



Wednesday Warriors

Susan Delgado

We were birthed by accident. Unplanned. But a natural birthing never the less. At least for the four of us. It was against the rules. We were told to stay home. Stay Contained. Not see anyone. After weeks of isolation and then months of lockdown we got a call one morning. Our two friends said on the phone that they were making a big pot of soup. “Could they come over and share their bounty with us?” At first for a few seconds I thought to myself, “Should we be breaking the rules right now?” But then, I remembered who I was deep down inside. I was the detector of gray area. Bender of rules. That is if the bending did not hurt anyone else. I replied, “Of course you can come over. Be here at six for cocktails!” Then my friend asked if I could make my rosemary biscuits and some dessert before we each hung up. I walked into our living where my beloved was reading and announced that we were going to have dinner guests. He looked up from his Kindle and said, “Great! Who’s coming?” I informed him who was joining us. He smiled. I went to the kitchen to look for ingredients. I prayed I had all of them in the pantry.

I needed Lady Gaga, Bach, The Righteous Brothers, Andrea Bocelli, Adele, and Taylor Swift to sing to me. I needed to feel okay with what we just committed to. Having our friends over during this pandemic. I needed to not judge myself or others from the desire of needing human contact. This uncertainty. This uncomfortableness. All human beings were having feelings of isolation and suffering. Our world was in limbo. Coronavirus had made us all bow down to her wrath. We ceased from being in the world. But had not ceased from caring or loving one another.

On Wednesday evening the Warriors were born. They arrived promptly. Masks on their faces. No hugs. No kisses. Greetings muffled through masks as they entered our house. Delight of gratefulness to getting together. Normally this would have never been an issue with us. We have all known one another for more than twenty years. Yet, the dark cloud that existed above and throughout the world was dense, dark, and present. Conversations of our adult children flooded our conversations. How they all called on a daily basis. Sometimes, more than once a day to make sure that we were sheltering in. How the news reports were so dire with the number of deaths happening. They reminded us that we were in the high-risk group. The four of us talked about how our adult children had become our parents. Scared for us to be exposed and get sick.

It was in those first few moments of sitting in our living room that we four decided not to disclose to anyone that we were having dinner together. And that we

would continue to have dinner every Wednesday evening until such time the restrictions eased up. Then we could tell our adult children about the four of us being together. But not before the pandemic took its course.

In the meantime we could not breathe a word about the Wednesday Warriors. Everyone was following the rules, and we were essentially breaking them. Corona was running amuck throughout the world. The news media put the fear of god into everyone that we knew, including us, the Wednesday Warriors. Corona's arrival turned the world as we knew it upside down and inside out. We can't smell, touch, or see Corona physically. She is an invisible enemy. The worst kind to fight.

But she could not destroy our love of friendship. The bonds to stay connected. The stories we share about life, celebrations, sorrows, and death. Loving is hard work as it takes strength to be intimate, vulnerable, and exposed to others.

The Wednesday Warriors continued to meet and talked about how the world classified us as being old and susceptible to the virus. We wonder out loud how we became ancient in such a short time. The virus only spared the young people in the beginning. But then she took no prisoners. She began to take from every age group with her destructive cells. The four of us flew under the radar of lockdown, our adult children, and friends, who were very fearful. The four of us wanted some normalcy of life. We reassure each other that we would endure and we would not live in constant fear of the pandemic.

Touching is no longer a simple human luxury. It can no longer be given freely to those you love or care about. A kind smile can no longer be visibly exchanged between two people. Our tears are hidden from one another and grief is discreetly covered by a mask.

The Wednesday Warriors got stronger in spirit for being together for a couple of hours each week. We continued to support and love one another. Coronavirus was on our minds as it was everyone else. But on Wednesday afternoons or evenings we tried our hardest to just be present in the moment for one another. To be grateful for the small intimacies we shared in our backyards, under the sun umbrellas, the small candle lights, and under the veil of destruction.

At present time some restrictions have been lifted. One must be careful. Be safe until there are better treatments for the coronavirus and a vaccine comes to market.

And so, like all the cycles in life, the Wednesday Warriors no longer endure together. Our friends sold their home to move closer to family, grandkids, and to start a new chapter in their lives. We had one last meal together, and it was bitter sweet. The taste lingered not only in our mouths but in our hearts also. One day we will greet one another with hugs and kisses and the pandemic will no longer exist.

