

Chapter 129

In Chapter 129 of "All the Colors of the Dark," the protagonist, Joseph, wakes up in a cold sweat, haunted by a vision that compels him to paint a figure whom he associates with a northern shore. Anxious and filled with a sense of urgency, he reaches for the telephone, attempting to gather himself as he awaits the answering machine's response. When he finally hears a familiar voice on the other end, he is momentarily paralyzed by shame, revealing the depth of his emotional turmoil.

The voice belongs to Norma, someone he knows intimately. Their conversation unfolds with tension, each aware of the pain beneath the surface of their exchange. Norma pleads with him, urging him to surrender, but Joseph resists, his voice trembling as he articulates his struggles. She reassures him, calling him a "good boy," but he can hear her own suffering echoing in her words.

Joseph expresses a deep longing for connection, revealing his desire for Norma and her granddaughter, Saint, to be his family. The warmth of nostalgia begins to seep through the conversation as Norma offers a simple promise: returning to her for ice cream at Lacey's Diner. This small gesture revives memories of the past but also sharpens the ache of his current distancing.

He admits to missing both of them, eliciting a poignant moment when Norma acknowledges the heartbreak experienced by her granddaughter due to Joseph's absence. Despite his apologies, he finds it hard to address the truth behind her statement—that he has become a source of pain for them. The chapter closes with a haunting reminder from Norma that it's time for him to let go, reinforcing that Saint no longer needs him, encapsulating the themes of longing, regret, and the painful process of moving on.