

16. The Visit

In Chapter 16, titled "The Visit," Chona, a Jewish woman from Pottstown, lies comatose in a private room at the Reading hospital, her care arranged by a wealthy theater owner from Philadelphia. Amidst the nurses' disdain for the diverse visitors and the care team, the narrative reveals a tense relationship with the hospital staff who disapprove of the racial and social mixing. Addie, alongside Chona's husband Moshe and their friend Nate, keeps watch, hopeful for Chona's recovery despite doctors' grim prognosis.

Addie believes Chona exhibits signs of life each morning, a belief she shares with Moshe when he arrives exhausted from his theater responsibilities. Their private discussions and observations of Chona's condition underscore their dedication and hope, contrasting with the bleak hospital environment and the nurses' prejudiced whispers.

The chapter also delves into a subplot involving a scandalous event at a store, hinted to involve inappropriate behavior by a Dr. Roberts towards Chona, leading to her current health crisis. Addie and Nate discuss their frustration with the injustice and racism pervasive in their community, revealing the complexities of their lives beyond Chona's hospital room.

Amidst their personal struggles, Addie's dedication to Chona and her family reveals her character's depth and resilience. She contends with societal racism and the personal challenges of supporting her friends in a hostile environment. The narrative weaves themes of hope, despair, and the fight against injustice, portrayed through the lens of characters grappling with their circumstances.

As the chapter concludes, Addie and Nate's reflections on their situation underscore the broader societal issues they face, particularly racial inequality and the misuse of power. Their determination to support Chona, alongside their personal battles, paints a poignant picture of friendship and resilience in the face of adversity.