

# 11. Gone

In the chapter titled "Gone," the atmosphere inside the Heaven & Earth Grocery Store shifts dramatically when the overhead bulb flickers, signaling the entrance of a visitor. Dodo, who is hiding on a trapdoor ladder, witnesses Miss Chona's initial calm demeanor turn to alarm as she confronts the newcomer, a man dressed in a fedora and black coat—Doc Roberts. While Miss Chona usually handles her disability with grace, the unsettling presence of Doc, feared within the community, exacerbates her condition.

As tensions rise, Miss Chona and Doc engage in a heated conversation, which escalates into a conflict regarding social issues, leading to Miss Chona's eventual seizure. Dodo, overwhelmed by fear and uncertainty, watches as she collapses. His instinct to protect her clashes with the teachings of Aunt Addie, who had warned him to stay close and quiet, fearing for his safety in the presence of state officials who might take him away to a special school.

A moment of panic grips Dodo as he realizes his beloved Miss Chona is in danger. Unable to restrain himself, he leaps over the butcher's counter to confront Doc, who is inappropriately handling Miss Chona after her fall. Dodo's actions spark a chaotic struggle; he unexpectedly finds strength in defending her, launching himself at Doc in an attempt to save Miss Chona from further harm.

Just as Aunt Addie arrives, Doc pushes Dodo away, leading to a frenzied scene where both adults work to stabilize Miss Chona. Amidst the tumult, Dodo tries to help, but chaos continues as the police, summoned by Doc, arrive at the store. Fearing the repercussions of his actions, Dodo flees, making a desperate escape through the yard and up to the roof of the building, eluding the policemen chasing him.

In a moment of desperation, Dodo jumps from the roof to avoid capture, but ultimately loses his balance and is caught, resulting in an abrupt blackout. This chapter encapsulates Dodo's turbulent emotions and the turmoil within his environment, marking a pivotal moment in his life filled with fear, loyalty, and an urgent need for agency.