

# Unremembered Loss

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

Issue 18

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This is a short month so I decided to write about short stories, or in this case really short stories. I've been writing five different types of short stories - Hint fiction, Nano Stories, 140 character line a day stories, character blogs, and traditional short stories. The short story is a different medium than the novel. Instead of worrying about filling up the pages you have to focus on getting to the point, especially with the very short stories.

## Hint Fiction

In August of 2009 I tried my hand at writing Hint Fiction. These are stories in 25 words. Unlike all of the other forms, the Hint Fiction short story does not have to have a main character, problem, or resolution.

The point of the Hint Fiction is to give the reader just enough of a hint that he or she can imagine the story. I entered two stories into a contest, but failed to win.

Here are the two I entered and two others I wrote at the time, along with one I wrote about getting Comic-con tickets this year – finally one that Rory wrote.

### **I Hoped We Could All Be Friends.**

We kiss. He yells. I duck. Knife hits. You cry. We run. Car crashes. We're okay. He finds us. She finds us. We run on.

### **Flight 723**

Rocked by turbulence, smoke fills the cabin, a baby cries, and masks drop. Spinning, falling, fading to blackness. We're floating. A sea of endless dreams.

### **One Last Chance**

Free. Limited time. It's a matter of life and ... Hurry. Time is of the essence. Kiss. The end is near. Will I see you again?

### **Lost**

The moon is full, illuminating the countryside. The wind carries the sent of wolf. There is nowhere to run, and no way to find home.

### **Comic-Con Tickets**

Anticipation. Third time's the charm. System crashes, like last time. Pressing retry over and over. Five hours of trying, then success, but at what cost.

### **The Alley**

The lights flashed, the cold handle of a gun in my hand, I heard screaming and a yell. I felt the trigger. Blood was everywhere.

– Rory

# Nano Story

A Nano Story is a story in 50, 55, or 60 words. Fifty five seems to be the most common. One might think that a 55 word story would be easier than a 25 word one, and if the rules were the same that might be true.

With a Nano Story there must be a main character, a problem, and at least a hint to the solution to the problem.

My first attempts at writing Nano Stories was while I was writing my NaNoWriMo Novel in November. In my November newsletter I incorrectly called them hint Fiction.

*Friend* is another example from the novel.

In December I wrote a set of six Nano Stores around the well known story of the Prodigal Son. I took the story and wrote it from six different points of view.

Finally there is one from Rory.

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## Friend

He saw that I was sad. He actually listened to me. I shared my deepest fears, and then he helped me face them. He was there when I needed him most and cheered me on when I started doing better. I tried to give him a reward - he said no.

## Son

I asked my dad for my inheritance early. I lived high and denied myself nothing until I was penniless. I found a job taking care of pigs, but thought, "My father's servants live better than this." I went back home to beg for a job, but my father welcomed me back as a beloved son.

## Father

My heart broke when he asked for his inheritance, as if I were dead. I mourned when he left. Every day I watched the road, praying to God to return my son. When I saw him, I ran to him giving him rings and a robe. I thanked God for returning my son to me.

## Brother

He left me to do all the work. Life was always hard, but it became almost unbearable. A year later he came home. Father welcomed him like nothing had happened and threw him a party. When I complained he told me he always had me, but his son had been dead and was now alive.

## Mother

My heart broke twice that day. My son turned his back on us and my husband fell into depression. I put my sadness aside – I had a household to run. The day he came home, I was afraid of what my husband might do, but God kept his heart soft and he took him back.

## Sister

My younger brother was never satisfied - wanting the prestige and honor of a birthright. He never saw how hard I worked, never realized how well off he was by being a son. He thought he would do better on his own, until he became a slave. Now he's glad to be a younger son again.

## Neighbor

It was disgraceful how he treated his father, telling him he wished he were dead. Then the father gave him his inheritance; he had no respect for himself. A year he waited for him to return, leaving others to tend to his business. When his son returned he ran to him like a child. Disgraceful.

## Captured

An arrow flew out of nowhere and hit me in the shoulder. I fell down to the damp ground and a bag was pulled over my head. When I awoke, I was tied to a chair and bleeding badly. I pulled out my hidden knife and started cutting a rope. One fell free, leaving four.

– Rory

## Character Blogs

My Character Blogs are a different kind of short story. There is not really any word length, but less than 1500 is a good rule.

What makes Character Blogs interesting is that they are Journal entries, which means they are written in the first person.

Perhaps a bit too much of my writing is done in the first person, but it comes from my year writing about my grief.

As can be seen from the example Hint and Nano stories, first person allows you to share the thoughts and feelings of a character with-

out feeling like you are prying too much.

My character blogs have ranged from the short and simple observation of an old woman at 56 words

*The moon tonight is dark. The tribe, just after sunset, left on the monthly hunt. I'm too old to run, but everyone took up a spear and joined in who was able. Mothers with their babies in arms, I saw running along side of the males and children. Everyone was excited. They will return at dawn; we'll have meat for all, I am sure.*

... to the epic stories of Samuel Gees where he retells the stories of his adventures as a youth.

*Many years ago I went on a trip to the seaside. It was with my friend Red Beard. Before I start my story I need to tell you a little bit about Red Beard ... + 3121 more words.*

When I wrote my NaNoWriMo novel it turned out to be a collection of personal journal entries, which when taken together tell the history of man.

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## Traditional Short Stories

The traditional short story is between 1,000 words and 20,000 words. Shorter works being called flash fiction and longer ones novella.

Short Stories can be broken down in to two finer sets by word counts: the short story being 1,000 words to 7,500 words, and the novelette being 7,500 to 17,499 words (in which case the novella is 17500 to 40,000)

Except for a few of Samuel's character blogs and some of the

longer stories in the NaNoWriMo novel, most of my short stories fit into the Flash category of less than 1000 words.

The one notable exception is the *Shepherd's Story* that appeared in the December Newsletter at 1,306.

It is interesting to look at how the demands on the writer change as the length of the story increases.

For the shortest stories, the idea is the most important item. As the story length increases, the character and plot become important. As the

stories stretch into the thousands of words, the conflict and growth in the main character become the thing that must be focused on.

While a fast paced fight scene might carry a 500 word story, 5,000 words of fighting will become dreary.

So as with all things, one must look at the task at hand and tailor one's approach to meet the problem there. As I write more and challenge myself with different styles, all of my writing improves.

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## Line A Day Stories

I've saved the Line A Day stories for last because they are a combination of styles. A Line A Day story is one that is written one line a day where each line is up to 140 characters in length.

When finished, a Line A Day story can be anything from a Flash story to a 50,000 word novel.

My first Line A Day story, *Beyond the Beyond*, turned out to be 18 lines and 448 words. A respect-

able Flash Story. It took just under three weeks to write and post and explores the nature of heaven from a temporal point of view.

My second two Line A Day stories were started in May and August of 2009. The First, *Father*, is currently at 6,732 words and is still being written. The second, *No Where To Run*, is currently at 4,461 words and is also still being written.

I have not written a line every day, but I think I've averaged more than once every other day.

The challenges of the Line A Day story are on one hand, each line must be compelling enough to make the reader want to come back and read the next line, and on the other hand, the story as a whole must be deep enough to interest the reader for a long time, so they will read the story for a year or more.

The other thing that happened this month was that the Line A Day story that I've been working on since May of 2009, was recognized by the editors of the web site where I'm posting it.

I'm not sure why I won this award, perhaps it is for persistence. In any case it makes me feel good to have something I've written recognized as good.

Here is the beginning of the story. If you like it, please go and read the rest of it and vote for it. Hey, leave a comment too. I think I like comments even more than awards.



“Are you sure?” Bob said as he sipped on his coffee. He pondered Jill’s words for a few moments. “This doesn’t sound like you at all.”

“It does too sound like me,” protested Jill. “I’ve thought about this a lot and I know what I’m doing. I’m not a kid anymore you know.”

“I didn’t say you were a kid. And I’m on your side,” Bob said softly. “I love you and I don’t want to see you get hurt. That’s all.”

“You love me! Is that why you kicked me out of the house? I bet you love that dog of yours more than me. You didn’t kick him out.”

“I didn’t kick you out honey. You chose to leave because you didn’t want to follow the rules. You can’t imagine how much I miss you.”

“You made rules I couldn’t follow. You drove me out,” Jill complained. “Now that I’m on my own, you’re still trying to tell me what to do.”

“I don’t think giving you a midnight curfew was a rule you could not follow.”

“What about doing the dishes every night? I hardly ever ate at home. You were trying to force me to clean up after all of you pigs.”

“And so you left. That was your choice. That’s what kids your age do. You make choices, and then you have to live with them.”

“Right,” Jill almost spat back. “Now I’m trying to make another decision and you’re giving me crap about it.”

“Jill, please don’t talk like that. I raised you better than that.”

“You raised me - like some farm animal. Do you want me to sit pretty? How about I roll over or play dead?” Jill put her hands up begging.

Bob lowered his eye – shook his head. “Why do I even bother?” he said quietly. He looked up into her eyes. “Because I love you. That’s why.”

“You love me.” Now it was Jill’s turn to roll her eyes. “You keep saying that. I just don’t see it.”