

## ALONE

Alas, I am alone and destined to remain so. No longer can the burning, innate longing for love, companionship and re-affirmation of my worth reverberate inside my heart and mind. Is this due to years apart from others? Or is it because of my transgressions that I am left with no choice but to accept the exile society will impose that separates me even from those who once felt affection from and for me?

Once thrust back into the world from which I am now ten years removed, it would be foolish to feel others remained steadfast in their caring for me. For they had no choice but to evolve and adjust their own feelings and priorities in order to survive. I could not be part of their lives except as a faint memory as someone who, for whatever reason, allowed his own weaknesses and mistakes to cost him his acceptance and invoke ten years of separation from those he loved and befriended through years of life experiences.

The person I am now no longer is afforded the privilege of love, companionship or even acknowledgment. I must learn to accept and attempt to exist as a remote desert island separated from society's affections by miles of deep treacherous waters that prohibit my exit and others from reaching. Instead of coalescing with others and creating familial bonds, I must strive to build a different kind of life that bears little resemblance to the one I lived prior to my banishment.

Only time will determine if I can successfully function (much less thrive) in such isolation that inevitably will generate doubt as to why I exist at all. The definitive challenge will be to abide without succumbing to doubts of my self-worth that because of my proscription can never be emboldened by the recognition and affection of others. For those whom I previously relied for affirmation have moved far beyond where I bewilderedly stand. To ask them to revert to where they were



ten years prior would be fatuous and reprehensibly selfish.

I sardonically recall the many times before my isolation where I craved solitude and detachment from the world. Only then, I naively felt, could I find peace I so desperately coveted. Now, with no excuses and a ten-year head start, I will dwell in a society void of family, friends, and acquaintances with only self-spawned encouragement to get me through each day. Whether I am able to generate the fulfillment necessary to justify my continuing to breathe and endure remains to be seen.

The only upside is that without the interaction with others, I alone must judge whether my existence is worth the plethora of challenges I must face as a banished, forever-tainted human being. I can only hope that my self-discernment is objective and fair and takes into account the many obstacles an ostracized and alone man faces in a world where connectivity and conformity trump individuality and where a man's past, as Faulkner says, is not even past.

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