

Unremembered Loss

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

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Who needs New Year's Resolutions when you're already getting things done.

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A Big Step

I've taken the next long step towards getting published. In December I decided it was time to hire a professional editor, after agonizing over the decision for a long time and weighing all the factors.

The first factor was a financial one; should I spend \$3,000 editing a book that might not, or even probably won't, ever earn me that much money. I thought about doing a Kick Starter project to try and raise the money, but decided that unless I believed in it enough to spend my own money, I probably wouldn't have the dedication to take the results of the edit and apply them.

That leads directly to the second factor; am I willing to put in the effort to take the results of the edit and rewrite my work. In fact, after talking about it with the editor, I decided the question really was, am I willing to put in the effort to incorporate the edits three times - that's because I've paid for three rounds of edits.

The first is called a development edit; that's where the editor looks at all the big picture issues: characters, character development, character interaction, story, story arc, speed, engagement, suspense, and a dozen other things - each of which could lead to major rewrites.

The second is a substantive edit; that's where the editor looks at chapters, paragraphs, sentences, word, grammar, flow, purpose, turning points, suspense and another dozen things - each of which can cause whole chapters to be rewritten, added, dropped or otherwise mangled.

The third is the copy edit; which focuses on the words, their layout and the way they lay on the page. It also looks at grammar and structure one more time. Hopefully, this will have the smallest affect on the story.

The question of effort was not really the point - it was more one of fear. Is my skin thick enough to take the criticism that is sure to come my way? Is my ego strong enough not to be crushed when my work is shown to be wanting? Will I step up the challenge to make my writing great, or will I give up in defeat?

Those were the questions I had to answer. I looked at myself, at my goals, and what finishing means to me and decided that I needed to do this. When I was talking to the editor, getting to know him and he me, I told him I needed him to be hard on me - that when I resisted making changes that he should push to make sure I wasn't resisting just because I didn't want to do the work, because it is hard work for me.

The last question, and perhaps the hardest, was whether I had the time to finish. Between family, work and the rest of life, did I have the time to do this. I still don't really know the answer to that question, but I've been working on the book for six years and I figured if it takes another six years, then that's what it takes.

With the decision made, I signed the paperwork in December. I'm actually having him edit my shorter novel first, but just a light development edit and evaluation of whether it is marketable. That story is in his hands as you read this, with the results expected in the middle of February. That's when his work on Unremembered Loss will start. Since the novel is twice as long and the edit will be much more in depth, I don't expect the results of the first edit until April.

I'm sure next month's newsletter will be filled with the fears and tribulations caused by the results of the first edits.

Bye-Bye

I admitted defeat this month on my radio play. It was a tough thing to do, but I've let it hang over me for too long.

The play was a radio broadcast during a zombie apocalypse. I got 10 or 15 different writers to write parts of the 30 day, 1/2 an hour a day play. In the end, it was the number of writers and their varied styles that brought me down. Some of the stories were too short, while others were too long. Some had too much detail, some were just fluff, and some went off on a tangent. Some didn't keep up with the overall story arc, while others jumped way ahead and messed up the surprises that other writers were writing about.

I finished three days of the play and had another 4 days partly done. I kept telling myself that "next month" I would start working on it again. This month I realized I was kidding myself and just causing myself grief. I wrote a letter to all the authors and let them know that they could take the work they had done on their stories and turn them into something else if they wanted.

Hello

We had a little extra money left over in our company at the end of the year so we decided to branch out in another creative way. We now make pins and buttons. It is cool from a creative point of view because the process from beginning to end is so short. So far we've sold buttons at one event (a boy scout merit badge weekend), selling over a dozen buttons.

One of the cool things we've done is to make buttons with pressed flowers. Emma found a flower press that she had put flowers in many years ago. We made four mirror buttons with flower and sold all four to the first person who saw them.

We've pressed some more flowers and made eight more flower mirror buttons, but haven't had a chance to sell them yet.

If you need buttons for a fund raiser, let me know. We'll make them for you for much less than you can buy them elsewhere and your group can raise some money.

Puzzles

We finished designing out first story-jigsaw puzzle. It is a limited run of 50 sets. We have finished and sold three sets so far and have an order for one more. It has been fun doing the puzzles, especially working with other artists. It has been a bit frustrating getting the puzzles cut - not the part that I thought would be the hardest to get right.

A Short Story

In the mean time here is a short story. The goal of this story was to write the story in twenty-six sentences, with each stating with the next letter of the alphabet.

Fear

by Douglas Clarke

As the sun set in the west, Zeth couldn't help but think of the sunrise that morning - so full of hope. Besides the prospect of spending the day with Yolanda walking through the shops that line the beach, he was looking forward to popping the question over dinner that evening. Curiosity had gotten the best of him when she didn't show up for breakfast so he went up to her room and knocked. Despite the ever increasing volume of his knocking, she didn't answer. Eager to be with his beloved again, he went and fetched the hotel's manager - convincing her to come and open the door.

Frustrated and heartbroken, Zeth sat in the lobby wondering what to do next. Gone - without a trace, without a word or note, Yolanda had left. He decided to walk along the beach - perhaps looking for some closure in doing what he had planned, even if alone. Inside a small shop he saw a blue dress that reminded him of her, the swaying of her hips, the spring in her step. Just then something caught him - a flash of blue out of the corner of his eye - Yolanda?

Knocking over a display and ignoring the shop owner's yells, Zeth ran outside. Looking up the walkway, eyes darting this way and that, he searched for his love. Methodically he made his way up the street, searching every shop, studying every face, glancing around every corner.

Now he sat at the bar, nursing his ninth beer, watching the sun disappear like his love had. Only if he had told her sooner that he loved her - that he wanted to be with her forever. Perhaps she wouldn't have run away, or maybe she knew and that's why she had run.

Queasiness - was it the beers or his regrets - in either case he decided to leave the bar and see if some fresh air might help. Refreshed by the cool evening breeze, Zeth walked along the beach, letting the waves lap at his sill shod feet.

Standing there was Yolanda. Tears running down her cheeks. Unable to control himself, unable to feel anything but relief in seeing her again, Zeth ran and threw his arms around her waist, and then swung her off her feet.

Vexed with sudden pain, Zeth, put Yolanda down and stepped back.

"Why?"

Exhaling, Yolanda spoke of her fear, her panic, her regret in running away.

"Yolanda, will you marry me?" Zeth asked, one knee on the sand.

"Zeth, if you will have me, I'm yours," Yolanda replied with her words and her kisses.