

A DAY AT THE HILL



J.Q. GONZALES

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TADHANA PRESS



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Maui, Hawai'i
welcome.to/tadhana

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To Katherine-Marie.

Explore the lives of Jonathan and Katie and discover a truth. *A Day At The Hill* is an enigma. Could this story reveal the truth? Destiny has set its foot upon one's path and like a wind that sets one's sail. Can the past bring to light to the future?

A day at the hill is a day of discovery.

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Enjoying her solitude with her favorite horse Feathers, the name being inspired from her sensation of flight as her horse leaped over the hurdles on the hill, Katie feels a sense of longing she couldn't understand. The first thing that came to her mind is Jonathan and she began to ask why this feeling is keeping her at bay.

Today is her birthday. There's only one present she would wish for, it's Jonathan's presence.

“How's Jonathan nowadays? I haven't seen him for a while.”

“I guess he's been so busy with his work. That man

is hardworking and he loves his job so much being a good artist. He cannot resist being back on this hill. It's so serene and pristine."

"HMMMMM...I wish he's with me at this moment as I have to travel again without seeing him. It's so sad. I want to see his smile and his mesmerizing eyes and to listen to his soothing voice."

She went on the other side of the hill to see the crater lake and stopped by a tree and tied down Feathers as the sun approached at its highest. The summer breeze blew and she felt refreshed from the scorching sun.

Her solitude brought her inspiration and she has the chance to know herself more and understanding why she misses Jonathan so much.

It was almost noon when Katie came to take a shade from the tree where Jonathan was painting. Katie was riding her horse Feathers and they went towards the tree to escape from the scorching sun.

"Hail to thee good Sir, wouldst thou be kind enough to share your tree with a lady?" Katie greeted Jonathan with a smile.

The artist was in great awe. He was tongue-tied for he saw the most beautiful maiden in the land. Katie was dressed in her equestrienne uniform with her long, black braided hair. Her eyes were glittering with passion and a smile captivating the soul of the artist.

“Uhhmm, greetings to you my lady. You or I cannot claim this tree for which you speak, for it is shared by one and all. And in so, it is ours, both in kind. My name is Jonathan Thompson. I am an artist, and I have come hitherto from a farming village not far from here. I planned this day in solitude. Your presence is a most welcome surprise, I assure you. May I have a name to place with this vision of beauty?”

“Katie Montaigne,” she said with a smile and a nod.

“Do you mean you belong to the House of Montaigne? The owner of the Windsor Castle? I’m so delighted to meet you my Lady Katie Montaigne.”

“I didn’t know that a woman of nobility spends her time in this place,” Jonathan wondered.

“Mr. Thompson, this place is very serene. I find my peace here. By the way, what brought you to this hill?”

Jonathan sat down on the grassy turf under the tree. He leaned against the tree trunk and started talking with a deep sigh. He looked at Katie straight in the eye, as his eyes wanted to say something.

“When I was a kid, my grandfather always brought me to this hill to watch the sunset. Under this tree we played hide and seek. I loved my grandpa so much. He’s like a father to me. He taught me how to appreciate the beauty of nature. He didn’t live to see me become a painter. He is still with me here.” He pointed to his heart and paused to take a deep breath.

“He is still in my heart and soul. You know he instilled in my being how to appreciate art in nature. If you see that spider spin its web and create shapes of symmetrical designs, you appreciate their existence. Life is like a web; sometimes you get entangled. Grandpa let me see things in nature differently in comparison to man’s everyday living.”

Katie was touched by his words.

“Mr. Thompson, I’m very glad to meet someone like you. You’re down-to-earth. You’re an artist. I wasn’t

expecting this at all. I thought every man I knew is the same. What makes you unique? What makes the person you are? I really don't know.”

Jonathan felt a great sensation he couldn't explain after hearing Katie's words. He wondered why this woman he just first met unleashed those words to a complete stranger like him and outside of her class. He was immobilized by her words. He gained his awareness when Katie began to tickle him with the feather she had plucked from her headdress.

Jonathan started laughing from the tickles. Katie just became a girl in that instance bridging their gap and Jonathan as a boy. She grew up in a noble fashion while in the castle and had to act accordingly as dictated by her environment. The hill brought her the freedom she could ever imagined and meeting Jonathan gave her the joy for he see things differently as characterized by his art.

“My lady I'm just a common man. I'm just a man who works on his craft. I do what I do best just like you. There's nothing unique about me,” the young man

replied.

“You know while I was at Oxford University, I’ve never learned what you’ve learned. Things that life have to offer. Academics and science taught us to become so absorbed and think in logic. They have killed the child in us. I want to find the road leading to the child in me and you are the road.”

Before Jonathan could say a word, Katie stopped him.

“Mr. Thompson, please be with me for a while on this hill until the sun goes down.” Katie looked at him with her eyes begging.

“As you wish my lady. I wish to put you on canvas with Feathers and the Windsor sunset on the background.”

“You’re here at the right moment and alas I found the subject to capture, a lady and her horse. Thank God everything is in place. The scenery is perfect for you, my lady. I want you to hold this pink rose, and look far away as if you are looking for someone coming up to this hill.”

“Mr. Thompson...” Katie couldn’t go on with her thoughts.

“My lady, call me Jonathan please.”

“Alrighty then, Jonathan. I would be delighted to be the subject of your painting.” Katie Montaigne replied with glee.

Jonathan got Katie to sit on the grass while Feathers is also lying down under the tree. He gave a pink rose to her and had her hold it. Jonathan looked at her and adored her beauty. He began to paint a picture onto his canvas and slowly captured the images he’s seeing. When their eyes met, he felt a strong attraction towards her but he disregarded that feeling. He treated her as one of those French women who have posed for him when he was traveling in Paris. Jonathan is a gentleman and a professional. Everything is sacred to him. Meeting Katie Montaigne gave him the desire to make things happen. His palette was tainted with bright colors and every brush stroke revealed the form of a woman and her horse. The painting was finished when the sun begins to retire for the day and the fowls in the crater lake started

to settle down for the night.

After a few brushstrokes, Jonathan finished the painting and presented it to Katie. He gave it a title, *The Equestrienne*.

Katie was so amazed with the realism of the painting capturing every detail, every emotion. She realized this truth; he can see her in minute details.

Moments later, the servants from the castle came looking for her. She had to leave.

Jonathan dedicated his painting to Katie. One final touch, he's adding on his insignia and dating it 19 April 1899. He finally wrapped it with sackcloth and gave it to Katie.

“Katie, I’m giving this painting to you as a remembrance of me, of the memories we made on this hill. I may not see you again but I believe that all paths lead to one destination. Remember this, no matter what happens, everything has its own place. It’s getting late now. I must go. It’s a pleasure to meet you my Lady Montaigne.”

“I really appreciate this gift. I’ll hang it in my room.



THE EQUESTRIENNE

Meeting you today, I learned a lot about life. One of these days our paths will cross each other. You're a very wonderful person Jonathan. I wish to see you again."

Katie planted a kiss onto Jonathan's lips. It was a passionate one.

The sun was finally down. Katie rode away towards the castle. Jonathan was left behind and he felt a deep longing as she gazed upon Katie as she vanished into the horizon.

Days have gone by and followed by weeks, Katie is back on the hill on a carriage. Her beloved horse Feathers is with her. Katie is now daintier than before and she is dressed with elegance and finesse showing off her great splendor a man would die for.

Katie plans to spend the day by herself and to enjoy the beauty of nature. The flowers have taken much of the hill's panorama in the springtime. She brought a picnic basket with fine cheese from France and fine wine from the vineyards of Monte Blanc. A loaf of bread and slices of ham and turkey, bean sprouts, and a jar of mayonnaise for making her savory sandwiches along

with two plates and two wine glasses and utensils. It seemed like she was expecting someone.

Reminiscing, she brings out her journal and started writing a poem. She entitles it *Windsor Dreams*.

Windsor Dreams

*My thoughts of you pulled me up
In the middle of my sleep
A smile so great and wide
And if fate will bring us together
Binding us forever
Enjoying the sounds of laughter
The epitome of joy to savor
I want you to climb up the ladder
To get me out of my guarded tower
I know it's now or never
For me to have you with love,
With trust forever*

Tears dropped as she scribbles each word for each line. She is longing to see Jonathan again and here she is

on the hill under the same tree where they met. When she leaned upon the tree she have noticed an etching of a heart with the names Jonathan and Katie. It was dated 19 April 1899. That is the date when they first met. She figures out he came back to the hill. The wood chips are still fresh. Jonathan must be here in town and haven't left. What mattered most to Katie was knowing that she and Jonathan have mutual feelings for each other.

The sun has moved overhead. Katie was getting sleepy until she is awakened by a familiar voice.

“Excuse me my lady, would you be kind enough to share your tree to a stranger?” the voice said.

“Splendid! Of all the days, you showed up out of nowhere on my birthday. You're the greatest gift I've ever had!” Katie exclaimed and she hugged Jonathan.

Katie's face was glowing with so much joy.

“I wish this is forever.” Katie looked at Jonathan. Her eyes were watery.

Jonathan hugged her back and combed her hair with his hand assuring he will never leave her, assuring he cares for her.

“Forever...yes, forever my lady.”

“Where have you been? I’ve been wondering where you have gone all this time?” Katie asked.

Jonathan sat down and leaned against the tree. This time he is not painting. What brought him back to the hill? Katie is standing as she watches Jonathan talk.

“My lady, as soon as we parted that day, I packed up and sailed to France. I was commissioned by The Louvre to do a painting. I didn’t tell you where I was going because I knew from the way you looked at me that day. You’re eyes were trying to say something.” Jonathan moved his attention towards the crater lake and watched the migratory birds in their afternoon treat and then he looked back at Katie.

“Katie, I came back yesterday from Paris and went straight here on the hill, hoping you’re here. Since you weren’t here, I etched our names ‘Katie and Jonathan’ enclosed by a heart. That would explain this etching on this tree. Yes, I came back for you. Though we are world’s apart, I came back to you by heart.” Jonathan’s eyes penetrated Katie’s as he unleashed those words.

Jonathan gets up and approaches Katie closer. He holds and feels her soft, silky hands. Katie's grip is hard like she has not held someone's hand before. Those clasping hands are sealed with a promise of forever.

"Jonathan...Jonathan." Katie said his name with a sigh and tears fell down on her face. "I have fallen for you and I tried to forget you. I have traveled far and wide just to forget about you but you've been coming back to me here" Katie pointed toward her heart.

"My folks wanted someone from the nobility and they have never paid attention to my happiness. I only have one life to live, Jonathan. I want to be happy. I want to enjoy the freedom of loving with no boundaries."

Jonathan embraced Katie with affection. He has never felt an intense emotion like this. Katie's presence in his life led him to bliss. He'll never let this moment come to pass for he has found the woman who he would share his dreams and aspirations. Call it destiny, they were meant to be.

"Katie Montaigne, my lady. I want to tell you this

and now I must for if I don't, I'm going to regret this for the rest of my life." Jonathan holds her hands and in his eyes were expressions of assurance and commitment to make Katie the happiest woman in the world.

"I'm giving my heart and soul to you for these are the only ones I can offer. I have no gold. You know where I'm coming from. But I assure you my Lady; we can build our own kingdom in our hearts. Happiness is not measured by the glitters of gold but by the very grace of giving love and receiving love. Against all odds, we remain triumphant because we have love. My Lady Katie Montaigne, I love you."

"Jonathan." Katie's voice is soft and she displayed elation in her face. "I can tell you at this moment, I'm very happy to know and feel that you love me. Your love is the greatest gift of all. It's not those gifts of luxury that I care about. It's the love that is worthy of having. Sir Jonathan Thompson, have this feather as a symbol of my love and devotion to you for you are like the wind that sets my sails to direct me to my destiny. I love you, too."

A DAY AT THE HILL BY J.Q. GONZALES

Jonathan and Katie watched the Windsor sunset and awaiting what tomorrow would bring. The best times of their lives start on from this day on the hill.

J.Q. GONZALES was born in the tropical paradise of Maui and he was raised in the Philippines, where he appreciated the works of great literary and visual artists. After high school, he moved back to Maui to continue his quest for reaching a higher level of creativity, inspiration, and understanding.

Writing became his passion when he learned how to write with his pen. He was fascinated by the children's stories read to him by his mother. He then started writing stories so he can reach humanity's perception of truth and they'll learn from it. He believes that the pen is the extension of his soul—a means of self-expression.

He is currently one of the editors of Burnay, an Ilocano dialect electronic magazine in the world wide web. *Tadhana*, his own personal website showcases his literary work and his photomontages. His poem, *The Feather*, was published by the International Library of Poetry in December 1999 in their poem anthology, *Mystical Night*. Two poems, *The Flame* and *Wish*, are to be published in December 2000 by the same publisher in their poem anthology, *Time After Time*.

He graduated at the University of Hawaii with a major in Liberal Arts with honors. He was a member of the school's Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, Psi Sigma Chapter. Currently, he is working as a graphic designer and information technology professional and aim to excel in the realm of cyberspace.