Elbert Bede, Past Master of a lodge in Oregon, for this story.

"A young man passed a pawnbroker's shop. The money lender was standing in front of his shop, and the young man noted that he was wearing a large and beautiful Masonic emblem. After going on a whole block, apparently lost in thought, the young man turned back, stepped up to the pawnbroker, and addressed him: 'I see you're wearing a Masonic emblem. I'm a Freemason, too. It happens that I'm desperately in need of \$25.00 just now. I shall be able to repay it within ten days. You don't know me; but I wonder whether the fact that you are a Freemason and that I am a Freemason is sufficient to induce you to lend me the money on my personal note.'

The pawnbroker mentally appraised the young man, who was clean-cut, neat and well-dressed. After a moment's thought, he agreed to make the loan on the strength of the young man's being a Freemason. The two went into the pawn shop, where the young man signed a note and received the \$25.00, and then went his way. Within a few days the young man repaid the loan as agreed, and that ended the transaction.

About four months later the young man was in a Lodge receiving the Entered Apprentice degree; he had not really been a Mason when he had borrowed the \$25.00 from the pawnbroker. After he had been admitted for the second section of the degree and placed where all candidates are placed, the young man looked across the Lodge room and noted sitting there the pawnbroker from whom he had borrowed \$25.00 several months before, on the strength of his being a Freemason. His face turned crimson and he became nervous and jittery. He recollected the admonition he had just received from the Master and he was bothered. He wondered whether he had been recognized by the pawnbroker. Apparently not, so he planned at the first opportunity to leave the Lodge room and avoid his benefactor. The lecture and charge were probably lost on him. As soon as the Lodge was closed, he moved quickly for the door of the Tyler's room, but the pawnbroker had recognized the young man, headed him off west of the altar and, to the young man's astonishment, approached him and greeted him with a smile and outstretched hand.

"Well, I see you weren't a Freemason after all when you borrowed that \$25.00," the pawnbroker commented.

The blood rushed to the young man's face as he stammered, No, I wasn't, but I wish you'd let me explain. I had always heard that Freemasons were charitable and ready to aid a Brother in distress. When I passed your shop that day, I didn't need that \$25.00. I had plenty of money in my wallet, but when I saw the Masonic emblem you were wearing, I decided to find out whether the things I'd heard about Freemasonry were true. You let me have the money on the strength of my being a Freemason, so I concluded that what I had heard about Masons was true, that they are charitable, that they do aid Brethren in distress. That made such a deep impression on me that I presented my petition to this Lodge and here I am. I trust that, with this explanation, you will forgive me for having lied to you."

The pawnbroker responded, "Don't let that worry you too much. I wasn't a Freemason when I let you have the money. I had no business wearing the Masonic emblem you saw. Another man had just borrowed some money on it, and it was so pretty that I put it on my lapel for a few minutes. I took it off the moment you left. I didn't want anybody else borrowing money on the strength of my being a Freemason. When you asked for that \$25.00, I remembered what I had heard about Masons; that they were honest, upright, and cared for their obligations promptly. It seemed to me that \$25.00 wouldn't be too much to lose to learn if what I'd heard about Freemasons was really true, so I loaned you the money and you repaid it exactly as you said you would. That convinced me that what I'd heard about the Masons was true, so I presented my petition to this Lodge. I was the candidate just ahead of you."

I doubt whether any of you have had such a pointed experience as these men. Again, I would ask, "What did you expect?"

In general, weren't we each prompted by things we had heard about our Order from friends, business acquaintances, and relatives? George Washington once said that he was led to petition Freemasonry because he had noted that the noblest men of Virginia were members of the Fraternity, and because of the favorable opinion formed through contacts with those men. Our Order is judged by what others hear and read about it and our members come to us because of actions which seem to prove that what is said about us is true.

Again, I ask you, "What did you expect?" Further questioning, "Did you find what you had been led to believe was true of Eastern Star members? Are they kind, forbearing, patient, friendly, tolerant, compassionate, loving and humble in their associations with each other and their neighbors? Are they upright, honest, and ever ready to lend a helping hand to those afflicted and less fortunate than themselves? What did you expect?"

"The real essence of the Fraternal Spirit is to be ever mindful of the welfare of others, to bring cheer and gladness into others' lives, so let us put heart and soul into every handclasp, greet each other as sisters and brothers and enjoy life with each other."  
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