

Unremembered Loss

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

Issue 13

September 2010

The start of the second year's newsletters and I've taken a slight detour.

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A Detour

About a month ago I decided to take a little detour on my road to getting my book published. I've been reading other author's blogs and several of them talked about how to take your blog and turn it into a short book. The idea is that you've already put a lot of effort into writing a blog, so the amount of work need to take then and turn them into a book is smaller.

This idea struck a cord with me for a couple of reasons. First, I really like some of the blogs I've written for the characters in my novel. Second, I would like to get my novel published in the traditional way, but as a complete unknown it's an up hill battle. I've though about self publishing, but there are a bunch of down sides. However, a collection of blogs entries would be something that I could self publish. Third, I'm still trying to find the exact market that my novel fits. With a short book, I can try to better target an audience. Lastly, I've had several people tell me that my blogs made them think and look at things differently.

As I looked through my blogs, the thought of turning them into a daily devotional intrigued me. I started by randomly picking a couple of blog entries and trying to write some question based on them. I liked the results, but they were a little eclectic and the questions seemed a bit deep for the beginning of a devotional. (I didn't want to scare off potential readers as they read the first day's entry.)

My second stab at a devotional was to take four stories that I had written that were, in essence, one

long story. I started with the first one and found that I could easily create seven days' worth of devotions for the first story. I started laying out the book with two facing pages for each story and for each day. It turned out that two of the stories took four pages. The pattern felt good.

I started writing each day's questions, ten on average, leaving room for the readers to write in their responses. As I was writing I found myself using two points of view when asking the questions. The first was a typical second person point of view where I was asking questions like, "Have you ever" The other point of view was a first person one, where I was asking myself questions like, "Have I ever"

After a bit of indecision, I decided to write all of the questions in the first person point of view. The choice was actually tough. I was already writing some of the entries as a sentences to complete, "I was surprised when," this might have been the reason the question first came up. I also tried to rewrite some the question in the first person point of view and found it difficult - the question seemed forced and sometimes awkward because in second person it is easy to ask questions with options. "What did you say when they asked you who Jesus is, or what would you say if asked?" In the first person point of view, I would already know which of the two questions to ask. I could have left the questions in both forms, but it felt odd prefixing the finish the sentence questions with, "Complete the following statement, I am happiest when" I could also have

removed the finish the sentence questions and replaced them with, "When have you been the happiest?"

In the end, I liked the more personal feeling of the first person point of view and felt it would have the effect of drawing people out more. Also, when reading over parts that a person had already finished, it would feel more like an exploration of self than an interview. I also thought it might help be see the kinds of questions they that can ask themselves when they do their own devotions.

So I started editing and writing each weeks devotions, changing the questions to be first person. I pulled in a couple more stories that were related to the main story and fit with the theme. I ended up with six stories and a total of 108 pages including the cover and introduction. I have four of the weeks completely done and another one roughed out.

This week I'm going to be looking for several people to use the devotional in its draft form. I'll be giving them the introduction, the first weeks devotions, and a response form. Then each week I will give them the next weeks devotions. If all goes well I should get lots of good feedback and could have a finished product in six weeks. Of course things never go that smoothly, but it does feel like I could have something done by the end of the year.

If you would like to be a beta tester, please let me know if you would rather have a electronic or printed copy.