

Unremembered Loss

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

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The Rise and Fall of the Human Race

I sent it off...

I set myself some goals for getting through the revisions last year and I finished. I sent the third draft to my editor on February 9th, a short 751 days after I sent it away for the first round of edits, which was 1540 days after I had started writing it.

Going back and figuring this out makes me wonder where time has gone. November 1st, 2010 I sat down and started to write, with the goal of writing a novel in 30 days.

I finished the first draft in that 30 days, finishing at 10:30 on the evening of the 30th. The goal was 50,000 words and I had a little over that. The manuscript has grown a little since then to 65,388 words.

I read through it one last time this evening before exporting to a word document and pressing the send button. A few of the stories still brought a tear to my eye. I think a lot of the stories are very powerful. Some are very timely, and a few are timeless.

I'm not sure what it is I want to tell you all - other than you've got to buy a copy when it comes out - but it feels like there's something.

I almost didn't press that send button. Was it ready? Was I done? Is it good enough? Am I good enough? Will my editor roll his eyes when he gets my email and say to himself, "He expects me to do these edits for the 2014 prices?"

There was fear, but then I pressed send. There was a sense of peace that came over me. I had walked through the valley of darkness. I had faced my fears and challenges and made it through.

So now what? I wait. I can think about a cover. Words for the back cover. Dread the reply email with the editor's comments, or focus on something else while I wait.

After six years, it feels like these stories are part of me. I think, even more than my novel, this book is a peek into who I am - what I think is important and where I see injustices in the world. I could probably go on and on, but I think I've said all I really have to say so instead let me give you a taste of "*The Rise and Fall of the Human Race*"

The Third Crimean War, 2082

Headlines from the "Network News"

Excerpts from "On the Path to Peace" the biography of Kim Balanchuk
by Bohdan Yelyuk

Day 97 of the war and the costs mount

Kim knelt in the corner of the room, her body trembling from the cold and the sounds that the wind carried through the broken window. Despite the grumbling of her stomach, her next meal wasn't something she was worried about. The trembling stopped as her body tensed at the roar of a jet's engine.

She held her breath as she waited for the scream that would announce an incoming bomb. The roar passed and the screams didn't come. Kim's body slumped into the corner - every muscle slack - the breath she had been holding escaping. The reprieve lasted only seconds. Soon the wind carried

new threats and her muscles tensed once more.

Her body knew the routine well, five relentless weeks, but it was anything but routine. The sleepless nights, the ever present threat, the loss of place - of belonging - each took their toll, each left Kim less of a human and more a wild animal.

Day 100 - Should we have gotten ourselves into this?

Kim pulled the shriveled apple from the tree and shoved it into her pocket with the others. Greedily she picked the last one. This one didn't go into her pocket, instead she held it in both hands. She stood there staring at it, then she dropped onto her knees.

"Thank you, God." She paused, then after taking a deep breath she

bit into the small red gift. It's juices filled her mouth, not sweet at all, but the best thing she could remember ever tasting. She ate all of it, reluctantly spitting out the seeds. Sated, she took her treasure and left the openness of the field for the imagined safety of the shrubs.

"Why am I here?" she asked no one. "Did I do something wrong?"

Is this a punishment?" Her hand bumped into the pocket bulging with apple. "No, God is sustaining me. He would not protect one who was being punished." She crawled under the largest of the bushes and curled up. The explosions seemed far away and the rumbling in her stomach quieter, soon she was asleep.

Day 105 - Two more soldiers die, death toll reaches seventeen

It had been two days since Kim had eaten, but something kept her from eating the of last of her apples. She moved as quickly as she could, along the low stone wall next to the road. She knew she had to find water soon and it drove her toward the small town. Most of the buildings had burned, their frames looking like skeletal fingers reaching into the sky. A few wisps of smoke trailed off to the west.

Kim sat in another burned out building. The first rays of the morning sun peeked through the mountain tops. Fear didn't consume her like it had a week earlier. Now her thoughts were of life and hope as she held the head of the sleeping boy in her lap. He had been in the

One building ahead looked intact, it held both hope and dread. It could hold food and water, or just as easily death, but without the first, the second would find her soon enough. Step by step the building approached, then she saw what lie beyond it. Littered all around the town's central square were bodies. Some in groups of two or three, others alone. Some in what must have been a final embrace, others running. Each differ-

ent. All random, but for two things. They were all dead and they had all fallen the same way in death.

Kim's mind wouldn't let her count, or even estimate how many had died here. It was just too many. She couldn't think about why they had gathered together in the square or what could have caused their deaths, instead she focused on the door to the building and what might be inside.

Day 107 - Our fascination with death

building in the town of death. He had not responded when she entered or when she spoke, but when she had held him, he had clung to her.

The building had held life, in both food and humanity. She had

left her death with the dead in the square and found living with the life she now claimed as hers to protect. Ishmael stirred. Kim stroked his head softly and whispered for him to go back to sleep.

Day 115 - Hostilities End - Our boys are on their way home

The airplanes were gone. The smoke not quite as heavy. Kim walked slowly down the road, Ishmael's hand in her's. Their search

for a new home continued as they passed each leveled farmhouse and each crater. They could hear the pops of gunfire in the distance and

they occasionally passed a decaying body, but the feel of spring was in the air.

This is the third story in the book, in the chapter titled "The Rise of Technology." It's not a new thought: what happens when those that wage war don't have to deal with the pain and suffering of war. But that's not what the story is about, it's about the depth of the human character that can find hope in the mist of war.

Please share this with you friends and encourage them to sign up at www.douglasclarke.com/lists. This book now represent six years of my struggle to write a story worth reading and I need your help to finish.