

# Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Beethoven Shams

In the chapter titled "Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Beethoven Shams," the setting begins with a surreal dream landscape—a vacant parking lot elevated among flower-filled trees and expansive yellow grass. This space lacks context, diverging from typical dreams that start with character introductions. Initially, the parking lot is devoid of inhabitants, but soon two figures emerge: Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, known for his towering height and distinctive basketball attire, and Beethoven, Cyrus's imaginary younger brother, characterized by curly hair and casual wear.

Their conversation begins with Kareem inquiring about what Beethoven loves. Beethoven mentions basketball, a collection of interests including Borges, pecans, and the show "Twin Peaks," prompting laughter between the two. The jovial exchange includes banter about their personalities, with Kareem playfully suggesting Beethoven's affinity for DJing or Bitcoin, and Beethoven claiming he might excel at improv.

As they walk through the dreamlike setting, Kareem shares an anecdote about a devastating fire that destroyed his extensive jazz record collection. Beethoven expresses that the memories attached to those records are far more significant than their physical forms. A poignant moment arises when Kareem reflects on the loss of art that provided meaning and purpose in life, touching upon the emotional weight of losing cherished items.

Their dialogue deepens as Beethoven challenges the notion of kindness from strangers who sent Kareem records—drawing a parallel to personal motives. Amidst this conversation, Beethoven's presence becomes ethereal, with his skin paling, and he appears older and less human, blending into the environment. The imagery suggests a transformation or realization of his nonexistence.

As they both acknowledge the philosophical implications of their experiences, with an element of poetic reflection on scarcity and richness, the chapter concludes with a light-hearted twist reflecting their dynamic. Beethoven attempts another joke, highlighting the sometimes trivial yet meaningful moments shared in life, which culminates in laughter that fills the air, encapsulating the blend of humor and gravity present throughout their discourse.