

I am going to be using “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins as a guide for recounting a personal experience I have had. The narrator’s fixation on the wallpaper developed into an obsession and she would stare at it at night. This moment in the story brings me back to the time I was ill in bed for a week. I found some vague similarities in both of our situations. The setting of the main parts of the story reminds me that I once felt stuck too. I was waiting for my illness to get better so I could leave my house like the narrator was waiting for the renovations to complete so she could finally leave that room behind. I want to share this story of mine because it was a moment in my life that stands out to me.

Attending a public high school is an experience like none other. There is nothing that can come close to compare. It led to one of the most agonizing experiences of my life. As a freshman, I was put in a band class for elective credit. I was actually excited to try playing a real instrument for the first time. I just had this idea in my head that band class was going to be so fun. The idea I had in my head was completely different from what it was actually like. The school year had already begun, and we had spent over a month learning about notes and other musical concepts. It was finally time to be assigned an instrument. Due to the lack of funding, all of the band classes shared the same instruments. We were not assigned instruments individually. Personally, I found that super unsanitary. I was a bit disappointed with how things were run. I was in this class for good and there was nothing I could do, so I complied.

I was given the honor of playing the flute. The flute’s mouthpiece is not interchangeable. It was not like the other wind instruments where a different mouthpiece could be inserted each time. That meant everyone who used the flutes had to put their mouth on the same exact mouthpiece someone else had blown into every period before theirs. We were told to buy alcohol

pads to clean the mouthpiece each time before playing. I honestly do not know how that would make it more sanitary, but I did as I was told. “What about the droplets going into the instruments?” I thought to myself. I just dealt with it like every other public school misfortune. It was a part of the experience just like the overly crowded hallways, the daily fistfights, the atrocious cafeteria food, and more. Looking back at that school year, I got sick at least once a month. This was unusual for me, being someone who rarely gets ill. I knew it had to do with those flutes, but I did not think about it until the year ended.

Well into the school year, I got terribly sick. I did not contract the illness from anyone I knew, it was without doubt from those flutes. I got a severe case of tonsillitis and I was bed-ridden for an entire week. I was physically weak and unable to do anything. I stayed home from school when I started feeling the symptoms. I only got up to use the bathroom and for other essential reasons. After coming home from the urgent care, I knew I had to rest and limit any excessive physical activity. I was going to be stuck in my bed for a while. Time passed by very slowly. I tried to entertain myself, but I ended up spending most of my time laying there and staring at my surroundings. At first, it felt normal. I was just looking at the wall and zoning out, like a student in a boring classroom. I thought about what I would be doing at that moment if I wasn't sick. I was thinking about what I might have missed in school. I had my phone to distract me temporarily, but it did not alleviate my longing for the things I was missing out on. The second and third day was the hardest for me. It was the peak of my sickness and all I wanted to do was just go into hibernation and wake up to find my sickness gone for good. After the worst of it had subsided with the help of the antibiotics I was prescribed, I just mostly felt fatigued and worn out. I had shivers going down my body and my head was throbbing. My throat still hurt quite a bit but I was glad to be getting better. I really wished that I could be back to normal so I

could do the things I usually did. I missed seeing my friends and not being in the same confined space. I wanted to stop feeling the tiredness and aching. By the fifth day, I was able to get up out of bed and walk around the house for brief periods of time. I would get up to stretch my legs and clear my head. It was nice, but I still wanted to go outside and do things like I normally would. Finally, after a week, I felt well enough to return back to school. It felt great to return back to my normal routine. I reached the end of my affliction.