

## *Dragons*

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As a child, I heard stories of brave knights and heroines conquering brutal beasts to save their loved ones. I imagined myself staring into the eyes of an evil, winged beast with the means of incinerating me and looking past its scales to its heart, a heart that almost seemed human and frightened. Growing up, we believe a strong human heart can defeat impossible evil; however, when darkness seeps through the cracks of storybooks and crawls into our world, it becomes more sinister. This happened in Nazi Germany where darkness spawned antisemitic dragons whose fire seared the word Holocaust in our minds forever and set the childhood stories of the Jewish people ablaze. Classmates, clients, and friends grew talons and armored wings that caged their frightened hearts. These dragons tore parents from children and exiled the useful to the dark caverns of Auschwitz. In times of such evil, heroes must arise from the embers of fantasies. Just as I imagined seeing through a dragon's eyes and into its heart, so did the heroine Georgia Gabor.

Georgia Gabor braved the claws of two Nazis from her past and commanded their humanity from their frozen hearts. One of these dragons was a former schoolmate. This past connection encouraged her to approach him and ask for protective papers for her and her family. She succeeded in unleashing part of his conscience from its dark lair and he succeeded in shedding scales. Unfortunately, the papers could not protect them for very long and other dragons soon stole her mother. But Georgia Gabor persevered against her fear. When facing her second dragon, she grabbed her shield and armor, preparing for battle against the Nazi commander, a former client of her father's. She tricked his guard into believing the mighty general was her uncle and waltzed dauntlessly into his office. Jumping into his leathered arms, she reminded his heart of its child-like need to be a hero in a world of villains. She asked for her mother's release from his talons. Surprisingly, he freed her. Once upon a time, Georgia Gabor was a dreamer and now she is a hero relinquishing her enemies' darkest scales.

In 2020, we brave a new dragon. The deadly, fearmongering, isolating foe of COVID-19. This dragon attacks us in two ways. First, it isolates, cultivating an environment of anxiety and depression. Second, it deceives others into denying its lethality and uses them to spread its own contagious fumes. This unique dragon cannot be killed by weapons and war, but only with community and compassion. We must remind our sick and scared neighbors they are not facing this viral beast alone; there is hope in defeating it. With the power of unity, we can slay Covid-19 and rewrite the storybooks. Instead of reading, "Once upon a time" at bedtime, our children will listen to the heroics of our history books and like Georgia, the next generation will be taught the strength of the human heart.