

# Chapter 203

In Chapter 203 of "All the Colors of the Dark," Patch and Tooms sit silently together for an hour, interrupted only by Blackjack being called to a fight in the block. Their close proximity offers a semblance of comfort against the harsh realities that surround them.

Tooms shares a vulnerable moment, revealing his past: "I never wanted to be a doctor," he confesses softly. In a moment of levity, Patch jokes about his criminal inclinations, saying, "I never wanted to rob a bank," before admitting it might be untrue. Their shared laughter echoes through their conversation, a momentary escape from their circumstances.

The tone shifts as Tooms recounts a tragic moment from his life: the death of his sister when he was fourteen. He recalls finding her after she took her own life, revealing a painful memory still tinged with disbelief. "I don't know how she got the rope up over the high branch," he reflects, showing both sorrow and the lingering shock of that traumatic event.

Instead of focusing on Patch's troubles, Tooms steers the conversation toward him, asking about Patch's joys, Misty, and Charlotte. The topic brings a surge of pain for Patch, each name a reminder of his losses. Tooms reflects on a visit from Patch's mother, recalling her struggle, and acknowledging that he could see she would face difficulties after Patch's father's passing.

Their dialogue deepens, revealing the bond formed through shared grief and care. Tooms admits, "I didn't do nearly enough," despite Patch feeling gratitude that Tooms looked out for him. They discuss parental aspirations, with Tooms asking what Patch desires for his children. "More than you want for yourself," answers Patch, a testament to his love and desire for a better future for them.

The chapter concludes with Patch expressing his sorrow at Tooms' current situation but also conveys the comfort of their reconnection: "But, damn, it's good to hear your voice." This moment emphasizes the importance of companionship in facing their struggles and traumas.