

Where They Belong

Nikola Tesla was a famous inventor in the late 18th century and the early 19th century. Throughout his lifetime, he filled 80 trunks with his ideas, thoughts, and inventions. Around the time of his death, 20 of his trunks went missing. The mystery to this day is where did they go? Today we find out what happened to one of the missing trunks.

Denver, CO 1905

Two women dressed in all black let out a breath as the door creaked open. They quietly slipped out of the red halls of the hotel, tiptoed into the suite, and closed the door behind them. One of them glanced around the room quickly. It was a mess. With the little sunlight in the room, the once white walls had come gray. Dust covered the papers and clothes that were strewn everywhere. A thin man lay on the king-size bed. The two women quickly crept by the sleeping man and over to the mess he had created. By the stacks of paper and pencils were a pile of large, locked trunks. The two women carefully glanced over the trunks. After a minute of deliberation, they grabbed one and shuffled out of the bedroom and into the man's office. They looked at each other, stunned. One of them laughed, "After six years!" The other gasped and hugged the trunk, "Oh, I still remember that day so long ago..."

Six Years Earlier in Colorado Springs

The year was 1899, and Mabel Smith and Florence Forest had both turned 19 in the month of April. These girls were not twins but were twins at heart. They filled their days with each other's company, going off to their secret meadow and writing. Mabel and Florence were born in the wrong century. They didn't want to marry or be wives. They wanted to write and go on adventures together. When they were fifteen, they had read about Susan B. Anthony's speech

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on women's right to vote, and since then, Mabel and Florence have been feminists. They always daydreamed about living in a time period where women had rights and were more than just stay-at-home mothers.

One fateful day in March, they were off to their meadow taking stolen parchment and quills in their pouch that was supposedly filled with sewing. Nobody but they knew about their meadow. Secrets were told there, thoughts shared, and the most rebellious ideas were created. Until that day.

"I'd like to be an author," Florence said thoughtfully.

"You could write a novel!" Mabel daydreamed, "But what would our mothers think?" I'd have to travel to a different time period to write a book because god forbid a woman do anything other than cook and clean."

And Florence said pointedly, "And I'd come with you and write songs." Thinking about their new made-up lives made the overly ebullient Mabel tripped over a root. Always in control, Florence was never judgmental of Mabel's tendencies toward overexcitement and gave Mabel her hand. Mabel was chunky, short-built, and only 5' 1". She had shiny, crimson hair that lay to her stomach. Her face, littered with freckles, smiled up at Florence and sang, "Thank you."

Florence grinned down at her friend. Being that she was tall and willowy, she leaned down and whispered into Mabel's ear, "Let's hurry up. I've had an idea." They continued on, only to stop when Florence put down the picnic basket to put her shoulder-length brown hair into a ponytail and blow her bangs out of her sweaty face.

Florence's crooked teeth grinned when they started to see light shining through the trees. When Mabel reached the opening, she stepped back and clutched Florence's arm.

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Mabel cried, “Someone found our spot!!”

Florence dropped the bag and flung herself to the opening. Mabel followed. The once beautiful meadow was occupied by a tent-like structure with a massive golden sphere on the top and antennas were set up everywhere. “Who did this?” Mabel said gloomily.

“I know who.” Mabel’s eyes followed Florence’s finger until it ended on a man laying across the grass, *their* grass, writing in a notebook.

Mabel wailed, “ What on earth are we going to do now?”

One Month Later

Mabel and Florence were despondent, and nobody knew why. Everyone had been fussing over the tremendous new inventor Nikola Tesla that had moved to their town. Nikola Tesla was a fine man in his 40’s. Everyone liked the prospect of Tesla coming to Colorado Springs. There was talk of his genius, eccentricities, and experiments. People hoped that his coming would attract tourists. Nobody knew what Tesla was working on or why Colorado Springs, but they didn’t care a bit. But Mabel and Florence were quite concerned with Tesla coming to Colorado and stealing *their* meadow. Where would they go to fill their days?

One day the girls decided to confront Tesla about his stealing. They fumed on the walk back to *their* meadow, “How could he! Why there?”

They finally reached the opening. They watched Tesla walk into his tent, leaving a book behind on the grass. Mabel glanced at Florence, “ He is practically asking us to steal his notebook.”

“Mabel!” Florence said, shocked.

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“Come on! It is just one silly notebook.”

“That’s true,” Florence signed, crossing her arms over her pale blue corset. But before she could speak further, Mabel, totally forgetting about confronting Tesla, ran into the field and over to the notebook. Mabel swiped the book off the ground and quickly scanned through it while Florence looked over her shoulder. At a quick glance, the notebook contained primarily esoteric inventions that just went over the girl’s heads. But one invention caught their eye, and when Mabel dropped the journal and shrieked (making Florence practically choke her so Tesla wouldn’t hear), they knew they had hit gold.

“Once Tesla makes that invention in the notebook, we need to steal it in any way possible,” Mabel said, jumping up and down and doing cartwheels in the field near her house until she was so dizzy she passed out. Florence was quite used to Mabel’s crazy energy, so when Mabel passed out, she just poured lemonade on her and continued to read her book.

Denver Colorado, 1905

Nikola Tesla’s fame as an inventor had grown exponentially in a short amount of time. He has been living his life peacefully in Denver, Colorado.

One fine day Mabel and Florence were on their way to listen to one of Tesla’s speeches. They weaved through the streets of Denver until they reached a royal-looking building where the speech was.

Mabel and Florence walked into the room with their black gowns and sat. “Hopefully, this doesn’t take too long,” Florence said anxiously.

“Calm down. We’re only here to go through with the plan,” Mabel grinned.

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The lights dimmed, the curtains opened, and there stood Tesla. He started speaking, “Thank you all for coming today. As some of you may know, I believe that the world around us can power our lives. In Colorado Springs, I successfully found that we can wirelessly communicate over long-distance only using the air around us. I also found a way to travel that isn’t around the world. You might find this intriguing.”

After the speech, the girls lounged at the doors, waiting to corner Tesla. Once they saw he was able to slip away, they blocked the doors and breathed, “Oh, Mr. Tesla, the speech was fantastic! It’s freezing and dark outside, and we live nearby. Would you do us a favor and walk us to our apartment?” And, of course, how could he refuse?

Obviously, Mabel and Florence were capable of walking by themselves. They had a plan devised. Florence knew that Tesla only slept two hours a night. They hoped that after a speech and long walk, he would sleep more than his usual two hours that night. It was necessary, seeing that the girls were going to break in and steal the invention once and for all.

After they stole the trunk, they left Tesla, the thin man lying on his king-size bed, and rushed into his empty office. Florence opened the trunk’s latches. After quickly reading the notebook, she pressed a button inside the trunk, and golden light filled the room. With a pop, the room was bare again.

January 7th, 2022 Leadville, CO Library

Mabel and Florence clutched each other excitedly, “It worked! The invention worked!” Mabel screamed. “It was worth it!” Florence gushed. They had done it. They had escaped the

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20th century, where they had to be married, cook, and clean. They were now in the 21st century, where they could read and write freely. And have the most freedom in the world.

They quietly walked into the library's lecture hall and read the sign: *Nikola Tesla and the Disappearance of His Missing Trunks*. They both looked at each other and giggled.