

LITTLE TALKS EXCERPT

DR WALLER is on a bus.

DR WALLER

Sometimes I wonder if I could convince a patient to have their leg amputated. Just. Just because. Just how far does the framed degree behind my desk go, you know?

“Mr. Hanover, you’re a very sick man. Your brain has convinced you of things - things we know aren’t true. This is a disease, and we call it Crazy. The disease. Your brain is telling you things for no apparent reason, for... for the pure pleasure of tormenting you, it seems. Because it’s fun to. It’s telling you stories, elaborate ones and you’re believing them and that’s very dangerous, Mr. Hanover. The risk with Crazy is that you’ll spread it to someone else, and, well, we can’t have an epidemic of Crazy, now, can we?

But I have good news. Science has identified the source of crazy, down to the very cell. It seems Crazy begins in the left ankle, the molecules quickly spreading down to infect the foot before moving upwards to infect your leg, torso, head. The poison, if don’t catch it quickly enough, heads for the blood, and then - well, then you’re a lost cause.

But not you, Mr. Hanover. Thank whatever gods you pray to because you, Mr. Hanover, are not a lost cause. We’ve caught it early enough, Mr. Hanover; it’s not yet in your blood and if we act quickly you’ll be able to live a good long life without your tricky little brain ever acting up at all.

Now as for your foot, I’m afraid it’s too late for that. There are some places on your body too overtaken by this foul - this terrible - to save. Our best course of action is to act quickly, amputate without regret in order to save the rest of you. Yes, Mr. Hanover, we’re going to have to remove the left leg. And some other parts, too. The right ankle. And, of course, your thumbs. Both thumbs most definitely go.”

The problem wouldn’t be Hanover. I mean, he’d be his own challenge but convincing the surgeon, and all the operating nurses. Outpatient services - inpatient, of course.

It wouldn’t be worth it. Did you know hospitals are required, by law, to immediately dispose of all the operating tools they use for amputations? Even though we have the best sanitizing equipment out there - I mean, they can literally make these scalpels better than new, beyond the standards of factory sealed sterilization - irrelevant. If it’s used in an amputation, it must be immediately disposed of.

That’s not true. I made that up. That’s not true.