

# Unremembered Loss

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

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Welcome to this month's newsletter. I had planned on having this newsletter focus on a new release, but I ran into the end of the month and the project is not ready yet – so stay tuned next week for the big news. In other news, the second round of edits on my novel are done. I have to do a quick run through and check all the dates – since it is a history book – and then it will be ready for the final pass.

In the mean time, I decided to bring back one of the super heroes I introduced in issue 70 of my newsletter, Mega-Spider. This will be part one of the new story, with part two scheduled for July.

Thanks for reading and letting your friends know about the newsletter – Doug

<http://www.douglasclarke.com/lists>

## Mega-Spider Another Friday Night on the Town

Another week done, another wad of cash in her purse. Dena sat in traffic and wonder what she was going to do when she got home. Nothing she realized. So why go home? With that question lodged firmly in her head, a fact tried to join the picture - the Last Stop Tavern is just a block away.

The nudge of that fact brought the question to conclusion – there was no reason to go home, and in fact lots of reasons not to go home: dirty dishes, boring TV, no one to talk to, and most of all, no margaritas. Dena edged on to the shoulder and then zipped by the cars parked on the freeway. Three minutes, two curbs, a trash can and one angry old woman with a walker later, she was walking into the dim light of her home away from home.

Time moves differently at the Last Stop. If you've got money to spend, time seems to stop, but once you hand your last dollar to Phil, that last drink is gone before you know it and you've got nothing to do but leave. For Dena, on a Friday night, time was moving at a snail's pace. With five gone and number six set up, the chirp of the cellphone was the last thing she was hoping for.

The Mayor. Why is it always Friday evening when she calls. Do you suppose that the bad guys have Monday through Friday jobs, too, and Friday evening is the first chance they have to cause trouble? Or is it that the bad guys know everyone is tired on Friday evening so it's the safest time to execute their plans? Either way, Dena resisted the temptation to drop the

phone into her drink and instead downed the drink, then pressed connect.

“You've got me. What's the problem.”

The mayor's voice was quiet, almost a whisper. “Got a problem at city hall.” The sound of gunfire drowned out her voice. “I could use your help, if you don't mind.”

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Ten minutes later – and the thought did cross her mind, what happened to all the traffic – Dena slid up to the curb, the cloud of smoke from her 15" slicks hiding her as she slipped out of the her '67 Shelby Mustang and into the shadows. She hit the railing by the side stairs hard and sprang into the air.

She reached out and grasped a flag pole, then flipped up to the balcony. She landed in a crouch and peered through the window.

Three holes pierced the windows surface, a spider's web of cracks radiating from each. The mayor's office was in shambles – every chair overturned, every book knocked from its shelf, the mayor's desk split in two – with no sign of the mayor. Mega Spider sprang towards the window and hit it with her shoulder. The fine cracks grew and joined each other. With a crash, she tumbled through the window, into the office and ran through the door.

She dropped to her knee beside an officer, finger to his neck. She pulled back a bloody hand and looked away. Three more times she repeated the process, each time finding only death. The sound of spinning tires told her that she wasn't going to find the mayor here.

Running back to the office and to the window, she saw the unmistakable taillights of a Corvette disappearing down the street.

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Back at the web, Dena let her fingers weave a web through the internet. Dozen of traffic camera image filled the screens. The outline of the corvette traced through them. A map of the city marked the car's route, as her software found the car at each intersection. Then nothing.

She searched each camera and nothing. Between 5th and 6th the car simply disappeared. Dena checked, no garages, no alleys, no where to go. She scanned the cameras again. Then she saw it – a truck crossing 6th, large enough to hold a car, with a beautiful logo on the side – Confederated Chemical Corp.

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She parked a block away – no sequels, no smoke, not even the beep of her car alarm. She stayed in the shadows as she approached the rusted fence that circled the rusty buildings and tanks of the formal Confederated Chemical plant.

One light shown through a third floor widow – one of the only unbroken windows on this side of the building.

Mega-Spider flipped over the fence, crossed the debris covered fields and into the main building. She scanned for a computer network, but the building was dead.

Two flights of stairs and a long dark hallway later she was poised outside the door – the rooms light escaping under it. She listened. One person breathing. Labored breathing. Probably gaged. No other sounds.

With a push the door swung open. Light filled the hallway. She saw it from the corner of her eye – a light sensor stuck to the wall where there shouldn't have been one. She felt the signal radiating around her, but there was nothing she could do to stop it.

She ran as fast as she could towards the mayor – no doubt in her mind that death was racing her. She hit the mayor's chair at full force and lifted it and the mayor towards the window.

The window resisted their intrusion, but then the room exploded into a ball of fire. The pressure wave did what Mega-Spider couldn't manage and blew the window and the mayor and Mega-spider into the night.

Mega-spider twister and rolled, positioning the mayor and her chair above her before the ground raced up to meet them.

Mega-Spider felt the ground beneath her – breaking ribs – knocking the air from her lungs – sending a shockwave through her head. Then she felt the chair plunging into her now stationary body – breaking ribs – knocking the rest of the air from her lungs – sending her head into darkness.

Thoughts drifted back into Mega-Spiders mind. Thoughts of pain. Unimaginable pain. The thoughts fled away leaving her in blackness.

Twice more she tried and failed to fight back to consciousness. Then the single thought, I'm not dead, but I wish I was, stayed with her as she felt the pain of every breath and every twitch.

To be continued ...