

All Stories Need An Ending

by Ivan Reyes

Gus wondered when his mother would be home from bingo, as she did on Sunday, with her friends Esther and Eleanor, and he looked at his watch and would wager, based on the fact that it was nearing midnight, that bingo had come to a close, and her and her debaucherous friends had made their way to the casino, lurking, now, near the penny slots and toying with the idea of the roulette table or more adventurously but also relatively dangerously the black jack table, and Eleanor slipped everyone a bit of ecstasy and now they were really peaking, and Meg, Gus's mother, spotted a handsome, well built -- jacked, as they say -- young man standing by the bar and her imagination whirred to a background of gaudy and hellish noises which signaled vice, damnation, and everything else that made a soul feel warm. Gus sat in his comfortable, courdoroy, purple chair swiveling back and forth watching and thoroughly enjoying late night television and his eyes feasted on the tube's warmth.

Meg dropped another penny into the contraption and it spun and spun and she turned to Eleanor and whispered, "Are you sure that was good shit you gave us?" and she placed a hand to her forehead, adding almost as if speaking to herself, "I'm feeling sick." It had been laced with heroin, unbeknownst to Eleanor.

"Yea, it was good shit, I'm peaking, motherfucker," said Eleanor.

Meg went to the bathroom and threw up and felt better. She looked into the vomit and smiled. The puke swirled with color and majesty. She lifted her face from the toilet seat and then sat on it. She moaned. At the sink, she dabbed a lace kerchief with cold water and

padded her forehead and behind her ears and her neck just below her ears. She looked into the mirror and bathed just for a solitary moment in her beauty and glow. For a woman of her age, she was an exemplary specimen. Age had not withered her luster. Time fortified her wisdom. She wished she had some blow, but she knew that was only the drugs talking. Drugs, after all, once in the system, demanded unfalteringly more drugs. She exited the bathroom and reunited with Eleanor.

Where's Esther, she thought to herself. She scanned the room and found her sat by a fountain. She dabbed herself with her moist kerchief as she made her way to where Esther sat alone. "How are you feeling, doll?" Meg asked. "Not too well," answered Esther.

Gus was drunk on whiskey and playing with his guns.

He picked up a .45 Magnum and pointed the empty pistol at the window and grunted, "Bang." He cocked the hammer and pressed the trigger and his heart skipped a beat when it clicked. He remembered his father told him, "Don't pull the trigger, squeeze." He cocked the hammer and squeezed. He was used to death. People are children, nowadays, he mused. He felt philosophical. He drew his father's giant face in his mind. He was a handsome and intelligent looking gentleman. Quiet. A man of duty. He died screaming. Gus heard it. A massive heart attack. Gus squeezed and squeezed and squeezed the trigger.

Meg rode with Esther in the ambulance car. She reassured her and made her anxious heart feel peace and Esther could feel the waves of death in the distance. She stared blankly at the ceiling of the truck.

She was reflecting upon her life. It was a good life, she concluded. And truly, there was nothing disdainful about Esther's life. She was a good person who enumerated countless good acts. She guiltlessly

relished the pleasantries of life as they paraded into her frequency. She felt her life slipping away, and she would not resist. She let it go.

Eleanor had flushed the rest of the drugs down. She watched them go swirling down. She took a taxi home and undressed and showered and prepared for sleep. She closed her eyes as she lay on her bed and slept dreamlessly and in the morning found out about Esther. She offered to pay for the funeral.

