

Unremembered Loss

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

Issue 22

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Welcome to another issue of the newsletter. Don't forget to forward this newsletter on to your friends and help me build a following that will one day lead to Unremembered Loss being published. Sign up for the newsletter at <http://www.douglasclarke.com/lists/?p=subscribe>

Doug

Hope Part II

Last month I wrote about hope from the point of view of an eleven year old boy. He learned about hope by watching his mother. He learned that hope is confidence.

This month I have another example of someone seeing hope in action, and maybe having seen hope in action may be able to understand it a little.

Zerog is one of the Turpes in my story. In the view of the people of Maple Grove he is a monster that worships a false god, and has no concept of hope, mercy or love.

The Words of Zerog

The humans have this word – hope – which I don't really understand. I spent some time with one of them recently and we talked about it – very strange.

I captured her in the woods and was bringing back to camp. She looked so young and tender. I'm sure she knew that her fate was to be a slave, to be tortured, and to end up as my dinner. She had to know she wouldn't see her people again, yet she was happy. I asked her why she was smiling and she answered me, "Because I have hope."

"Do you think you will be rescued?" I asked her.

She said, "No," and just kept smiling.

I didn't believe her so I took her off the trail and made her sit – I figured we would wait and see if we were being followed. While we waited we talked some more.

"What is this hope?" I asked her.

She thought for a few moments before saying, "It is the knowledge that God will use whatever happens for good – no matter how evil its intent. It is the knowledge that I am safe in him."

"Do you see where you are? Do you know where you are

going?" I asked her.

She nodded yes.

"And you believe that you are safe?"

She nodded again and then said, "You may hurt me. You may even kill me. But I know that I am safe."

"What are you safe from if I can hurt you and kill you?"

She lifted her hands up towards the sky and said, "I am safe in the eyes of God."

I didn't know what to say. What kind of God does she worship? In the eyes of God, the only thing I know is failure. I have not sacrificed

enough; I have not worked hard enough; I have not finished the tasks given to me.

I finally asked her, “How can you not tremble in fear before your God? Are you perfect?”

She shook her head. “I am not perfect. No, far from it. God may be disappointed in me, but he has forgiven me. All he asks is that I try to share his love with others, and even when I fail at that, he still loves me.”

“He loves you,” I said, almost hissing in contempt, “How can a God love someone like you?”

“Because his son loves me, and he loves the ones his son loves. Doesn’t your God love you?”

This one who was about to become a slave surely had nerve to ask if God loves me. One could be struck down for thinking so highly of oneself. God is to be feared and obeyed – he has no time to love me – and even if he did have time, how could he love something like me? My own mother can hardly stand me.

I jumped up yelling at her, “I should kill you for asking such things!”

But she didn’t flinch; she just sat there smiling. I didn’t

know what to do. I felt kind of foolish yelling and being angry while she was calm.

When I finally sat back down she said, “Would killing me make your God look at you with favor? If so, maybe you should kill me.”

I sat there a long time thinking, or trying to think. My mind didn’t know what to make of this woman. She seemed so out of place. She should have been crying and begging, but instead she was happy and even suggested that I should kill her. Maybe I should have. I thought about it, but my fear got the better of me.

I reached over and cut the rope tied around her neck. She sat there with a puzzled look on her face. “Run away,” I yelled at her. She just sat there smiling at me. I stood up and pulled her to her feet. “If your God loves you so much that you are not afraid of him, perhaps I should be afraid of his wrath if I hurt you.”

She nodded, understanding, and took a step backwards.

“I think there might be hope for you yet,” she said. “I have been told that there is nothing good in the Turpis, but today I think I have seen some.”

We stood there for a moment looking at each other - neither

of us moving. Then she took off the pack she was wearing

She reached into her back and pulled out a leather purse. I could hear the clinking of coins within it. She held out the purse. I stared at her.

After a moment she flicked the purse into the air. I caught it. It was heavy with coins.

“I know you are risking a lot, but perhaps this will help you save your honor a little.”

My disbelief must have shown on my face as I stood there. I had let her go, and still she stood there.

“Can I give you a hug?” she asked.

My mind did not even understand the questions. I stood there motionless.

She stepped forward again and wrapped her arms around me. “I’ll pray for you.”

As she started to walk away, I said to her, “Today your God has saved you.”

She looked over her shoulder and said, “My God saves me every day.”

I watched her walk away.

I wondered at her faith.

I’m still wondering about this thing she called hope.