

Chapter 87

Chapter 87 of *All the Colors of the Dark* finds the protagonist and Misty in a quiet basilica in Huntersville, where they share an intimate moment. As Misty struggles with prayer, she is burdened by the blessings she has already received, unsure of what more she can ask for. Despite this, the depth of their connection is evident as Misty tightly grips the protagonist's hand, symbolizing the emotional intensity of their bond. This scene highlights the complexity of Misty's inner world, where gratitude and longing coexist, and where her relationship with the protagonist deepens as they navigate their own emotional struggles. The basilica, a place often associated with reflection, becomes a setting that contrasts the weight of Misty's internal conflict with the tenderness of the connection they share. The quiet surroundings allow for a moment of calm amidst the turbulence of their lives, amplifying the intimacy of their exchange.

Meanwhile, the protagonist spends a considerable amount of time at the public library, reflecting on the last decade of his life. As he sifts through old records and documents, painful memories resurface, reminding him of events he had unintentionally overlooked. He recalls a blizzard that swept through the region, the shocking assassination of political figures, and the cultural moments that shaped society. This reflection not only brings personal memories to the forefront but also extends to a broader societal consciousness, highlighting the often-overlooked tragedies and experiences of those around him. His efforts to gather names and faces of those affected by these events are driven by a desire to remember and honor their lives. However, his contributions to Nix, the chief, are met with indifference, as Nix files the information without offering any acknowledgment or validation. This lack of recognition from the person in charge creates a feeling of frustration and alienation for the protagonist, who seeks to make sense of his past and the world around him.

The narrative then shifts to the protagonist's domestic life, focusing on his interactions with Sammy during their weekend barbecues on the balcony. Their friendship is characterized by humor and camaraderie, but there are hints of underlying tension. Sammy casually mentions a woman named Nina, suggesting complications in his personal life that add an element of unease to their otherwise lighthearted gatherings. Meanwhile, the protagonist navigates the delicate dynamics of caring for his mother, ensuring that her needs are met while simultaneously protecting Misty from the troubled atmosphere at home. This juxtaposition of domestic responsibilities with emotional complexities underscores the protagonist's struggle to balance his

obligations to his family with his desire to pursue a meaningful connection with Misty. His role as a caretaker, while filled with duty and love, also carries the weight of responsibility, leaving him feeling torn between the two aspects of his life.

Throughout the chapter, Misty's desire for deeper intimacy is subtly revealed, particularly as she yearns for a more meaningful connection through their relationship. This is most evident when she expresses her wish to attend the prom, a significant social event for young people that symbolizes both celebration and transition. Though the protagonist is hesitant at first, he eventually agrees, taking Misty to the dance where they share a heartfelt embrace. This moment captures the mix of joy and responsibility he feels toward her, highlighting the emotional complexity of their bond. Their connection, while rooted in youthful love, is also marked by the weight of their individual struggles and the challenges they face together. The prom serves as a metaphor for the stage of life they are in—one of growth, change, and a mix of hope and uncertainty about the future.

As the protagonist delves deeper into his painting, he finds solace in creating portraits of local girls, channeling his grief and artistic talent into meaningful works. His art becomes a form of emotional expression, allowing him to process the loss and trauma he has experienced. The reactions to his paintings elicit strong emotional responses, particularly from the mothers of the girls he paints. These reactions are filled with a sense of grief and connection, as the mothers see their daughters immortalized in the artwork. However, the encounter with Richie Montrose, who returns the portrait of his daughter, Callie, reveals the profound pain of loss that resonates throughout the chapter. Richie's inability to accept the portrait symbolizes the overwhelming sorrow that cannot be easily addressed or overcome. Chief Nix's observation about grief reinforces this theme, emphasizing that those connected to the victims carry the emotional weight long after the initial tragedy. The narrative intricately weaves together the personal and collective experiences of loss, memory, and mourning, leaving readers with a deep sense of the emotional complexities that shape the lives of the characters. The chapter serves as a powerful exploration of the ongoing impact of grief and the struggle to find meaning and closure amidst pain and uncertainty.