

Rebirth

The devastation was unbelievable, that which had stood for thousands of years, lay in ruins. The columns pock-marked and chipped as if ripped by giant jaws; the shattered, shuttered windows stood testimony to the lost community. Rubble strewn streets demonstrated the murderous whirlwind that had blown. This island would never be the same again.

He struggled over the stones, clutching the bottle he had found in a bombed out shop. The drink was his only escape from the memories that constantly flowed through his mind. It helped anaesthetise his emotions for a short while; hiding away the terrible images of contorted bodies, children blown in half, women blooded and broken.

Before the war, he had been a teacher, striving to help his pupils appreciate the world. Now there was nothing to appreciate except the unerring ability for man to work his own destruction. Lost in morose thoughts, he missed his step and dropped the brown bottle.

The bottle rolled down the path, bouncing and sliding and threatened to break. It came to rest in a puddle of black rainbow water. He caught-up and tugged at the cork; the golden liquid poured down his throat as his long held addiction was sated.

With the bottle emptied, he turned and caught his reflection in a broken mirror. At first he didn't recognise the shambolick, destitute excuse for humanity. As awareness dawned, he slumped in front of the mirror and began to sob.

Empty of tears a new resolve slowly stiffened his body. The island on which he was

stationed was completely deserted. Everyone was either dead or had left to escape further carnage. He was alone.

Struggling to his feet, his head pounded with the poisons coursing through his veins.

A new hope took hold. He was more than the sum of his experiences He had self-will.

He *could* lift himself out of the darkness.

Resolved to break his addiction and take a grip of his destiny, he started to walk down hill, his legs strengthened with every stride.

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