

Chapter 204

In Chapter 204 of "All the Colors of the Dark," the town of Monta Clare is engulfed in mourning as the community pays tribute to one of their own, Norma. As Saint walks along Main Street, she observes storeowners standing solemnly at their doorways, a poignant testament to collective grief. The atmosphere is heavy, especially at St. Raphael's, where the congregation gathers not just for a service but to reconnect with their shared loss. Saint, who plays Chopin on the organ, is struck by the gravity of the ceremony and the memory of Norma's life, filled with both simplicity and profound endurance.

As Saint navigates the crowd, she notices familiar faces—some from nearby and others who traveled long distances for the occasion. In the back, Nix offers a bittersweet smile, reflecting a deep sadness evident in his eyes. Sammy, dressed sharply in pinstripes and a pink cravat, sits nearby, his cane leaning against the stone, symbolizing a need for support amidst the emotional weight.

Saint's thoughts drift to Joseph Macauley, who sent her a simplistic yet meaningful card featuring a winter scene, capturing the essence of their shared memories, though he himself is not present for the graveside service. The day proceeds as they lay Norma to rest in the warmth of the sun, honoring her wish to remain near the tall house filled with cherished memories rather than return to the city where her husband and daughter lay.

After the burial, the townspeople gather for sandwiches on a small lawn, organized by Mrs. Meyer, with Lacey catering and Charlotte providing a selection of cakes. Saint moves through the crowd, exchanging pleasantries while fending off hugs, and searching for familiar faces. Finding Sammy again, she hesitantly accepts a drink from his flask but quickly regrets the decision.

As the day draws to a close, Charlotte immerses herself in reading on the porch while the kitchen neighborly silence is broken by a ringing phone. Saint, standing in the kitchen alone, becomes numb as she listens to Sister Cecile's voice, revealing unsettling news: "Eli Aaron just visited here." This abrupt interruption promises to draw Saint back into the complexities of life beyond her grief, suggesting that the chapter's conclusion opens a new narrative thread for her to confront.