



Sunshine: A Post-Apocalyptic Novel

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SETTING AND PLOT INTRODUCTION

It has been centuries since our civilization destroyed itself. Under an ash-choked sky, most of the globe is uninhabitable. In addition, the apocalypse has created a new phenomenon called the Storm of Nights, a sudden storm that can destroy entire cities. What civilization remains has spread slowly, with most people living in distant towns.

However, this is not a future without hope: years ago, the hero Light-Bringer discovered the magical substance sunshine, which had the power to repel Storms, and has saved countless lives with both sunshine and her moral teachings. Even though Light-Bringer has since passed on, her nephew the sunshine-seller anonymously continues her work. In addition, the city New Washington strives to unite humanity and has taken many less fortunate towns under its wing.

One such town is the town of Greendale, home to some of her most devout followers, as well as teenagers Alice Harrington and Tim Huang. It is frequently visited by the sunshine-seller. Through interviews with Alice, Tim, and other residents of Greendale, the sunshine-seller seeks to understand both the world and his deceased aunt.

However, when a civil war breaks out in the neighboring Redglade and Redgladean refugees begin arriving on Greendale's doorstep, the traditionalist people of Greendale find their moral fiber tested. Through his interviews, the sunshine-seller is forced to bear witness to the answers of two questions that have plagued him: whether people are actually willing to adhere to Light-Bringer's teachings of kindness and charity, and whether his faith in his aunt is justified.

A MAJOR FIGURE: LIGHT-BRINGER

LIGHT-BRINGER'S FIRST TENET: *"Man is not chained, but always free, and always faced with the choice: to be hateful and only love himself, or to see the human in everybody."*

The hero of this age, Light-Bringer arguably saved humanity by discovering sunshine, the magical substance that can repel Storms of Nights. And while most people would have either kept the discovery for themselves or used it for profit, the selfless Light-Bringer instead shared her discovery freely, saving countless lives.

LIGHT-BRINGER'S SECOND TENET: *"And Brothers shall protect Brothers, and Sisters protect Sisters, and Neighbors protect Neighbors, and to each the protection of their own."*

Light-Bringer was also instrumental in the founding of New Washington, the noble city that would take upon itself the duty of protecting its less powerful neighbors. Advancing side by side, Light-Bringer and New Washington together saved the world, one with the salvation and the other with the sword.

"We, to carry the torch long after Light-Bringer has passed on, to carry her spirit into the new age! For the glory of Light-Bringer, the sunshine! The sunshine! The sunshine!" --Church of Light-Bringer

Now, even though she has passed on, her teachings of kindness and acceptance continue to inspire thousands. She has become more than a mere hero to the people: now she is as venerated as any religious figure, and the Church of Light-Bringer exists to continue her creed and spread her teachings.

"And then there was sunshine"

THEMES AND QUESTIONS

How easy is it to do the right thing?

Is it worth doing the right thing, if no one praises you for it, and all it does is cause you pain?

How easy is it to know good from evil?

To what extent do we get to choose what we believe in: are our moral systems merely the result of our backgrounds, or are they our own decisions?

Is the imitation of our parents' and peers' beliefs inevitable, or can we choose to disagree with them?

Should we choose to disagree with them?

MAIN CHARACTERS

THE SUNSHINE SELLER

"See the human in everybody"--Light-Bringer

Now an old man whose name has been forgotten by most of the world, the sunshine-seller is the nephew of the deceased hero Light-Bringer. He loves her, of course; after all, everyone does, and he wants more than anything else to believe in what she has taught him and the world.

"In order for something to be born, something else has to be destroyed." --James Fletcher, founder of New Washington

So it is quite the shame that what the sunshine-seller sees never quite matches up with what Light-Bringer says. He loves her, of course; after all, everyone does, and he wants more than anything else to regain his faith in her teachings. But he cannot bring himself to become a hero as she did, just as he cannot forget the histories of Redglade, New Washington, Light-Bringer, or himself. Just as he cannot shake his disillusionment.

"It's not my fault." --Alice Harrington

More than anything else, the sunshine-seller wants to reconcile Light-Bringer and the real world.

THE FOOL: TIM HUANG

"And the really stupid thing is how I can change my name and my voice and even my own memories but all they gotta do is take one look at my face and bam, I'm launched right outta Greendale and across the wastes and end up right back in the filth where I started."

A fourteen-year old immigrant to Greendale from Redglade, Tim can neither shake the shadow of his identity nor the shame he feels because of it, and thus drifts through the edges of more united groups of friends, never fully able to belong.

THE COWARD: ALICE HARRINGTON

"I don't even know why I say the things I do, or why I feel like I have to--I just end up doing so. It's like something else wants to be said but somehow the words get turned around in my stomach and end up coming out wrong."

A fourteen-year old child living in the town of Greendale, Alice has trouble making friends and hides her loneliness under a thin veneer of misanthropy and arrogance.

THE IDEALIST: SAM SARDOVA

"I told myself that I would never be ashamed of my history."

Another immigrant from Redglade and Tim's increasingly estranged friend, Sam hides his loneliness under a thin veneer of cheeriness.

THE CHARISMATIC: MAGGIE REYNOLDS

"Sure, the night seems dark, but the sun always rises in the morning!"

Alice's classmate and later friend, Maggie's bright disposition and purehearted faith in Light-Bringer never fail to inspire, just as her simple faith in those around her and what they believe is anything but surprising.