

The chapter begins with Will, whose hand is described as a "mole in the dark," frantically searching through his pockets as fear grips him. He is aware that a multitude of potential futures, represented by "million old men," threaten his father, Charles Halloway. As he grapples with the dark, Will knows that time is running out to protect his dad. He must act swiftly, as these imagined figures of the future could overwhelm Halloway, threatening to consume him with the weight of harsh realities of aging.

Driven by urgency, Will retrieves kitchen matches from his seemingly bottomless pockets. He lights a match, bringing a momentary blaze of illumination. The stampede of fears and the looming presence of time giants halt, startled by the light. They gaze back with memories of past figures, their mouths agape in astonishment, now settled in temporary stillness. Will's match represents a fleeting chance against a relentless tide of possible futures that plans to suffocate his father.

In a moment of desperation, Charles Halloway utters "No!" as Will struggles against the impending darkness that arises once the light is extinguished. Will thrusts the match forward, but the reflections in the mirrors create a terrifying array of versions of himself and his father that depict their potential downfall. The imagery is symbolic of all the years grappling with existence, threatening to impose anguish and obliteration on both men.

As the match flickers, Will's emotional plea intensifies, urgently declaring his love for his father. The burning flame casts shadows on Halloway's tense form, closing in on despair and uncertainty. Despite the crippling fears they face, they share a vital connection that defies the passage of time. The moment crystallizes into a powerful resolve as Charles Halloway opens his eyes to confront Will, the flame, and the congregated reflections of himself. Suddenly, the gravity of their situation weighs heavy, yet an inner strength surges. He releases a cry—an answer that echoes through the chaos—and the proverbial Witch, emblematic of their fears and struggles, feels the weight of that sound as it reverberates through time.