

Chapter 27: Finders Keepers ...

In Chapter 27 of *Mother Night*, the protagonist reflects on the tragic and unsettling death of Lazlo Szombathy, a man who, using a rope meant for the protagonist, took his own life. Szombathy had been a Hungarian Freedom Fighter and was deeply troubled by the fact that, despite his history of violence and his past in Hungary, he was unable to practice as a veterinarian in America. His bitterness about the disparity between the freedom he was promised and his experiences in the United States is painfully clear. Before his death, Szombathy left behind a note in which he claimed to have discovered a cure for cancer, but this assertion was quickly dismissed by American doctors, who deemed it absurd. The narrator finds himself contemplating the tragic futility of Szombathy's life, which had been marked by frustration, bitterness, and ultimately, death, a reflection of the larger human condition where unfulfilled potential and desires often lead to profound despair. This loss becomes a reflection on the broken promises of both personal freedom and scientific discovery in a society that struggles to balance hope with reality.

As the narrative unfolds, the protagonist finds himself in a cellar that belongs to Dr. Lionel J. D. Jones, a place where not only medical procedures are conducted but also where the infamous Iron Guard convenes. The sound of a printing press fills the room, its mechanical churn echoing as it prints *The White Christian Minuteman*, a publication that adds to the sense of secrecy and ideological tension surrounding the gathering. The protagonist, having been beaten earlier, is now receiving care from Dr. Abraham Epstein, with the events leading to his injuries becoming an increasing source of mental turmoil. Despite the harsh treatment, the protagonist feels an odd sense of trust in Dr. Jones, whom Resi, his companion, had recommended. Resi, however, is deeply concerned, as she voices her worries about the dangers they face, particularly the threat from those who have tracked the protagonist's past actions. The chapter

hints at the broader conspiratorial forces surrounding the protagonist, suggesting a larger, far-reaching web that involves powerful enemies determined to pursue him for the crimes of his past. Resi's growing anxiety and her belief that they are being pursued by Jewish operatives serve as an ominous reminder of the lasting consequences of the protagonist's involvement in the ideological wars that have shaped his life.

As the tension escalates in the underground space, Jones' chauffeur, known as the Black Fuehrer of Harlem, serves the protagonist a quiet breakfast while providing cryptic but chilling advice. The chauffeur informs the protagonist that the state of Israel is now actively interested in capturing him, referencing the infamous capture of Adolf Eichmann as an example of the Israeli government's reach. This revelation hits the protagonist with full force, as he now understands the international scale of the consequences tied to his actions. His past, a series of choices made in the heat of war and survival, has now caught up with him in the form of powerful international scrutiny. As the severity of this new threat becomes clearer, Resi and the chauffeur agree that the best course of action is for the protagonist to leave the country immediately. The notion of fleeing becomes less of a choice and more of a necessity, a means of escaping not just the physical dangers that await him but also the looming specter of his past catching up with him. Plans are quickly put in motion to arrange for the protagonist to be flown out of the country to an undisclosed location where he can start over. The chapter delves into complex themes of paranoia, survival, and the inescapability of past actions. As the protagonist grapples with his identity and the threat of retribution from the global stage, the urgency of his situation weighs heavily on his mind. This chapter explores the intricate dynamics between past trauma and the inevitable need for escape, showing how deeply personal histories can intersect with larger political forces in ways that force individuals into desperate actions.