

Chapter 84

Chapter 84 of *All the Colors of the Dark* unfolds in a lively and energetic party atmosphere, where Saint enters feeling the weight of all the eyes on her. As she moves through the bustling crowd, she makes her way to the gift table, where she carefully places a pink sweater she knitted, hoping it would be the right fit for Misty. The sweater, a symbol of her care and attention, stands in stark contrast to the confidence Misty exudes when she enters the room moments later. Misty arrives in a stunning white dress, immediately drawing the attention of everyone around her, her presence commanding the space and making Saint feel small in comparison. The moment feels almost surreal, and Saint's mind races with a mixture of awe and discomfort. Misty's radiance only serves to amplify the self-consciousness Saint has carried with her, and as she stands by the gift table, she is filled with a quiet unease. The party, meant to be a celebration, becomes a backdrop for Saint's internal struggles, where the weight of her insecurities and feelings of inadequacy become even more apparent.

Misty's casual inquiry about the presence of a particular boy only serves to heighten the tension between them, as Saint is struck by the fact that Misty seems completely unaware of the complexity of her emotions. Saint is caught in a delicate moment, wanting to protect her feelings but not fully understanding how to express them. She hesitates before gently asking Misty not to pursue the boy, the words coming out carefully, as if she were walking on fragile ground. The emotional distance between the two girls becomes evident as Saint struggles to communicate her discomfort without seeming overly possessive or needy. As the conversation plays out, Saint's insecurities become more apparent, and she realizes how much her emotions are influenced by the perceived distance between herself and Misty. The unease that follows their conversation speaks to the deeper issues within their friendship, where unspoken tensions simmer beneath the surface. Saint longs to feel seen and understood but struggles with the fear that her feelings may not be reciprocated or acknowledged in the way she hopes.

The emotional atmosphere shifts as Saint is left standing alone when Chuck arrives to whisk Misty away to the dance floor, leaving Saint to wrestle with her thoughts. The chaotic noise of the party fades as she watches Misty step outside, seemingly to search for the boy she had mentioned earlier. Saint feels a deep sense of isolation, caught between the overwhelming desire to be understood and the reality of being disconnected from those around her. Just as she is consumed by her thoughts, Jimmy

approaches her, sharply dressed in a blazer, signaling his own desire to be part of the evening's events. The shift from feeling abandoned to being seen by Jimmy creates a strange yet comforting contrast for Saint. Their conversation starts with light pleasantries, but soon it becomes more genuine as Jimmy expresses his admiration for Saint's strength, especially in light of Joseph's absence. Jimmy's sincerity is palpable, and his ability to notice even the smallest details about her offers Saint a brief respite from her emotional turmoil. It is a moment of connection she desperately needed, as Jimmy's words offer not just validation but also a subtle invitation to consider the possibility of a new emotional path.

Jimmy, sensing Saint's inner conflict, gently encourages her to dance, offering her a simple but meaningful gesture. His acknowledgment of not being her first choice only adds to the sincerity of his request, as he emphasizes that he truly wants to share a moment with her. Saint feels torn, caught between the lingering feelings for Misty and the subtle, growing connection she shares with Jimmy. Her emotions are in turmoil, as she wishes to remain loyal to the past while being pulled toward the present. A quick glance outside reveals Misty walking away, and in that fleeting moment, Saint makes a decision. She takes Jimmy's hand and steps onto the dance floor, leaving behind the doubts and insecurities that had clouded her judgment. This act of embracing the moment signifies an important turning point for Saint, as she chooses to let go of past attachments and step into a new possibility. Her decision to dance with Jimmy becomes a symbol of her emotional growth, a recognition that, while the past shapes her, it doesn't need to define her future. The dance, which begins with hesitation, transforms into a step forward, and for the first time in a while, Saint allows herself to experience joy without the weight of past conflicts holding her back.