

**The History Lesson**  
**By Catherine Jennings**

“Your Majesty, a moment of your time!” shouted Jack, one of the king’s advisors.

The king sighed. Jack had been working on something that he said would convince the king that they needed to supposedly reform the country. “Yes, Jack, what is it?”

“Your Majesty, I’ve finished the time machine!”

“The what?”

“The time machine! Your Majesty, just let me show it to you, it will be worth your time.”

“Fine, Jack, whatever; I do have a meeting with the council soon so make it quick.”

Jack guided the king down into the very depths of the castle. At the bottom of the staircase was a long, dark hallway and at the end of it was a huge room. In the center of it was a machine. It looked somewhat like a rocket, with a narrow, streamlined shape.

“Your Majesty, may I present the time machine,” Jack hopped right on up into the cockpit, pushed a few buttons and flipped a few switches and the time machine began to levitate off the ground. “Do you want to test it out?”

“Why not?” the king said resignedly, but he had to admit that he was intrigued. He hopped into the machine and then, a bright light filled the room and suddenly they were flying over a large city filled with little white buildings and on top of a large hill was a huge temple overlooking it.

“Where have you brought me, Jack?” asked the king. He was spellbound by the beautiful city below him that was so different from his own country.

“Your Majesty, this ancient Greece, the center of learning and many other things in the ancient world. It influenced the world until long after its own fall,” Bronx replied.

They landed on the hill above the city where stood the Acropolis of Athens. The king marveled at the grandeur of the buildings around him. Nearby he saw a group of men crowded around an older man who seemed to be teaching them. The teacher spoke eloquently, and the king realized that he was listening to a great speaker. This man, as Jack had said, would inspire the world long after his death.

“Who is that?” the king asked.

“That is Socrates, one of the greatest philosophers of the ancient world.”

The king listened to Socrates, spellbound by his words. Never before had he heard someone speak like him.

“Your Majesty,” Bronx gently urged the king back to the time machine, “there are many other places that I need to show you.”

They climbed into the huge time machine and soared up into the sky. There was another flash of light, and when the king looked below them, he saw below him a huge field where hundreds of soldiers stood at attention in neat files.

“Where are we now, Jack?”

“Your Majesty, we are now in Rome. Below us is one of the training grounds for the Roman legions.”

The king watched as the soldiers silently moved forward in disciplined ranks and then as they threw their long javelins at targets across the field. The soldiers then began to fight in earnest. They charged forward towards the targets and began to use their swords in the close combat. The soldiers were rotated out occasionally so that there were always fresh troops at the front lines. They all fought silently, which was unnerving to the king who was thinking how terrible such a force as Rome’s would be against his own army.

“Bronx, these soldiers, how do they do it?”

“Your Majesty, they are such good fighters because of their tactics. Their *gladii* are perfect weapons for close combat. They might not all be good swordsmen, but they fight behind a shield wall, making a dangerous fighting machine, but there is one more thing I want to show you.” Bronx hit a few buttons, flipped a few switches, and then pulled a lever. Flashing lights filled the machine, and they were going faster than the speed of light.

“I wished this machine would go a little slower,” mumbled the king.

Far below them they saw a huge mountain of stone. The monument was surrounded by the desert on all sides. At the base of it were more huge blocks of stone being dragged by a hundred men, possibly more, up huge ramps.

“What is *that*?”

“That is the Great Pyramid of Giza, each of those stones are a couple tons.”

“Tons?”

“Yep, and about 2.3 million blocks were used in its construction.”

“What are they for?”

“They are tombs for the pharaohs or kings. Their mummies were buried in those pyramids along with treasure or anything else that the Egyptians thought they might need in the afterlife. Those pyramids would last for thousands of years until the Egyptians would be almost forgotten by the world. And so, your Majesty, what do you think of all this?”

“I think,” the king said slowly, “that you and I have a lot of work to do.”

Later, when the two returned to the palace, the king looked out upon his own city. He saw the old buildings and thought of the pyramid and how Jack said it would stand for thousands of years. He thought of the Greek philosophers and the Roman armies and how they would change the world.

“We really do have a lot of work to do.”