

The rain had finally stopped, leaving the roof unmarked and ready. As they pondered the balloon's hesitation above, Will mused that they needed to act first, worried about the Witch discovering their plans. In his room, he reflected on his Boy Scout archery set, wondering if he could outsmart her. He didn't want her to report back for days about their secretive doings. Stealthily, he grabbed his bow and quiver, and opened the window to communicate with the Witch through his thoughts and feelings, aware that although she couldn't read minds, she might sense his excitement and victory over her.

At the clock's chime, signaling four in the morning, Will shouted for the Witch to return, claiming the roof was clean from their rain. His confidence surged as he felt the earth shift beneath the balloon, urging the Witch to come back, feeling wild as he raced outside, fueled by adrenaline. He reached the abandoned Redman house, where silence hovered ominously, and opened the door to darkness and dust. Climbing up the crumbling stairs to the roof, he concealed his weapons behind the chimney, where he could keep an eye on the approaching balloon.

The witch, sensing the boy's presence, hovered nearby, growing frustrated and suspicious. Will remained calm, using his wits to distract her as she inhaled and exhaled anxiously. As she circled the balloon, Will took a stand, daring her to come closer, feeling the tension rise. When their proximity reached its peak, he quickly grabbed at something familiar—the remnants of his archery supplies, now turned crucial for his defense.

Just as he was about to release an arrow, the bow broke, shattering his plan. The Witch, sensing victory, breathed a sigh of relief, oblivious to the impending danger. In a desperate last effort, Will flung an arrowhead at the balloon, which began to tear, releasing a torrent of air and color as tumult erupted around them. He lost his grip and fell, but a nearby tree broke his fall, leaving him hanging amidst the branches to witness the balloon's chaotic retreat.

Will remained suspended in the tree, heart racing but alive, collecting himself as the surrounding world fell silent, the balloon spiraling away with the Witch's distant cries echoing into the night. After a moment, he calmed down, finding solace and gathering his strength before carefully climbing down to the ground.