

# Chapter 9

Jack Sawyer finds himself in a desolate, dreamlike amusement park under a gloomy autumn sky, haunted by memories of his childhood. The eerie atmosphere is punctuated by the sound of waves and a foreboding guitar melody. Jack, now mentally regressed to his younger self, recalls fleeing with his mother from his uncle Morgan Sloat. He encounters Speedy, a deceased friend whose presence blurs the line between dream and reality. Speedy urges Jack to resume his forgotten role as a protector, hinting at a looming threat involving the Crimson King and a kidnapped child with dangerous potential.

Speedy's cryptic warnings unsettle Jack, who resists the call to action, insisting he has retired from his past responsibilities. The conversation grows tense as Speedy emphasizes the urgency of rescuing the child, referred to as a "Breaker," whose powers could aid the Crimson King in catastrophic destruction. Jack's reluctance is met with scorn, and Speedy's tone shifts to a harsh, commanding Southern drawl, demanding Jack reclaim his courage. The dream's surreal logic intensifies as Jack grapples with the weight of his unresolved past and the moral imperative to act.

The dream takes a darker turn when a malevolent voice taunts Jack, threatening him if he interferes. A vortex opens, offering Jack an escape, but the voice's laughter follows him as he plunges into darkness. Upon waking, Jack struggles to recall the dream's details but is left with a lingering unease. He rationalizes his childhood trauma as a stress-induced breakdown, dismissing his heroic memories as fantasies. Yet, the phone's sudden ring triggers a visceral scream, underscoring his unresolved inner turmoil.

The chapter ends with Fred Marshall's phone call, implying another layer of real-world urgency. Jack's psychological conflict—between denial and duty—mirrors the dream's themes of  and responsibility. The narrative blends supernatural dread with Jack's

fragile mental state, setting the stage for his inevitable confrontation with both his past and the unfolding crisis. The chapter masterfully intertwines memory, prophecy, and horror, leaving Jack—and the reader—on the edge of revelation.

