

The Sun Just Above the Horizon
#31 Genre: Fiction, 893 Words
By Grace Gonzales

“Love will save us in the end.

Those words sprinted through Mary’s mind over and over as she struggled to recall the vivid details of her dream. Her chest felt heavy with every beat of her pounding heart. She paused for a moment, took a deep breath and tried hard to gain control. Her dream felt like reality. She closed her eyes for a moment and remembered the soldier from her dream standing in front of her.

Was he trying to tell her something or was she overthinking? Why does it always come back to love? she thought, with a look of dismay and doubt. Abruptly she stood, walked to her window and opened the drapes, peering into the sun as if it would provide inspiration. Her mind was filled with all of the recent occurrences. In an attempt to make sense of it all, she pushed back images of John, the love of her life.

There are far too many things to think about right now than to try to analyze dreams, Mary thought. *I have to focus on getting through the day without feeling as though I’m losing John . . . and possibly even my mind.*

Her emotions flowed over her like a tidal wave. The very thought of losing John again made Mary’s head spin. She pushed the drapes back together with enough force the rod almost bent inwards.

She heard a pounding at the front door. Grabbing her robe, she ran down the hall towards the door.

“Who is it?” Elly was jolted out of her sleep by the thudding steps. As she sat up on the couch, she saw Mary running past, looking perplexed.

Mary stopped dead in her tracks as she reached the door and did not stop to pay much attention. On tiptoe, she peered through the peep hole of her vintage mahogany door. Pushing the handle down with her thumb, she hesitated.

“WAIT!” Sylvia screamed rushing from the bathroom. “We need to tell you something Mary, don’t open it!”

“I don’t understand. Why can’t I open the door?”

“Elly and I hesitated to tell . . . we did not want to hurt you. . . . Mary, please trust us.”

She ignored their pleas and proceeded to open the door, creaking as it swung open. The rays of sun blasted their way through her doorway into the hall with force. She could not make sense of the image on her doorstep and squinted to keep out the light blocking her view. Sylvia was standing right behind Mary to see who was there. Mary began falling backwards as though being pushed. John leaned forward to catch her. Sylvia ran to get water while Elly helped John carry Mary to the couch. Mary slowly came to as she felt the coldness of the water on her lips.

“What’s wrong?” she asked. The coolness of the water brought her to full consciousness.

John explained how Michael had come to visit Grace at dawn and how he was able to record their conversation without them knowing. He pushed the play button on the small recorder which fit snugly into his large palm.

Grace sounded irritated and her voice was somewhat garbled. “I can’t believe you didn’t wait for me to deliver the goods. There are more than five seeds. There’s a whole field ready to be harvested.”

“You are running out of time, Grace!”

Grace’s placating voice sounded odd. John saw Mary’s look of alarm.

“That doesn’t sound like her at all. Her voice sounds anxious and scared. We’d better go check on her.”

Rushing over to her house they found Grace lying on her side at the foot of the entrance steps in the hot sun. Someone must have called 911 for they could hear sirens in the distance approaching the gated community.

The EMT’s began to check Grace’s vitals. They barely talked to each other as they poked and prodded while asking everyone to stay back. One of the EMT’s, after performing the rapid antigen test, told them she tested positive for COVID-19 and they needed to see who amongst them might have antibodies to save her. Since Mary had been sick recently she rushed to the hospital to hopefully save her dear friend from certain death.

The night sky seemed dark and ominous while they waited for the phone to ring. At the shrill sound of the instrument, they answered and Grace was on the other end. She could barely muster enough strength to speak.

“You saved me, Mary... you have the antibodies in your blood!” After a long pause, Grace slowly explained she had been a double agent working for Michael under the guise of a government agent. Her voice pitched higher as she fought to explain how Michael tried to punish her by spraying her with the virus over a week earlier. She continued, her voice lagging, to tell them Michael killed his brother, Hotel Sassy’s owner, after discovering he was going to defect. The seeds were already hidden behind the framed flower to prevent Michael from getting his hands on them.

Mary’s eyes opened wide as she abruptly interrupted. Once again she had seen the face of the soldier in her dream from 1918. It was him, the hotel owner! He was working for Apophis and had come to realize a truth.

Love *will* save us in the end.

Ms. Gonzales began her writing career in college publishing her first article in the UTD Mercury. She later went on to study Journalism and English and wrote for local magazines for a while and then went on to teach English and Writing for a brief time including working as an Environmental Educator and most recently a grant writer for a local college. Ms. Gonzales helped to co-author her first journal recently for Cornell University, Measuring Environmental Assessment in Education and has recently began blogging and freelance writing. She wanted to be part of this unique opportunity and to learn from others in order to and polish her own skills as a writer.