

# Chapter 24

Chapter 24 of *All the Colors of the Dark* is set during a tumultuous Thursday, amidst the Super Outbreak of 1974, with severe storms battering the home of Norma and her granddaughter, Saint. The harsh weather creates a grim atmosphere, with thunder crashing and windows rattling, heightening the sense of urgency and fear. While the storm rages outside, Norma finds comfort on the porch, retreating to a familiar spot where she can weather the storm in peace. Saint, on the other hand, focuses on Patch, who arrives soaked from the rain, his shivering body betraying the cold and discomfort he's endured. Saint's concern is heightened when she realizes that the storm's power stirs up painful memories for her. She reveals how the storms always bring her back to thoughts of her grandfather's death, linking nature's ferocity to her personal grief.

Once the storm finally subsides, Saint and Patch move outdoors and begin playing with the slingshot Patch had brought with him. As he shows Saint how to properly aim and shoot, they take turns hitting Progresso cans that have been set up as targets. Saint, fully immersed in the game, is unaware of the heavy financial pressures that hang over Patch's family. Each successful shot brings a fleeting sense of joy, and their bond grows stronger through this simple act of shared play. However, the innocent fun takes a more serious turn when Patch admits that he could kill animals if it came down to survival, a statement that shocks Saint and reveals the darker side of growing up. She, on the other hand, admits she could never do such a thing, a moment that reflects the emotional divide they feel in confronting the harsher realities of life. Their conversation, filled with tension, marks the beginning of their mutual exploration of survival and morality.

The scene shifts as the two friends retreat into the home, where Saint sits at the piano, her fingers hesitating over the keys. Despite her fear of judgment, she plays a piece with passion, singing "Mona Lisas and Mad Hatters." Patch listens intently, and to her

surprise, he praises her music, telling her it's the most beautiful he has ever heard. This recognition encourages Saint, and they share a tender moment as Patch opens up to her about the deep pain he's feeling regarding his mother's job loss. The vulnerability in Patch's voice stirs something in Saint, and she comforts him with a promise of escape — a dream of visiting the North Carolina Coastal Plain, a place known for its purple honey. This shared dream symbolizes a brief respite from the harshness of their reality and offers them a glimpse of a world beyond the struggles that define their lives. Their emotional exchange culminates in their first kiss, a significant moment that deepens their connection and marks a turning point in their relationship.



The following day, as Saint and Patch attend school, tensions rise when Chuck Bradley, a local bully, shatters Saint's slingshot. This provokes Patch to defend her, and despite being physically hurt in the confrontation, he refuses to back down, showing a fierce determination to protect her. In this moment, Patch reveals the depth of his feelings for Saint, calling her his anchor and expressing his care for her in a way that solidifies their bond. The chapter delves into the complexities of childhood and young love, highlighting the internal battles both characters face as they navigate their complicated emotions and the external turmoil around them. Their shared experiences of loss and struggle bring them closer, while also highlighting their resilience and the powerful connection they have forged in the midst of adversity. In the face of chaos and hardship, their relationship becomes a beacon of hope, offering them both a sense of purpose and belonging.