

## MENTAL WAR (CHARLOTTE'S MONOLOGUE FROM THE EVENTS)

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I thought I knew what insanity felt like. I really did. That constant buzz that starts in the very back of your mind, growing louder and louder every day, until you can actually start to make out all the thoughts that it is trying to articulate. But the buzz can only be understood for an all too brief window of time before it grows too loud to comprehend. It isn't the volume that gets you though. That's why earplugs exist. It's the speed. The buzz not only breaks the sound barrier, but it rivals the speed of light. You can only catch one word, maybe two if you're lucky, out of the billions squished into each minute of cognition. "Cold" "Die" "Dark" "Wrong" "Sleep". Random words that are usually harmless in the context of whatever sentence they are a part of, but when you get one word per minute of infinite thought, you grab that one word like it is water in a desert. You take each word and store it in a special place, revisiting each one as you add another to your collection. After an hour you have 60 words that form a syntax of their own, which you then subconsciously and unwillingly try to decipher. This all happens while you are trying to function like a regular human being. "Would you like fries with that?" becomes difficult to answer.

Everyone experiences some type of mania in their lives. It feels like being a hyper toddler; like you've had one too many cups of coffee. But until you can't untangle the buzz from your actual, everyday train of thought, you know nothing of true mania.

I tried to fix it on my own, but downers only do just that—make you fall down a dark rabbit hole that even Alice wouldn't dare dive into. Then you get to experience that buzz in slow motion, which, let me tell you, isn't any better. You get one word an hour, so all you are collecting each minute are letters. Sometimes I would find myself in that state without taking anything. I couldn't decide which state was worse, so I bounced back and forth from hell to...well hell— another corner of it, anyway.

I thought that was insanity. So did my doctors. So did my friends. But we were all so very wrong.