

Rose And The Red Sun

In the scorching summer of 1942 Rose woke with a start. Her green eyes flickering open in fright, her blonde hair coated in sweat, she bit on her lip to hold back the scream that was about to burst from her throat. It had been an evening full of horrific nightmares that had been prominent ever since her Mother and Father had died overseas in a German bombing. She heard Tim, her redheaded twin, herding sheep outside in the paddock of their Auckland farm. Suddenly the sheep were silent and the birds were screeching in warning. Rose was about to call out to Tim when she was forced to the ground by an eye piercing *Bang!* The ground shuddered and the house shook.

"Tim!" Rose bellowed. He didn't reply.

Rose crashed down the stairs, refusing to believe that Tim could be gone.

"Tim!" Rose yelled again, the ringing that had been screeching in her ears was slowly ebbing away and Rose heard the farm quickly coming back to life. She raced outside to find Tim crumpled on the ground. She was about to go hysterical when she noticed the slow rise and fall of Tim's chest. Rose fell to the ground in relief and shook Tim's shoulders, trying to wake him. Suddenly he woke.

"Rose!" He mumbled, still dazed. "Run...Japs...Plane...Run" He was struggling to get the words out and fell back into unconsciousness. It was then Rose noticed the heat sizzling into her back, she whipped around and was faced with a wall of inferno.

Rose screamed, scrambling away from the blaze, trying to drag Tim with her. Once she was a safe distance away Rose stopped to examine the towering flames. What she discovered brought on another scream. Right in the corner of the blaze a beige plane wing loomed out...And painted on it was the Japanese flag.

"Water! Water!" Yelled a strange male voice. Rose whipped her head from side to side, searching for the source of the sound.

"Who's there?" Rose cried. A man hobbled out of the smoke, a gash oozing blood on the side of his face.

"Kon'nichiwa, my name is Shi-won and you may not of noticed but my plane is on fire!" The foreign man declared.

"Yeah, I noticed." Rose replied with rolled eyes, she never missed a chance to be sarcastic, even when she was standing in front of a blazing Japanese fighter plane. "My name is Rose Wilson by the way." She called over her shoulder as she sprinted to retrieve a bucket of water.

Rose returned with an overflowing bucket of water to find Shi-won helping Tim to his feet.

"Tim, are you harmed?" Rose screeched, almost dropping the pail on her feet.

"No, Rose. Just a little sore." Tim replied tiredly.

"Sorry to interrupt your happy little reunion, Miss. But I really think you should hurry along and put out the raging fire destroying my plane."

Shi-won stated, his voice strange and foreign. He looked a little woozy, the blood he had lost from his poring gash was taking its toll. Rose hurried closer to the blaze, trying to ignore the steaming heat immersing into her skin. She gripped the handle of the bucket with all her might and threw the water over the inferno. She doused the flames several more times, determined to contain the embers. Rose breathed a sigh of relief, she had stopped the blaze.

Rose spun around to inspect Tim, he did seem unharmed but his companion however was far from that. His clothes were soaked crimson with gore and he swayed on his feet, barely able to stand.

"Whatever shall we do, Tim?" Rose queried.

"We can't just leave him here Rose." Tim replied.

"Yes, but if he is found we will all be in peril!" Rose stated.

"Isn't it worth it to save an innocent man's life?!" Tim spat angrily.

"That's the thing! We don't know he's innocent, for all we know he could be on a mission to kill the whole district!" Rose yelled.

Well, it's not up to you. I'm the official landholder of this farm and what I say goes. Now help me haul him up to the attic." Tim responded firmly.

Rose was fuming as she bandaged the young man's wounds. Tim had lugged Shi-won up the stairs and he ended up slumped unconscious on a pile of old potato sacks in their creaky, glacial attic. It had been an excruciating few hours of dressing and redressing the strangers wounds, but as much as it pained Rose to admit, Tim was right, they couldn't just let him die. Whatever the cost, even though he was a foreigner, forbidden and potentially dangerous Japanese pilot, they must save Shi-won.

Shi-won woke hours later, his chocolate brown eyes snapping open. "Where...What...Umm...Where am I?" He questioned, his expression was one of confusion and curiosity.

"Where did you learn such excellent English?" Rose quired, ignoring his question.

"My Mother was from Australia, she passed away a few years ago" Shi-won replied with a sigh.

Rose pretended like she didn't hear him, the subject of dying parents was still fresh and hard to comprehend, she was quite sensitive about it.

"To answer your question you're lying in our attic, and you have been unconscious for quite a large period of time." Rose muttered.

"What are you going to do with me?" He got straight to the point.

"We'll hide you here. " Rose declared.

"No! That is too risky for you and your brother, you've already helped me more than I deserve. I'm leaving. " Shi-won snapped, trying to stand up but crumpling to the ground in a pile.

"Well, you don't have a choice. You are staying in this attic whether you like it or not!" Rose shrieked as she slammed the door with a heavy *thump!*

Seasons turn and as a bitter winter approached Shi-won and Rose grow close as he healed. For the first time since the dreadful war had started life was bearable. Until one fateful, brisk autumn day...*bang, bang, BANG!* Rose suddenly realized someone was knocking, well, more like hammering, on their ancient, mahogany door.

"Coming!" Rose shouted. She opened the door to find a young officer dressed in a crisp Home Guard uniform.

"Sorry to bother you, miss. I'm Officer Dinkens, the new Sergeant of your local Home Guard, I'm just here to do my rounds. Nothing to worry about, I'll just be searching the house. Do you happen to have a basement or attic?" He stated with authority.

"Um...I'll just go fetch my brother from the chicken coop." Rose stalled. This was a bump in the road, a humongous, mountain sized bump.

"Tim, come quick!" Rose cried as she shoot like a bullet down to the chicken coop. Tim peeked his head out the side of the coop, a bewildered expression on his face.

"Whatever is the matter, Rose?" He demanded.

"Someone's here, Tim! They want to search the attic!" Rose wailed.

"Rose, calm down. We'll think of something." Tim stated, but Rose could see the doubt flash across his face.

"I've already talked to Shi-won about what we should do if someone were to find him." Tim mumbled guiltily. Despite her worry and fear Rose felt rage coursing through her at the thought of Tim and Shi-won keeping secrets from her, they were supposed to be a team.

"Alright then genius, what's the plan?" Rose spat.

"Uh, you're not going to like it...we pretend we didn't even know Shi-won was in the attic." He muttered.

"No! No way. Then he'll be in twice as much trouble. As if the officer will believe that anyway." Rose scoffed.

"You'd be surprised. We're doing it Rose, we don't have a choice."

Tim strut up to the house, wiping his face of any recognition or emotion.

"Good day, sir." He greeted the inpatient officer.

"Do you or do you not own an attic or basement?" The officer barked.

"We do have an attic, sir. But it is filled with nothing but old potato sacks." Tim stated with confidence.

"I'll be the judge of that, lead the way." The officer commanded.

Rose's palms were coated in sweat as they climbed the stairs to their inevitable doom. Tim slowly pushed open the creaky door, clearly dreading what would follow. As the door swung open the officer yelled triumphantly and raised his rifle, aiming at Shi-won's temple.

"Nothing but potato sacks, aye? More like you're all going to rot like potato sacks in a prison cell." He smirked.

"We are just as shocked as you officer, I had no clue there was anything up here, let alone a rogue soldier!" Tim exclaimed.

"I find that *very* hard to believe, why don't we ask this...thing." The officer spat with disgust, looking pointedly at Shi-won.

"I...I have never seen these people before. I snuck into their attic while they were at their parents funeral a few months ago and have been living here off stolen food ever since. Like I said, I've never laid eyes on these folks before."

The officer spun around to face Rose, looking at her like a predator would to prey.

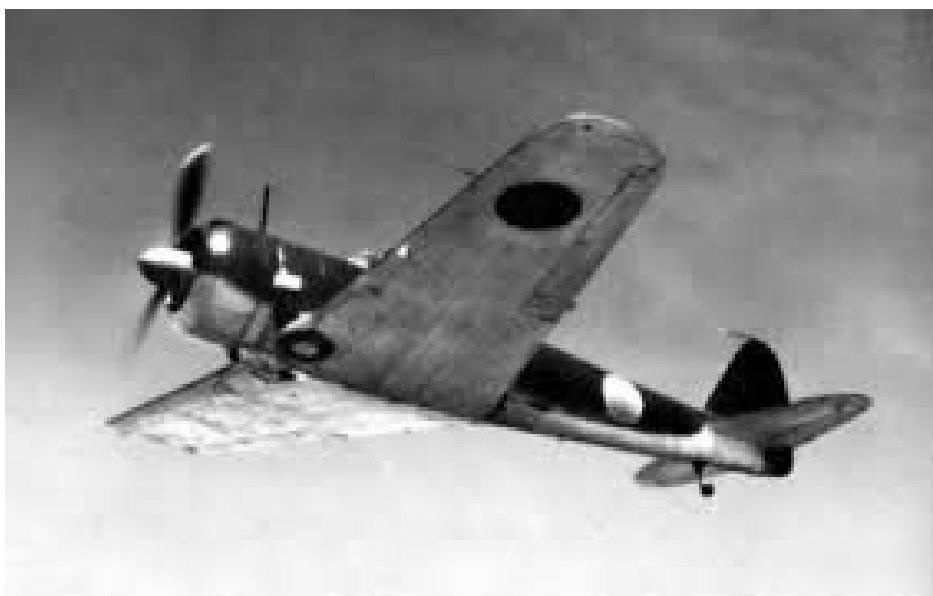
“Well? Is this true?” He demanded.

“Uh, yes. I have no idea who this man is.” Rose stammered, trying to hide her despair.

“Well then, I’ll take him off your hands. I assure you he will be punished, miss. I’ll see to it myself.” Officer Dinkins marveled with an evil glint in his eyes. He stepped into the gloomy attic, taking Shi-won in his grasp and hauling him down the stairs. They were gone.

Seasons, months and eventually years passed as the dreadful war raged on and as time passed Rose’s hope dwindled away. Eventually victory was declared over the Axis Powers, but it meant nothing to Rose due to the fact that everyone she cared about that could be affected by the war already had been. Whenever she thought of her parents her heart was filled with an excruciating ache. Although it hurt, she came to accept the fact that she would never see Shi-won again. They discovered he had been taken to an internment camp in Wellington but that was where the information stopped. But on a frosty winter’s day whilst Rose was feeding the pigs all that changed.

“Rose!” A croaky but familiar voice bellowed. Rose whipped around. Emerging out of the fog was a much thinner, but still recognizable, Shi-won. Rose dropped the scrap bucket and shoot up the hill to embrace Shi-won. It had taken a war and a few years in prison but they were together, they were home.



A Japanese fighter plane.

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