

Stage Three: Afterbirth - Turk

The chapter opens with Turk, a former white supremacist, in a clinic with his young daughter Carys, who is being treated for strep throat. He distracts her by making a balloon animal, showcasing his role as a caring father. Turk reflects on his current life, having taken his wife Deborah's last name to reinvent himself. He is now a stay-at-home dad and works with the Anti-Defamation League, speaking about his past hate-fueled actions and the consequences they had, including the suicide of his first wife, Brit.

Turk recounts his journey of transformation, detailing how he once propagated hate through a website and violent actions. He explains how a brutal attack by his former allies became a turning point, leading him to abandon his racist ideology. Despite his progress, he admits to lingering biases and channels his aggression into ice hockey. Turk emphasizes the duality of human nature, noting how the same brain region can foster both hatred and compassion, using the Holocaust as an example of extreme cruelty and global empathy.

The narrative shifts back to the clinic, where Turk meets Ruth Walker, the nurse-practitioner treating Carys. Turk is anxious that Ruth might recognize him from his past, but she doesn't seem to. He notices her credentials and family photos, realizing she is a successful Black woman married to a Yale graduate. This moment highlights Turk's internal conflict as he grapples with his history of racism and his current efforts to atone. Ruth's kindness and professionalism contrast sharply with Turk's past beliefs, underscoring his ongoing struggle for redemption.

The chapter closes with Turk thanking Ruth, though he remains uncertain if she knows who he is. His daughter's illness serves as a backdrop to his introspection, emphasizing the tension between his reformed identity and his lingering guilt. Turk's story illustrates the complexity of change, the weight of past actions, and the fragile

hope for forgiveness, both from others and himself.

