

# Chapter 10

Chapter 10 begins in the stillness of a quiet midnight, where a lightning-rod salesman makes his way down an empty street. His leather valise is nearly void, and yet he carries himself with an ease that suggests a deep comfort in the solitude around him. He pauses at a store window, his attention immediately drawn to the soft flutter of white moths as they dance in the cool air. Inside the window, a sight holds him captive—a massive block of ice from the Alaska Snow Company, carefully balanced on sawhorses. Within the ice, encased perfectly, lies a stunning woman, seemingly frozen in time. The delicate form, untouched by the years, evokes memories of youth, beauty, and the unattainable, as if she had been preserved forever in the cold embrace of snow, isolated from the passing world.

The woman's beauty is striking, with hair as white as the ice that surrounds her, giving her an ethereal allure. She seems to belong not to the present world but to a timeless place, one where art and nature merge. The salesman recalls his encounters with other captivating women, recalling the stunning marble sculptures he saw in Rome, the vividly painted figures in the Louvre, and a mysterious shadowy figure that had enchanted him during his youth. All these images converge in the woman before him, her frozen form combining the raw physical beauty of the sculptures with an essence that cannot be fully captured or understood. This enigmatic quality only deepens the salesman's fascination, as he realizes that this figure represents something far beyond physical appearance—it is as though she is a representation of timelessness itself, embodying a beauty that exists outside the constraints of time.

As he observes her, he begins to contemplate her features in greater detail. The thought occurs to him that once the ice is broken away, her hair might reveal a hidden depth of color that was previously concealed. He also wonders about her height—whether the ice has distorted her true size due to its refracting properties. Yet,

all of these thoughts feel secondary to the connection he senses with her, something far more profound than mere physical details. He begins to feel an intense, almost intuitive certainty that if she were to awaken, he would recognize her instantly—particularly the color of her eyes, even though they remain hidden by the layers of ice. This connection, though unspoken and unacknowledged, seems to be the most powerful aspect of the entire experience, making him feel as if he is tied to this frozen woman in ways he cannot yet fully comprehend.

With each passing moment, a sense of warmth and anticipation builds within him. The notion crosses his mind, almost as a passing fantasy, that if he were to touch the glassy surface of the ice, the warmth from his hand might be enough to melt it, even if only slightly. This thought pulls him closer, his heart racing with the possibility of a momentary connection between his warmth and her cold, frozen state. The surrealness of this moment, a blend of extremes—heat meeting cold, life meeting death, the known and the unknown—compels him to move forward. His hand hovers near the door, and as it swings open with ease, the frigid air from inside the shop rushes to greet him, mingling with the warmth that still lingers on his skin. He steps across the threshold, drawn inexorably into the mystery that surrounds the ice, surrendering to its magnetic pull. Meanwhile, outside the window, the moths continue to flutter against the glass, unaware of the drama unfolding inside. This strange, captivating scene—where heat, cold, and mystery intersect—leaves a lingering sense of intrigue, as if the moment itself holds secrets that may soon be revealed. The chapter ends on a note of suspended tension, full of anticipation and uncertainty, leaving readers to wonder what will happen next in the salesman's interaction with this frozen woman.