

Chapter 13: Thirteen

The chapter begins with a disrupted plan for a trip to Norfolk, as Rodney's arrangement to borrow a car falls through at the last minute. Ruth, who had previously acted indifferent about the trip, reacts strongly to the news, revealing her hidden investment in the journey. Despite her earlier claims that she was only humoring Chrissie, her visible distress suggests she cares deeply about finding her "possible"—a person from her past. The narrator, Kathy, attempts to cover for Ruth's reaction, hinting at the underlying tensions and unspoken emotions among the group.

Once the car issue is resolved, the group sets off early the next morning. Ruth's behavior during the ride becomes a source of tension as she monopolizes conversation with the veterans, Chrissie and Rodney, isolating Kathy and Tommy. When Kathy suggests rearranging seats to ease the awkward dynamic, Ruth reacts defensively, accusing her of causing trouble. This confrontation highlights Ruth's preoccupation with projecting a certain image to the veterans, revealing her insecurities and the group's fragile dynamics. The tension lingers, but Kathy reluctantly acquiesces to avoid further conflict.

Upon arriving at the seaside town, the mood lightens as the group enjoys the freedom and excitement of the trip. The scenic beauty and cheerful atmosphere temporarily overshadow their original purpose. A shared moment of laughter over a quirky café sign briefly restores the bond between Kathy and Ruth, offering a fleeting respite from the earlier strain. However, this harmony is short-lived, as the underlying tensions soon resurface.

The chapter concludes with the group avoiding the main reason for their trip—the search for Ruth's "possible." Instead, Chrissie and Rodney dominate the conversation with nostalgic stories about their friend Martin, leaving Kathy and Tommy feeling excluded. Their laughter feels performative, masking the unspoken discomfort and

highlighting the group's disjointed priorities. The chapter underscores the complexities of their relationships and the unresolved emotions simmering beneath the surface.

