

forty-two years

In a series of late-night visits to Werryck, the protagonist witnesses fluctuations between Werryck's agitation and tranquility. During one session, Werryck reveals he hasn't slept in forty-two years, a result of trading sleep for revenge and influence. This admission stirs reflections on Lark's belief in redemption for those who have wronged her, such as Large Beef, the man who attempted to firebomb her shop. The protagonist—somewhat intimidated by Werryck's complexity—chooses to play a familiar bass line on his instrument.

Werryck recounts a vivid dream from his past, a thrilling car ride off a mountainside, illustrating his longing for dreams which he has been deprived of. As the protagonist contemplates the essential nature of sleep, feelings of sadness for Werryck emerge.

Later, work assignments lead the protagonist and his crew to the dark and cold confines of the ship's Shambles—a detention area below the waterline. The crew learns they will be sealing corroded steel hulls with hot tar. Entering the Shambles, they navigate through oppressive darkness, encountering dim lights and signs of decay, culminating in eerie scenes of inmates serving their sentences.

Upon meeting Marcel, a fellow worker in the Shambles, the protagonist is introduced to Maggie, a woman confined in a cell who has been hearing music through the plumbing—specifically the protagonist's playing. Their heartfelt exchange reveals Maggie's appreciation for the music, offering a glimpse into the unexpected connections formed in dire circumstances.

As the workday ends, Ivar appears with a slip of paper containing the name "Sol," hinting at hidden narratives and emotions. This revelation invokes an amused and lively response from the protagonist, momentarily easing the tension of their monotonous lives. That night, Werryck appears more vulnerable and mortal, falling asleep while the protagonist plays soothing music. This nocturnal intimacy transforms the atmosphere, revealing deeper layers to Werryck beyond his initial imposing demeanor, concluding the chapter with a sense of both fragility and connection in a harrowing environment.