

TRUE COLORS
(excerpt)*

By

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In hindsight, perhaps Deacon Thomas should not have allowed his six-year-old son to use his lighter. Perhaps he should have said “no” when his son begged to light the candles at the altar of their church. Thomas may have been busy chatting with Father Daniel and Brother Lawrence, and just didn’t notice that he gave his son the lighter, or he may have actually been proud that his son was finally taking an interest in the church. But for whatever reason he had given him the lighter, it wasn’t long before the parishioners at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church began to smell smoke.

Mrs. Annabelle Kaufman—the Patroness of the Church—just had double cataract surgery, and although her eyes were still bandaged, she claimed that it somehow sharpened her other senses, allowing her to alert the congregation to the burning altar. All the candles had liquefied into a flaming pool that quickly traveled across the stage, then to the curtains. Some of the devout, old ladies in the front pews fainted, while most of the other parishioners scrambled for the door. Only Deacon Thomas and Brother Lawrence had the good sense to dash toward the fire extinguisher, but when they both grabbed the heavy, red cylinder they began to argue over who should be the one to use it. The matter was quickly settled when the sprinkler system kicked on. All the while, as nuns and parishioners poured out of the church in panic, Thomas’ son merely watched, entranced but horrified. Then he ran.

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