

Chapter 226

In Chapter 226 of "All the Colors of the Dark," Patch finds himself a hundred miles south, positioned by a bluff that overlooks the winding Mississippi River as it creates an oxbow. He has carefully cropped his hair and maintained a clean-shaven face. Beside him rests a blue leather satchel containing clothes, money, and other essentials—items he had discovered in Cooper's car before disposing of it in a remote location.

Patch is dressed in a ball cap that shields his face from the sun, and despite the discomfort, he opts to leave his eye patch in his pocket, choosing instead to wear dark sunglasses. As he strolls along the riverbank, he is captivated by the transformation of the sky at sunset, where the iron water shifts from bold hues to abstract patterns. The moment when land and sky seem to merge inspires him—the scene is so beautiful that he wishes he had the skill to paint it.

Seeking cover, he finds a secluded copse where he can lie low among the sedges, using his satchel as a makeshift pillow as he awaits the arrival of night. His thoughts are focused on the impending journey ahead; he knows that with the dawn, the checkpoints will shift, and he will finally cross into Tennessee. This transition represents more than just a geographical shift for Patch—it brings him one step closer to her, the individual he longs to reunite with. The anticipation and urgency of his journey reflect his emotional state, where the landscape serves as both a physical and metaphorical journey toward hope and connection.