

# Chapter 43\_St. George and the Dragon ...

In this chapter of *Mother Night*, the narrator reflects on the state of his attic, which has been transformed into a makeshift tent by the janitor. The door is missing, and a sign crudely declares, “Nobody and nothing inside.” The atmosphere inside is dark, illuminated only by dim light filtering through broken windows. Paper and rags fill the shattered panes, creating an eerie and desolate ambience.

The narrator glances out at a nearby park, reminiscing about the innocence of childhood play and wishing for someone to join him in a playful cry. Within this solitude, he hears a rustle that turns out to be Bernard B. O’Hare, a man from his past who had once arrested him in Germany. O’Hare, now in a frayed American Legion uniform and visibly intoxicated, perceives himself as a heroic figure confronting evil, viewing the narrator as a dragon. Their reunion is fraught with tension, as O’Hare appears intent on confronting the narrator about their past. He describes their meeting as preordained, as if fate had conspired to bring them back together.

O’Hare reminisces about his life after the war, expressing disillusionment with how his dreams crumbled into mundane occupations, from diaper services to dispatching frozen custard trucks. He recounts his experiences of disappointment and confusion, wondering about the meaning of life and his place in it. The narrator responds sympathetically, recognizing the futility in O’Hare’s life choices but is cautious around him, suspecting that he may be armed.

O’Hare’s bravado crumbles as he deems the narrator “pure evil.” This spurs a critical turning point, leading to a physical confrontation. The narrator, armed with fire-tongs, demonstrates his readiness to defend himself. He successfully incapacitates O’Hare, who, now crippled and humiliated, realizes his expectations of easily subduing the narrator were misguided. After throwing O’Hare out, the narrator reflects on the nature of hatred and evil, suggesting that true evil lies in mankind's desire to hate unreservedly, often fueled by delusions of moral superiority.

The chapter culminates with O’Hare’s hollow threats, while the narrator dismisses him—emphasizing the futility and cyclical nature of hatred and violence in the human condition. Through their encounter, deep themes of identity, morality, disillusionment, and the complexity of human nature are explored.