



January First: A Child's Descent into Madness and Her Father's Struggle to Save Her

Michael Schofield

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Michael Schofield's daughter January is at the mercy of her imaginary friends, except they aren't the imaginary friends that most young children have; they are hallucinations. And January is caught in the conflict between our world and their world, a place she calls Calalini. Some of these hallucinations, like "24 Hours," are friendly and some, like "400 the Cat" and "Wednesday the Rat," bite and scratch her until she does what they want. They often tell her to scream at strangers, jump out of buildings, and attack her baby brother.

At six years old, January Schofield, "Janni," to her family, was diagnosed with schizophrenia, one of the worst mental illnesses known to man. What's more, schizophrenia is 20 to 30 times more severe in children than in adults and in January's case, doctors say, she is hallucinating 95 percent of the time that she is awake. Potent psychiatric drugs that would level most adults barely faze her.

A *New York Times* bestseller, *January First* captures Michael and his family's remarkable story in a narrative that forges new territory within books about mental illness. In the beginning, readers see Janni's incredible early potential: her brilliance, and savant-like ability to learn extremely abstract concepts. Next, they witness early warning signs that something is not right, Michael's attempts to rationalize what's happening, and his descent alongside his daughter into the abyss of schizophrenia. Their battle has included a two-year search for answers, countless medications and hospitalizations, allegations of abuse, despair that almost broke their family apart and, finally, victories against the illness and a new faith that they can create a life for Janni filled with moments of happiness.

A compelling, unsparing and passionate account, *January First* vividly details Schofield's commitment to bring his daughter back from the edge of insanity. It is a father's soul-baring memoir of the daily struggles and challenges he and his wife face as they do everything they can to help Janni while trying to keep their family together.

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