

# Chapter 144

In Chapter 144 of "All the Colors of the Dark," the narrative unfolds over a summer of blossoming friendship between the protagonists. Each Sunday, they embark on hikes along verdant trails beside the Meramec River, which resembles a gilded pathway ensconced in lush greenery. Misty, sharing her knowledge, explains hydrotropism while reminiscing about her childhood, when her father would take her biking in the mountains, evoking a sense of nostalgia for a simpler past.

During one outing, they pause at the floodplain forest, where Misty prepares a picnic, presenting a Tupperware dish containing sausage and hash brown casserole, a recipe inherited from her mother. This familiar dish brings up a twinge of discomfort for the male character, yet he swallows his feelings and participates in the meal. As they eat under a dreary sky, their conversation shifts to the subject of Tooms, a character central to their past traumas.

He reveals his efforts to reach Tooms through multiple visitation requests, expressing a desire for forgiveness and atonement. In contrast, Saint, another figure in this narrative, is depicted as losing faith in the possibility of reconciliation, suspecting that Tooms had a role in the death of a girl, gaining a sinister pleasure from their anguish.

Misty's inquiry, "Will you keep looking?" suggests a blend of hope and resilience as she observes the starlings flocking together in harmonious movement. The male protagonist's gaze lingers on Misty, perceiving an unsettling stillness within her, as if her enthusiasm for life had been drained away. She deftly references the whimsical term for a group of ladybugs—a "loveliness"—hinting at her appreciation for the beauty in simplicity, a poignant contrast to the darker underlying themes.

This chapter encapsulates a moment of connection as the protagonists navigate their past while cultivating a fragile but profound bond, reflective of both sorrow and hope as they stand together against the backdrop of their shared experiences.