

Chapter XXXII

In the chaotic aftermath of the situation involving Carlene's trailer, a sense of disorder prevailed as police officers, state troopers, and paramedics flooded the scene. The rain had subsided, revealing curious neighbors who gathered outside, eager to witness the unfolding drama. Inside, adults—Lester, Lill, and Carlene—were questioned by officers while children hovered protectively nearby. Bobbi, Will, and Fish occupied Carlene's sofa, with Bobbi feigning boredom and Will keenly observing the officers' movements. Fish appeared worn out, his earlier distress subsiding with the discovery of Samson.

On the floor, Samson and I shared a moment of connection, his ink-stained hand clasping mine as his thoughts formed a comforting, melodic background. Paramedics arrived, distributing blankets and checking on the children. In the midst of the chaos, I felt an urgent need to explain to the officers and caseworker that it was my idea for the group to embark on this journey to see our Poppa, fearing we were wasting precious time. Despite my insistence that I was to blame, the adults responded with polite nods but seemed unconvinced.

I became anxious about the ramifications for Lester and Lill, feeling sick with worry and guilt over the deception that led us here. My concern extended to Carlene, though I considered her merely a rotten apple in our troubled mix. Inquiring after our Poppa, I was met with practiced responses from the caseworker, furthering my anxiety about our uncertain future.

As Kansas state troopers joined the scene, the prospect of being taken back to Hebron loomed ominously. I felt a growing determination not to lose the progress we had made. Just then, a familiar figure emerged among the troopers—Bill, Will and Bobbi's older brother. His presence brought relief, prompting joyful interactions as he embraced his siblings. Observing this reunion unveiled a secret about Will that reshaped my understanding of their family dynamic.

Finally, seizing an opportunity to share my perspective, I approached Officer Meeks, hoping he would listen to my account of the events and my deep yearning to see Poppa. Overcome with emotion, I implored him to understand that everything that had transpired was my fault, leading to an outpouring of tears.