

3. Chase

In the chapter titled "Chase" set in 1969, the ominous atmosphere of an old, dilapidated fire tower over a mist-shrouded bog sets the scene for a startling discovery by two young boys, Benji Mason and Steve Long. As they venture up the fire tower on an unusually warm fall morning on October 30, 1969, their adventure takes a grim turn when they notice what appears to be a body in blue clothes lying motionless in the mud below.

Alerted by the unusual silence broken only by the distant caws of crows, their initial curiosity quickly transforms into horror when they realize the body belongs to Chase Andrews, lying dead with his eyes wide open and a leg grotesquely twisted. Despite their fear and awareness that their presence in that area was forbidden, the gravity of their discovery compels them to seek help. The prospect of crows descending on Chase's body adds urgency to their mission.

In a panicked decision, they agree neither will stay behind alone to ward off the birds, a task both daunting and macabre. Racing back to town on their bicycles, they navigate the sand tracks to reach the sheriff's office. Upon arrival, they find Sheriff Ed Jackson, a medium-height man with reddish hair and freckled skin, immersed in a magazine. Their abrupt entrance and urgent tone break the tranquility of the sheriff's mundane activity, setting the stage for the investigation into Chase Andrews' death.

This chapter seamlessly combines the innocence of childhood adventure with the harsh intrusion of mortality, all within the backdrop of a close-knit community in 1969. The vivid description of the setting and the characters' immediate reaction to their harrowing find evokes a sense of urgency and foreboding, leading the narrative into the unfolding mystery surrounding Chase Andrews' untimely demise.