

In this emotionally charged chapter, Charles Halloway rushes to his son Will and his friend Jim Nightshade, who lie on the ground in a seemingly lifeless state. Initially, Will reacts with despair, believing Jim to be dead. Charles, however, insists there might be hope, urging Will to avoid giving in to grief. He explains that their enemies, represented by Mr. Dark, feed off sorrow and despair. Fueled by desperation, Charles smacks Will, prompting him to rise and fight instead of wallowing in grief, motivating him with the recollection of the earlier confrontation with the magical entities.

In a powerful monologue, Charles emphasizes the value of joy and laughter, insisting that such emotions repel the dark forces. He recounts an encounter with the Witch, asserting that a smile can be more potent than tears, stirring Will toward action. Will, feeling hopeless, is commanded to sing, jump, or do anything that would defy their enemies, leading him to initially resist but ultimately join his father's spirited antics.

As they engage in a playful song together, Will gradually shakes off his sorrow. The playful atmosphere escalates, transforming their fear into joy as Charles dances and prompts Will to join. During this tumultuous movement, Jim appears to awaken, triggering a wave of laughter from both boys as they exuberantly pull him into their celebration.

In the aftermath, they laugh and dance, energized by the revival of their friend. The trio, now emboldened by the lightness of their spirits, realizes they have recaptured joy and life in the face of overwhelming despair. They share tender moments, reassured by their bond and the shared experience of overcoming darkness together. Charles, appreciated as a hero by Will, emphasizes that while they've won this battle, the fight against darkness will continue, and they must be vigilant. The chapter concludes with a sense of renewed hope and friendship as they move forward, leaving the past behind and looking toward a brighter future.