

JOYCE'S INDUCED HALLUCINATION THEORY

By: Julia Wilmot

At the end of season 4, fans were given more insight into the physics of the upside-down in contrast to the right-side up-- though, this left some fans with a burning question: if the upside-down was *created* and is currently flowing through a distorted version of November 6th, how did Will communicate with Joyce and see the alphabet if it didn't exist yet?

This is a really fair question— so I'm going to try to tackle it.

At this point in the season, when Joyce has assembled the lights and is waiting for Will to communicate with her, he supposedly spells out using the connection through electrical interference that he is "RIGHT HERE" and to "RUN," then crash— a demogorgon comes out of the wall.

After watching season 4, I can't say that it was Will who was communicating through the alphabet lights, but rather someone with the ability to make you see things when they're not there, or, seamlessly distort your reality for a moment in time. Now who could that be...

In the first 8 minutes of the series, there is some debate as to whether the entity who opened the door to let the demogorgon in is Eleven or Vecna, since we've been egged on by the parallelism between Eleven in the second season opening the door to Terry Ives' home, then

again in the same season but this time the Byers' home. For the sake of this theory, we will remove this uncertainty and place it in the air because that won't change what I am about to tell you: Vecna spoke to Joyce through the alphabet light wall.

The Duffer brothers hinted at this by using episode 7 of season 2, with Kali/O8, then later on again in season 4. Not only did this episode tell us that there is one more survivor from the Hawkins Lab Massacre, but it introduced to us the idea that these powers include making others hallucinate. For Will, his hallucinations are different—whenever he would see things they would be considered as NOW-memories, or rather, Truesight (which subtly tells us that time in the Upside Down is occurring all at once but however many units per time have elapsed are MUCH larger in the Upside-Down, making it eternally November 6th— hypothetically). Why would Vecna do this? Initially, I believe that Vecna's plan might have been sporadic killings to strengthen his powers— because as we learned in the last season, he gets stronger with each kill (which is why he was able to open the large gates). It is possible he was also looking for Eleven, but sensed a greater connection for whatever the reason may be, to Will.

He may have realized that he could use Will to his advantage, for several reasons—he's much like him, sure, but he's forming an army and needs Will as a spy.

To commence his plan after Will's capture, Vecna created these hallucinations where Will was trapped in the wall to fasten this already established sense of urgency so that he could continue executing his

plans. Vecna wanted to get rid of everyone, starting with the people closest to Will— OR, people he once knew (The First Shadow). So the perfect change arose, and Bob, Joyce, and Hopper were in close proximity (the hospital— mainly Mike, Joyce, Hopper, and Bob by association). He realized what he could use Will for, realizing that he could double cross his loved ones while under possession. Vecna had quite a few setbacks in his plans, making him realize how strong the main group is, he stopped trying to kill them and started trying to kill their faith, by watching the ones they love die/disappear or suffer— and now watching the town—their homes burn—which is more punishing than death while he can't reach them, as he views it, since death is synonymous to liberating and healing in Vecna's books.

Vecna had planned this when he sensed Will's heart. He wanted Hopper and Joyce to find Will, and he wanted to bring him up to the surface so that he could become The Spy and help destroy Eleven and everyone she knows and loves so that destroying the world would be that much more gratifying. As we know, Vecna has a multi-phase plan with a lot of backups for Hawkins, when he seemingly fails, he actually has a whole other plan loaded, throwing him into the same direction: forward. Thus, Eleven reopening the gate triggered sub-plan-phase-one: take Will, phase two: make sure he's found alive in the UD, phase three: make him a spy-- and so on. They were small steps to a larger plan. So I believe that Vecna was making Joyce see things, because there was no actual gate there.

She axed down her wall later on in the season, and Vecna made her seem crazy to those around her when she really was “seeing things” like Jonathan thought, but not for the same reason he suspected. Vecna also advised her to run because he still needed her alive and to go crazy enough to find Will, or help find him. Everything she imagined was consistent with the laws of the upside down, but I believe that the iconic “Run” scene all happened in Joyce’s mind.

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Vecna has all powers combined. Since eleven and 8 are the only ones left alive after the massacre, they have to work together things

Some say they kept Will alive because of Vecna’s empathy or sympathy for the boy since they are very alike, but he doesn’t see people that way. He sees them the same way as he does animals, inferior to the world he’s allegedly cultivated. Except one thing he didn’t plan for is Will’s strength.

Vecna couldn’t properly infiltrate Will’s mind because he was singing “should I stay or should I go,” for comfort, the same way that Kate Bush saved Max the first time. And the same way it was days until he was properly captured in the UD.

Vecna considers himself Sui Generis and superior to humans, he sees, feels, does things in which they cannot. He wants to fix it. And he needed help. Breadcrumbs Joyce was only the beginning of his multi-phase plan.