

Chapter 26 _In Which Private Irving Buchanon and Some Others are Memorialized ...

In this chapter, the narrator, along with Resi, returns home after dark, planning to spend the night at a hotel but instead finds themselves drawn to their home. Resi expresses her excitement about finally having a house, while the narrator reflects on the challenges of turning a house into a home. Their return is overshadowed by the discovery that someone has drawn a swastika next to the narrator's name on their mailbox, indicating a disturbing resurgence of notoriety and hostility surrounding him.

The narrator expresses trepidation at the potential danger of returning home, recalling past contentment and lamenting the intrusion of renewed attention from those seeking to harm him. Resi suggests he should leave for another country, but he questions where he would go. Their interaction is interrupted by a rude, aggressive man who recognizes the narrator, Howard W. Campbell, and confronts him, presenting an article that reveals the Israeli government's request for Campbell's extradition for his alleged complicity in the Holocaust.

This violent confrontation escalates as the man physically assaults the narrator, punishing him in the name of his fallen friends from the war—Irving Buchanon, Ansel Brewer, and Eddie McCarty. The man expresses his rage against Campbell's perceived escape from justice, attributing to him the losses that his friends suffered during the war. After suffering a severe injury, the narrator loses consciousness, only to awaken later in a damp room filled with Nazi memorabilia and Resi's presence.

The aftermath reveals the emotional turmoil the narrator faces, living with the weight of his past and the fear of being hunted for it. The chapter concludes with a hint of dark humor as the narrator, now in compromising circumstances, makes a joke about having joined the Hottentots, illustrating coping mechanisms amid trauma and irony in a tense environment. The chapter encapsulates themes of guilt, memory, and the haunting repercussions of war on personal identity.