

# Chapter 29

Chapter 29 begins with Will abruptly waking from a brief sleep, gripped by the troubling realization that Jim's lightning rod is missing. Panic sets in as he calls out for Jim, only to find that Jim had removed the lightning rod, seemingly for his own amusement, daring the storm that looms outside. This sudden awareness intensifies Will's anxiety, as he worries about the exposed roof and the possible danger it might bring. But their fear is soon compounded by a strange sight—a balloon floating silently above them. This peculiar phenomenon adds an eerie quality to the scene, as it drifts gracefully, unbidden, and almost otherworldly. Its stillness contrasts with the brewing chaos outside, amplifying the unease the boys are already feeling. The balloon becomes an ominous symbol of what might be yet to come, an unsettling harbinger in the darkening sky.

Drawn by a shared sense of dread and curiosity, the boys peer out of their window, captivated by the balloon's strange movement through the sky. It moves with an unnatural grace, its silence adding to its eerie presence. As they watch in wonder, the atmosphere around them shifts; the temperature drops sharply, and an ominous tension builds. The balloon's descent toward them seems deliberate, as if it's being guided by some unseen force. The boys' senses are heightened, their nerves buzzing with both excitement and fear as the air thickens with an unspoken warning. This surreal moment leaves them frozen, unsure whether to stay hidden or confront whatever dark presence is descending upon them. The balloon's unsettling approach reinforces the sense that something far beyond their control is unfolding right before their eyes.

Suddenly, the figure of the Dust Witch emerges from the balloon, casting a shadow over the boys. Her eerie presence strikes fear into their hearts, as they realize the full extent of her supernatural abilities. Despite being blind, she seems attuned to every

vibration in the world around her, searching for souls to trap. Her uncanny sensitivity makes the boys feel vulnerable, as if she is reading their every thought, every emotion, even from afar. The witch's ability to sense their very essence only deepens their terror, reinforcing the fear that she is somehow already aware of them and their location. Her connection to the world around her, and the way she manipulates the atmosphere, makes it clear that they are in immediate danger. The boys feel an undeniable pull toward her, even though they have no way of understanding her true intentions.



As the panic grows, Jim has a frightening realization: the Dust Witch knows where they live. This understanding spurs both boys into action, and they frantically begin to strategize how they can protect themselves from the looming threat. The balloon starts to rise, but a strange, unsettling feeling remains in the air as the Witch's presence marks their home with a strange silver trail. This unnatural mark can be seen from miles away, signaling that they are now in her sights. Will quickly formulates a plan to fight back, deciding that the best course of action is to remove the silver paint left by the balloon. They have to act fast, before the Witch can return and use her powers against them. The boys are driven by a sense of urgency, working together to wash away the mark from their roof before the morning arrives.

In a flurry of activity, Will grabs a garden hose, empowering them with the means to erase the ominous silver trail. As they scrub the roof, the first light of dawn begins to break, but their anxiety grows with each passing minute. They fear the return of the Dust Witch and her balloon, knowing that time is running out. Amid their frantic efforts, Jim expresses regret over his decision to take down the lightning rod, but Will, ever the practical one, reminds him that staying busy is the best way to avoid drawing the Witch's attention. Their joint effort builds a tense but determined atmosphere as they race against the clock, driven by fear and the desire to protect their home. This race to scrub away the Witch's mark underscores the boys' resilience and their commitment to each other in the face of an insurmountable threat. As they work together, they must also confront the looming question: will they succeed in erasing the mark before it's too late?