

MARRIED TO A TERRORIST

A TRUE STORY

The desert heat swirled around as I stepped off the airplane in Beirut. The heat should have made me sweat, but I still couldn't stop shivering. Rome had been colder, but that wasn't why I felt so cold. No, I was here to get my children back from their father who'd kidnapped them and brought them here, halfway round the world. How had it come to this?

By

Loreen Janzen

Janzen, Loreen
Married to a Terrorist

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This book is dedicated to my children,

Lee,
Pamela,
Mechele,
Troy, and
Mark.

My dearest children, I hope that this will enable you to comprehend the part of your background that you have never known and to give you a better understanding of the difficult times you had growing up.

And to the countless women who find themselves in need of a safe place. Fifty percent of the proceeds of *Married to a Terrorist* are dedicated to Women's Shelters.

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Thank you all from the bottom of my heart,

– Loreen Janzen.

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Edmonton Journal

EDMONTON, ALBERTA, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1976

FINAL

METRO EDMONTON 15c OTHER 20c

Ex-city man heads embassy invasion

A gunman who led seven armed men into the Canadian embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, has been identified as Eddy Haymour, a former Edmonton businessman.

Mr. Haymour, who had been a city barber shop owner and dealt in real estate, reportedly claims he was cheated out of an Okanagan island by his estranged wife, who now lives with their four children in Wetaskiwin, about 40 miles south of Edmonton.

First reports had the gunmen holding about 25 hostages, but after about three hours of tense negotiations, eight women hostages were freed and driven off in a red patrol truck of the Palestinian Armed Struggle Command, a branch of the Palestinian police force.

A psychiatric consultant with the B.C. attorney-general's department, Dr. John Peter Duffy said Mr. Haymour told him he and his family would be kidnapped by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and taken to Lebanon.

"If that is not successful, he told me, the PLO, which is active in British Columbia, would kidnap his wife and use him as a page."

The charge of a dangerous man only one of many charges against Haymour, some of which included bomb threats to the government of former B.C. Premier A. C. Bennett

"They're all inside a conference room . . . they are in the room. It's not optimistic. We're all here. There are about 20 of us. We're hostages. There's no violence yet. That's all I can tell you." — A telephone interview with a Canadian embassy staff member in Beirut, Edmonton



(Continued from Page 1)

The children are Lebnon, 14; Pamela, 12; Michele, 8, and Troy, 3.

The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Janzen, of 4012 53rd St., Wetaskiwin, Mrs. Haymour was working in Edmonton in a dress shop in 1959 when she met her husband.

The marriage was troubled and Mrs. Haymour said that at times she "lived in fear" of her husband. "I took many beatings," she said.

She obtained a legal separation in 1967 and custody of the children. Mr. Haymour was given visiting rights.

Looking exhausted and bewildered by the whole experience, Mrs. Haymour spoke briefly about her difficulties with her husband.

She said there was an incident in 1969 when Eddy was supposed to take the children to the zoo but instead took them to Lebanon. "He left a note saying I should pick his car up at the airport."

With the help of her parents, Mrs. Haymour flew to Lebanon — her husband is from a small village in the Middle East country — and told him she would go back to him if he would let her have the children.

The Haymour children, Lee, 14, Pam, 12, Michelle, 10 and Troy, 3, aren't allowed to play alone or go uptown unescorted. Mrs. Haymour said she fears her husband may attempt to take the youngsters to live with him, something that happened in 1969 when he took the children to Lebanon.

"I think he's just using the kids to get sympathy." In 1969, Mr. Haymour visited the children during a separation period when Mrs. Haymour said she had legal custody. She said her husband put the children on a plane and flew them to Lebanon where he put them in a boarding school while he went to Syria.

Mrs. Haymour has color snaps of him in combat drabs in Syria holding a machine gun with similarly dressed men in the background.

She finally went to Lebanon to get the youngsters. "I never thought I'd get out alive," she said.

Mr. Haymour also has accused his wife in the media of making him into a British Columbia mental institution and Lake Okanagan.

"I didn't put him in an institution and I didn't take him away," she stated flatly. Instead, she blamed her estranged husband for his problems.

"I had to run a crafts shop and take in seven and eight boarders," she said of the period when they lived in Okanagan. It was during that time that Mr. Haymour started to build an Arabian-style hotel on an island in Lake Okanagan.

"He was into a number of things in 10 years," she said, adding "people told him to get off that island, that he'd lose money . . . he was never at home. It was always this island business."

Mrs. Haymour has been trying to divorce Mr. Haymour since their final separation about three years ago.

Chapter One

Canadians Taken Hostage – February 23, 1976 – Beirut

The phone was ringing next to my ear. I swear I could hear it in my sleep. It was only 7:00 in the morning. Who could it be? Finally I awoke enough to answer it.

“Hello.”

“Hi, Loreen.”

“Loreen put the radio on.” It was my sister Myrna from Edmonton. “Mohammed is holding up the Canadian Embassy in Beirut with 20 to 30 hostages. My God! What next?”

I sat up in bed, jumped to my feet and ran to the kitchen to turn the radio on. I fumbled into my housecoat. Fear gripped my stomach. I checked to see if the children were all right.

What was going to happen to us now? Would our ties to this man never stop haunting me?

The front doorbell rang and I went to the door.

There greeting me were a group of news reporters fully equipped with notebooks and cameras, pointing towards me. One of them thrust a microphone into my face. The Press!

“Are you Loreen Haymour?” one asked.

“Yes,” I replied

“Have you heard the news that your husband Mohammed Haymour is holding up the Canadian Embassy?”

“He’s not my husband any more,” I declared, and explained that my sister, Myrna, had just phoned and given me the news.

Holding the microphone close to my face, they asked if I would make a comment?

Half asleep, my hair uncombed and looking frightful, completely

confused and scared half to death I gave a brief explanation, "I know that he is a sick man and that this isn't really unusual for him. He kidnapped the children in 1969. I had to go over to Beirut to bring them back to Canada. The children and I are continually living in fear everyday of his coming to kidnap them."

I peered over their heads and I saw many cars either parking or driving up to the front of the house. Others just passed the house. Pretty busy, I thought for a small town at such an hour.

Everywhere television cameras were being set up. All the way down the street, people were coming to my house.

"I have to go," I mumbled and closed the door.

I didn't know what to do. Should I send the children to school in the midst of all of this commotion? I didn't even feel quite awake yet!

I was in shock.

The doorbell rang again. I went to the door and slowly opened it, afraid of what I would find. There stood two men in plain clothes who identified themselves as RCMP officers. They asked if they could come in. I nodded stiffly.

They explained the situation and asked me not to talk to the news media at this time because the innocent people Mohammed was holding as hostages might be put in danger if the wrong things were said. There was no knowing what would or could put their lives in more danger. They asked if I could come down to the police station in Wetaskiwin to answer a few questions.

The children were just getting up at this point, wondering what was going on. I explained to the policemen that I had to call my parents to come and look after the children before I could go anywhere.

The fear mom and dad felt for the children and me was plain to read on their faces when they arrived later. Mom said that Myrna had called and explained what was happening. "My goodness girl," she said, "What next?" My Dad was so furious he said that they should just put him up against a wall and shoot him. We all felt totally helpless.

The officers waited to escort me to the station. I complied. In a daze, I got my coat and began to leave.

"Where are you taking Loreen?" asked mom.

The RCMP officer told her, "We have to take her to the police

headquarters to ask her a few questions.” They made it sound as if I had somehow been involved in the things Mohammed had just done.

I was escorted past the reporters and all of the people outside our house to the police car. Locked in the back seat of the police car, I felt like a criminal. “How could this be,” I thought. I hadn’t done anything. I was innocent. Mohammed was the guilty one. Why was I being punished yet again for something I hadn’t done?

Only an hour had passed since I had awakened to the stunning news.

I watched the snow on the ground through the car window as we drove to downtown Wetaskiwin. Cold and numb, helpless, insecure, I fought the tears of fear that threatened to choke my breath.

Questions whirled in my brain. How did they find us so fast, here in a small town in Alberta? Any minute now I was sure that my heart would stop pounding – that it might just stop altogether.

Mohammed had really done it this time. This was an international incident. Maybe now it wasn’t a family matter any more, maybe they would deport him so he couldn’t cause any more hurt, to us or anyone else. Maybe.

At the station I was taken into a small room. Two policemen sat with me. They asked if it was okay to tape the conversation. I nodded numbly. They asked me if Mohammed Haymour was my husband and when I had last seen him?

When and why I had left him, were the next questions.

I told them that I had left him in 1973 for the second time. I told them about the kidnapping, about the letter bombs and the one that had been meant for me. I told them about all the mental and emotional abuse over the years.

I told them I was terribly afraid of him and my fear that he might kidnap the children again. I knew the things of which he was capable of, that he had held me and the children as virtual hostages for years; hostages of his threats, his violence, and his mistreatment. I explained to the officers that a life didn’t mean much to Mohammed, just as the laws of Canada meant nothing to him.

He had always behaved as though he was above the rules governing the lives of others. There had been nothing in his behavior to indicate his attitude had changed.

I suspected that he had been involved in political organizations in Lebanon and Jordan. In fact, he had suggested and intimated it himself on numerous occasions when I was in Lebanon getting my children back. The children had told me that he only came to see them on weekends when he had them there. When I asked him about why he didn't visit the children more, he told me that he was in Jordan on business.

"What business?" I would ask. He would reply that he met with the PLO – even Yasser Arafat.

Funny, but I'd never questioned his answers then. The policemen's questioning seemed to last forever.

Finally the officers drove me back to my house. The police would stay with me and my children and would remain in constant contact with the government officials dealing with the hostage taking in Lebanon.

When I learned that Mohammed was demanding that his wife and children be brought to Lebanon I became very frightened.

So full of helplessness. I was overwhelmed.

How could I make them understand that there was no way I would be a party to this. Nothing would convince me to go to him and to hand him our children, not after what we had already been through.

The lives of the hostages seemed to pale in comparison to the threat that Mohammed posed to us. How could they even ask? Did our lives mean nothing? They wanted to exchange our lives for those of the hostages. They might as well shoot me right here, because once over there in his country he would, and the children would become lost in his way of thinking.

The children; Lee, Pam and Mechele were at school when I arrived back home. Mom and Dad had gotten them off.

Mom and Dad and my son Troy were the only ones in the house with the officers. I became frantic. Why had they sent the children to school? I was so terrified for the children that I phoned the school and asked that the children be brought back home. I wanted them where I could see them and know that they weren't in danger.

I didn't trust anyone.

The principal brought them home himself; he was very understanding of my distress. This lowered my anxiety a little – being together where I could watch over them, myself.

The children were frightened too. I sat down and explained to them what was happening, and tried to reassure them not to worry.

Questions filled my mind. How do you sit down and tell your four children not to worry in such a situation, children who had already gone through so much? I was particularly concerned for the three, who were kidnapped by this man in 1969.

How do you tell your children that their father is holding innocent people hostage? How do you prepare them for the possibility that they might have to go back to Lebanon to help free those same hostages? How?

You can't! You just can't!

Around 10:00 that same morning my children, my parents and I watched as a television news bulletin came across the screen. Every TV station, it seemed, was carrying this Canadian News Bulletin.

"Eddy (Mohammed) Haymour, a Canadian citizen was holding hostages in the Canadian Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon. He and the other terrorists have stated that they will throw out one of the hostages every hour if their demands were not met. He wanted money from the British Columbia Provincial Government and his family flown to him in Beirut."

By this time everyone we knew had heard the news, both in Wetaskiwin and in Edmonton where we had lived years earlier.

My pastor arrived to pray with us for the people being held hostage and their families, for the children and for our whole family. I remember, he asked God to make me strong, that I would not crumble, because the children really needed their mother. We also prayed that no harm would come to anyone overseas in Lebanon, that no one would panic and do something crazy, and that no lives would be lost.

Later, in a moment of despair, I remember my father kept shaking his head and saying over and over, "This can't be happening to our family."

The phone rang and one of the officers answered.

It seemed to me that he was on the phone for quite a long time. Then they called me to the phone.

It was the Defense Minister from Ottawa. "Why do they want to talk to me," I thought.

I remember it as if it were yesterday.

He asked if my name was Loreen Haymour.

"Yes," I replied.

"We would like to ask you some questions," he explained. He talked about many things and asked about our circumstances.

I told him about how I'd been trying to get a divorce and custody of the children for three years, but was unable to do so because of stipulations regarding people in mental institutions and divorce law. I was always being told that it was a family matter so no one seemed to think that they should assist us.

"Mrs. Haymour, your husband wants us to send you and the children to Beirut, Lebanon. Would you go? We have an airplane waiting for you at the Edmonton International Airport on stand-by," he said.

I was outraged! How could they even ask this of me or of my children? He'll kill me when he gets me there. What a crazy mess! I began to cry and plead with him.

Then I seemed to gain some control. My response was quick. "No! I am not putting my children through one more ordeal with him. We have been through enough! I can't stand any more!," I said.

He tried to be understanding.

My mind whirled. Mohammed had just been released from jail for bringing letter bombs into Canada. Why, I kept asking myself, wasn't he deported then? For the sake of my children, please just let us live our lives, already.

My mind was made up. I would not do what they asked!

He continued, "Do you think that Mohammed will hurt the hostages?" He wanted to know what his temperament was like. "Would you be willing to talk to him?" he asked.

I explained as clearly as I could that I honestly was not sure what he was capable of in his own country. His actions here were bad enough. I explained what had gone on in our marriage: the kidnapping, the mental abuse, the letter bombs, and about the time spent in a mental facility here in Canada.

"He is probably capable of just about anything if he is cornered!"

"If it will help the hostages, I am willing to talk to him but only as a last resort. Mohammed (Eddy) is just using the children and myself to get his own way as he has always done."

"What right did he have to point a gun at someone's head?" I wondered

out loud. Our lives with him were hell. My children had a right to a normal life. He was using those hostages. He was using all of us. Couldn't they see that? What kind of person would hold innocent people hostage? What father would put his own children through such an ordeal? Besides, he loves the publicity, the power for his own gain. "Money, Money, Money! Canada is easy, giving money to terrorists. We see it all the time. Millions given out," I said.

I poured it all out, all of the pent up fear and anger at a situation that never seemed to end for us. After a pause he quieted. You could tell he was thinking.

The Defense Minister asked me who my lawyer was and if I had custody of the children.

I told him that it had been impossible to get anywhere on that matter. He said he would call me back. I thanked him and said good-bye.

It wasn't more than half an hour later when my lawyer called. This was a surprise

He advised me that he would not be handling my child custody case any longer and that he had turned it over to another lawyer. He then put me through to him.

This lawyer asked me how soon I could get to Edmonton. My custody papers were ready and waiting to be signed. I explained that I would get there as quickly as I could tomorrow but that I would have to arrange for someone to stay with the children. With everything that was going on, I really didn't want to leave them.

So this is what the Defence Minister was thinking about. It was all planned, I would leave the next morning escorted by plainclothes RCMP right to the lawyer's office and home again.

The phone kept ringing that day, most of the time the RCMP answering it.

Thank God that I am in Canada, not in Lebanon or Saudi Arabia, I thought to myself. Police were everywhere. The road outside our house was like a highway, cars everywhere, press everywhere

The hostage negotiations continued. Twenty-five were still being held. The television and radio said that the PLO were involved. Officers talked with the hostage takers as hundreds of civilians watched them from behind cars and other barricades, the television reported.

My children and I watched as they showed even my wedding pictures.

I could not believe what I was seeing. Where had the press gotten these pictures, and so quickly?

Those hours seemed to drag very slowly. Every television station was broadcasting the developments of the hostage taking. Here in Canada, regular programming was being interrupted for the latest update bulletins.

During this time, the RCMP received a phone call that went on for what seemed like an hour. After the call they said, "Mrs. Haymour, we want you and the children to come with us. We're going to take you to a hiding place. We don't think you're safe here any longer."

I was terrified, for the children and for myself. I thought they were lying. I was sure this was their way of taking us to the airport and to Mohammed.

I was so exhausted, my mind a blur. I prayed and prayed, "Ease the pounding of my heart, O God!" "Oh my Goodness, Oh my Goodness!"

The RCMP felt that I would be safer somewhere else. They believed that Mohammed had some contacts with terrorist friends and groups sympathetic to his views who were involved here in Canada. They might try and aid his cause by involving the children and myself in some way. Fear rose in me afresh. "No I won't leave my house," I cried, "We'll stay here no matter what."

The newspapers quoted a Maalouly in Beirut saying that Mohammed (Eddy) Haymour told him that his wife was a Jewess and had conspired with a pro-Zionist Canadian judge to take his children away from him.

"What a liar," I thought, "Just to make himself look good in their eyes!" I understood what this would mean to the Lebanese people because they were at war with Israel and might retaliate against me and the children. Mohammed's statement would make the Lebanese people hate me.

I am Canadian. I was born in Canada to a German immigrant. My mother was born in Canada as well. We were Lutheran by faith not Jewish. No one should be put through what the children and I suffered that day! The emotional pain and terrifying stress was beyond endurance at times. I never imagined that I would ever figure in an international incident let

alone a hostage taking. It didn't seem possible. But Mohammed had made it possible. Thank God no one lost their lives!

Sadly, I realized something that day. When the issue is simply a dispute between two adults over the custody of their children, the wheels of justice appear to move very slowly, but when the issue becomes one of international importance, things can be resolved very quickly.

Oh, how I feared for the children. They had grown up in a very upsetting environment. How could they have a normal life? How could they ever have a normal life with a terrorist for a father? Could they ever forget?

If they could, would their friends and the community understand or would the children be blamed for the actions of their father? I was well aware that children and people in general could be cruel. I did not want to put the children through that sort of stress.

When the RCMP asked me to take the children out of our home into hiding I said no.

"We are not going anywhere," I said. "I do not believe or trust anyone anymore. Perhaps we'll be taken onto a plane and sent to Lebanon, just so this thing can be resolved. We are not moving or going anywhere! I'll stay as long as it takes!"

Another thing became very clear to me that day, it is not as much what you know as who knows you and how much bigger the issue matters to them that really counts. It is a question of perspective.

I went on to explain why I was refusing, in hope that they might in some way understand my fear.

"When my children were kidnapped back in 1969 and I asked the RCMP for help to get them back, no one could help me, even though I had a lawyer, a legal separation and legal custody of the children. Why should I trust them now to take me and my children to a safe place?"

I was so afraid that they would send me to Mohammed in Lebanon with the children. I didn't care if we had to stay here for a week, a month, or a year, whatever it took for this ordeal to be over; and so we did just that. We waited.

The children stayed home from school that week. The children's teachers brought their homework to me so I could teach them at home. With this arrangement, I felt at least a little safety, a little peace.

I found out later across the street in a neighbor's house – actually it was my cousin Malinda's home – the RCMP had placed officers with guns continually positioned on my home round the clock. We felt like hostages all over again.

I am very thankful for their support and understanding. Looking back on it now, I don't know how I would have gotten through that ordeal, without the support of my parents, family, friends, RCMP and government officials with their willing assistance, no matter how small or large the need. I thought often, thank goodness we were in Canada.

By noon of the second day, friends and family were bringing us food and support to get us through. At approximately 10:00 p.m., word came that the hostages had been freed. The sixteen hours of hell for the hostages was finally over.

No one died.

What a terrifying experience it was for everyone involved. Words cannot express how I felt that hour, or for that matter, that day.

My family and I were utterly exhausted yet elated over the release of the hostages. Unfortunately the ordeal continued for us for some weeks afterward.

All that day, and for weeks to follow, people called and called and called. Reporters arrived until 10:00 at night. The children had nightmares, waking up screaming and crying in the night. I kept thinking that no man who says he loves his children would have put them through so much agony. Unfortunately by Muslim law he owned us, so that is what we lived.

Weeks later I heard that the Canadian government had sent one of Mohammed's brothers to Lebanon, at the taxpayers' expense, to bring him back to Canada. Why, I'll never know.

In the end, Mohammed was never actually charged with anything here in Canada relating to the criminal acts committed by him in our embassy in Lebanon. This was beyond comprehension for me.

The pastor from my church, Reverend Lang, phoned Stan Schellenberger, our MP, on April 9, 1976 to find out why Mohammed Haymour had not been charged with anything. He explained that what he had done was obviously illegal and flagrantly terrorizing so many people. Was there some confusion for some reason?

I have always wondered how the government could so condone his

actions. It galls me to this day. Instead of being deported and having his citizenship revoked, the Canadian government PAID to bring this terrorist back into Canada. Unbelievable!

Questions were asked in the House of Commons by Mr. Stan Shellenberger and Mr. Don Monroe (MP for Esquimalt-Saanich) though to little effect.

It is my understanding that the reason Mohammed was not charged with any criminal act for his part in the hostage-taking – an act of terrorism – was because of a loop-hole in the Canadian law at the time.

If you committed a crime in or on Canadian Embassies in foreign countries, the Canadian government has no jurisdiction to charge the person in this country. Only the country where it took place could press charges.

Suffice it to say, he has never been charged for this crime. I read somewhere that Mohammed was out on bail for \$210 from the Beirut jail he was held in, and had returned to Canada. The Canadian government actually helped his brother locate him and paid to have them brought back to Canada.

Somehow this has always seemed grossly unfair in my view but I am so thankful that the law is now changed

The papers said that Mohammed Haymour was to have faced charges for the hostage taking in Lebanon at a later date, but he never returned to his country. Later, when I met some of Mohammed's people, they thought that he was a hero here in Canada, saying that he had fought the government and won.

To this day, Mohammed claims that I defrauded him out of the proceeds of the sale of his island and gained custody of the children by declaring him mentally incompetent.

In reality, I never received any money from the proceeds of the sale of the island and I received custody of the children during his siege in Beirut to prevent the children from being sent to him there. Reports indicated that Mohammed (Eddy) Haymour told Michel Maalouly he had been deported from Canada without his four children and without a penny. Maalouly in turn gave this information to a Beirut newspaper, the *Al Bavrak*.

The truth is he left of his own accord with the forty thousand dollars

he had received from the B.C. Provincial Government for the sale of his property.

Have you ever heard it said that if you tell a big enough lie loud enough and long enough, sooner or later people will believe you? Mohammed had this ability down to an art form. He was so good at spinning a tale to suit his own purposes.

From what I heard through the media, he actually received a formal apology from the B.C. Government for the personal harm they caused him.

Harm? What a laugh! To top it all off he was paid approximately \$400,000 in compensation and legal fees because of this supposed harm. This the taxpayers of B.C. and Canada paid for. A great way to make money if you can get it, I figure!

What I don't understand is if Mohammed was in such need of his wife and children, why did he not ever give them a dime towards their support or education?

Why has he never even sent them a birthday card?

I also don't understand why our government didn't make him pay for the police and hostage expenses, let alone for the welfare of his Canadian children?

There are so many unanswered questions that haunt.

The television program *The Fifth Estate* aired a documentary on Mohammed (Eddy) Haymour in the fall of 1986. In it they made statements that he had lost his family because of the wrong the B.C. Government had evidently done to him. They never attempted to contact me for my input. The program never addressed his responsibility in what had "happened" to him. And they seemed to me to skim over the fact that this man had not only kidnapped his own children and put them in danger but had violently held innocent hostages in the Canadian Embassy in Beirut which had gained international attention.

Before this program was televised perhaps they should have checked out both sides of the story. Airing half-truths is, I feel, irresponsible journalism and slanderous.

As a mother, looking back, I felt that I couldn't do enough to protect them. At times, I was frantic for their safety. Although under

enormous stress at times, I always tried to do the best I could, given the circumstances.

I just hope my children can forgive me for not being as understanding or as patient as I could have been if the circumstances had been different. I would have died for them. I would have! I always tried to give them a home and an ordinary life, amid the craziness. I love them dearly and will always be there if they need me. That has never ever wavered, my mother's love. Maybe this book will help them to understand the frustrations of the times.

There are times when I look back and see the insecurity most clearly, the hurt and the fear on their faces and I wish I could go back and change things – wipe it all away like one wipes away stray tears. But we don't have that luxury and I guess in the end we must go on with our lives. We didn't have books to learn how to handle parenting let alone what we endured, only our instincts or what we learned from our parents, who learned from theirs.

My children were still relatively young then, and to be perfectly honest, I knew very well what he was capable of so I chose to stay quiet all of these years about the real reason I left him and the perpetual fear we lived with.

I will be silent no longer. I have come to realize that I am a survivor, a survivor with a purpose and that I am finally healing from the life I lived. Writing this story from beginning to end has helped this immensely.

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