

# Unremembered Loss

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

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## A Dry Run - the audio play *Alone?*

Amongst the other news in March's newsletter, I wrote about the audio play I'm working on and the previous one that failed. After writing that newsletter, I started to think about the work required to write and produce a serial audio play. I realized that there were a lot of things I didn't know anything about. With that in mind I decided that it would be a good exercise (learning experience) and prudent to write and produce a single short audio play first.

With lots of short stories under my belt I selected four of my favorites and re-read them with an eye toward turning one of them into an audio play. Two of them were quickly eliminated because, while they might make good audio book, they were not play material.

I selected one of the other two and started turning it into a script. When I was done I realized that it was going to be technically difficult to produce because it had several crowd scenes in it.

I took the second story and turned it into a script. From a technical point of view it would be easier to produce, but it was closer to an audio book than an audio play.

I weighed the pros and cons of the two scripts and decided that if the goal was to produce something, then I should start with the easier

of the two. With the second story, *Alone?* ready to go, I mapped out what I needed to do.

Step one was to come up with a budget. The tricky thing here was to not under value my own time. When looking at all of the tasks that had to be done, which ones could I do in an hour or two that I could also get someone else to do for twenty dollars? I decided to value my time at the aforementioned twenty dollars an hour and set my budget at \$100 per minute of the final project, which in this case is \$500 to \$600.

Having already spent three hours writing the script and creating the budget, I set off to find the voice talent I needed to record the three parts. As I started to search on the website [fiverr.com](http://fiverr.com), I quickly realized that it wasn't going to be as quick a job as I had thought to find the "right" voices to capture my vision (or whatever you call the hearing equivalent of vision) of the story.

What I found was that I couldn't really hear the story in my head, but, as I listened to different actresses' audition tracks I knew almost instantly that each of their voices were not what I was looking for.

I probably listened to three hundred auditions during a two hour period before I had to stop and re-

ally try to categorize what it was I was listening for – a 40ish woman, the ghost of her grandmother, and the narrator.

I tried searching for "older woman voice over" and found that not many woman wanted to tag themselves as "older." I tried "mature" with a little more success. I was listening to auditions as fast as I could. I ruled out the English accents. I listened to one from a South American woman. It wasn't what I was looking for; but there was something about it that felt right. After changing my search to include "Hispanic" and listening to another dozen voices, I found my woman.

Feeling renewed, I continued my search and quickly found my grandmother, a woman from Italy. I didn't find my narrator until the next day, but when I found her I also saw that she did audio mastering. I was planing on doing the audio mastering myself but for \$35 she would do it all.

I hired all three women and sent them their scripts. The recording cost me about \$5 per minute, plus another \$5 per actress to get high quality audio files. I knew I would have to pay additional for commercial licenses, but hadn't planned on paying that per actress. I paid the same licensing fee to the woman who read 50 words as the one who read 650.

Then I waited. I got a few samples along the way and made a few suggestions. Ten days later I had my final audio files. The thing I learned from this was that I missed out on the director part of the creative process.

I was the writer and the producer, but I didn't get to hear the actress say her lines and get to say, do it again a little slower and with feeling. I got to give some up front direction, sent it off into the net and then wait for the finished recordings to come back. I'm happy with the results, but I'm sure they could have been even better if I could have been involved in the recording process.

With the audio completed, I reached out to a composer friend of mine. I asked him if he would be interested in creating a background music track for the play. I told him I didn't have much of a budget, but he jumped at the opportunity.

Music in process, I turned to art. Even though this is an audio play, if I want any hope of getting people to click on the link to it on Facebook or Instagram, it has to have a picture. I started to look for someone to do the art and quickly discovered it was even tougher than finding the right voice.

Part of the problem was finding someone to do a piece of art for \$50 while looking at a site that is based on \$5 projects with additions. I also found it hard to describe what it was that I wanted.

I ended up making a composite image from seven pictures I found on the Internet and saying "something like this, but ... ." This took another couple of hours of searching and Photoshop work.

The pieces were now coming together: the voice track, the music track, and some art work, with another couple hours to tie it all together. But wait, there's more. I still had to compress it, figure out where to upload it, and once it is uploaded, I will have to let people know about it.

I want to know how many people are listening to it so I want to put it somewhere that tracks the numbers of visitors. YouTube seems like the best choice, but there are other good places, too.

I want a lot of people to know about it so I have to get out the word. The first obvious choice is my newsletter. Hopefully I can count on all of you to spend the seven minutes it will take to listen to my first audio play.

I have a Facebook page where I'll post the picture and link, but my Facebook following is a bit iffy. I do have a few writer friends who will probably listen to it. Big question is, will anyone re-post it so their friends will see it?

My expectations are pretty low for this first project. If I can get 400 views in the first month, I'll consider it okay – my daughter's video of her swimming rat got 416 views the first month and after 22 weeks it reached 6,199 views. You can watch it here:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BENODSjAzjN>

If I can get 4,000 I'll consider it a success. 40,000 and I'll have another one up next month. I might even think about quitting my day job if I get 400,000 views, but I know that'll never happen - still.

My other ambition is that at least some of those views will also be converted into newsletter subscribers. How about a 1% sign-up rate. 4 is okay, 40 is a success and 400 would be fantastic.

So what do you say? Have I inspired you enough to spend seven minutes listening to my play? If my play is good, will you tell your friends? Maybe even make a post on Facebook or tweet about it? If you're not already a subscriber to this newsletter, will you sign-up?

## The Play

Enough talking about the making of the play and on to the play itself.

The play follows a woman, who has just lost her mother, as she follows the traditions of her community, which among other things involves walking alone through a cemetery.

To listen to *Alone?* follow this link or find the link on my website.

<http://douglasclarke.com/word-press/general/alone>

<https://www.facebook.com/douglas.clarke.161>



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Douglas G. Clarke