

Journey from Darkness
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I am motionless. Crushing darkness is all around. The air is thick, heavy, squeezing the air out of my lungs. I turn my head from side to side to see what surrounds me in this world of nothingness. I cannot move so I strain my ears to hear. The only sounds are angry scratching, growling and snapping. I imagine the sharp teeth and nails biting, encroaching on my space, reaching out. How did I get here? I cannot find a way out, there is nowhere to move. Was I dropped here from the air, or perhaps I have just materialized in my own personal hell with no hope of escape?

Then I hear something else. A voice, a whisper, a beautiful sound out of the night. "This way..." I turn my head to see, but still the darkness is still impenetrable. I can hear them now, more voices. "Here is the path." I know the direction, but to move. My legs are leaden, frozen, so heavy. More voices: "I see you, this is the way, babysteps." And so I lift my leg and turn my body. Eternity passes... my first step and I feel the solid ground under my foot. The voices are there, louder now. Next, I try to move again, take another step. It is easier now, as if the momentum has given my body new strength and purpose. There is a path, but it is not smooth. Rocks, trees and holes impede my journey. The voices help guide me but they cannot warn me of all the danger.

All the while the terror of what is behind still lurks in my mind. I want to stop, I need to stop. Fear and exhaustion cripple me and I cannot go on. Just a small rest, just a short break, an escape from the unending journey. I stop, but now I can sense, no see. There are more on my path. Many more. I am not alone. There are shadows, slowly creeping toward the voices. They are just as blind as me. Hands out, reaching, straining to reach the voices. Some move so slowly, forward, back, forward, then back again. But then there are some that are strong. Their strength inspires me. I know how hard this journey is and my spirit is renewed with hope that I will also find my strength. Arms, hands reach out, pulling me along. We will journey together now.

Time passes. The shadows, my fellow travelers grow to be familiar. We tell of our journey, of our time before we found one another. We find more on the path and offer our combined strength. Our own little army, our lifeboat, our whole that equals much more than the sum of its parts.

Another eternity passes and slowly things begin to change. The voices pull us forward, the path is smooth, and there is a small ray of sunlight on the horizon. The light is amazing to behold. None of us can remember the beauty of a sunrise. It is like being born again. The warmth washes over us and we stare at the world around us with wonder. Never again will we have to endure the eternal night. Darkness may come, but it will pass and the light and warmth of the world will never abandon us.

The voices come forth. Our friends, our family. How they have missed us. They knew we would come. They never stopped hoping, gently calling out to us. "This is your journey, but we were with you all the while."

Just when I think my soul is fulfilled. There is nothing more I could want in this lifetime. I have my fellow travelers, my guiding voices and we are together enjoying the beauty of the lakes, rivers and trees. Suddenly, the sky opens up and my heart breaks with the beauty of two small angels that appear before me. The strongest voices of all that kept me going through the darkest time before the dawn with the simple call... "mama".