



A Michaelmas Story

Courage in the Dark

By Jennifer Ross



**Daily
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Courage in the Dark

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Darkness was everywhere. The sky was a cold, dark grey, and the streets were lonely and scary. People were hurrying about, trying to get home to burn the candle they had for the two minutes they were allowed to each day.

There were rules, and they had to obey them. Not only that, but they would not get another candle for a month, so they had to save the one they had and cherish the light when it was lit. The rest of the time, the people in the house would sit together in the dark and remember when the light was brighter.

Why was it so dark these days?

Their lives were so different now. In the old days, people would play in the sunshine, dance on the beach, go out with friends and family, and eat by candlelight for hours.

Now they had this one tiny candle and all these rules. How did it all begin?

It began the day the dark cloud passed over the sun and never moved. People began to forget that the sun had once shone brightly and courageously. The earth was colder now and greyer than ever before.

For the George family, the saddest part about all this was that most people forgot that the sun had ever shone brightly. They began to think that the earth had always been grey and cold. And as for the babies born now, they grew up in the dark. They never knew life any other way.

Children's skin was pale and thin now. There were no vegetables or fruits to eat, so everyone lacked the proper nutrients. No one knew what to do. They just kept going about their daily activities.

But not the George family. They would sing songs at night as they sat around their candle. They would sing songs about the light, and together, the songs would take them to a different place. Even when the two minutes were up, and they had to blow the candle out and sit in the dark, they would continue to sing their songs for another hour, and it would help them remember the light and how they felt when the earth was warm and bright.

Why did it change?

Was it the dragon that had cursed the earth and made everything dark? Was the greedy king stealing the sun's heat to make himself warmer and richer? There were all kinds of rumours, and no one knew for sure. The George family seemed determined to remember the old days, so they always told their son and daughter about the times when they were young, and they would play in the sunshine, watch the sunset over the water, make fires at night, and sing. And so, the family would sing, "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine," over and over and over, and the son and daughter had a faint feeling of what it must have been like in the days before the dark cloud was cast over the earth. They could feel that the singing warmed them inside and made them feel brighter even when it was dark and cold.

That night, both children had dreams. A being visited their dreams, a being that seemed like an angel of light. The children could feel a strong, wise presence, and the being was indeed an angel, one of the highest angels in heaven.

"Keep singing, and the light from inside will spread out to the world. No matter who controls the earth, they can't control what you feel inside. Keep singing."

In the morning, the boy and girl both mentioned their dreams to each other and were astonished to discover that they had received the same message. The boy went to the bookshop, and in the dim of the day, he searched book after book, looking at drawings of angels to see if he recognized the one from his dream. The bookkeeper said he should stop searching, as looking at these books was a waste of time. The boy ignored him and kept searching. Finally, there it was, the most prominent picture in one of the most minor books, the angel from his dream, St. Michael. Light filled the page, and the boy felt instantly warmed.

Time was out, and he had to go home, but he felt the power of his dream spread through him. That night, he spoke with his sister, mother, and father late into the night, late into the darkness. They spoke of their dreams, of their visions of St. Michael. Father said that St. Michael was God's strongest and bravest knight and that he fought evil wherever it threatened to strike. It made sense to them that St. Michael would send them such an important message. They had to shine brighter in the darkest of times; it was the only way forward.

The children felt they needed to tell others of their new understanding. They began inviting others over to sing with them at night. Groups of children would join them and sing "This Little Light of Mine" and other songs about St. Michael. They would sing and sing, and their hearts would be filled with light.

When the other children went home, their parents could feel the light and warmth emanating from their children, even in the darkness. Soon, the parents joined the singers in the evening, and the group got larger and larger.

One night, while they slept, another vision came to the boy and girl. It was St. Michael, and as clear as could be, he said to them, “The earth is dark because people have lost faith in God, in the Great Spirit everywhere, but now I see that faith is coming back to the earth, and your group of singers is bringing the warmth and light back to earth. I will tell God, and he will be proud of all of you. Keep singing.”

The group continued to grow in numbers, and one night, as they sang, a lonely wanderer lurked outside their house. In the days of darkness, some humans turned even more deeply toward the dark. In these cases, greed and cruelty took over. This particular man was one of those beings. As the house was filled with singing, he sat outside and threw rocks at the windows.

Crash!! The singers were jolted out of their joy. “What was that?”

Crash, Crash Crash!! Some of the children went to the window to see what was happening and immediately saw the culprit standing dimly in the night.

Crash, Crash, Crash, came the rocks at the windows.

The children wondered what they should do. They asked each other, and then they said,

“What would St. Michael do?”

After all, he was the bravest and most courageous, and he would encourage the best in everyone. So, the brother and sister walked outside and smiled with all their hearts at this unhappy man. They opened their arms in a gesture of welcome and said,

“Please join us in singing.”

The man looked hesitant and scared. “Please,” they said, “Ease your mind and join us for a song, share in our joy.”

This dark and angry man walked into the home and immediately felt lighter within. He felt hope and possibility for the first time he could ever remember. Even though it was still dark, he felt light. He sat down and listened to the music, and soon enough, he, too, was singing. He couldn’t help it.

They sang all night long, and the clock showed early morning by the time they were finished. The fantastic thing is that they were all still energized.

The brother and sister walked towards the door to say goodbye to everyone, and they were astonished to see a glow on the horizon.

“What is that?” Asked the boy and girl of their parents.

All the children had heard stories about the sun but had never seen it. It was more beautiful than anything their parents could describe to them.

“Is that the sun?” they asked in unison.

Tears filled their parents’ eyes.

“Yes!” they whispered. “Faith, love, and tending to our inner light have brought us out of the darkness.

They all stepped outside to experience the rising sun.

“This is a new dawn, truly, for everyone.”
