

Chapter 188

In Chapter 188 of "All the Colors of the Dark," Patch is in a waiting space, where a secretary is making calls regarding judge changes in the Twenty-fifth Judicial Circuit. After a twenty-minute wait, Warden Riley arrives, instructing the guards to remove Patch's handcuffs. Riley, a portly man in pinstripe attire marked by shaving nicks and burst capillaries, gestures toward a large painting in his office depicting a vibrant Main Street, reminiscent of Patch's past work from nearly twenty years ago. The painting sparks nostalgia in Patch, taking him back to his first sale, where he noticed more flaws than triumphs.

Riley, feeling proud of the artwork, reveals that it was chosen by his wife, Aileen, during her many attempts to decorate the office. A conversation unfolds about Patch's request for a library service for inmates on C Level. Warden Riley reflects on the recommendations from the Federal Bureau of Prisons as Patch struggles with his memories, including those of his daughter who doesn't visit, and the hardships he faced while serving his time—such as a fight with a gang member that resulted in broken ribs and lost teeth.

Despite the prison's harsh environment, Patch finds solace in reading, expressing to Riley that literature provides an escape and is a fundamental right for inmates, regardless of their situation. He shares a quote about kindness and compassion, reinforcing his message about humanity amidst incarceration. As the chapter draws to a close, Patch prepares himself mentally for his upcoming visit to C Level, the dreaded death row, hinting at the weight of implications that lie ahead. The night before, he finds himself unable to sleep, underscoring his anxiety and foreboding thoughts about the morrow.