

I still remember when I told my psychiatrist about Z. My doctor's name was Wingding. The conversation went like this.

“How are you doing today, Batson?”

“I'm doing great, Dr. Wingding.”

“Why is that? What changed?”

“I'm not alone here anymore. My brother is with me now.”

“You have a brother? I need to go through your records again, I don't recall a brother.”

“I met him last night for the first time. He died in 1965. But he is with me now. I don't mean right now. I know he's here in the hospital somewhere. I saw him last night.”

“I understand, he's with you in spirit. He's looking down at you from heaven and all that. Have you ever been diagnosed as schizophrenic?”

A tornado hit the room and my doctor, me, and everything in the room was caught up in it. The twister got smaller and smaller and landed on the desk. The room returned to normal. Or I had a panic attack and there was no tornado.

“No, I've always been Baptist. They immerse your entire body in water. The Lutherans diagnose with sprinkling. That's schizophrenic, I think.”

“Do you hear voices?”

“Yes.”

“What do they say?”

“One voice said, ‘do you hear voices?’ Another voice said, ‘yes.’ Then, the first voice said, ‘what do they say?’”

“Those were our voices.”

“Yes.”

“Do you ever hear voices when you are alone?”

“Yes, when I talk on the phone.”

“Tell me about your childhood.”

“I lived in a small town in a little house. It was me, my mother, my half-sister, and my stepfather. My real father and my mother had divorced when I was still little. My stepfather was abusive at times. Everything could be calm and then without warning become chaotic. My mother was abused. I can remember my stepfather lurking outside my bedroom door spying on me.”

"When can I leave from here?" I whispered.

"When you prove to me you can cope with everyday stresses. And when you begin to live in reality. You're seeing phantom brothers and alien guardian angels. How can I release you the way you are now?"

"I can't tell you something that isn't true. I have a phantom brother and an alien guardian angel. I will prove that to you."

"You could be here for a long time,"
Dr. Wingding said.