

## 32. Alibi

In the stormy ambiance of Barkley Cove, 1969, the narrative unfolds with Joe divulging to Sheriff Jackson a significant breakthrough in their investigation related to the night Chase Andrews died. Despite the difficulty of tracking down the reclusive Miss Clark, known for her elusive nature, Joe finds credible testimony at Jumpin's marina indicating she was out of town on the crucial night. Tate Walker, a figure from the past now working at an ecology lab, and Jumpin, a marina owner with close ties to Miss Clark, both confirm her absence in Greenville for a supposed meeting with a publishing company. This revelation provides her with a plausible alibi, shaking the previously held belief of her presence near the scene.

Post-lunch, Miss Pansy Price, bearing potentially crucial information, visits the sheriff's office. Employed at Kress's Five and Dime, she claims to have witnessed, along with her colleagues, Miss Clark boarding a bus that aligns perfectly with the timeline proving her absence from Barkley Cove on the night of Chase's death. Miss Price's observation further strengthens the alibi provided earlier by Tate and Jumpin, complicating the case and casting doubt on the initial suspicion towards Miss Clark.

The chapter showcases the intricacies of small-town dynamics, the evolving nature of evidence in a criminal investigation, and the juxtaposition of community perceptions against tangible alibis. Amid these revelations, skepticism remains, hinted by Sheriff Jackson's musings on the feasibility of Miss Clark's travel logistics, suggesting the complexity in discerning the truth in a tangled web of timelines, relationships, and local lore.