

Excerpt from

CHAPTER 19: “Lost with Madness and the Murk”

Following eons of traveling in the destitute,

Madness finds the lost and living remains of his forgotten friend.

Within human’s forgetting of who they are and where they originally came from, they began to walk within blindness and uncertainty not knowing who they are. And while the humans fear death, the fear of the unknown is far greater. The fear of death is encapsulated within the fear of uncertainty and the unknown. Because of this, humans began to accept the false labels imposed upon them because of their own fears of the unknown. They desperately stumbled looking for identity and they would prefer the cold comfort of a false identity rather than the searching unknown for the true identity. The branded in labels, such as “human” and “man”, created a great cracking in their psyche. The mysterious immortal side of their eternal being began to war with the concrete immortal side that was so deeply engrained within their mental cognitions. The brutal war between these two sides battled for thousands of years over which identity would occupy the space within their mind. This great cracking helped to further their forgetting, as they sided with the mortal tangible identity that they could easily define. It also made the fear of death derived within mortality a powerful tool for the manipulators of life. And so, life had become a search for labels to solidify the unknown with preassigned definitions. The searching with curiosity for their true names, true definitions, and true self became a rare occasion.

Madness saw all of this slipping away within the who am I. Within his long time down within the endless murk, had learned of the loss of identities. He had learned of the mass

entanglements of interconnected mental constructs used to control entire sectors of the population. And even within those that doing the controlling behind shadowed veils, he had traced their own ills to the desperations for identity. No one is exempt from the desires of finding out who we are. Some of them continue to still search for who they are, while others take what is forced upon them. Others create their own customized false identity driven by the ego in their pursuit of power and prestige. Little do they know that that which they hold will be released from them the day they die. You can only take with you the truth of self within the great unmasking that is death.

Madness is one of the great witnesses within the humans' terrible use of Time's gift. Of course, if you too had seen all the cruel sufferings done within time that Madness saw, you'd find it equally maddening.

As Madness had finishes his long winding search within the inner-time he held within, he proceeded with a new Power of Knowledge. This absorbed knowledge helped sharpen the blade of his mind.

Approaching the still and dim olive murk green sands ahead, a shadowy form starts to fade into sight getting larger as Madness nears. It is the dulled outline of a broken man sitting on the sand with legs crossed upon the ground. Upon the man's leg is the burdened weight of a ball and chain. He rocks with insanity shivering within the icy cold dirty water. As Madness approaches, the man's head jolts up to look at him wide-eyed with fearful started surprise in his fearful eyes. Madness slows and waves up the palm of his hand in a gesture of fellowship.

Madness speaks with slow softness, "It's alright, I'm here to help."

The desperate man is looking up at him with cautious uncertainty, but with slight comfort for the company. His face is skin and bone, as his soul is starved for fulfillment from his eons of

solitude. His hair is matted and his face is scruff. The man speaks with a shuttering cracking voice.

“Have... you seen... my children?”

“Your children?” Madness replies.

“Yes, there was four of them. I forget their faces, I forgotten their names.”

Madness glares at him with familiarity. He knows him from somewhere within time, but he cannot place it.

Madness replies, “Have we met?... Where did you see your children last?”

The man shutters, “I don’t recall seeing them, but I miss them... I don’t recall you.”

“I’m sorry, I can help you find them if you don’t recall them. Do you recall how you felt within their presence?”

The man keeps shaking, as if within an eternal look of terrorized shock. He stares within the ground dirt sand moving his fingers deep within it, as he contemplates and reaches from far away within the place he sits.

“Yes!” the man blurts out with excitement. “One of them was so determined. I loved that most about him.” He pauses, as fishing deep within, then continues, “Will. Will, will was his name.”

Madnesses’s face lights up with realization, “Fortitude! You’re Fortitude aren’t you?!”

“Who? Who’s that?” the man replies confused.

Madness is excited to see him, “Yes, yes it is you! I recognize you barely, you look so different, but it is you.”

“I might be, I don’t recall my name.”

Madness takes a seat crosslegged in front of Fortitude to look at him close at eye level.

He takes his hand and claps it with both of his.

Madness locks eyes with him and speaks with assertion, “You are Fortitude and your children are Endurance, Will, Stamina and Strength. Two girls and two boys. Your wife is... Courage. You have to remember.”

“I try to... How are they?”

“Courage has been ill without you and the children are divided. They have been manipulated and contorted within the warped ambitions of others. They need you to unite them again.”

Fortitude replies in solemn regret, “I’ve stuck to here and I don’t even know where here is?”

Madness responds, “We are in the kingdoms of pain within the lower realms of forgetting. You need to remember, we need to get you out.”

Madness pauses in silence, as Fortitude does not know what to say.

Madness continues in an attempt to lift his spirits, “Hey, you remember your friend Certitude? He and Passion are awaiting for us above. Passion is her usual beautiful self and Certitude has the most amazing stories and plans for the future. He’s told me all about you within it. You stand bold in it with all of us and your children and wife by your side. Doesn’t that sound wonderful?”

The expression on Fortitude’s face shifts with a touch of hope and a tear filled smile in his eyes. He speaks, “Really? You think that’s possible? He really saw that?... It’s been so long since I’ve even dreamed of such a vision.”

Madness speaks with confidence, “Yes, old friend, it Will be. But first you must stand again. By standing, you rise. Even just a small step, you rise up.”

Madness stands still holding his hand, as he pull Fortitude to his feet.

Madness continues, “You must have the fire of Will to proceed forward, Fortitude. You must hold grounded Strength within times of heavy weakness. You must keep Stamina within the long journey ahead. You must Endure with your heart the pains of this world and keep moving forward. If you do all that, you will find Courage once again.”

Fortitude feels uplifted with hints of his old identity once again. He speaks boldly, “Yes. Yes, I can do this again.” He pauses shifting back to heaviness, “But I’ve forgotten how to swim up and I’m far to tied to the heaviness.”

Madness lightens the mood, “Baby steps. First you stand, then you walk, and in time you learn to swim and fly again. When you find the strength, you can break the chains. You carry the weight and hold the children with you. Don’t give up and it will be.”

Fortitude lifts the ball into his arms with confidence, as he smiles ready.

“But will you come with me?” Fortitude replies with concern and fear of losing the confidence.

Madness gently breaks the news to him, “No... You have to do it alone, but you’ll have the energy of your children and wife with you to keep you going. Besides, where I must go, you do not want to go there. It is a place of concentrated pain that I am trying to find. It is not what you need.”

“No, I need no more of that. So this is goodbye then?”

“Yes, old friend. But I will see you again, perhaps sooner than later.” Madness replies.

Fortitude with a degree of nervousness, prepares himself to learn to walk once again. He lifts his head up, as if sensing the feeling of his son, Strength.

“See you soon, my friend.”

They give each other a gentle nod of both recognition and Gratitude, as they turn away from each other. Fortitude slowly takes small steps in his own self-rehabilitation to walk again. Madness continues within the direction that he was traveling before finding his lost soul friend. The murk ahead has cleared a bit allowing him Madness a greater perception into the distance.