

# Chapter 143

In Chapter 143 of "All the Colors of the Dark," Misty drives an '85 Mustang with Patch as they navigate onto Interstate 35. Dressed in boots and a raincoat, her blonde hair is concealed beneath a cream woolen hat. They pause by the Gold Run River, where Patch opens the window to feel the serenity of nature, noting the silence that envelops them. The scene transitions as they stop beside a deep, narrow box canyon, evoking images of Grace, whose body has long returned to the earth.

As Misty reclines her seat, she soon drifts into sleep, leaving Patch alone with his thoughts until daybreak. He exits the car to gaze at the expansive, leaf-covered woodland, recognizing the site extends over a million acres. Misty takes his hand, guiding him through a steep terrain where they encounter fallen joists. Here, Patch recalls Tooms's vague accounts of his actions regarding a young girl's tragic end.

The environment is depicted vividly, a great oak intertwining with the sky, while Patch seeks a stream that glimmers like shattered glass over rough rocks. Following Saint's instructions, they progress through the shortleaf pine until reaching a rusted sign. Patch declares, "This is it," signaling the location they had sought.

Misty, breathing heavily, reflects on their slow pace along an all-weather gravel road, which has not been traversed for some time. Saint's detailed mapping has helped them trace a route from Monta Clare, along an area where Tooms could have accessed the forest. As they ascend a steep trail, Patch expresses disbelief that Tooms could have carried the girl such a distance, the chilling thought causing Misty to snug her hat and coat tighter.

Their descent uncovers secrets of the terrain as they examine the dirt searching for clues. Eventually, they arrive within sight of the access road, prompting Misty to recall a storm that had hindered travel during her abduction. Patch contemplates the implications—if the road was blocked, it would have been impossible for Tooms to bury the girl there.

As they return, silent and reflective, Patch makes a call from home. Saint, as usual, is quick to respond. Despite their conversation, Patch insists on the deceit of Tooms, while the possibility of the girl being alive lingers unsettlingly in the air. The chapter closes with a blend of tension and uncertainty as they grapple with the implications of their findings.