

Livanette Huertas  
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As readers, we have a hard time believing some of what Bromden describes -- but his narration invites all of us to examine our own relationship to perception, delusion, and/or the relationship between memory and the present. Use a moment from Bromden's narration as a springboard for talking about the complex landscape of your own mind. How has your understanding of these topics been challenged, expanded, or enriched by our reading?

### The Spirits

I can't remember the first time I ever saw something so... mind boggling. It's presence and sight would make a small movement, and it was a flinch for me to look at what it was. Just like that, it would be gone. I always told myself that I would try not to look at it right away and see if I could still see it in the corner of my eye. That never happened. I was still pretty young although, maybe in my tween years around the 6th grade. I never anticipated an answer to why a shadow shaped as a cat would walk near me, because I never asked the question. I was comfortable with a cat that could've just been a sweet, affectionate, spirit kitty walking around the house with me. The deception of my mind created my favorite animal, following me like I always secretly wanted.

I was around 12-13 years old when I started hallucinating and it's something I have in common with Mr.Broom, a staff member who is likely to have schizophrenia in the book of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. There had been many scenarios of Mr.Broom mentioning fog around him in the asylum he works at, but it was never mentioned within the patients he was around. The author only giving the perspective of Mr.Broom has the reader able to assume at first that it was actual fog, but once the reader thinks out of the box and reads more scenarios of the fog around Mr.Broom, they see the patients completely ignoring this fog that Mr.Broom claims is there. Seeing things that are not actually there, is a hallucination and common hallucinations that stay for a while is a sign of schizophrenia.

When I realized this as a reader, I found something I could relate within Mr.Broom. However, it wasn't something huge to relate with until the theory that Mr.Broom had these hallucinations when something bad was about to happen. On pg 69, it states, "When nothing else is going on, you usually have the fog or the time control to contend with, but today something's happened." I read this, and an unfortunate memory ticked in my mind. The hallucinations weren't just a deception in my mind that no one else could see, but at times, a warning.

It was the summer of 2023, and I had been washing dishes. It was another instinct to turn around like usual, but not just at the corner. It was all the way behind me, and a shadow of a person came to stare and disappear. Just like the cats, I found it not too much to worry about. Little did I know, the night following I had a mental breakdown. It wasn't just a period of intense emotions and emotional distress, my thoughts were different. Not only intrusive, but disturbing

thoughts I never had before. I listened to negative music and felt so many sensations, as if a spirit went inside and started to take over my body. I don't know what it was, and nor do I know what it was today. All I knew was, it wasn't good. I didn't feel like I was in my own body, like something was taking control over me.

I never had an exact connection to the shadow and that night, until I saw it again and a family member had been affected as well. A chaotic mouth that wanted to be known, while the person loved to stay silent even when mistreated. Disruptive actions that echoed around the walls. A loving, strong spirit, broken down by the barriers of the pain they held for years with the help of a figure. A shadow figure changing all of the ideals of a person that was held to, their whole entire existence. I knew, when they screamed down the halls and needed to be held down, it was like a devil entering into them. They never hurt me or anytime else, but it hurt me to see how different they were.

Mr. Broom is able to be warned about bad events, and I was unable to see the warnings. Now that I've read his side of the story with his deceptions, I have learned that my deceptions can help me, just as well as the people around me.