



## CHAPTER FIVE

### The Collision

*“The first and greatest victory is to conquer yourself; to be conquered by yourself is of all things most shameful and vile.” - Plato*

Max drove on mental cruise control on his way back to his apartment. His thoughts were a million miles away. No doubt about it...Bee's words had stung him as much as Big Ben's hit on the field.

Luckily, he had put \$5 of gas in his 20-year-old Chevy yesterday or he might have ended up in the gravel on the side of the road, his car sputtering empty and stalled.

Of course, Max liked the feeling of “running on empty.” It was a little game he would often play while driving on campus. It reminded him of a clock ticking down in the fourth quarter of a game. He liked the feeling of “getting the most out of whatever is left.”

For some reason, Bee's words “hit home” somehow. Chill bumps still filled his arms and back. “Was it the caffeine?” he thought.

Max never took drugs or drank. He thought to himself, “this must be how it feels!” He read somewhere that the brain can produce drugs more powerful than anything you could buy in a drug store or on the Detroit ghetto-streets. And all of them are free!

No doubt about it. Bee had given Max some big pills to swallow. He reached over and felt the crack in his helmet with his fingers. He wondered how much light could really come through that tiny broken space.

Bee had done something powerful in that little dive and breakfast place. He had wiped the slate clean. He had turned Max into a blank canvas. And all he could think about were those two lions knocking heads.

Max had been a high performance junky all his life. His favorite book was “The Magic of Thinking Big” He had seen the movie “Rocky” at least a dozen times. His first hero as a child was Warren Sapp. The book “The Power of Positive Thinking” was his second Bible.

Max had always been searching for an “edge” that would give him the “keys to the kingdom.”

But now the game has changed. He suddenly realized that he was just beginning. He knew nothing. This emptiness now fought with the full stomach from a big breakfast. For a short moment, Max thought he might puke. And so, he started to breathe deeply.

Suddenly, a MSU student on a bike pulled out in front of him. “Nooooo!” He slammed on his breaks, just missing him by inches.

Now stopped and stationary, Max waved off the bike rider like he was a DB who just missed any easy Pic 6ix. “It’s okay...”

He started breathing hard again like he would on the field after a painful tackle. Max was learning fast. He was making progress.

But he still knew... there was still plenty of heavy lifting to do.