

Definition of Madness

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Written during two National Novel Writing Months this, my first serious novel, is dedicated to my mother and elementary school teacher. She forced me to write my first short story as a school assignment, yes mother and teacher were one in the same. She taught me that any skill no matter how tedious, infuriating and/or consuming is worth the effort it takes to learn. With out her influence in my life I never would have even tried to write something of this length let alone in two months. Mom, this ones for you.

Chapter 1

Issac Porter sat in his car quietly contemplating the sanitarium, standing large and stately on its bright green lawn. It was cleaner than he had expected, Issac raised an eyebrow at the intimidating building, the lawn was well groomed and the shrubs were trimmed. Issac took a deep breath as he tapped the manila envelop nervously on the steering wheel. Issac pressed his lips together this was his only lead on what happened at the Doe Bay resort and he had to pursue it.

Issac's face was the epitome of resolution as he stepped out of his car and moved up the sidewalk into the facility. Issac got a chill as he noticed he was being observed by multiple, what he assumed were, non violent offenders being tended in the front yard by orderlies. He snorted quietly, they were like playground monitors. Issac shook his head as he opened the door and stepped over the threshold.

Once he was inside it is what Issac expected from a hospital, sterile and plain, with bright lights and a nice looking young lady at the front desk. Issac had no idea that facilities like this still existed in the US. The woman at the desk looked up and smiled at him, she was Washington white with her long blond hair pulled back into a neat bun.

"Is there something I can help you with today?" She asked him pleasantly as Issac approached the desk.

"Well, actually there is." He said quietly as he showed the woman the manila envelop. "This was sent to me by a friend, and I was wondering if there was a patient here by

the name of Una?" The woman frowned at him, her brow furrowed slightly.

"Does she have a last name or do you have a patient number that I can look up?" Issac ran a hand through his curly red hair. He had hoped that it was a strange enough name that this wouldn't be a problem, obviously he was wrong.

"No last or middle name just Una, and I don't know her patient number." Issac chuckled nervously. "That's the one piece of information that the folder didn't have." The woman smiled uncomfortable as a doctor somewhere down the hall looked up from the papers he was going over. The doctor dismissed the orderly he was talking to and started to make his way over, Issac didn't notice as he tried to explain to the woman that it was very important that he speak with this woman. The doctor approached and taped Issac on the shoulder, Issac looked back and blinked at him.

"I'm Doctor Lefevre, I'm Una's practitioner are you family?" Issac turned to the small man and took a deep breath.

"No I'm not but it is imperative that I speak with her." Issac licked his lips, his face set in determination.

"Would you happen to be Issac Porter?" Lefevre asked, curiosity blazing in his eyes. Issac blinked at the doctor wide eyed, he nodded reluctantly and looked very confused.

"How did you know that?" Lefevre smiled ruefully and beckoned for Issac to walk with him. Issac followed

reluctantly as the Doctor started down a hallway.

“A couple days ago Una told me that a man named Issac Porter would be looking for her.” Porter looked shocked at this reevaluation. “Considering she hasn’t had a single visitor since she was admitted 6 months ago,” the doctor shook his head. “Imagine my surprise when you waltzed in asking about her.” Porter pressed his lips together, he could easily imagine!

“Say did Una send anything in the mail recently?” Issac asked boldly, the doctor looked at him and furrowed his brow.

“Not that I can recall.” the doctor said simply as he opened a door that lead into a side yard. “I know her friend 143 sent something out, we read all mail that leaves here, and 143’s letter was simple scribbles. The same thing she always sends out to the same address since she arrived here 10 years ago.” Issac furrowed his brow at the doctor.

“Were you ever curious as to who was receiving these mysterious letters?” the doctor smiled again as they walked across the yard.

“Oh it’s no mystery, the letters are addressed to the brother that was caring for her, he finally couldn’t do it anymore and sent her here. Every week she sends him a scribbled letter and he never replies but he doesn’t send them back either. So we just keep sending them.” Issac shook his head as the doctor shrugged.

“Could it be code or a cypher?” Lefevre laughed at him, Issac blushed a little at the doctors response.

“I doubt 143 has that kind of capability, shes a walking

vegetable.” Issac nodded, thinking that was a bit cold, and turned the subject back to the reason for his visit.

“Well do you know Una’s real name at least? I know she supposedly has no family but a name at least.” Issac looked at him hopefully, some confirmation was all he was looking for but the doc simply shook his head as they walked into a small garden.

“We know very little about her, Una appeared at the Doe Bay Resort. Dressed in the most ridiculous getup, hard leather, belts covered in knives and other oddities. Her pack was full of the strangest things.” Lefevre shook his head. “Some of it was down right disturbing, they kept her in the hospital’s mental wing for a couple of weeks and we sent out state wide notices, news, magazine and paper articles but no one claimed her. We had DNA tests run against every database we could find, no matches. We also ran her description through the databases. Still nothing, as if she didn’t exist.” Issac chewed his lip slightly and nodded.

“I can’t believe that nothing came up.” the doctor shrugged. “What about her psych evaluation?” The doctor stopped about 100 yards short of a tree with an orderly standing under it.

“Well at the hospital they did an evaluation and determined that she was non violent.” he chuckled slightly. “Well unless your a goblin, then you better watch out!” Issac’s eyes widened.

“What do you mean?” He asked softly and the Doctor smiled at him.

“Well she has some pretty severe delusions, she thinks

she is some kind of super hero or something. She sees herself as a crusader for good.” Lefevre looked at the orderly who was himself looking into the tree. “We did some more extensive testing and found that she wasn’t hallucinating, uh imagining that people were monsters. So we test her every month to make sure the delusions aren’t getting worse.” the man shrugged. “Her delusions seem to be stable, if there is such a thing.” Issac blinked slowly, taking in what the doctor was saying.

“So will I get to talk to her?” Issac asked after watching the orderly for a moment, he seemed to be talking to the tree or something in the tree.

“Well she’s in that tree over there, if you can get her to talk in more detail about her delusions I would like to know more. From what I gather she believes that she was magically transported here, anytime I press Una for more details she closes me out.” Issac nodded and looked back to the tree, the orderly finally saw them and seemed to be calling Una down.

A small woman dropped gracefully from the tree and smiled at the orderly. Porter blinked in surprise at the thoroughly tattooed figure, the woman was slight, 5’5 and hardly 100 pounds. From the pictures in her folder he expected her to be a good 130, but she was wispy, almost frail. Her long dark hair was pulled away from her face and her strange green eyes were simply alight with excitement. The closer she came the more Porter wondered how she had destroyed the Doe Bay Resort.

“Good afternoon doctor.” Una said softly, her voice had

an odd treble to it. Her high cheek bones and dusky olive skin were far from the Washington norm. “And you are Issac, yes?” She asked as she turned her blazing green eyes on him, finely arched brows shadowed her deeply set eyes, Issac almost didn’t notice the gnarled scar that interrupted her left eyebrow. Porter nodded and she smiled revealing strait pearly teeth. “Wonderful to finally meet you Issac.” Una said as she looked to Lefevre again.

“Well Una this is your guest and I will leave you to it.” The doctor said politely as he turned to the orderly and nodded. The orderly sniffed and moved to a table not far away. Una locked arms with Issac, he could feel the taught cord-like muscles ripple through the fabric that separated them, then led him to another near by table.

“Please have a seat.” Una said pleasantly as she sat at the small table. Issac was struck by an odd thought as he sat, Una’s loose fitting patent uniform seemed more like monks robes on her. There was a fluidity to her movements that he hadn’t expected. Porter was fascinated by the detailed tattoos that played across parts of her forehead and cheeks as she gestured to a table. They sat in silence for a moment, Una seemed completely relaxed but Porter suddenly felt tense and he wondered if those who were of unsound mind were always so unsettling.

“So what brought you here Mr. Porter?” Issac laid the envelop on the table between them then he looked at her.

“How did you know I would be here?” Una sighed softly, a smile teasing the corner of her lips. As she smiled the corners of her eyes crinkled, suggesting that she was

older than she looked.

“A little bird told me.” She said sweetly as a small chicken landed on her shoulder, it was a brown and black rooster with an enormous comb and feathered feet. The plain little thing bawked and Porter could have sworn that Una heard something intelligible as she looked at the small bird and smiled. She looked at Porter as she pet the chicken gently, Issac took a deep breath and swallowed hard.

“How did he know?” What Issac really wanted to know is why the orderlies hadn’t disposed of the bird. Una smiled, her eyes seemed to glow but she remained silent.

Finally Porter looked at his watch and realized he had one hour before visiting hours were over. Una laughed musically as the bird crowed then jumped from her shoulder and scratched at the ground next to her. Porter frowned and pulled out his note book.

Issac opened it and took a moment to read through his prepared questions, he looked at Una again. She seemed extremely amused by his nervousness. Porter shrugged and attributed it to the asylum looming behind them. Issac opened his mouth but Una spoke first.

“You want to know how I came to be here, how I’m involved with the destruction of the resort yes?” Issac nodded and Una smiled. “I want to know what is in the envelope.” she said simply, leaning back in her chair. Issac hesitated and finally passed the envelope to her knowing that he wouldn’t get very far if he didn’t, Una took it with a quiet thank you. As she leafed through the pictures and articles Una started again. “I used to be able to read these,

but the letters are so strange now.” She seemed wistful as she ran a caressing hand over the leaflets.

“Is it the medication they have you on?” Porter instantly asked her, Una just chuckled at him.

“No, it’s more complicated than that.” Una said softly.

“What do you mean by that?” Issac blurted, she glanced at him. Issac could almost see the secrets lingering behind her eyes.

“I lived here once, not far from this little island actually.” Una stated as she glanced into the distance, almost as if she could see her home from where she was.

“You did?” He asked simply and Una nodded as she continued to look through the manila envelope. “The doctor didn’t say that.” Una laughed at him.

“That’s because I refused to speak of it before...” her eyes darkened slightly. “That’s not who I am anymore.” she said softly as she pulled a paper from the stack. “Have you read everything that’s in this envelope?” She asked him.

“Um most of it...” Issac started but she interrupted him by laying a missing persons case on the top of the stack. Issac looked at it and frowned slightly, Una tapped the case file.

“You should have read this, it may have shed some light on the situation.” Issac grabbed the file and started to read but Una had other ideas, it dawned on him that she could read or maybe she just recognized the picture.

“That’s me at 18, it seems like so long ago.” Issac looked at her in shock, she was about 25 he would have guessed now he wasn’t so sure.

Porter grabbed the picture in the folder and held it up to compare it to her. He frowned but under the tattoos and he could see Una in the young, Washington colored, athletic woman in the picture. He was amazed at how the tattoos distorted her features. Una waited patiently until Issac had read over the rest of the file. Then Issac realized it had only been 2 years since the disappearance of this young woman.

“Why do you look so much older?” Una smiled, her longer than average ears twitching slightly, the corners of her slanted eyes crinkled revealing tiny crows feet.

“Magic.” Issac started to laugh but the expression on Una’s face had become deadly serious.

“Magic, you expect me to believe it’s magic?” Porter asked her disbelievingly. Una shrugged and Issac understood now the depth of her delusions, when the doctor had said goblins Issac thought he was being sarcastic. Porter looked at the orderly who was reading a book and seemed not to notice that the chicken was pecking things off his shoes.

“Oh pay no attention to those buffoons, now I was wondering if you did this research?” Issac looked at her but she seemed to know the answer.

“Some of it, the rest came to me by mail yesterday with no return address on it.” Una leaned back again and nodded

“I will tell you my story, but that will take some time and you will have to wait till tomorrow.” Porter was amazed that it would take that long for her to tell him, her mystery intrigued him and he didn’t really have a choice if he was to get the answers he was looking for.

“Okay, I’ll see you tomorrow then.” Porter agreed. “I’ll come back as often as I need to.” Suddenly Una leaned forward, her long fingers laid on the envelope and Issac realized they were tattooed also.

“I know why your here, Issac Porter.” Her eyes were suddenly swollen with sorrow. “the destruction of the resort was not my direct doing, I was the cause but only because a great evil was trying to end me.” Porter almost laughed but the expression on Una’s face stopped him. She was so sincere,

“Okay.” Issac never really blamed her for what happened, he just wanted to know why. Issac knew that logically there was no way one person with out an electronic device to their name could cause that kind of death and mayhem. When they found her she had not one technological bit on her person and there was no radiation at the site. Una seemed satisfied, she leaned back again

“I think we will have time to go over how I disappeared and that end is where we will have to stop.” Porter leaned forward as Una pressed her full lips together, the rooster jumped to the back of her chair and settled in. Una leaned back and stroked the rooster gently, the little thing cooed softly. Una looked at the impatiently waiting Issac.