

# Unremembered Loss

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

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I went into the archives for this month's newsletter. This is a story that I wrote on March 5th, 2010, at 10:19 in the evening. I had been writing my newsletter for seven months and was exploring different writing styles. The March newsletter was about writing fight scenes. This story explores what could happen with guild and grief are not dealt with. I decided that this would be a fitting topic on the tenth anniversary of my son Nigel's death. I'm happy to say I never had these thoughts or feelings, but I did experience the darkness of losing someone.

## The Note

*I'm not dead.  
Meet me tonight at Guido's  
Tell no one.  
7PM.*

"That's all the note said! You don't think ..." Jim left the question floating, hoping that Lisa would tell him he was crazy for even thinking that Zachary might have left the note.

Lisa's voice crackled over the cellphone, "No I don't think, but if he did you shouldn't be telling me about it." Jim could hear Lisa hyperventilating. "What are you going to do?"

"I don't know, but don't worry. I'll be fine. You relax. Okay?"

"I'm fine. It's just that - what if he is back."

Jim heard the sound of a horn blaring, then glass shattering, and then nothing. He looked at the phone, "6:15 - called ended." He quickly dialed Lisa's number, but only got a message saying that the number was out of service.

Jim stood there, his body trembling. He nearly threw the phone when it rang. He looked at the screen - Mary - he flipped it open. "Hello," he said in a quiet voice, trying to keep his voice steady.

"Hey Jimmy. How do you do? I got this strange note. It says ..."

Jim snapped the phone shut.

"Get a hold of yourself," He muttered to himself as he started pacing around his room. "Think. Think." He tried Lisa's number again, but still no service. He went to his dresser and rummaged at the back of the sock drawer. He froze as his fingers found the cold steel, then carefully he pulled out the handgun.

It was heavy in his hands. Heavier than he remembered. He reached back in and pulled out the box of shells - it felt lighter. He opened it and dropped the gun when he saw its contents. It only contained a piece of paper, the same old looking paper that the note had been written on.

The gun landed painfully on his foot as he stared at the folded piece of parchment. He held his breath and pulled out the piece of paper. He could see that it had writing on it.

Jim closed his eyes as he unfolded the paper, hoping that somehow the words wouldn't be there when he opened them again. But they were.

*You won't be needing these  
where you're going.  
Don't be late.*

Jim set down the box and the note, then picked up the gun. He checked it. He found that there was one bullet in the chamber. He put the gun back in the drawer, but then pulled it out again and slid it into the pocket of his jacket.

Jim looked at the clock by his bed - 6:22. He calculated the trip in his head: 5 minutes to get down stairs, 15 minutes to walk across town, an extra 5 minutes in case the lights were against him - that gave him 12 minutes to spare if left right now.

Somewhere along the way the decision of, whether or not to go, had be made. Jim grabbed his keys and his phone, and headed out the door. The wait for the elevator churned up the acid in his stomach. When it finally arrived, Jim didn't even wait for it to open all the way before he had jumped in and started pushing the lobby button.

As he walked across the lobby, he jumped when he heard, "Mr. Garland, there's a package for you." Jim took a couple of deep breaths. "Mr. Garland."

Jim looked over at the elderly man standing behind the desk. He was holding out a small box. "Would you like this now, or would you like me to hold it until you return?"

Jim walked over to the desk and managed to say, "Thank you," as he took the small box. He saw his name written there, Mr. James Garland, in the same writing as the two notes. Jim walked slowly across the lobby and out into the blaring of the street.

He walked for several minutes and found himself sitting on a bus bench looking at the box. Almost without thought he found himself opening the box, but he stopped. The flashing red and blue lights drew his attention down the street. He stood on the bench and counted three police cars and an ambulance.

Jim shoved the half opened box into his pocket and started running. He ran only two blocks, before reached the police tape. A crowd of

people pressed in to see what was going on - Jim pressed in, too.

He could see two cars, one sticking into the side of the other. "What happened!" he yelled at the woman in front of him. When she didn't respond he started shaking her.

"A car crash," the woman finally answered. "Now leave me alone."

"Who was in the cars?" Jim insisted. "Was it Lisa?"

The woman looked disgusted at Jim. "It was a man and a woman. How in the world would I know her name?"

"What did she look like?"

"Short, skinny, black hair."

Jim collapsed to the ground in relief, the adrenaline having carried him as far as it could. He sat there, trying to regain his strength. The sound of a distant bell ringing brought him back to the moment. He focused as he listened to the bell, it told him it was a quarter to.

He got up and started down the street, not quite at a run. He cut through the park and got mud on his shoes. He went through an alley and tried not to notice the man sleeping there. He heard the bell ringing again as Guido's came into view.

As the bell rang out its seven gongs, Jim leaned against the brick wall next to the entrance and remembered the last time he had seen

Zachary. It had been seven months ago when Zachary had shipped out to Afghanistan. Two months later he had come home in a body bag and they had put him in the ground.

They had been best friends and had promised to always stick together, no mater where they went. But Jim had chickened out when Zac had signed up. He had felt guilty when Zac had written about how hard it was without Jim there with him. He had felt even more guilty when Zac's body had came home, but his sprit had gone somewhere that Jim couldn't follow.

Jim looked through the dark window of Guido's. It had been three months, but the smell of the fire still attacked his senses. He saw what remained of the tables and chairs - of the place they use to hang out. Jim slid down the wall and sat on the sidewalk - lost.

He pulled the note out of his pocket, but the words were no longer there. He pulled out the box. It called him. He opened it. Inside was a blue box. He opened it and saw a medal laying inside, the Purple Heart.

"I'm sorry Zac." Jim said, and reached into his pocket. He pulled out the gun. "I'm coming."

Lisa screamed as she saw the flash and then heard the crack. She ran to Jim, his body lying on he ground. She grabbed him and held him tight. "I'm sorry Jim," she cried into his shoulder as she felt his life leaving him.