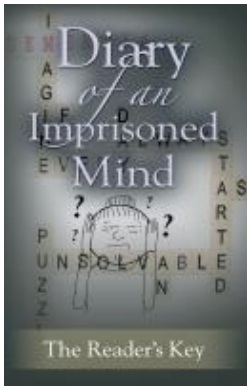


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Diary *of an* Imprisoned Mind



The Reader's Key



Diary of An Imprisoned Mind is an illustrated first-person narrative that depicts the hypothetical day of someone struggling with a dementia disorder. The reader is allowed to enter the fictional character's mind of confusion, questions, and delusions as she struggles to make sense of daily routines and her surroundings. The story's intent is to increase dementia awareness by relaying the sadness and despair which imprisons millions of individuals. The author and illustrator have directed all royalties, which would be due to them, to be paid to The Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation.

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Amy Hurley lives in Spotsylvania, Virginia with her husband, two sons, and daughter. She graduated from Cornell University with a degree in Nutritional Science, and went on to become a Registered Dietitian. Amy has also worked in long term care as well as surveying nursing homes for the North Carolina state regulatory agency. Her grandmother and mother were diagnosed with Pick's Disease, a frontal lobe dementia. It has always been Amy's goal to help those that face the devastating effects of dementia.

Diary Of An Imprisoned Mind

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Diary Of An Imprisoned Mind

Jennifer Orsak and Amy Hurley



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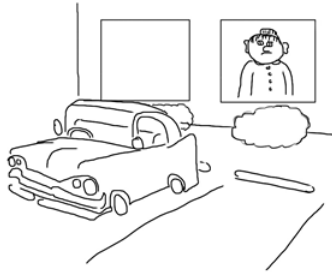
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First Edition

Irene's story

Looking out the window I silently tell myself, "I must hurry. I must hurry. I must hurry!!"

The sun is beginning to rise now, and I see what my eyes have been searching to find. I spy my car parked three spaces from my window view. I see no one else in the parking lot. It is the opportune time. I must hurry.



Walking quickly back to the bed I bend over my open suitcase and haphazardly throw more items into it. Did I get everything? I slowly straighten up. My back catches in a sharp pain as it tries to cooperate. I try to ignore the pain and

be optimistic. Today will be a good day. Today I am going home and no one will stop me.



The catch in my back is becoming a little more intense. Oh, my arthritis. Of all days, why did it pick this one to act up? I'll just take one moment and go to my bathroom medicine cabinet to retrieve my Tylenol. That should fix it.

Walking away from my suitcase I enter the bathroom, pick up a cup, and prepare to fill it with water. I turn on the faucet and look around. My medicine cabinet is gone. But where is it? It has always been here. Something isn't right. I drop my water cup on the floor and ignore the water which continues to run. I look around in a panic. What have they done with my medicine?

I instinctively grab my head. "Think Irene. Think." I silently coax myself.



For a moment I thought this was my bathroom, but it isn't. My medicine is at home. Home!! That is it. My mind rushes. I must get home. Paying no heed to the water that continues to run in the bathroom sink I leave the bathroom and approach the bed once again.

“She will be here. She will be here,” I repeat silently to myself.

My daughter left me here a few days ago. How could she have done this to me? That conniving stealing little wench-who would have thought? After all those years of raising and taking care of her and now to find all she wants is my money-my house and my bank account. I am fine and I will prove it. I will be gone from this horrible place when she

comes back to check on me. But I must hurry. She will be here. I would have never, never, never thought in a million years she would do this....never...never....never...

Once again I instinctively grab my head to stop my thoughts.



If I could just get home to a quiet place I will be able to think clearly. I am sure of it. There. I will just give my suitcase a final snap and everything is quite tidy and ready to go.

From habit I glance in the mirror before leaving. It appears I may need just a tad of lipstick. Now where did I place that? Did I pack it? Opening my suitcase once again, I rummage through hastily. Hum...It's not here. Maybe I left it

in a drawer. I walk to the dresser again and pull open a drawer to search.

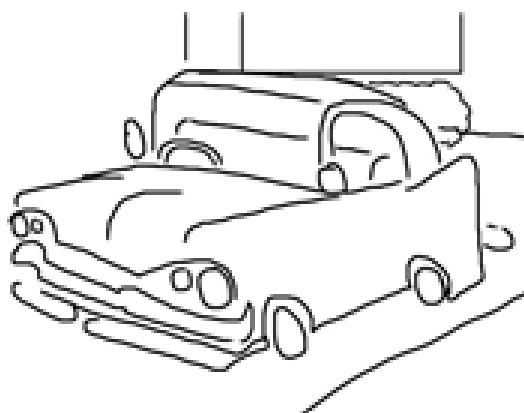
Oh my, what is all this?



I must have missed quite a few things when packing. I thought for sure I put everything in my suitcase. I ruffle through. These things certainly do not belong to me. I never wear such things. Wonder where they came from? Well, I will deal with that later. I must find that lipstick!! To no avail, I am not able to locate my missing cosmetic. Leaving the drawer half open I apprehensively walk back to the window to make sure my car is still there. What if my daughter came and got my car while I was searching for that stupid lipstick?

Becoming apprehensive I murmur aloud as I gaze out the window, “Spoodles and tunes. Spoodles and tunes. Spoodles and tunes.”

Yes, there it is. My car is still there. I can’t wait to go home.



Spoodles and tunes. Oh, I’ll just forget that stupid lipstick. I return to the bed once again and slam my luggage shut. I give it a huge heave and prepare to lift when suddenly there is a knock at the door.



Turning I see a very young girl peeping in the door. She seems to be only a child. I stop momentarily as I glance her way. What on earth does she want? Scowling I decide the best alternative is to say nothing. The little wench will just go away. Oh my, where am I getting those awful words? Where do they come from?!?!? I don't say or think things like that.

I instinctively grab my head once again. Stop. Stop. Stop.



A voice interrupts my thoughts. The young girl is starting to say something.

“Irene it’s breakfast time,” the young girl says.

I turn away while continuing to ignore her. I don’t need their breakfast. I just went to the supermarket a couple of days ago. I have a kitchen full of food items waiting, and nothing brews coffee like my old fashioned coffee kettle. I’ll eat when I get home if my daughter hasn’t cleaned me out of food. I go ahead and give a final heave and lift my suitcase. Turning to leave the room, I see that the young girl has now entered. Why won’t she leave me alone? Doesn’t she know this is a very important day? She continues to talk as she approaches me and I continue to scowl.

“Irene we have hot oat meal with brown sugar and melted butter—your breakfast favorite. I’ve already prepared your coffee the way you like it-2 creamers and 1 sugar. I’ll walk to the dining room with you before it gets cold,” she says as she reaches to take away my suitcase.

“Just the way I like it?” The words echo silently in my mind.

How does she know how I like my coffee? I don’t like any coffee unless it is poured in a mug at my kitchen table within the solitude of my house! I feel the suitcase starting to slip out of my hands and quickly jerk it back.

“NO!!” I shout aloud.

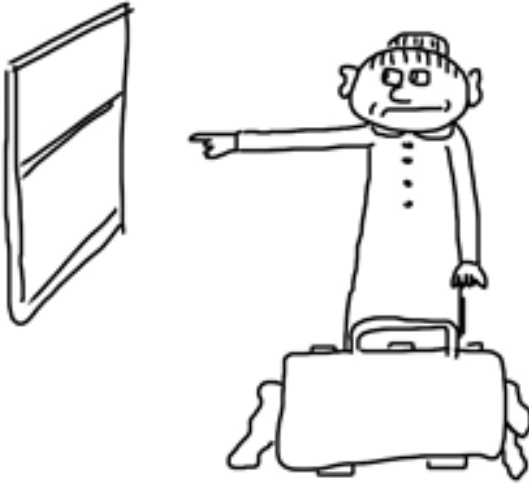
Temporarily the young girl looks warily at me and then she begins again.

“Why don’t you put your suitcase where you would like it to be and then you will know exactly where it is when you return from the dining room?”

“But I’m not going to the dining room with you,” I say silently to myself.

Don’t you know I am going home? My car is just right there. This is all a mistake. I turn away from the young child and point to the window where I see the morning light is

starting to now reflect off my car's windshield. I continue to point. Surly she can see that is my car.



Yet, try as I might to relay the urgency of my departure, all I seem to mutter to her is, “Home-I want to go home.”

“I know Irene. I know you want to go home. We all would like for you to be able to go home also. I know you have some pictures of your home in your drawer. Maybe we can look at them after breakfast together,” the young girl says.

“NOT HUNGRY!” I yell as I get more and more frustrated that the young girl is so blind to the immediacy of my situation.



“Oh God,” I silently plead. Why is this happening to me? I only want to be at home.

Tears start to run down my face and I feel my suitcase slipping out of my hand once again as I move my hands to wipe them away. To my dismay my suitcase flies open and my belongings are sprawled on the floor.

I want to scream, “Now look what you have done.”

Yet those words seem to die on my tongue and I manage only to whimper, “No, no, no, no, no.”

I grab my head and grip it tightly in a desperate gesture to control my mind. Closing my eyes, I begin to rock back and forth.

“No, no, no, no,” I continue aloud.

Slowly I open my eyes. I stop rocking and glance downwards. All my precious and neatly stored things are strewn for all to see. What has my life become? Urging my arthritic knees to cooperate, I kneel slowly to start rectifying the mess when I suddenly spot my small silver case of lipstick. I reach to pick it up when I note that the young girl has also stooped to help. She too has seen the shiny cosmetic case and reaches for it.



Holding it out to me she says, “Oh, look Irene it’s your lipstick. You have been wondering where this was for several days. Now you can stick it back in your pocket where you keep it.”

The young girl drops it into my hand and moments pass while I continue to only stare at the small object. My head starts to pound. I feel overwhelmingly tired. This is just too much for me. Can’t anyone see this fiasco is killing me? I bow my head and tears again roll down my face. Exhaustion is overtaking me.

I look up to see the young girl waiting patiently. She places her hand on my shoulder in a gesture of comfort.

“Irene, why don’t we get some breakfast and maybe you will feel better after you’ve eaten? Your daughter called this morning and said she would stop by and see you around 10 o’clock this morning. I can help get these things back in order while you have something to eat.”

Suddenly the tears stop and my frustration turns again to anger with the absurdity of this entire situation. I want to yell at this young naïve child. I want to tell her that my daughter is the problem. This young girl is the problem. Everybody is the problem. They treat me like I don’t know what I am doing

and have this superficial sense of sweetness about them-as if they think they are trying to help me.

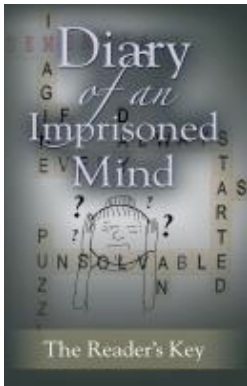
Yet for some reason the words forsake me and I end up just shouting at the young girl, “No!!”

The young girl looks taken aback momentarily. She then stands and silently holds out her hand waiting for me to take it.

Well two can play at this game. I’ll eat their breakfast and then quickly return to this room to pack and be gone before my daughter arrives.

A low groan escapes me as my arthritic knees allow me to cautiously stand again. I take the young girl’s hand. I’ll let her think she has won. Wordlessly, I accompany her out of the room and down a hallway.





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