

In the darkening streets, a small parade moves silently past Mr. Crosetti's barber pole, illuminating the empty sidewalks as evening descends. Will walks, focusing on the rhythm of his steps, counting in a whispered cadence of "one-two" as he looks for someone familiar in the crowd. He notices Jim in the parade, accompanied by an odd assortment of characters, including a whimsical Dwarf and a Skeleton. The throng of people seems to press closely behind him, intensifying his awareness of their presence.

Will's attention is diverted by the three dogs running alongside, their tails guiding them through the parade, evoking thoughts of calling for help in a dramatic fashion. Yet, the dogs ignore his silent pleas, and he attempts to convince himself their appearance is merely coincidental. As Mr. Tetley rolls a wooden Indian into his shop for the night, Will feels a strange mix of acknowledgment and indifference as they exchange greetings.

Mr. Dark, another figure from the parade, beckons them with vague promises of fun at the carnival, the allure of a free ride echoing in the air. Will's instinct warns him to keep Jim from engaging with this deceitful figure, but Jim seems entranced, slick-eyed and unresponsive.

Mr. Dark further tempts Jim with the prospect of partnership, suggesting a future filled with grandeur—growing him to a strong age, pairing him with Nightshade for supernatural acts in the carnival. Will internally protests, hoping to break through to Jim, urging him to resist the seductive allure of Dark's promises. The atmosphere grows tense as Dark envisions a nightmarish fate for Will, portraying him as a plaything for the Dwarf, robbing him of his agency and voice.

Just then, a policeman, Mr. Kolb, appears, interrupting the flow of dark intentions. The trio, caught in a web of temptation and fear, is slowly drawn away from the safety of the lights and into an uncertain road leading to meadow country, navigating a march devoid of safety and comfort. The ominous narrative continues as they turn away from the familiar and into the unknown, leaving behind the warmth of community as the parade progresses onward without them.