

The alarm on her phone went off. It was time for medications. She stood up and let the blanket on her lap fall to the floor. She was sore from sitting for so long. She stretched, trying to touch the ceiling with the outstretched hands which rested at the end of her arms. She didn't come close, but she felt better. Hey, maybe life is like that. Maybe you just have to try, and if you don't succeed like the character in a movie, you will still feel good because you tried.


She trudged, almost uphill, one slow step in front of the other as she made her way to the kitchen. Abilify, Prozac, Lamictal, Alprazolam and Gabapentin were all waiting for her. She fumbled the first orange bottle when she picked it up. It fell, closed, to the floor with a crack. She picked it up, took a small yellow pill out of it and placed it on the counter. Yellow, orange, white, pink, green and yellow again. Who invented the colors of these pills? There were probably hundreds of board meetings about what color the medication should be. You should be able to order your meds in the color you want. "I'll have a green Abilify, and let's try pink Xanax today, okay, Gladys?" Her pharmacist was usually Gladys. What a horrible name. She was a nice lady though. On top of her shit.

She picked up the fistful of pills and said what she always did before she swallowed them. "Well, here goes nothing." The chemicals entered her body and began doing whatever it was they did to her personality, her soul, her natural imprint. Each one changed who she was in a different way. Her snowflake was becoming the same as many others she saw standing in line at the pharmacy. The unresponsive look in the eyes was the first giveaway. No reaction. They just stood and waited as long as they had to, without opinion and with patience. Her chemistry was like theirs now. The doctors and the pharmacists were merely pawns to the pharmaceutical companies who aimed to not only control the population but also give the gift of nothingness to a generation of patients who willingly gave up who they intrinsically were in the name of "getting better." She thought the business model was brilliant. Convince doctors and patients that the patient is sick and needs a product that may or may not work. A product that they can't really specifically explain but which has helped some people. They just don't quite know how it helps. The companies created their customers from dust, and most of them now look dusty. Not quite alive but maybe feeling better. The customer really isn't sure they are better, but when that phone alarm goes off, they willingly consume the product. All because a doctor told them to. Brilliant!

As her chemicals went to work, Justine returned to the couch. She felt a stab of hunger grumbling in her belly somewhere. She felt too lethargic to cook. She glanced at her picture window and noticed it had no drops on it. The rain had stopped. Now everything was green and peaceful. Alive, but she was dead - the walking, or rather the sitting, dead. She felt her anti-anxiety medication calm her. It reminded her of the hospital just three weeks ago. They fed her all kinds of calming chemicals to get her to sit down and stop spouting off the made-up algebra she was doing in her head that day. She was also speaking most of the equations out of her mouth for the whole world to hear. But that was after the salami store. She was a genius that day. She laughed thinking about it.

At 5:05 her doorbell rang. Her first reaction was "shit!" She considered not answering it, but she found the will to get up after the second ring. One stubborn step after another placed her at the doorknob. She turned it and was startled, confused and curious all at once.

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