

## Saint Michael the Immortal

*And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.*

*Book of Revelation- 12:7-8*

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It was the land of Isles, in a time before the invention of mosquito repellent, and two figures sat near a small camp they had made for the night.

“I touched his face after invoking His name, and molded his image to fit that of fat Gorlois of Cornwall. The head of dragons, mighty Sir Uther himself, hobbled off as fast as his newly stunted legs could carry him to get at the woman he sought: Lady Igraine. I clothed him in the only disguise that could see him past the guards and into her bed: that of their very own master and her husband, the Duke!”

The young man tilted his head back to down another mug of meade before continuing.

“And that, dear Nimue, is the true story of Lord Arthur’s birth!”

“Surely you jest Myrddin! But, if you simply must make up such a fanciful tale, at least you’ll tell me what happened next?”

“All right woman, but not before you refill this,” replied the ninety-something year old, holding aloft a wood carved mug in hands that appeared to be thirty.

“You drive a hard bargain, but this time I’ll cede,” and she took his cup, crossing the moonlit, forest clearing to the ass that carried all of their earthly belongings.

“Here you go, a not-at-all empty cup for a not-at-all bad liar!” She pronounced, before settling her tender frame in his lap, and her hands, enticingly around his neck. “Now, get on with the tale!”

“Well, truth be told, there’s not much more to it. Sir Uther died years later, and, in the end, I raised the boy to be a king in the right fashion...”

*“I’ll bet old Lucy liked that, his very own chosen host, brought up under a cross and baptized before he knew it!”* Boomed the Voice, though only Myrddin could hear it, and all too loudly at that.

“You damn it! Could you be a little louder?”

*“Well you don’t have to be sacrilegious about it, I was just a bit excited,”* replied the now slightly more quietly booming Voice.

“But I didn’t say a thing!” Came the young woman’s voice, not booming inside Myrddin’s head, but from a very comfortable distance in front of his face, about where he would expect a female voice to come from if the lady in question was a very attractive five foot eight and sitting in his lap. This was, of course, the very situation Myrddin remembered he was in, as he brought his mind back to matters slightly more down to earth.

“Oh... sorry then, I thought you had...”

“Silly, first trying to make me believe you’re older than my father, and now you’re hearing voices. What next?”

“Well, we’ll never find out unless we get on with the night, now will we?” Myrddin tired to stand up and lead her to their tent as best he could, only to find that quite impossible, with her sitting in his lap. It only took a moment for the more than half-drunken well, half, of his mind to convince the other, slightly-less-drunk-but-still-sober-enough-to-want-not-to-get-dirty half that the forest floor wouldn’t be bad enough to warrant all the extra effort to actually get into the tent, and he kissed her on the spot.

“*Thou shalt not commit adul...*” The Voice boomed again.

“She’s not mar... mmmm...” Myrddin tried to reply, only to be cut off by another deep kiss.

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“*Wake up, wake up sleepy head! You’ve been drugged, and are almost dead!*” The Voice boomed, in a sing-song, almost cherry manner.

Myrddin came to, staring up into the forest clearing. He saw three of Nimue standing over him, appearing somewhat distorted. Wait... no... five. Actually, make that seven. Aww heck there were plenty of her. Plenty more of her than there should have been, in any case. \*picture 1\* He looked around with his now fragmented vision to see her pack up their camp, and ride the ass off, leaving him behind.

“You’re wrong, you know,” he thought, having no vocal cords to speak of anymore. “I’m not dead.”

“*Well of course, it’s not like you can die, I made sure of that a long time ago,*” came the booming Voice.

Myrddin sighed. Or, at least he tried to, before he remembered he didn’t have lungs anymore.

“*Had you not been so intent on sleeping with her you might have noticed the eye of newt she slipped into your meade. Or, you might have noticed the pentagram she inscribed around your body as you lay in the dirt. You might even have figured out what was up when she started chanting...*”

“Plenty of people chant...”

*“In tongues!”* The booming Voice continued, *“but no, sleep with her first, find out if she’s a servant of the Devil later. Brilliant idea. Now here you are.”*

“Yep, here I am. Uh, where, and what exactly, is here that I am?”

*“And you have bad grammar! I won’t answer the question until you state it in a sensible fashion.”*

“You damn it! Fine, what in the world am I?”

*“A bit testy today, aren’t we? But I did promise. All right, at the moment you seem to be a bit of sap on a tree.”*

“I don’t suppose you’d be willing to get me out of this...”

*“Actually, I wouldn’t. And don’t think you’ll make me change my mind by giving me those ‘in Your mercy’-eyes either. I think the stay could do your manners some good.”*

“Fine, at least tell me how long it’ll be this time.”

*“If you must know, it’ll be one hundred and sixty-eight years, seven months, eighteen days, and forty-two minutes, exactly.”*

“I don’t suppose you have anything better to attend to in the meantime?”

“Nope.”

“Not even saving someone’s mortal soul?”

*“Nothing I can’t get a few cherubim to handle. Besides, what good am I if I can’t even find time to spend with my favorite and most sinful servant?”*

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Two hundred years passed, and mosquito repellent still hadn’t been invented. At this, the mosquitoes were very grateful, Myrddin, now George of Cappadocia, was most decidedly not. He was, however, quite grateful for the rather large statue currently being built in his honor. Well, the statue was a plus, but those nightly banquets! Those were something! The constant gifts of gold and silver were pretty nice too. Actually, he couldn’t decide which he liked more, so he settled on liking them all.

“Bollan! Another cup of wine!” Myrddin, now George, called to the King’s advisor. The old man wasn’t used to such treatment, but in light of the circumstances, decided to obey the call.

*“You didn’t even try.”* Boomed the Voice in a most displeased manner.

“What do you mean I didn’t even try?”

*“You just killed him.”*

“Well, of course I did! He took the form of a dragon.”

*“And what about trying to redeem him? About forgiveness?”*

“But... but...”

*“Ah ha! Just as I knew, you didn’t care to think about it.”*

“But he was going to eat her!”

*“One immortal soul versus one very mortal and temporary life? Besides, she would have gone to heaven.”*

“But she was a princess! What did you want me to do, kindly ask the dragon to stop trying to eat her and turn a new leaf?”

“Yes.”

“Oh fer Christ’s sak...”

**“Don’t use my name in vain either.”** Boomed a slightly different Voice.

“You stay out of this!”

*“Then don’t use his name in vain, you heard him.”* Came the first booming Voice again.  
*“Besides, you just wanted to sleep with her.”*

“What? No!” George blurted out before pausing slightly, “so what if I did? She wasn’t married either!”

*“That’s no excuse. I should turn you into stone, or smite you almightily, but I think you’ve already earned your reward.”*

“What the heck are you talking about?” George asked right before he realized the King’s advisor was standing in front of him, full cup of wine in hand, staring.

“I heard you talking with demons! You’re a witch! You probably just cast a spell on us to make us believe you actually killed the dragon!” The visibly shocked advisor began yelling out.

“Look, man, they’re not demons, just,” this wasn’t going to come out well, it never did, “Voices. Booming Voices.” George began thinking quickly, trying to find a way to keep the disgruntled man from running off and getting him burned at the stake. What did he have that would interest an old aristocrat. George ran through the list in his mind: a statue, banquets, gold... “You damn it!”

“Heheheh...” chuckled the Voice, in a booming manner.

“Listen to me old man. I’m going to teach you about something very important to this new religion I’ve been talking about since I arrived. It’s called generosity. As in, I’ll show my generosity to you by giving you all this gold you see here, and you show your generosity to me by not telling anyone about what you just saw here. I don’t want to see any stakes! None, you hear me?”

The old man greedily looked around at the veritable treasure of riches strewn about, “Mmm... sounds good, but pledge it on your sword,” he demanded.

Easy enough. George thought about it for a moment before realizing he had left his sword by the dragon’s den. “Aww heck,” but at least he would make the old man come with him to go get it.

It took a bit of a ride, and a bit more searching for the blade once they got there, but eventually George found it. Then he realized he had never bothered to clean the dragon’s blood off, so he did that. Now there’s very little that sticks to a sword better than two-days old, dried dragon’s blood, so it was well into the night before George finally, sword in hand, went down on a knee and spoke the ancient words of binding... \*picture 3\*

“...and upon my honor, and glory, and might, and livelihood, and friendliness, and...”

Three exceedingly boring hours later and he had given all of his hard earned treasure to the old man in exchange for a little quiet.

“That ceremony was so your doing.”

*“Would I influence the development and social customs of an entire civilization just to bore you for a couple of hours?”*

“Yes.”

“Heheheh...” the Voice boomed, and rather continued booming for quite some time.

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Tired-Hawk sat in front of the campfire, watching the embers leap skyward.

“...peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they... they...”

“Insult you...”

“Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and...” Swift-Grasshopper paused for a moment, face contorted while trying to rack his memory.

“Go on...”

“Oh just tell me, Hawk that is Tired.”

“All right. Utter every kind...” the old man answered.

“Utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.” Swift-Grasshopper finished, intoning the last of this moon’s memorization.

“You know I am displeased at your mistakes.”

“Hawk that is Tired, I know, but...”

“But nothing, you have done well enough, and I know your heart is in the right place young Grasshopper that is Swift. You earn your marks this time, but don’t expect such generosity with the next passages.” Tired-Hawk took the rain stick from Swift-Grasshopper and etched another symbol in it with his knife, symbolizing one more memorized passage from the Holy Book. Then, to the far off sound of a coyote’s howl, he smiled, for he had taught the boy well, and when he had gone on, this boy would hold the tribe to his teachings.

*“See? There are non-violent ways of fighting old Lucy. I don’t want to say I told you so...”* the Voice paused, but it was a booming pause. *“Actually, I do. Nyah! I told you so, I told you so, I told you so!”*

Tired-Hawk just sighed, and brought his attention back to the man-child sitting in front of him, at least the Voice had stopped chuckling.

“Young Grasshopper that is Swift, you have learned well the ways of He-who-is. How many moons now until your day of the sun?”

“Six, Hawk that is Tired, then I will face the tests and become a man. Then I will choose a wife.”

Six months left then, such a short time to finish writing out the Holy Book Tired-Hawk owed his pupil in return for memorizing its passages. Tired-Hawk decided he had better get started on actually making the copy then.

“Very well Grasshopper, return now and sleep well, for evil things roam the desert at night, and I have work I must attend to.”

With that, Tired-Hawk left the campfire for Swift-Grasshopper to attend to, and climbed the creaking stick ladder that served as mode of entry into the sandstone cliff side dwelling he called home. \*picture 2\*

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It was his twentieth life in as many centuries.

He was tired. After two millennia serving under Him, who wouldn't be? It was an exhausting job, and it's not like the Adversary took any breaks. That's partially why he was a she this time around. Myrddin Emrys, turned George of Cappadocia, turned Tired-Hawk of the Niwahan Tribe, turned sixteen others was now Miss Ellie Thatcher, a simple immigrant woman who pulled fourteen-hour days at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company, alongside five hundred other women, at the intersection of Greene Street and Washington Place in New York City.

All he wanted was some time off. He hadn't seen evidence of anything big coming up from the Fallen One. Besides the work of his minions, old Lucy might not even have been around at all. It was with that thought in mind that Ellie came into work on March 25, in the year 1911, at 5 am.

As she walked up to the ninth floor where she worked, packed in cramped conditions with only a gaslight hanging overhead for illumination, she thought how lucky she was to be able to take a break from her real work. After all, how many fiendish plots could be afoot in the old ten-story building?

It wasn't until 3pm that day, after the fifteen minute lunch that she looked over her shoulder at the new girl to her left. That was when Ellie noticed her eyes. They were glowing. Red. Not just any red, mind you, but the most intense, hellfire-inspired, wants-to-burn-you-in-eternal-damnation-right-this-second red that you could possibly imagine. And then some.

So she tried to ignore her neighbor.

This lasted about half an hour.

Ellie finally gave in and turned to her neighbor, “Excuse me, but you just couldn't hide the eyes, could you?”

“What are you talking ab...” the brown-haired girl next to her started, “oh, it's you.” She finished, in an unearthly voice, one dripping with malevolence and just plain nastiness.

“You know, I just wanted a break,” Ellie heard from beside her.

“Yeah, me too, but you know the rules. The Mandate.”

“Yeah, I’m the Adversary, tempter of mankind, and sower of death, destruction, and bad smells throughout creation.”

“And I’m first among His servants, and fight you at every turn. Yeah. Now could you just do something evil already for me to oppose?”

“Look, I didn’t expect to be doing any evil today. I’m a little unprepared. I just wanted a break, you know, something relaxing, and since Hawaiian cruises won’t be invented for another hundred years, well, I was thinking we might be able to post-pone this?”

“What?” Ellie gasped in astonishment.

“You know, like take a raincheck. I know it’s stretching the rules, but He doesn’t need to find out, just this once.”

Now that Ellie thought about it that did sound like a pretty good idea. She could at least go back home and catch a nap before...

“*Don’t even think about it.*” Boomed the Voice.

“Oh, it’s you.” Ellie replied to Him.

“*Of course it’s me, I am only omnipresent too you know.*”

“Oh, right! Bah, how stupid of...”

“**He’s here, isn’t He?**” Commented the brown-haired girl.

“Yep, the one, the only.”

“**Well, not exactly the one, more like the one half.**” Boomed another Voice.

“One third, if you ask me,” helpfully chimed in the Holy Spirit to the scent of lavender. Ellie couldn’t understand why it was always lavender, he/she hated the stuff, but there was no deterring that Holy Spirit.

“*Hey, I’ll note that nobody actually asked you two about your opinions to begin with.*”

“Oh man, they’re all here now.”

“I guess we better get on with this then.”

“Yeah, sooner is better than later, you know how impatient they can be.”

The brown haired girl shrugged off her cloak and burst into flames. Well, not so much burst into flames as she caused everything around her to burst into flames, including her hair. As for her, most of her clothing was burned off except for some sort of tacky jumpsuit...

**“Hey! That was supposed to be Joseph’s Amazing Technicolor Dream-long-underwear. Dad, I didn’t know anyone was allowed into the late 1900’s yet!”**

...and the workers around Ellie ran for the stairwells through the already nearly-tangible heat, leaving the now flaming-haired girl floating in mid air for a moment \*picture 4\* before she vanished from sight as smoke filled the building.

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After the fire that claimed one hundred and forty six victims, Ellie took on the name Frances Perkins, and helped to turn the fire’s tragedy into a social reform movement that spawned numerous minimum-wage laws, the New Deal legislation, and ultimately, the Social Security Act of 1935.

*“Nice job.”*

“But he became a politician to do it...”

**“And it was a nice job anyway.”**

And Myrddin Emrys, aka George of Cappadocia, aka Tired-Hawk, aka Ellie Thatcher, aka Frances Perkins, aka a thousand others, or as he would prefer, just Michael (Saint Michael, if you insisted, and Saint Michael the Archangel if you really wanted to tick him off) lived somewhat, sort-of happily everafter.