

# Chapter 29

The chapter opens with Dale, Doc, Beezer, and Jack preparing for a high-profile press conference in La Follette Park. Doc is visibly nervous, while Beezer and Dale remain composed. The event, organized by Jack, aims to present a controlled narrative about their involvement in the Fisherman case. The press is restless, but Dale ensured local residents have prime seating. The group rehearses their story: Henry Leyden identified the Fisherman, who was later found dead at his home, where Ty Marshall and other children were rescued. Key details are intentionally vague, with the group agreeing to claim memory lapses due to "bad air" at the scene.

Jack emphasizes the importance of sticking to their story to protect Dale's reputation and honor Henry's heroism. The narrative frames Henry as the true hero who uncovered the Fisherman's identity before being killed. The group plans to downplay their own roles, attributing the resolution to Henry's actions and the subsequent police work. They also avoid mentioning the destruction of Burnside's house, deflecting questions with claims of faulty memory. The goal is to reassure the public that French Landing is safe again while deflecting scrutiny from their unconventional methods.

As they step onto the platform, the crowd erupts in applause, with local residents and media alike cheering. The scene is chaotic, with flashing cameras and shouted questions, but the group remains focused. Jack, confident and polished, leads the way, while Doc, now calmer after smoking a joint, follows. The atmosphere is electric, blending relief and celebration. The presence of familiar faces from French Landing adds a personal touch, underscoring the community's collective trauma and healing.

The chapter captures a pivotal moment of closure and public reckoning. Jack's strategic storytelling ensures the group's actions are portrayed as lawful and justified, while Henry's sacrifice is elevated. The press conference symbolizes a return to normalcy, though the underlying tensions and unanswered questions linger. The

crowd's enthusiastic response hints at a community ready to move forward, even as the truth remains partially obscured. The scene sets the stage for the story's resolution, blending triumph with ambiguity.

