



THE AFFLICTED
BY
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The Afflicted (2017)

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Disclaimer

These stories are not intended or represent any known or unknown individuals. The characters and situations are fictitious.

Please be advised that these stories contain and have been created with ***adult content***.

Case #1: Melanie

Melanie sings and dances as she feeds the swine, throwing in some corn husks. She seduces the pigs with her chants and gleeful laughter. They snort and grunt in rhythm to her melody. She does not remember that the woman told her to bring water to her. The woman screams, “Servant, where is the water? I told you to bring it to me! Idiot servant girl! Get it now!”

Melanie drops the bucket of corn and grabs another bucket. Running to the river and crying, she grunts like the pigs and swirls her tongue, unable to tell the woman that she is sorry...she forgot! She knows the woman beats her when she forgets. So she runs back, swinging the bucket and spilling some of the water on the woman’s feet. Does Melanie think? Does she know language? She understands the glare and anger of the woman who stands before her. The woman is cruel and hates her, but she does not know why.

The woman knows that Melanie’s mind is slow, but she blames the fourteen-year-old girl, for she is a sign of her sinful past...the curse that left her wed less. Fourteen years ago, she met a man who promised her marriage. He lied and left her with a babe in her womb. In the beginning she rocked the babe that she named Melanie, but as the infant’s growth retarded, the woman pushed Melanie away. Now, she called her “the servant girl” never calling her by name. She loathed the grimy, unkempt idiot that she had borne.

Later, fearless and daunting Melanie walks the paths of the village to the Tavern, which is filled with men. She feels drawn to these bodies. She does not know why. When she reaches the alley, she peers through and into the Tavern. The men are gleeful, and some women are dressed with shiny blue, red, and black gowns. The sound of Melanie’s glee as she claps her hands with joy reaches the man. He turns, looks, and blinks at her. She feels her heart throb, and she claps her

innocent hands again. The man pushes through the crowd and emerges from the back door. Shy Melanie looks down, rocking back and forth, embracing herself. The man touches his fingers caressing her tucked-in chin. His voice is gentle, but she does not understand. She only feels an unbroken bond with him.

The man presses his lips and then his teeth on hers. He caresses her body, and she feels the bond. She knows he will not hurt her. She likes what he is doing, and in a surge of primal passion responds to his advance. After the climax, he rises, straightens his trousers and walks away. He never looks at her. She takes a moment to relieve herself after the orgasm. Then, she follows his path, but does not find him. She is certain he will be there after the next sunset, but she does not see him again.

Three months from the first moment of the end of her virginity, Melanie is with her mother. The woman looks at her as she lifts the wood. She cannot be, thinks the woman. Melanie is slightly heavier. Then the woman touches her abdomen and feels its growth. She slaps the young woman, beats her, and kicks her. Melanie does not remember or know what she forgot. She cries without control. The woman screams, "Get out of here you slut!"

Melanie runs from the woman. Never has the woman hurt her so much before. That much she realizes. She runs to the river and the soothing rustling currents instantly calm her. They have always attracted her. She sits at the edge of the cliff, watching the currents. The melodious sound invites her to join in the dance and sing to the music she hears within her. She has always heard the melody, as long as she can remember. The music of the Tavern reaches the recesses of her memory, and she lifts her arms high to the clouds, dancing, loving, feeling, forgiving the woman. She hums...dances to the rhythm in her retarded mind...she seeks solace. At first, she does not

understand, but then she listens. A whisper in the current of the river beneath the cliff beckons her. She understands and forgives. She flies through the air from the cliff and lands in the protruding rocks within the murderous river.

Melanie is no more.

Case # 2: J.D.

An ecstatic, frenzied crowd plowed through, bumping each other, jumping over the barriers of the bleachers. The Bears and the fans lifted him in the air, chanting over and over “J.D.—number one! J.D.—number one!” The hero of the hour, the first starter high school quarterback, Jason Daily, and his team had won the state championship!

J.D. shuffled up the porch steps to his home, exhausted from the game and the night’s celebration. The thought of bed sounded pretty good right now, but the strange car at the front warned him that bed would have to wait. A towering, handsome man with a muscular torso stood up and spoke as if he knew him. “Hi, J.D.,” he grinned, extended his hand, and shared a vigorous handshake between two athletes. “How would you like a full scholarship to Delford University? Your dad likes the idea. Do you?”

J.D. hid the tension and anxiety spreading through his muscles. His gut cringed. He feigned a grin to his father. “That would be great!” His father gleamed with pride. “Dad, I’m tired. Can we talk in the morning?” The coach agreed to return in the morning. J.D.’s shoulders slumped when he entered his bedroom, and he didn’t undress. He plunged face-down on his bed, exhausted and crashed.

At ten o’clock in the morning, his mother tapped him on his shoulder. “J.D., you slept with your clothes on! Poor baby, were you that tired?”

“Yes.”

“Would you like breakfast in bed?”

“No thanks mom. I’ll be down in a bit.” His mother stroked his hair, and he hugged her. It was time, he thought. I have to let go.

Coach Garrett showed up around 11:00 am. They conferred in the garage, where his dad spent most of his day working, carving wood. To please his dad, J.D. agreed to accept the full scholarship and play football for Delford with the goal to enter pro football, his future—his dad’s dream. No matter how hard this would be, J.D. knew he had to make it work, because he would do anything for his disabled father.

After graduation, J.D. commenced his tedious journey in college. He dedicated his summer to training with his new team. Their teasing and camaraderie created a bond between them, and J.D. discovered that he experienced a pleasure of feelings dormant deep within him that had gone unnoticed and offensive to his status at Delford. He fit right in, though, partying with girls, booze and struggling with classes. His hidden feelings remained dormant.

Then, a life-changing incident struck in his junior year. His team and the whole school were elated at again another victory for the Delford Lions. But his dad and mom were not present. That cringe in his gut warned him that something was wrong. As the crowd paraded behind him into the locker room, J.D. noticed Deputy Lansbury looking at him with a somber face. The officer took him aside.

“Your dad and mom were in a car accident on their way here.”

“Where are they now?”

“I’m sorry J.D. Both were killed.”

That night he didn't celebrate. He mourned. He sobbed. He drank himself into oblivion. In time the alcohol addiction grew. His dad's dream ended. Now, with no purpose, he struggled with classes, and with life, so he quit school. He migrated into another nearby town, indigent and lifeless, drowning his failure and sorrow in alcohol. Oblivious to the world around him, he hounded people for money to buy his bottle.

One evening, he met Larry. "Hey, man, can you give me something to buy food to eat?"

"You're not going to eat! You're going to drown yourself!"

J.D. shifted away and intended to approach another person, but young man grabbed his arm. J.D. felt a surge of anger and shoved the man away. Their eyes connected, and when the stranger smiled, J.D. glared at him.

"You're J.D., aren't you?"

"So?" J.D. stepped away.

"J.D., I'm Larry."

Once again, J.D. shoved Larry's extended hand. But Larry persisted.

"Would you like to come to my place and eat?"

"No."

"I'd like to help you and listen to your story."

At that instant, J.D. turned and looked at the well-built, handsome young man. Their eyes connected again, and J.D.'s heart fluttered. How did this man know him? He lowered his eyes and hesitated. Larry patted him.

“Come on, J.D. I bet you haven't had a decent meal for a long time.”

J.D. did not respond. He simply nodded and followed Larry, like a lost pup.

The friendship of the two attractive young men flourished. Larry, a sharp, stylish all-American, fit the perfect success story. J.D. admired his skills at managing his life. He attended and graduated from college, worked as a case manager for a nonprofit organization, and leased his apartment; just what he dreamed of. But, where were his friends, his girlfriend?

“You have anybody...that you're attached to, Larry?”

“Not right now.”

J.D. felt an unfamiliar surge...a rush...he blushed. Larry smiled. He allowed J.D. to stay. On weekends, Larry disappeared until 5:00 am Monday morning, when he came to get ready for work. J.D. fixed breakfast. Surprised that he had not craved alcohol since he met Larry, he took care of his hygiene and appearance. He borrowed casual clothes from Larry. To show his gratitude, J.D. cleaned the apartment and cooked. He did not touch the liquor cabinet. His days were spent watching sports on TV.

One Monday morning, when Larry returned from his secret excursions, J.D. announced, “I have a job as a cashier at the convenience store down the block.”

“Way to go, J.D.!” Larry embraced him.

J.D. felt his blood rush...that rush...embarrassed he pushed Larry away. Larry smiled. The young man's eyes gazed intimately at him. J.D. looked away. His thoughts raced into denial.

When Larry returned from work that evening, he asked, "When are you starting work, J.D.?"

"Next week."

"Good job, man!" He patted J.D.'s shoulder.

J.D. flinched at his touch and walked away.

As he cleared the table, Larry asked, "Are you gay, J.D.?"

J.D. froze. "What makes you ask that? I've never...I...No!"

Larry glanced at his friend. Their eyes met. Larry inched closer, stroking J.D.'s arm. J.D. distanced himself ashamed of the love and attraction he felt.

"Why don't you admit it? There's nothing to be ashamed of." Larry reached out and caressed J.D.'s hair and face. Closing his eyes, J.D. allowed his dormant attraction for Larry to surface. Looking into each other's eyes, they embraced, then, they walked to the bedroom, hand-in-hand. J.D.'s heart pounded with excitement. He squeezed Larry's hand. Larry squeezed his back, and closed the door.

Larry introduced J.D. to his gay community. They visited friends in all walks of life. But J.D.'s new-found identity and relationship ended, as abruptly as it had begun. A knock at the door interrupted his daily chores. When he opened the door an officer asked, "Are you Larry Bentley's partner?"

"Yes."

“I’m sorry for your loss. Larry Bentley died in a car wreck.”

“He...what...?”

“He’s dead. I’m sorry.”

“He’s dead?” J.D. lost his balance and almost fell. The officer reached out and held him.

“Is there anything I can do for you?”

“No...no...I don’t know.”

“Would you like us to call someone?”

“No.”

The policeman helped him sit at the sofa and left. The phone rang. J.D. froze. Stunned, he stared at Larry’s photo. Why? He thought. Why, Larry? Not again...Not this again.

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“Yes, officer I saw him stagger from inside my store, and when I came out to dump the trash, he lay there, frozen, just like you see him. I nudged his feet, but he was rigid...just like that.”

“Okay, ma’am, we’ll take it from here.”

“He’s so young. I wonder why people get into this state...this kind of life you know.”

“Don’t worry, ma’am. We’ll handle it.”

“Dear God, he’s so young. Such a waste! Such a waste...”

The young man's body had no identification, nothing to tie him to his former glory. There was no one to notify. The officers called for transport to the morgue. The coroner's autopsy revealed he died of an overdose of alcohol consumption. There were two quarters in his dirty, smelly pants. The staff ripped his clothes off, cremated his body, and discarded it like garbage.

“Such a waste...such a waste...”

Case # 3: Andrea

I mustn't tell him, she thought. I don't need those pills.

"I'm super, doctor. I feel fabulous! *I am fabulous!*"

"Has the medicine helped you with your low moods, Andrea?"

"Oh, yes! They are an answer to my prayer."

"Do you pray, Andrea?"

"Of course, doctor. Doesn't everybody?"

I feel we should raise the dose a bit."

"No! Please. This dose fits me perfectly, really, doctor!"

"O.K., I'll see you in a month."

She grinned, confident that her manipulation worked. "I'll be here, she promised. It's a beautiful day, isn't it, doctor?"

"Yes, Andrea. It is."

The doctor watched her as she strode past him and exited down the hall.

"I'll see you, doctor." She glanced back catching a glimpse of him shaking his head.

I hope she's serious and realizes she needs those meds, he thought.

Andrea skipped her appointment and skipped days in taking her meds, taking them only sometimes to sleep. This habit affected her mood swings, usually leading her into her dark side.

No one at work suspects, and that's the way I want it. She persuaded herself. She never carried her medicines, because she knew that someone might discover the truth--her shameful battle with mental illness, which ran in her family. Her mother struggled with the stigma of Bipolar Disorder all her life. She wanted no part of that.

This morning promised to be special. She could feel it in her bones. She jumped when the alarm buzzed at five o'clock a.m. The timing was perfect. She planned her workday while she showered, put on her make-up and ate breakfast. My God, she thought, this is so perfect. Who needs meds! I'm feeling perfect! There's nothing wrong with me. I'm perfectly normal!

Kate and Lisa were immersed in their daily gossip. Kate spoke first. "Did you hear about Andrea?"

Lisa's curiosity peaked. "What happened?"

"She didn't finish her receivables yesterday, again!"

"Oh, God, she messed up again?"

"Yes. And her desk is a mess. Have you seen it?"

"How can I miss it? The heap on it is atrocious."

"Uh-oh, she's coming down the hall. Talk to you later."

As Kate moved away from Lisa, Andrea bounced past them. "Good morning, ladies! Wonderful day, isn't it?"

"Good morning."

“The world is brighter today than ever before, right?”

“Where do you get your energy, Andrea?”

“I live right, ladies! Have a great awesome day!”

Andrea reached her desk and the pile of papers scattered on her desk hit her like the slap of a wave. What’s this? She thought. She organized her desk yesterday! Was someone messing around with her paperwork?

“Good morning, Andrea.”

She turned around and her supervisor stood glaring at her.

“Good morning,” she stammered.

“May I see you in my office?”

Andrea’s heart pounded. She felt fear surge through her body settling in her gut.

“Andrea, your productivity has declined. You no longer meet deadlines. You are so behind on your duties, that you leave me no choice but to let you go.”

“I’m determined to finish my work today, Mr. Kinsley. I’ll work late,” she pleaded.

“It’s too late.”

In an instant her function descended from a high to a low. She walked back to her desk, holding back her tears, took her purse and strode past her coworkers without a word. I’ll find a better job, she thought. But the cringe in her gut grew tighter and tighter. She went home to her messy apartment and jumped into bed. She ruminated about the stupid manager, which submerged her

further into her dark side. She shut her eyes and sobbed, drenching her pillow. Tomorrow...I'll talk to him. I'll straighten it out...no, there is no tomorrow. Life sucks. All I need is to sleep, so I can function again. She took two pills and hours passed. Her mood fell further into depression. She took two more and nothing. Her mind raced with a trillion thoughts about what she should've, would've, done. I can clean up and catch up, but that stupid idiotic manager doesn't know me. Pride enraged her. She knew, if given the chance, she could outshine all of them. Soon they would miss her. Of course, she decided. He'll call me tomorrow. She smiled. She took two more pills, but her brain ruminated more.

Eight hours later, she was still thinking, planning, feeding her imagination. The beautiful day had ended. She succumbed to reality. She had lost her job. How would she eat? She felt helpless. How would she pay the rent? Hopelessness set in. Again she plummeted lower. She felt lost. Then she looked at the bottle of her medications. She poured the content on the table. Then she took all of them, one by one. Numbness set in. Sleep overwhelmed her.

"Yes," she muttered to the phone receiver. "Tomorrow I'll take care of it. I just need to sleep."

The police broke in to find her body rigid and face down on her bed, her left hand on the phone receiver, which beeped a busy signal.

"She tried to call for help," said one of the patrolmen.

"It was her time, Samuel. It was her time."

"No man, she made a choice. She chose death."

Case #4: The Professor

Charles David's face, like flint, without a blink of his eyes, held his cards tight in his hands. He waited. Then, after the other players folded, he threw his cards down, grinning and clapping.

"Damn you Charlie. How do you do it?"

"It's all in knowing, Pete...strategy and brains!"

The group of men scooted their chairs back. "Wait," said Charlie. "I'm in."

"No, man we're all cleaned out," the group responded together.

So Professor Charles David grinned and slapped his gambling buddies as they left his splendid home. "Great game fellows, see you all next week?"

"No, Charlie," said Pete. "You're too good. The wife is asking me what I do with my money. I can't risk her finding out about what I do on weekends. She'd skin me alive, or worse, if you know what I mean."

"Oh, come on guys, begged the professor. We can play another night. It doesn't have to be a weekend."

"We all work during the week, man, and you do too. How do you do it Charlie?"

"It's a challenge for me Sam. I get a rush!"

"Yeah, dude. You sure do."

"I've been thinking that I would like to play the big league games at the Casino."

"Man, you're gutsy, guy. See you."

Gambling became his obsession. When his friends backed down, Professor Charles advertised online to schedule a weekly game of poker.

“Sandra, I can make big money with a business. I could even quit the university, and you could quit your work.”

“But will it keep us together, and could we have more time for the boys?”

“Of course, love. As a matter of fact, with my next big win, I’m going take all of us on a trip to anywhere we want!

She smiled. He was so happy. “I guess there’s no harm.”

But Charles started to lose, and the addiction intensified. It was no longer a game. It was an unrelenting crave. He saw that the amount of his finances and assets were dwindling. He lied to his wife. “I’m going to Las Vegas to do research for a book on gambling. It’ll bring us more money.”

Charles scheduled his gambling excursion on a weekend that they were all going camping because the boys were on holiday from private school. Sandra asked, “Charles, did you forget? Can’t you postpone it?”

“No, Sandra. The ticket is paid for by the university, he lied. I have to go.” He avoided her eyes.

“What should I tell the boys?”

“I’ll make it up to you all. I promise.” Charles was edgy, and with every ticking second, his craving grew. He landed at Las Vegas at one in the morning, took a cab, paid to have his luggage

taken up to his room. He went to the bar. He drank on occasion, but today he drank because he needed to calm himself. Then, he headed for the casino.

He spent all night and part of the next day. He dipped into his wife's realtor account...then the savings...then the boys' college funds...then the house. He lost his personal account the first three hours of the game.

When he got in the plane to go home, he was unshaven, disheveled, and smelly.

His wife wearing casual blue jeans and a t-shirt met him at the airport, shocked at his wild look.

She had never seen him this way. "What happened?"

"Why? Why do you ask? Can't a guy have some fun?"

"David, you smell a lot like alcohol! Haven't you cleaned yourself?"

"Oh, hush, woman! I'm O.K.!"

"Why are you like this, what happened?"

"I was mugged and they stole everything, my wallet."

"Oh darling" she hugged him and kissed him. "Let's call the police. Or, did you call them?"

"No. I was drugged. I've been wandering about, until I found...my way home..."

He was edgy and shook uncontrollably.

"Darling...I think you need a doctor. Let's call Dr. Peterson."

"Yes...yes..."

She drove in silence to the sound of his heavy breath and what appeared to be an asthma attack.

“Dr. Peterson, is he all right?”

“He’s having a panic attack. I believe your husband needs some professional help.”

“A panic...I don’t understand...professional...a psychiatrist?”

“Yes. I’ll give you a referral.”

When they arrived home, the phone was ringing off the hook. His wife answered frantic. “Dr. Peterson?”

“No, who am I speaking with?” asked the man.

“Who is this?” She glanced at the caller ID and it was the mortgage bank. “This is Mrs. David.”

“May I have your date of birth and last four of your social please.”

“5/10/76 and my social is 3119.

“Mrs. David. Your bank has not approved the debit transaction for your mortgage payment.”

“What?”

“Are you having some...”

“Please, stop! My husband is ill. I have to get him some medical help. I can’t deal with you now!” She slammed the phone.

Then it rang again. “Who am I speaking with?”

“May I have your social?”

Mrs. David glanced frantically at the caller ID. It was the bank.

“Mrs. David, you are overdrawn on your account over 250,000 dollars. We need to speak to you personally or your husband.”

“What? No. That’s impossible! Please, I’ll take care of you later!” She slammed the phone.

The kids came in. “Mom, what’s wrong with dad? He’s just staring at the fireplace, but there’s nothing there. He doesn’t talk to us.”

“Your dad had an accident. He’s OK but I need to take him to the hospital. Kids, don’t answer the house phone. I’ll text you as soon as I find out anything, OK?”

“Sure mom. Can we help?”

“The best help you can give is to go to your rooms and stay quiet.”

“OK mom.”

She returned to her husband, who sat slumped in his chair. “Charles? What’s wrong? What happened on this trip? Did someone hurt you? I think we should go to the Emergency Room.”

He just sat in a trance, unable to speak, paralyzed with fear. How was he going to explain this to his family? He had lost everything...the house...the savings...maxed out their credit! He dropped his head into his hands in despair. He shook violently. He sobbed.

“Charles, speak to me. What’s wrong?”

“I lost everything.”

“Everything...what do you mean?”

“The money...the house...everything...”

The reality began to sink in for both of them. “Charles, everything?”

“I had a chance to win big,” he muttered. “But they took it all!”

“You gambled our life away? You said you weren’t that serious about it!”

“I’m sorry. I...”

“You need a doctor!”

“No. I’ll just go upstairs and lie down.”

“I’ll call the bank. Maybe we can salvage some of the money or assets. We have the real estate investments. That should help. You go upstairs. I’ll take a cup of tea up to you after I try to take care of this mess.”

She doesn’t know, he thought. There’s nothing. We are homeless. The boys...their college...dear God! His life flashed. He knew that he would never be rid of the culprit. Even if I restore everything, work hard, and restore...no...they’re better off if I’m dead.

He walked to the bathroom, took his wife’s pain medicine and swallowed the full bottle of pills.

He lay down. He recalled the game. I was close. I could’ve done it...I should’ve...why? I’ve always led a good life. I’ve always had a beautiful home, money to lavish presents on my family.

Why did God let this happen to me?

His tired brain grew numb. He closed his eyes and slept. His thinking ceased. He stopped breathing. His heart stopped beating. The world and his life ended for him because he chose to leave instead of face the consequences of his addiction. He stopped living. He gave up. He did

not keep on. He taught his family one important thing...to have faith and to love each other. So they picked the mess up and rented an apartment. She took a job as a customer service rep and the boys worked their way through college. The professor chose to leave them at the mercy of social disgrace, but they did not give up. They survived and lived. They found joy and did not allow their father to blemish their successes and failures with his choice to die. Why? Because they forgave their father and they did believe in God.

Case #5: Eliza

“You are the ugliest thing I’ve ever seen!” yelled the twelve-year-old Rudy.

“Get the hell out! You call yourself Catholic?” screamed the priest, Father Adolfo, as he slammed his fist on the small table in the Confessional.

Eliza ruminated on these salient moments in her mind. Bedwetting plagued her in her childhood and in her prepubescent years, and now as an adult, it emerged again. Rejection plagued her paranoid mind, and now, she found herself in a psychiatric ward.

“Eliza, you have Schizophrenia. Do you know what that means?”

She lay slumped in the hospital bed, with her chin rigid, her head heaving up and down with her heavy breathing.

“You cannot work. You cannot have children. You must take medication for the rest of your life!”

Eliza lay rigid...unresponsive. How can I believe what he says? She thought. He’s one of them.

They want to control me...to force me to kill myself...so that my soul will not go with Jesus.

Does it matter? Have I resurrected? Am I in heaven?

Placing his forefinger gently under her chin, the psychiatrist attempted to lift her head, but had to use his hand. Eliza’s catatonia, voices, and hallucinations dominated her. Her eyes remained shut. Hoping that Jesus had come for her, she opened her eyes. No! A clown in a priest’s cassock leaned over her and whispered, “Fight...fight...”

She resumed her pose. Fear taunted her. Jesus, come for me!

The doctor removed his hand and shook his head. “She needs to be committed. Let’s see if she’ll take her medicine. If not, shock treatment is next. If she doesn’t come out of it, we will send her in.”

After a sleepless night, Eliza’s door opened and the first shift nurse rustled in. “Eliza, I have your meds, hon.”

Eliza made no move or sound. She heard her pour water into a cup.

The woman leaned over her, her breath heavy, as she crunched Eliza’s jaw with her fingers and hand, twisted her neck, and pushed the pills down her throat. “God damn, lady, you’re going to take them!”

Eliza froze and choked on the pills. The nurse kept a tight grip forcing her to drink water. But Eliza froze, because now a man’s voice commanded her. “Eliza, on my shift, you’re going to take the god damn pills or my name is not Jabez!”

Tears rolled down Eliza’s cheeks. Jabez is Satan! He’s come for me...She ruminated this over and over Then, the Thorazine stupefied her mind.

“Eliza. Eliza. Wake up!”

She awoke with her mind in a dull foggy state.

“We need you to take some more medicine. Can you sit up?”

Eliza sat up on the side of the bed. Her body ached from the rigidity and catatonia that imprisoned her for so many hours. The beautiful woman smiled and handed her a tiny cup filled with pills.

“Take them.” She handed her a cup with cold water.

Eliza obeyed, and the nurse sat down on the bed beside her and embraced her. “They’ll help you feel better. You’ve had a rough day.”

Eliza looked at her and thought. She’s an angel. Jesus is going to save me! He’s sent her to take me to Him. Eliza felt weak, thirsty and hungry.

“It’s dinner time,” said the nurse. “Would you like to eat?”

Eliza nodded. Bertha led her to a large lobby with tables sectioned off for eating in the dining area. The trays were on a cart. A line of men and women stood waiting to take their trays, and they all sat around the tables. Eliza took her tray, and when she sat down away from the group, she ravished her turkey sandwich. She gulped down her cup of tea and tackled her Jello. She saw several patients return their trays to the carrier, and then they sat down in the common area to watch TV. She mimicked, and plopped down fixing her eyes on the tube, but ruminated about everything that had occurred. I have Schizophrenia. I’m insane. I must be locked up. That’s where heaven is. They don’t want to lock me up, because they want to imprison my soul!

In a split second she stood up in a trance, grabbed her head, and losing control, shrieked! The staff responded. They led her to her bed, and Bertha, the nurse, drew up an injection, gave it to her, and Eliza, still holding her head, shook violently.

“She’s having a seizure! Call Dr. James!”

“It’s probably the Thorazine!”

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Her recovery took over two months. She complied with the medications. Her hallucinations ceased, but the delusions and paranoia persisted. However, the medications helped her to cope. She heard the subconscious whisper, “Fight, Eliza...fight!”

And so, she applied and got a job as a crossing guard for Barton Elementary School. Her exposure to a life of routine helped the whisper grow stronger. “Fight, Eliza...fight!” She pushed her paranoia and delusions into a box. They emerged only when they were triggered by panic attacks. She also developed obsessions and compulsions that fit in with her routine. However, she improved. Her wellbeing came from the school children, who loved her.

Soon after she started working, she began to attend Daily Mass. She was in hell, she thought, but in her world the Eucharist reinforced Her Catholic faith. I can receive Him and be with Him every day. This sustained and strengthened her resolve to lead a “normal” life...to fight!

She did more than fight. She believed that she could help people like herself. Yes, I can do that! I can go to college. At age forty, she enrolled. The excruciating four years of her life ended with a diploma, with honors, in Psychology. She moved on to work with mentally challenged young people with multiple mental disorders.

Then the paranoia returned with intensity. Her blood pressure skyrocketed. An eating disorder and sleep deprivation plunged her into crisis after crisis.

“No more work, Eliza!” the doctor insisted.

“But work is a therapy for me, doctor.” She cried.

“You believe in yourself, but I assure you will relapse into severe deterioration...a vegetable...there is no ‘fight’ after that!”

“Okay, doctor. I do feel less stress since I’ve been home.”

“You’re very creative. Work at home.”

“Yes, doctor. I will.”

Peace...finally...at age 66, Eliza retired. The hallucinations were gone. The paranoia...anxiety... obsessions...subsided. She fought a different fight now. Her long battle took a toll on her mind and memory, generated by the chemicals in her brain. She grew old.

She lay in bed remembering her erroneous thoughts. The only certainty she lived by...her faith in God...persisted. Wonder, a grateful heart, and a war won comforted her feeling that the end grew near. She closed her eyes, never to wake up to the torment, the suffering, the guilt that she hurt others with her mind. Life ceased. The “fight” ended.

Dear Reader:

You have come to the end of this book, which convinces me that you have interest in my stories. However, I am looking forward to your review, so that I can assess what you like and what you don't like. Your opinion and view are important to me. Connect with me on my website: <http://www.my-mentalh.com> or my email addresses: veterans78229@gmail.com or fgcatholic@gmail.com.

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Regards,

Frances A. Garcia