





1. This group of annotations focuses on the first page, particularly the “safe” box Webber has created for herself. However, the line marking this box is dotted, allowing for the darkness to creep in and surround her, so much so that she is crowded to one side of this box rather than standing in the middle of it. This gives the first indication of how this “darkness” that seems to be protecting her may actually just be controlling her to think so. She cannot be identified within the box without the slight space with less darkness, reflecting that light is her true saviour, and that this dark is meant to suffocate while playing the guise of a friend.

The darkness within this page also allows no room for the colour red, which we know represents Webber’s usual inner thoughts and emotions. Despite the darkness portraying thoughts during this panic attack (or what at least very much seems like one), the lack of the typical inner Webber casts doubt on the intentions of this dark scribble: rather than helping Webber voice her thoughts, it seems to be overwhelming her with its own.

This all helps to affirm a possible side of illness (especially illnesses that are harder to see or relate to for people without the illness): a helplessness from the lack of understanding from peers that can turn to undeserved but, in certain ways, understandable, frustration and anger.

2. This set of annotations focuses more on the role of the darkness outside the safe space to further the idea that the darkness (and therefore, these thoughts Webber is having in this moment) are driven by a flawed logic and a certain level of paranoia. Reading the text within the darkness, which point 9 will focus more on, there’s some contradictory statements within that challenges the validity of any of the statements in the darkness. “Get me away” and “Never let go” directly oppose each other, and more notably, the defiant refusal to be spoken for at the bottom of the first page is completely flipped at the top of the second when the darkness concludes “Why ~~talk~~ try...why bother.” These turbulent swings in attitude convey an instability and reads as a rush of thoughts driven by rapid emotions that have not been processed fully yet that instills distrust in this darkness. However, despite that, in the moment, this darkness has briefly won, depicting the power these dark thoughts can have on people in inducing panic and hatred, however illogical they may actually be.

Moreover, there also seem to be some figures within the dark (this may be hard to see since I didn’t see them either until I really stared at the page for details) surrounding the safe box. Their presence outside means they are a “threat,” but knowing what we do about how this darkness is all driven by untrustworthy and volatile emotions, we know that she is only perceiving these people as a threat in paranoia that they do not care and wish to hurt her. This offers a perspective on how illness could feel isolating, expanded more on point 6, since the frustrations and fears that can result from an illness can cause the ill person to push people away.

3. Notably, there seems to also be a key (presumably to the box) outside. This reflects Webber’s belief that the escape from this self-imposed (in the sense that this is driven by one’s own emotions, though not self-imposed in that the conditions that drove someone to this point was likely out of their control in one way or the other ) dark prison is out of her reach in two ways. One, because she does not think that this is within her own capabilities (portrayed here by her being physically trapped in a box away from the key). Two, because it is so lost in the dark that it would be hard to find (just as Webber has kept trying, and more or less failing, to find a solution to her illness).
4. This point focuses on the shouts Webber makes at the bottom of the first page as she sinks into the darkness. She is voicing her frustrations, but rather than being heard by her peers that this thought is meant for, only the darkness is there to listen (and consume) the text. This portrays her frustrations that contributed to this outburst: that she is not being heard. No matter how much she tries to project, there is no one who (at least from her perspective) can hear or understand her, reflecting the difficulty of understanding the illnesses of others and the isolating effect this can cause for the ill.
5. This point observes the transition Webber experiences at the bottom of the first page. She starts standing up, then falls to her hands, then turns to a wispy mush of darkness. Though standing, even at the start of this progression, Webber’s legs have already been consumed by the dark and cemented her to the ground,

showing the lack of mobility and freedom she feels due to her illness. Though she can physically walk around and be in social situations, a lack of vocal communication has hindered her ability to connect and confidently navigate her social life.

Her reduction to just the darkness also builds on the idea that despite the way venting these frustrations could feel tempting or even liberating, the darkness does not serve to help Webber, but limit, and ultimately here, destroy. However, this transformation into this shadowy creature also lifts the blame off of Webber for thinking the things expressed in the dark. She is not the dark; she is a victim of it; a separate entity who got taken over by these thoughts that do not reflect the real her.

6. This set of annotations focuses on the text overall, some about content, but mostly about the format. Starting with the capital vs. lowercase letters, taking into account the fact that most of the text in this book is lowercase, the capitals are drawing our attention to what they are saying. The repetition of "SAFE," which could be read as a reassurance, with the context of the "evil" of the darkness and the paranoia fuelling it reads more as a delusion meant to scare Webber into staying from all sides. Webber's shouts as she reduces to shadow at the bottom of the first page reflect her strong emotions as she fruitlessly fights to feel heard. And finally, the "NO!" that first fights off the darkness, elaborated more in point 7, is significant in its act of defiance and recovery back to the light. This, in turn, groups the rest of the lowercase into the same "normal" standard, including the words of the darkness. However, the key difference here lies in the presentation of the text. The normal text is presented as black on white, a simple act accomplished by writing on the paper. However, with the darkness having scribbled over the whole page, the white lowercase text had to be intentionally carved into the black (and judging by the texture of the text, it almost seems as if someone was wiping away the black with their finger to spell out words within it in lowercase), making it more intrusive than black on white. This extra effort to mimic the way Webber typically thinks reflects the deceptive nature of this state of mind; that the flaws driving these thoughts are often not evident in the heat of the moment.
7. There is also something to be said regarding the role of the light vs dark within these pages. There is a light present around Webber at the bottom of the first page which dims out as she becomes a shadow, which just reflects a loss of hope, but in the first panel of the next page, there is a break in the dark that prevents her from being completely surrounded. This light stemming up from her, followed by the next panel where her normal, logical thoughts create pockets of light around her to protect her both reflect the necessity of the ill, however difficult or unfair it may seem, to defeat the darkness. Furthermore, she shows that this is not only necessary, but possible, even with an illness that feels so overwhelming.
8. However, the fight won here is not a guaranteed permanent state. On the first page, Webber is in white clothing, but on the second, the darkness fades downward to form black clothes on her, meaning that the darkness has not been defeated, but rather contained. This is also reflected by the progression of boxes on the second page. The panels are the same size, but the first is completely uncontained, the second has a few bits of darkness jutting out, and the third is fully back to the norm, finishing the return to order. The styles of the darkness being messier, thicker lines the texture of graphite, known for smudging and dark shading, has returned to the ink typically present within the book. This restraint, rather than obliteration, of the darkness serves to offer normalcy and hope back to the lives of the ill without dismissing these emotions or struggles as a "phase" or something to be fully hidden away.
9. There is also a presence of "No"s throughout the two pages. Though these can be read as denying the idea of other people caring or the idea of leaving the safe space, I think they represent the logical part of Webber that still existed deeper down the entire time. The "No"s existed on the first page as well around Webber's head, only to be swallowed by the darkness and cut off by her frustrated shouting. This hints at the possibility that these are opposed to the angry dark Webber. The "No"s come up again in the first panel of the second page, which we know is the start of Webber's return to light, and it is a "NO!" that cements this in the next panel. These "No"s seem to represent the idea that despite any overwhelming thoughts or emotions, the real person still exists inside to fight the darkness off and (hopefully) win.

10. My final note was that these pages seem to be in conversation with each other, past just being in sequence. All the characters of the first page face right, and all the characters of the second page face left. This constant conversation creates a sense of timelessness that reflects both the cyclical nature of this struggle aforementioned in point 8 and the time that could be lost during this struggle (the fight is just as valid whether it lasted for minutes or months or years).