

quixotes

Back inside, Lark excitedly revealed that they had a boarder arriving that evening, prompting them to prepare the attic room they occasionally rented out. The space was modest, consisting of a bed and a half bath, and had remained largely empty due to the quietness of travelers on the now dangerous highway. As Lark described their decision to accept a boarder, she whimsically acknowledged their nature as "quixotes," open to possibilities despite the circumstances.

Lark then unveiled her delight about the boarder, Kellan, and presented a bound galley of a long-sought book, **I Cheerfully Refuse**, by Molly Thorn—a unique author whose works had captivated Lark since childhood. Kellan had brought the advance copy into the store along with other titles, reviving Lark's long-standing desire to read it. The book was significant for its rarity, and Lark shared her history of searching for this elusive title since she was twelve.

As they prepared the room, Lark offered information about Kellan, describing his slender figure and notable features, including a damaged hand. The conversation turned to an infamous event from Michigan's labor history where workers disappeared, noted for their skeletal appearances, prompting Lark to refer to Kellan as perhaps a "squelette."

When Kellan arrived, he was seen as fragile and shy, carrying a children's suitcase and showing reluctance to engage in conversation or even accept food. Lark guided him upstairs to his room while they tended to final preparations. Later that night, Lark and Rainy exchanged whispers, contemplating Kellan's mysterious origins and the future they could foresee for him, which was a peculiarity of Lark's. He planned to head to his uncle's in Thunder Bay, and Lark asked Rainy to assist Kellan with his car, sensing he would need help.

As they settled back into comfortable silence, the narrative reflected on the peculiarities of human connection, the remnants of a troubled journey, and the little joys hidden within the mundane. Lark's intuitive grasp of Kellan's character hinted at a story yet to unfold, as both she and Rainy navigated the blend of hospitality and curiosity that the new boarder embodied.