

# Chapter 32

Chapter 32 opens with the dawn ushering in a powerful storm, its thunder reverberating through the town and rain falling heavily on rooftops. Jim and Will, caught in a restless sleep, find themselves haunted by strange dreams, dark and unsettling. Meanwhile, the carnival grounds begin to stir; the sound of the carousel rings out, an eerie, discordant melody that seems to only be heard by one person in the town—Miss Foley, who quickly hurries away upon hearing it. The storm's intensifying rain becomes a backdrop to the strange happenings, setting the tone for the growing sense of unease that envelops the town. This ominous atmosphere pulls the characters deeper into the mystery, their dreams and surroundings blurring the lines between reality and nightmare.

As the rain pours even harder, Jim and Will take refuge in their homes, quietly discussing the events of the previous night. Dressed in rain gear, Jim steps out into the dismal Sunday morning and begins to make his way toward Will's house. The weight of their unsettling thoughts presses heavily upon them as they walk together, reflecting on the bizarre occurrences that have unfolded. Breaking the silence, Jim recounts a particularly disturbing dream he had, one that involved a long coffin in an ominous parade, which struck him as disturbingly real. This moment sparks a brief, darkly humorous conversation about balloons and funerals, but it does little to lift the somber mood between them. Their minds remain fixated on the darker elements of the previous night's events, and the unsettling feeling lingers as they continue walking.

Their walk brings them to an empty lot dominated by a massive oak tree, where they suddenly hear the sound of a girl crying in the distance. Despite Jim's initial reluctance to approach the source of the crying, Will is compelled to investigate. The sound of the girl's weeping leads them to discover a young girl, drenched in rain, desperate and clinging to them for help. Jim, startled and uncertain, recoils, insisting that they do not

know the girl, while Will is drawn to her, recognizing the need to assist her. As the girl clings to them, pleading for help, it becomes clear that something is gravely wrong. The emotions of the moment become complicated by Jim's skepticism and Will's growing empathy, creating a tension between the two as they stand on the precipice of what could be a much larger mystery than they initially realized.

Will, determined to help, promises the girl they will return with assistance, despite Jim's continued protests. The girl's eyes, familiar in some way, stir something in Will, and he can't shake the feeling that they have encountered something like this before, possibly tied to the sinister carnival. Jim, still doubtful, struggles with his emotions, unsure whether to trust the girl or write her off as another odd occurrence in a town already teetering on the edge of chaos. As the two discuss their next steps, the sound of the carnival grows louder, its music and laughter mixing with the ominous air surrounding them. They realize that Miss Foley is in danger, likely tangled in the carnival's web, and the urgency to act becomes even more pressing. The impending threat of the carnival pushes them forward, even as they remain unsure of what they are truly up against.

As the carnival sounds grow nearer, their focus shifts to the need to protect the girl and take action. They scramble to figure out how to keep her safe, rushing to hide beneath the oak tree where she had been, hoping the carnival would not find her first. The boys, feeling the weight of their decision, brace for what might come next, knowing the gravity of the situation has escalated beyond their control. When they return, the spot under the tree is empty, and their search for the girl turns into a mounting sense of dread. The emptiness of the location adds to the growing anxiety, leaving them unsure of where she has gone and what her fate might be. This mystery deepens as they retreat further into the town, hiding and worrying about what will happen to the girl as the carnival looms ever closer. The chapter concludes on a note of dread, with the boys feeling the full weight of the danger now surrounding them.