

CHAPTER 68: JAMESON

Jameson and Avery, racing against competitors Branford and Katharine, search for clues in a high-stakes game on a cliffside estate. After finding matches in the kitchen, they return to the starting room, where they encounter Zella, the duchess, who seems aware of their progress. She hints that Branford has already found one key, leaving her with only one chance to turn the game in her favor. Jameson notices her lack of concern and deduces she knows more than she lets on, especially when she spots the matches in his hand and directs their attention to the fireplace.

Zella's cryptic remark about the fireplace—"No rest for the wicked"—suggests a hidden clue tied to fire. Jameson hesitates, weighing the risks of acting in her presence versus losing time. Avery asserts their claim to any potential key, but Zella dismisses the idea, implying the fireplace holds no key. Jameson realizes Zella has already seen and concealed the clue by rearranging the logs. Concerned about breaking the game's rules, Avery questions whether burning the logs is allowed, prompting Jameson to improvise by sacrificing his shirt to ignite the fireplace.

As the flames consume his shirt, invisible ink on the fireplace stones is revealed, displaying the clue "DIAL 216." Zella thanks Jameson mockingly before departing, likely to act on the clue. Jameson and Avery, however, suspect a deeper layer to the puzzle. Instead of rushing to a phone, Jameson hints at an alternative interpretation, and Avery recalls a sundial in the stone garden, connecting it to the numbers 216. Their quick thinking suggests they're one step ahead of Zella and their rivals.

The chapter highlights the tension and strategic maneuvering between the characters as they navigate the game's challenges. Jameson's resourcefulness and Avery's sharp intuition shine as they decode clues while outmaneuvering their competitors. The dynamic between them and Zella adds intrigue, hinting at unresolved history and rivalries. The chapter ends on a note of anticipation, with Jameson and Avery poised to

uncover the next piece of the puzzle, demonstrating their teamwork and cunning in the face of high-stakes competition.

