

Chapter 133

Chapter 133 of *All the Colors of the Dark* begins with Saint navigating the quiet, snow-covered roads in her year-old Bronco. As the snowflakes drift softly to the ground, she heads toward the James Connor Correctional Facility, tucked away in the rolling expanse of soybean fields. Upon arriving, she reunites with Patch, who limps toward her, still recovering from a past injury, a gunshot wound that marks the physical toll of his past. Their brief reunion is tender, but beneath the surface, Saint's worry is palpable, as she recalls her many visits to him over the six years he spent behind bars, despite his lack of response to any of her letters.

As they drive along Interstate 44 together, the landscape a blur of white, Saint reflects on how much has changed over the years. Their shared lunch at a small diner is filled with casual conversation, but there's an underlying sadness as Patch asks about Norma, their mutual friend, and Saint fills him in on her career and achievements. While Saint tries to play off the gaps in their relationship with a professional demeanor, a part of her remains emotionally distant, grappling with the fact that time and separation have left their mark. The conversation inevitably meanders back to the past, with Patch sharing thoughts on how his prison time has shaped his outlook and acknowledging the deep scars left by his incarceration. The weight of these unspoken thoughts hangs between them, making it clear that while they have both changed, the past still looms large.

Patch also shares with Saint some of the things he's learned while serving his time. He talks about a recent homicide case that had caught his attention, offering insights into how prisoners view freedom and the walls that confine them. His reflections on the harsh realities of prison life, and the slow process of adjusting to life outside, speak to the emotional burden he carries. As Patch recounts stories of his time in prison, Saint listens intently, aware that these painful memories continue to haunt him. His raw

vulnerability is hard for her to ignore, and it becomes clear that the trauma of his past is far from over. Despite his outward appearance of strength, his heart remains tethered to the haunting memories of his youth, his love for Grace, and the bitterness of the years lost behind bars.

When the conversation turns to their shared history, Patch opens up about writing to the judge, hoping to reconcile with the past, but Saint's thoughts are troubled by the realization that things can never truly return to the way they were. As they approach Monta Clare, Patch's childhood town, memories flood back. He gazes at the town from the car window, reflecting on the house where he grew up and the ghosts that still linger in the town's streets. Though the town's appearance has hardly changed, Patch senses that the past continues to haunt him, like shadows lurking behind the familiar facades. Saint, ever supportive, encourages him to look ahead with hope, believing that redemption is still within his grasp. Despite the deep scars of the past, she reminds him that there is still a chance to build something new, to create a future free from the weight of their shared trauma.

Their drive through the town and past familiar landmarks marks a moment of reflection for Patch. His memories of childhood, the house he once called home, and the people who shaped his past are all brought to the surface. Yet, with Saint beside him, offering gentle encouragement, Patch begins to entertain the idea that perhaps it is time to move on. The chapter concludes with Saint urging him to seek out his "paradise," a place where he can finally be free of the emotional chains that have bound him for so long. Her unwavering support and belief in his ability to find peace offer a glimmer of hope, and the bond they share seems stronger than ever as they face the uncertain road ahead.

In this chapter, the themes of reconciliation, hope, and emotional healing take center stage as Saint and Patch navigate their complex relationship. Their conversation is a delicate balance between the past and the present, each of them struggling with their own inner conflicts while also trying to reconnect with each other. The chapter underscores the emotional toll of unresolved trauma and the challenge of moving

forward, yet it also reveals the possibility of healing and redemption. Through their dialogue, the chapter paints a vivid picture of the complexities of life, love, and the relentless pursuit of peace.