

'What's the long face for?'

'Nothing'

'Don't give me that son, I'm your Father. You can't lie to me, I know everything about you'

'And everyone and everything else as well'

'Well I've been around a bit, so it's only natural I should have acquired a little knowledge on my travels. Now come on tell me, what's up?'

'I'm a bit depressed'

'Not again. What's the matter with you, it's your birthday?'

'That's just it'

'What?'

'I'm getting old'

'We're all getting old son'

'But it's not as much fun anymore, not like when I was a teenager'

'Trust me son, they weren't such good times. That group of lads you hung about with were nothing but trouble; a bunch of no good backstabbers.'

'But they were my friends'

'Friends? What kinds of friends doubt you? What kinds of friends turn you over to the authorities? I tell you, if they weren't such wasters I'd crucify them myself for the way they treated you. Anyway, now's not the time for getting nostalgic. It's time to look to the future'

'It still doesn't change the fact that I'm getting past it?'

'Jesus Christ will you listen to yourself. Anyone would think you were over the hill. You're only 2003 years old for goodness sake.'

Jesus felt guilty for His bout of self indulgence and to try and feel a little better about himself He diverted a tornado which had been heading inland, back towards the sea. Saving 139 human lives, 86 family pets and numerous other organisms down the food chain may not have been much in comparison to miracles past but it was better than nothing. Or so He convinced himself.

'You think you're old, think how I feel?' retorted God, starting to feel a little depressed Himself. It was an unfortunate genetic trait.

'How old are You, by the way?' inquired Jesus. But God pretended He hadn't heard to avoid the question. This annoyed Jesus. It was hard to believe that the one Supreme Being, Master and Creator of the Universe and general Meta-narrative of Human Consciousness could be slight of hearing given His curriculum vita. Unfortunately He wasn't allowed to confront Him about this as one of His house rules was complete faith in His Word only, and to question It would be impertinent.

God decided to answer His Son's question with another question. It was a bad habit He thought He'd rid Himself of on invention of politicians.

'If I told you how old I was you wouldn't believe Me.'

'But I'd have to or else You wouldn't exist'

'True' said God but still refused to give an answer. This was partly His prerogative and partly because He knew better than anyone that a little mystery kept people suitably intrigued.

'The answers inside you' whispered God, grinning at His ability to cryptically dumbfound anyone who asked for advice.

Jesus stormed off into an ether room. His Father could be an arrogant son of a...whatever. He momentarily considered taking His spite out on a man from Aspley by hiding his house keys so that he would scream in anger and frustration, thus conveying mortally, how He felt himself- but decided against it. He had done it to him 80 times already this year and it was starting to get boring. Instead He removed the keypad lock from his mobile phone so that he kept dialling up people by mistake. It was fun watching him think he was starting to hear voices, especially given that he already thought his memory was going on account of always losing his keys.

Jesus couldn't avoid His Father for long; such was the misfortune of living with an omnipresent being who was everywhere, and at all times.

'Jesus, will you please stop picking on that lad from Aspley. I didn't waste my time building you a universe just so that you can concentrate on one little part.'

'But...'

'There are no buts in Heaven'

'Yes Father.'

Jesus realised He'd have got on better with His Father if He'd been more ordinary, say like a saint or something. But He wasn't. Instead He could knock out a universe in six days. It placed a lot of pressure on their relationship and bonding had been put on hold as He was always off creating life somewhere when He should have been home. It was all very well being the heir to divinity but as His Father was immortal He was never going to die and therefore He would never inherit anything. Instead He'd had to sit around for the last 2003 years listening to him go on about each new ray of light He'd created and how many people prayed to him in one evening. It was starting to get him down.

'God...'

'Please, call me Father'

'Father, I'm so bored. There's nothing to do in Heaven.'

'Look why don't you open your presents. That might cheer you up'

Jesus begrudgingly took him up on the request, not because He wanted to but because He was the almighty being and therefore He had to. Once again though, He'd been almightily predictable with His gifts.

'You got me this last year'

'But it's different. Look closely.'

'Oh yeah; Sorry. You've given me the cure for AIDS. Last year you gave me a cure for one of the cancers'

'Exactly'

'But that's all You ever give me, bloody miracles. I'm sick of them. I've got a whole draw full which I haven't even used yet. No sooner do You give me a cure for some medical condition than You create a new ailment.'

'Supply and demand, my boy. That's the key to running a successful universe.'

Jesus found it somewhat perverse that a mystical being could be so logical, but now was not the time to confront him about His market economics as He was off on one.

'Sometimes you're so ungrateful. You should thank your lucky stars, planets and solar systems that you get anything at all. Do you know how much it costs to run a universe?'

Jesus clenched His mouth shut in frustration.

'I can hear everything you're thinking' said God, whose raised voice reverberated around the sky, causing an avalanche in the French Alps and the destruction of a small village in the process. This was why He insisted upon peace and harmony. It was all very well being the most powerful family in the cosmos but when your every action has a direct effect upon the rest of civilisation, one had to be incredibly careful about the way in which one behaved.

God pointed at the mess 'Now look what you've made me do.'

'I haven't made You do anything. You're the one Supreme Being, Master and Creator of the Universe, general Meta-narrative of Human Consciousness. Don't blame me'

God took a deep breath and was careful not to exhale because of the potential consequences. His son was obviously going through some kind of transitional stage as children of His age do. 'And when are you going to get your hair cut? Any self respecting messiah needs to lead by example.' God may have been responsible for Genesis but when it came to parenting He was no different to anyone else, believing that physical appearance was the root cause of what was instead emotional and intellectual independence. But there was no stopping him now. Just as He had built a universe in six days so to 'that hair' quickly built up in him a repressed dissatisfaction.

'You don't appreciate anything. You don't realise how much I've done for you, and the rest of the universe. It's not easy raising a child as a single omnipotent being.'

Jesus wanted to point out that it was He who had been crucified and therefore it was He who was meant to play the role of martyr, but like all obsessive-compulsives God had to be in control of the situation which was a frequent occupational hazard. Living with the most successful being imaginable was hard work and probably explained why He felt so depressed on His 2003rd birthday. However, as He had been created like everybody else as a manifestation of God's word He had to sit and take it and enjoy the little power He did have. He may have been banned from deliberately causing natural disasters but He wasn't banned from making innocent contact with individual human beings and with that, as God pontificated away, He hid the house keys from the man in Aspley for the 81st time that year, in addition to breaking his microwave so that he couldn't reheat his dinner when he got home late from work. It wasn't much in the grand scale of things, but then birthdays never quite live up to expectations.