

Chapter 165

In Chapter 165 of "All the Colors of the Dark," Charlotte arrives at the Mad House, carrying a small white suitcase adorned with blue butterflies. Her grandmother nods to Patch, indicating the significant responsibility he holds regarding Charlotte's well-being. As Charlotte enters the house, she inspects the hallway with a discerning gaze, noting the meticulous detail of the parquet floor, which Patch had installed with great precision.

Despite her keen scrutiny, Charlotte makes no attempts to interact with her surroundings; she keeps her pink coat buttoned and holds her suitcase tightly against her chest. She takes in the artwork that decorates the walls, the chesterfield, the hide rug, and the heavy drapes, yet remains distinctly detached.

Patch then invites her to see her room, but Charlotte's response is dismissive: "Nothing here is mine." He follows her up the stairs to a room that he has meticulously prepared. The bed is adorned with an ornate frame carved with roses and leaves, and a pink canopy hangs above, designed for her sense of privacy. The white shutters, constructed by Patch himself, have been ingeniously adapted with louvers to manage the room's exposure to the southern sun. Patch worried about seasonal temperature changes and had taken care to insulate and paint the room multiple times in shades of pink, seeking the perfect hue.

The room is outfitted for Charlotte's comfort with a reading scone for the books she supposedly has and a triple closet for her clothes, all because Misty had suggested her interests. Additionally, there's a collection of soft toys, reflecting her love for animals.

After briefly exploring her room, Charlotte heads back downstairs and notices a swing hanging from a large oak in the yard. She gently touches the larch seat and asks if it was her mother's swing. Upon confirmation, she sits in the cool sunlight, embodying an air of contemplation. Throughout this time, Patch struggles with how to interact with her, observing that it takes Charlotte nearly three hours to remove her coat and another hour for her shoes, underscoring the profound emotional distance between them.