Miles

Miles moves through the busy hospital lobby, a heavy sense of worry settling in his chest. His brother Wynton lies in a coma, his condition lingering in a state of uncertainty that has taken a toll on Miles emotionally. To make matters worse, Miles is still reeling from a recent conversation with Dean Richards, who had questioned his academic performance and behavior, making him feel increasingly inadequate. Desiring to escape the overwhelming reality of the hospital, Miles tries to distance himself from the anxiety by leaving the building. However, his escape is interrupted when he trips over the large foot of a man standing too close, sending him off balance. The man, who wears mirrored sunglasses and sports a handlebar mustache, immediately apologizes in a way that catches Miles off guard. Despite his frustration at the moment, Miles is momentarily disarmed by the man’s politeness, which creates a brief and unexpected connection in the midst of his emotional turmoil.

Miles tries to brush off the awkward encounter, planning to make his exit, but the man, who introduces himself as Felix Rivera from Denver, draws him back into conversation. Felix's vibrant personality and eccentric fashion—marked by a colorful shirt and suspenders—add an element of surprise to the interaction. As they talk, Felix makes a comment that strikes Miles as curious—he mentions that Miles is a descendant of Alonso Fall, a family connection that Miles doesn't recognize. To further complicate things, Felix drops an odd mention of Miles’s dog, Dizzy, a comment that leaves Miles wondering how this stranger seems to know so much. This strange exchange, while perplexing, starts to pique Miles’s curiosity, though it also makes him feel more uneasy and confused about his own emotions and the peculiar nature of the encounter. Felix’s seemingly random remarks only serve to deepen the mystery, adding a surreal quality to the moment that Miles can't shake off.

Felix’s remarks continue to unsettle Miles as the conversation shifts toward his brother Wynton. Felix expresses a surprising concern for Wynton’s well-being, speaking about him in a manner that seems both out of place and unexpectedly empathetic. The oddity of Felix's concern, combined with his lighthearted tone, confuses Miles even further, leaving him unsure of how to react. Felix goes as far as to say that Miles is “glowing,” a statement that baffles him even more, causing him to question Felix’s intent and his understanding of the situation. Despite the unease, a strange sense of relief washes over Miles from the interaction, almost as if Felix’s eccentricity and carefree attitude offer a small escape from the overwhelming seriousness of his brother’s condition. In the midst of the hospital’s tense atmosphere, Felix’s playful personality provides a brief, yet significant, distraction, leaving Miles both perplexed and slightly amused.

Eventually, Miles exits the hospital, feeling slightly lighter, though still baffled by the strange encounter. The cool air outside offers a stark contrast to the claustrophobic atmosphere inside the hospital, providing Miles with a momentary sense of relief. As he walks, his mind keeps returning to the odd conversation he had with Felix, who had appeared out of nowhere and brought a burst of eccentricity into the midst of his otherwise grim day. Felix’s unexpected comments and odd behavior leave Miles reflecting on the unpredictability of human interactions and the strange moments of connection that can emerge even in the most difficult of times. Though the encounter was short, it has a lasting impact, and Miles realizes that Felix’s presence may have opened a door to something much deeper—something he is not yet ready to fully understand. The chapter ends with Miles feeling a sense of quiet anticipation, knowing that the journey ahead, including the mystery surrounding Felix, will unfold in ways he can't yet predict. The chapter concludes with the understanding that, amidst his brother’s crisis, Miles is also navigating his own emotional complexities, and Felix might be the key to unlocking some of the answers he’s seeking.