

# Chapter 184

In Chapter 184 of "All the Colors of the Dark," the narrative unfolds with Sammy visiting Charlotte and Saint, revealing a large brass and leather case he presents to Charlotte. Inside lies a vintage shotgun from Boss and Co., London, dating back to 1912, which allegedly was used in a murderous incident over gambling debts. Charlotte, enchanted by the shotgun's beauty, expresses her gratitude, asserting its potential as a means to ward off unwanted suitors, while teasingly acknowledging its ability to attract different ones. Patch adds a humorous remark about arresting those drawn in, sparking playful banter among the trio.

Shortly after, Saint prepares to return to Kansas, embarking on an eighty-mile drive with Charlotte, who animatedly discusses a party and a boy named Dallas, whom Patch has already formed a negative opinion of. Charlotte's competitive streak emerges; she contemplates her romantic potential with Dallas, stating his current relationships won't be fruitful, humorously considering that her new shotgun could change her luck.

The chapter transitions to a poignant moment at Misty's grave, where Patch leaves Charlotte with her mother, underscoring the emotional undercurrents of their family dynamic. Following this, they visit the Culpepper Zoo, where Charlotte revels in the experience, marking their route and engaging with the animals. Patch observes her with affection, his daughter serving as his anchor in a turbulent world.

However, as they explore the reptile house, Patch begins to feel an unsettling physical reaction, reminiscent of anxiety or stress. Despite attempting to maintain composure for Charlotte's sake, he struggles against tightening muscles and a racing pulse. The imagery shifts to his memories of Grace, as he grapples with overwhelming emotions. The chapter concludes on a haunting note, with Saint hearing his daughter's call on her birthday, leaving readers with an unsettling sense of impending turmoil amidst family warmth.