

Chapter 172

In a reflective tone, Chapter 172 of "All the Colors of the Dark" captures a quiet year in the life of the narrator following his farewell to Grace. This year is marked by moments spent with his daughter, Charlotte, as they engage in everyday activities, illustrating the comforting routine of their lives together. The narrative encapsulates key events, emphasizing the changing seasons through the clothes Charlotte wears.

In January, they enjoy a memorable day at the Mad House, watching the 49ers compete against the Chargers. Inspired by the game, Charlotte discovers an old football in the attic and practices throwing in the frost-covered yard, envisioning herself as a football player. Her innocent ambition is met with a warning from Norma, who suggests contact sports could lead to barrenness, a term Charlotte struggles to understand. This exchange introduces a humorous yet poignant twist, as Charlotte playfully claims she might not want children, contemplating her own identity.

Every month culminates in a visit to the Alamo Theatre, where they bond over shared popcorn while watching horror films. Despite Charlotte's fearful reactions during a Freddy Krueger film, her determination to experience these narratives showcases her resilience.

Springtime brings a shift in tone with a tragic event in Oklahoma, leaving an indelible impact on Charlotte, who finds herself unable to sleep after witnessing the destruction and loss of life. The narrator's protective nature surfaces as he stays by her door until dawn, signaling a deep sense of responsibility and love.

Their ritual of lighting candles at St. Raphael's signifies mourning but also a broader commentary on hope. Charlotte's empathy is illuminated through her reading about a grieving mother, highlighting themes of loss and resilience. As the chapter closes, Charlotte's inquiry about missing girls hints at an underlying curiosity regarding the harsh realities of life, embodying both innocence and a growing awareness of the world around her.