

A Light in the Darkness



by

Karen Hedges

“Ooh, look!” squealed Maldwyn, excitedly, “the pearls have come out.”

Peter sighed and trundled over to where Maldwyn was perched on top of a chair looking out into the garden. His small friend used the oddest phrases at times. Words that bore no relation to what the object actually was. However, on this occasion, Maldwyn was spot on: the pearls were indeed ‘out’.

The two friends looked at each other with delighted grins as they enjoyed the first glimpse of spring in the form of tiny, nodding, snowdrops. They were indeed pearls in the darkness. Their appearance gave hope of better days to come and even the birds sounded livelier with the ever-lightening mornings.

“We’d better get ready,” suggested Peter, “it will soon be Candlemas Day itself.”

“Candlemas?”

“Yes,” explained Peter, “it is the anniversary of the day when Mary took baby Jesus to the Temple. Did you know it is already 40 days since Christmas Day and officially the end of Christmastide? And, what is more, it is about halfway to Spring – so it is a great time to have a celebration!”

Maldwyn loved celebrations. How would they celebrate Candlemas, he wondered? It should have been obvious and he laughed to himself when he saw Peter fetch a box of candles from the cupboard. But, what was the orange for though?

Peter put the orange in a shallow dish and stuck 5 candles in, “I don’t have any sweets so I’ll use sultanas instead of sweets on sticks to represent the four seasons with the fruits of the Earth.”

Finally, he cut some red ribbon to tie around the fruit, “this is to show Christ’s blood that he shed for the world.”

Maldwyn clapped his paws in delight. He scampered over to the cupboard and pushed out a box of matches towards Peter. Peter took out a match and carefully lit the Christingle. It looked beautiful! Maldwyn was mesmerized by the flickering light and hoped that everyone would enjoy brighter times ahead.

The two friends sat down to enjoy a slice of a tasty seed cake that Peter had made earlier that day.

“This afternoon we can plant those lettuce seeds you bought,” he said, inbetween mouthfuls, “and see if we can find some more snowdrops. It looks as though there are enough in our garden to pick one or two to put next to the Christingle. Did you know Candlemas is also the same day as Imbolc, the old spring festival of olden times? It is also a good time to start spring cleaning, getting ready for a fresh start. And in America, people look out for the first outing of Groundhogs – if one of these cute animals are seen, then spring is on the way over there.”

Maldwyn shook his head, “I thought new year was the time for fresh starts”.

“I think it can be any time,” his friend laughed, “personally I think Easter is a better time for fresh starts – when the church is full of flowers and the sun is warmer and the days are longer.”

Maldwyn agreed as he took another bite of seed cake. Seeds for Imbolc, an orange for Candlemas, and cake for either or both of them and a friend to share them with. Whatever the name, this second day of February was looking to be a good day.

