

Chapter 3: The Age of Cull

Cull lived in the depths and maze of tunnels in The Well of Souls, where his presence penetrated and saturated the terrain as he was one with all the vices it was occupied by. His world was one of dungeons representing his defeat and surrender. The incessant dripping and puddling of water had a rhythm like that which drove his maniacal soul. His world was cryptic, deceptive, and mesmerizing. Cull's makeup was deception, depravity, malice, and a jealous rage for something he didn't have—freedom from his weaknesses.

He became an expert at evading the truth about himself and was always able to verbalize an excuse for his shortcomings. He lived in paranoia and complete denial, becoming an artful and powerful master of deceit. He also had an uncontrollable and insatiable rage against triumph in freedom by others and was totally obsessed at seeing defeat of all who pursued it.

After years of prosperity, freedom, and sovereignty of the people, Cull escaped from imprisonment. Like a fluid, he flowed through the cracks in the terrain throughout the lands as a predator would surround his prey. When he arrived, he was armed with his gospel afflicting people across the land. Like a disease, his message was spread by all who were vulnerable to it. He was an expert at drawing out the worst in people. He would present a

circumstance, draw a disparity, inject sympathy, and create a culprit, eliciting the greatest opportunity for his victim's failure. Just like it happened for him, he knew how to give his victims a place to hide from themselves in denial.

When manifested, Cull's persona was a tall and gaunt figure, which was overshadowed by a strange darkness that he exuded. He was passionate and stood on street corners promoting his beliefs. He was a gifted orator and made the people believe he cared about the common man. He perverted an understanding of his care for them by advancing the philosophy that a minimum standard of living is justice and that it is incumbent on the public at large to take care of those who have less, through government policies. It was the purpose and responsibility of government to protect those who had the least. His intercession for the needy was to take from them the opportunity for triumph over their circumstances, ensuring the afflicted become dependent and stay that way.

He would target various groups of people, breaking the populace up into categories. To the poor he would preach the unfairness of those who had more. To the handicapped he would preach the obligation of the government to support them and to give them equal opportunity. To different races he would claim racial preference and minorities deserved special advantages, as redress for past transgressions against their ancestors. He declared that the world and its resources belonged to all of the people; and no one could own or pollute them in the smallest way. He said that the

right to feel safe was a greater right than self-defense and businesses were products of a government economy and should belong to the government. He declared that service to the public good is an inherent obligation of all and above all things, and that citizenship of one's country was subordinate to citizenship of the world. He pressed and pressed, disarming those who would surrender their pursuits of freedom and liberty to one of dependence and protection from failure.

Cull's ideal in the beginning was fairness and obligation to assist the downtrodden. Over time, it developed into accusations against greedy rich people and exploitation of the poor by the majority. He said, "It isn't fair. We slave and work and never get ahead. We deserve better. Join me and we will impose new laws that demand those that have taken more than their share to compensate the rest of us. It is not your fault that the system didn't work for you. The greedy rich manipulated the rules to enhance themselves at your expense. Now it is our turn; our actions to exploit the rich are righteous because that is what they did to us. We will set up alliances against rich employers who take all the profits for themselves. We will make agreements with those in government to garner support by the law makers and favor by the executive. We will control the businesses to ensure we get our rightful share."

More and more people began to assess what they had achieved in life and to compare it to the affluent in society. The disparity was

great, and for some what they saw made them vulnerable to too great a temptation. They unionized to loot and with a collective vote, to change government, garner power, and take what they wanted. Cull's ritualistic ideal of fairness and euphemism that government is good and trustworthy was mounting: controlling the behaviors of the masses to take away freedom from others and redistribute it. And the major benefactor was Cull, the parasite of all parasites.

Many of those in society were becoming vulnerable, and were being infected with resentment, bitterness, and dependence. Overtime he would be able to invent new arguments that businesses were not providing equal opportunity. As his power grew, he would target some businesses and ally with others. Those that he allied with were cronies who paid protection money in exchange for special exemptions from future legislation. This empowered Cull even further. Those that refused were left vulnerable to targeted burdens, strangling regulations, enforcement actions, penalties for noncompliance, lawsuits for damages, unfavorable media coverage, and public criticism.

Cull's ideas, growing in popularity, began to influence academia and the news media and many disciples of Cull targeted, penetrated, and saturated these professions. Cull's influence grew exponentially and reaching nearly everywhere. Many people, from poorer and primitive regions, were drawn to Cull's viewpoint, which stunted the evolution of these societies, as opportunists were

sophisticated enough to lure the ignorant and poor from their struggles and garner and sustain power for themselves.

Growing further in power and popularity, Cull called for amendments to the people's pact, the Book of Light. He wanted the government to impose personal and business income taxes based on a graduated scale and centralize government and its power; the more money that an individual made, the greater the tax burden that would be imposed was the idea. Greater taxes and a centralized government would authorize the redistribution of monies to cronies, and those who had not earned it in the name of fairness and special interest—a cycle of perpetual and ultimate destruction.

Winning and losing was becoming perceived by many as a responsibility of government to assign, rather than an individual responsibility to achieve. Those who gave in to this temptation and supported it further elevated Cull in stature, creating a permanent underclass and ensnaring many. The overachievers were burdened with more and more, and the government was empowered to impose even more on those who were loyal to freedom.

The greater burden on the affluent and businesses caused them to employ fewer people. As a result, the economy produced less and generated less revenue for the government. This expanded misery served Cull's objective: more government and less for all the classes of people. It was Cull's ideal that government with

dependent people was a fairer one, because, above all things, protection from failure was something no one should be without.

Cull gave the people a reason to betray the principles that protected their freedom. He said, "Those of you who are heavy laden, come to me and I will give you relief." The people saw Cull as godlike. He was popular and people would come from miles away to see him. The crowds would amass and chant "Cull!" over and over.

Time passed and it was election season and it was time for the people to elect a new leader. Cull campaigned for it and spoke infectiously. His use of propaganda was brilliant and the news media were his greatest ally. He became an expert on every needy group. He targeted each one precisely and he knew where they lived. He connected when he spoke to them, making them believe he cared for their personal welfare. He made promises that not only would their needs be met, but they would be met righteously by taking wealth from those who were rich and successful.

Not all agreed with Cull, however. There were many people who realized that taking from others to serve the needs of the needy only created more and needier people, and an excuse for failure. Taking the fruits of productive people only led to a reduction in innovation and commerce, causing people who want to work to lose their employment opportunities. To the productive, Cull represented an affront to their fundamental principles of freedom, and in the end, the poor and needy would end up less well off, as a downward economy would take its greatest toll on them.

Cull brought jealousy and division to the people. Some people felt that life didn't work out for them like it did for others who were wealthy and successful. They believed that their system of commerce didn't do enough. They wanted to move to where the resentful rule and the productive, coined as lucky, obeyed a greater rule, Cull's rule, that no one be required to experience the despair that comes with failure. Following this rule meant that government would be free to take the fruits of the productive ones' labor and redistribute it to the less or nonproductive. In order to do this, a number of questions needed to be answered: How much to take? And how is redistribution facilitated? The nonproductive have needs, but how do you identify them? What is, in fact, necessary versus convenient and how would it trustfully be handed out? Another question was: Who were the productive? There wasn't enough money to take only from those who had accumulated great wealth, but in order to adequately satisfy Cull's rule that no one experience failure, it required those who were only moderately well off to be forced to contribute also.

Sympathy for those who hadn't produced much, little by little, began to grow and what constituted necessity broadened as well. Discomfort became a part of the equation, and so did the lack of happiness; happiness that someone more fortunate was able to experience. Sympathy for failure was replacing the admiration of those who successfully overcame their obstacles. More and more, it became harder to become wealthy, as the means to get there was saddled with the extra burdens that the uncomfortable required to

be made comfortable. Making a profit was increasingly more difficult and often sneered at by those who benefited by redistribution. Public opinion was changing and the populace was splitting into two camps. One included those who held firm to The Struggle, did not betray their principles, and refused to be deceived by those who offered them relief from their heavy burdens. The other camp comprised those who subscribed to sympathy, jealousy, and The Struggle as an unjust ritual. It only created misery for those who were not lucky enough to benefit from triumph. They laid their freedom at the altar of tyranny in exchange for personal salvation and a society of dependency.

Cull had society right where he wanted it—trapped in a morass of excuses, with victimization justified by sympathy. He had his fangs at society's jugular. Public opinion required that assistance be provided to the less fortunate and it was up to Cull how these handouts were to be provided. As time went on, this society that was once a great one, unlike any the world had ever seen, could now be described as one with widespread poverty, hunger, and pandemics, as vanity, jealousy, and sympathy had had its way. And along with these circumstances came all the behaviors that one is vulnerable to when one succumbs to failure: theft, murder, organized crime, and an acquaintance with all the vices in the Well of Souls.