

# Chapter 126

Chapter 126 of *All the Colors of the Dark* introduces the Derry Younger Center, a nondescript two-story building with a pink exterior and a greenish, mottled roof. This establishment, unremarkable from the outside, symbolizes the hidden struggles contained within its walls. Saint arrives at the center, knowing full well that her presence here could attract unwanted attention and protests from those who oppose her choices. Once inside, she chooses a seat, deliberately avoiding eye contact with the others, a clear indication of her desire to remain anonymous while grappling with her internal chaos and the weight of her decisions.

As Saint waits, her mind drifts to her life back in Monta Clare, two hundred miles away, where she had been living with Jimmy. Jimmy, weighed down by both emotional and physical apathy, has become a shadow of himself due to his academic failures. Despite her attempts to help him by scheduling an appointment with Dr. Caldwell, Jimmy has refused to attend, offering yet another disappointment in the life they were trying to rebuild. This disconnect between her efforts and his resistance highlights the deepening rift in their relationship, a stark contrast to the hopes she once had for their future together.

While seated in the waiting area, a young girl beside Saint asks her about the pain she might endure, which prompts Saint to reflect on the long-term effects of their choices. She empathizes with the girl, understanding that, like her, the emotional toll of such decisions will only deepen as time passes, especially in painful moments like Christmas or when friends experience similar hardships. Despite her own struggles, Saint offers the girl a reassuring smile, telling her, "You'll be fine," in an attempt to offer some hope amidst the uncertainty they both face.

Their conversation takes a turn toward dark humor as the girl mentions a news story about a prison break involving spree killers. The girl expresses a romanticized view of escape, which Saint meets with biting irony, emphasizing the bleakness of such fantasies. Through this exchange, their dialogue fluctuates between humor and profound reflection, particularly when they discuss the nature of mistakes and the consequences of regret. Saint shares her belief that learning from mistakes helps reduce the weight of regret, which prompts the young girl to announce her decision to abstain from sex altogether. Saint responds with a supportive nod, admiring the girl's resolve in making a choice that she feels is right for her.

As Saint's name is finally called, she stands and hands in her form at the reception desk. For a brief moment, she notices a photograph of Dr. Tooms hanging on the wall, seemingly detached from the festivities surrounding the center's opening. This sight underscores Saint's sense of isolation and her feeling of being an outsider, even in this seemingly supportive space. As she prepares to step into the unknown beyond the door, she is reminded of her internal struggle and the uncertain journey ahead.

This chapter delves into the emotional complexity of Saint's situation, showcasing her internal conflict as she navigates the challenging decisions that lie before her. Her interactions with the young girl serve as a poignant reflection of her own struggle, offering a bittersweet look at the hope and despair intertwined in their lives. The contrast between the seemingly mundane environment of the Derry Younger Center and the weight of the decisions being made within it highlights the emotional gravity of Saint's journey. The dialogue with the young girl provides a moment of levity amidst the somber reflection, showcasing Saint's ability to connect with others, despite her own pain and turmoil.

Saint's journey is not only geographical but also deeply emotional, as she wrestles with the ramifications of her choices and the effects they will have on her future. Her relationship with Jimmy, marked by disappointment and distance, serves as a backdrop to her personal growth and search for resolution. The chapter offers a poignant meditation on the complexity of decisions, mistakes, and the consequences

they carry, making it a deeply resonant moment in the overall narrative. The emotional landscape that Saint navigates—marked by isolation, empathy, and the search for meaning—reminds readers of the profound challenges inherent in the process of healing and self-acceptance.

