

In this tense and climactic chapter, the scene opens with Will's father observing the lifeless body of Jim, yet sensing something still remains. The atmosphere is soon disrupted by a frantic boy named Jed, running from a threatening figure referred to as Mr. Dark. Jed pleads for help, emphasizing his fear of the "terrible man" chasing him, which instantly resonates with Will's father.

While Will's father tends to Jim, he follows Jed's lead. Jed is in a state of panic, ready to flee at any moment. Their conversation reveals that Jed is only nine years old, which deepens the gravity of the situation; a child should not be embroiled in such chaos. As tension builds, Will's father questions Jed about his intentions, insinuating that fear can lead to perilous choices. He challenges Jed, suggesting there could be a trick or danger hidden in their surroundings.

The confrontation escalates as Will's father discovers tattoos covering Jed, illustrating sinister creatures like serpents and scorpions. This artwork symbolizes the dark influences surrounding the carnival and the control Mr. Dark wields over his victims. Jed's desperate resistance is palpable, yet Will's father, drawing on his own strength, attempts to confront and dismantle the malicious grip Mr. Dark has over Jed.

The dialogue between them shifts into a deeper exploration of fear, evil, and the nature of true power. Will's father asserts that only good can triumph over evil if one chooses to reject its control, highlighting the internal struggle Jed faces. Through a metaphorical embrace, he aims to draw out the boy's inner strength and encourage him to resist the evil that has invaded his body and spirit.

As the confrontation reaches its peak, the battle seems both physical and psychological, showcasing a struggle between good and evil represented by Will's father and Jed's unwillingness to break free from darkness. Ultimately, the atmosphere shifts, embodying a profound realization: that evil has only as much power as one allows it, underscoring the urgent need for courage and resistance against formidable darkness. The chapter concludes with a haunting silence, leaving the outcome uncertain but charged with the weight of their confrontation.