

Unremembered Loss

For all the news and information from the world of Rathrae, and for the story Unremembered Loss

Issue 100

December 2017

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This is the one-hundredth monthly newsletter that I've written. That's eight and one-third years. It feels like way too long to still be working on the same book. However, I made excellent progress in November and started off December well, then we had the Los Angeles fires. We were evacuated for two days, then came a weekend, I never recovered. I'm 25,000 words behind as I write this newsletter on the 19th. I could try and finish the year strong, but I know that there will be other things pulling on my time so I'm going to take a break and hit it hard on January 3rd.

I've started to think about artwork again. It was always the plan to have drawings and maps and such in the book, so I've been thinking about how to get that done. There are three different approaches I could take.

1) Find a bunch of artists and have them each do one or two drawings.

2) Find several artists and have them each do drawings for one of the characters.

3) Find one artist and have them do all of the art.

Each approach has advantages and disadvantages. One artist would be the easiest to work with and may be the cheapest because they might give a bulk discount, but it might be hard to find one

artist that can do all of the different kinds of art I want and it might be hard to commit to one.

Lots of artists will give lots of variety and low risk if one turns out to be not very good. But, one-off pieces will be more expensive – I think – and I know it would take a lot of time to find all of the artists. On the other hand, it's a lot of fun looking at all the different artists, and having fun is at least part of why I'm doing this.

The middle ground of finding five or six artists might be the best, but it could also have the problems of both of the other approaches – lots of time to locate them, not enough pieces to get the price break, and having to commit to an artist for a bunch of pieces.

I'm going to put off that decision for a while longer. Right now, besides finishing the edits, I need to think about how the book will lay out – page size, font, and font size, how chapters will start, when there will be blank pages, how maps will be displayed, the placement of drawings, the number of drawings, do I want to have something distinctive about how Annay's journal pages look compared to Samuel's or the Captain's, etc.

There are also significant little things like:

1) I've titled each chapter. Do I want to keep the titles? Do I want

a table of contents that lists all the titles with their page numbers?

2) I've written the story as if it is a research document that someone has pieced together from the various source material. Do I want to list all the references somewhere? Do I want to but in footnotes? Do I want to put in some of the foreign language – words or phrases – with translations?

3) At the beginning of each chapter, I have a quote. A lot of the quotes are from the Holy Writings. I've written out much of that source material. Do I want to include that at the end of the book? Do I save that as a follow-on for when people want more?

There are also some significant big things like:

1) Do I do a hardcover version? Do I do a paperback version? Do I do an ebook version?

2) Do I only have black and white line drawings, do I include pictures (paintings)? Put another way, is the book black and white or in color.

3) How many pages do I want the final book to be? Before these last edits, it was 114,000 words. Right now it's 122,000 words. If I keep adding at this rate and seeing the parts that need to be filled in, it will put me near 140,000 words. That's a good-sized book without adding pages for pictures, about

375 pages, so 400 to 450 with pictures. Still doable, but getting up there.

4) How much layout do I want to do? Do I want to lay out every page, selecting where every drawing goes? Do I want to create a format and let the software figure it all out? I know what I want to do – lay it all out – but do I want to spend that much time? Can I get someone else to lay it out?

5) When it comes time to publish the book, do I spend the time to try traditionally publishing it or do I self-publish? If I self-publish, do I want to do it myself or do I pay someone to do it? Do I just do print on demand (higher cost per book) or do I get a bunch printed (up-front cost to me)?

6) When I'm all done, do I want to do a Kick Starter to raise the money to do the publishing and get pre-sales or do I just put it out there? Do I try to do book signings and go to trade shows? Do I pay someone to do marketing?

So many decisions.

Well, I couldn't help myself. I spent three or four hours laying out the book in InDesign. It was a lot of work, but not as hard as I thought it might be.

With no drawings or maps, the book lays out as 591 pages. Each chapter starts on the right-hand page. The main text is 11 point Times Roman. Pages with just text are 300 words per page. Pages with

dialog are more like 250 words per page. With all the white space for chapters, paragraphs and such, the average is 223 words per page.

This seems a little low so I might be able to shrink the page count some. Dropping the font to 10 point reduces the page count to 519 pages.

All those numbers are for a page size of 5" wide by 8.25" tall. If I grow the book size to 6" wide by 9.25" tall and 10 point font, the page count drops to 416 pages, which would be a good size.

So, adding the chapters that I haven't written yet, maybe 5% more and the maps and other drawings, and I might be able to come in under 500 pages.

I think I've got a handle on finishing the text for the book. The big question is going to be the art. Besides the who question, which I already talked about, the other question is how much?

How much am I willing to spend to have someone create the art for me? Is there a return on this investment or is this for my own benefit (enjoyment and therapy)? Is this the kind of thing that I do a Kick Starter campaign for? Can I find enough people who believe in the project to pay for the artists?

How much art? Do I want 1% of the pages to be art? 10%? I know that I want some full-page drawings, but how many little pieces of art do I want? I've

thought about having doodles in the margins of some of the journal entries. How many of those do I want? Which journals?

Well, I guess that's enough rambling for now. The good news is that I've made some good progress this year. The bad news is that I'm not done, which was my goal at the beginning of 2017.

This last Halloween was the tenth anniversary of my son Nigel's death. All of this is the result of that. I wrote on a blog for a year, and then I started writing the novel so next year will be ten years since I started the story.

I want to have it done before next Halloween, but maybe Halloween is a realistic goal - to have everything done and be ready to have it in bookstores and into your hands by October 31st, 2018.

Sounds like a good goal. I'll spend a couple hours during my break and create a timeline. Still, need to get the editing and re-writing done in the next month or two. I can use all the words of encouragement I can get, so thank you ahead of time for reaching out to me over the next several months with those words.

Happy New Years to everyone. I hope the new year finds you happy and healthy.

Doug Clarke

This newsletter comes out monthly. It often contains news about the two novels I'm writing, the occasional a short story, discussion about writing, or other very off topic things like my woodworking projects. Go to DouglasGClarke.com to see back issues or to buy a lamp.

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