

Chapter XIV

In Chapter XIV, the narrator reflects on the unique talents of the Beaumont family, acknowledging that their differences are intrinsic to their identity. The narrator recalls a formative experience with Grandpa, who explained the family's extraordinary abilities shortly after the loss of Grandma Dollop. Grandpa shared stories of their ancestors and how their special "savvies" were inherited, much like physical traits. He illustrated this by recounting tales of various relatives, some of whom used their talents for good while others, like Grandma Dollop's sister Jubilee, wasted hers on theft.

Grandpa emphasized that a savvy isn't supernatural but rather an innate gift that manifests along with the challenges of family life. The narrator notes how her mother, Momma, believed that many ordinary people possess savvies but fail to recognize them, with examples illustrating diverse skills such as making exceptional jam or avoiding mosquito bites. The understanding of savvies evolved; they were not merely peculiar talents but more of a distinct kind of know-how.

As the narrator converses with Will Junior, explaining their family's general characteristics, she highlights the common thread—the Beaumonts are like others but have unique abilities that make their experiences distinct. Yet, when pressed for specifics about her savvy, the narrator hesitates, recalling familial rules about discretion and sharing only with those they trust the most.

The narrative transitions to a moment from the past when the narrator's parents met during a carnival. Momma, who was effortlessly skilled at tossing rings, intrigued Poppa, leading to an amusing exchange filled with charming banter. This further showcases the family's delightful mix of talents and quirks. The chapter culminates in the present as the bus ride reveals tensions between the boys, hinting at the narrator's desire for peace and the looming dynamics of her special family legacy, all as they navigate the complexities of their lives amid ordinary events.