

Chapter 25

The chapter opens with Charles Burnside, a grotesque and malevolent figure, emerging from a toilet bowl in a men's restroom on Daisy Wing, clutching Henry Leyden's hedge clippers like a prized possession. Bloodied from stab wounds on his abdomen and arm, he moves unsteadily, his appearance as unsettling as his actions. Despite his injuries, Burny methodically tends to his wounds using bandages from a cabinet, leaving a trail of blood on the pristine white tiles. His focus is on minimal cleanup, aiming to avoid notice rather than achieve any semblance of neatness, as he dons his damp, bloodstained shirt and prepares to leave.

A moment of self-reflection catches Burny off guard when he glances at the mirror, shocked by his own deteriorated appearance. The once-sly, foxy man now looks haggard, ill, and terrifying, with sunken eyes, veiny baldness, and a skeletal frame. Though he dismisses the vision as a trick of the harsh lighting, the encounter unsettles him. His internal monologue, filled with crude, disjointed phrases, reveals his connection to a sinister master, Mr. Munshun, who urges him to move forward. Burny's mind drifts to Black House, a place of both comfort and horror, where he anticipates tormenting a captive boy, Tyler Marshall.

Burny's thoughts shift to his immediate plans, fueled by a desire for revenge and pleasure. He spots Butch Yerxa, the night attendant, asleep at his desk, and relishes the idea of using the hedge clippers as a weapon, recalling how they severed Henry Leyden's fingers with ease. His primary target, however, is Chipper Maxton, whom he blames for his physical decline, accusing him of skimping on food and stealing Medicaid funds. Burny's twisted logic justifies his impending violence, seeing it as retribution for Chipper's greed and neglect.

The chapter concludes with Burny sneaking into the hallway, heading toward the lobby with malicious intent. His actions are driven by a blend of vengeance, sadism, and

obedience to Mr. Munshun's demands. The narrative underscores Burny's depravity and the looming threat he poses, leaving the reader anticipating the chaos he is about to unleash. The vivid descriptions of his appearance and mindset reinforce his role as a terrifying antagonist, embodying both physical decay and unchecked evil.

