

# sea like a shroud

In this chapter, the narrator reflects on a recent event that has left a profound impact. They are grappling with the absence of Kellan, who had been living with them like a brother but has now left unexpectedly, leaving no note or indication of his departure. The narrator feels a mix of disappointment and bitterness, particularly because Kellan had previously expressed desires to leave.

Lark, another character in the story, attempts to lighten the mood, but the narrator's feelings are bruised. As they converse in the shop, the atmosphere is disrupted by a sudden and violent windstorm that sweeps through their area, causing chaos outside. During this storm, they witness various objects being tossed around, and the craziness of the winds stirs an underlying tension, drawing their focus outward.

After the storm passes, they embark on a search for Vixen, a dog who has been swept away, and this quest takes nearly two hours. The search symbolizes the unpredictability and turmoil in their lives. Upon returning home, the narrator is relieved to find the house seemingly intact but quickly discovers disarray inside, indicating an intrusion rather than mere storm damage.

Chaos reigns as they enter the kitchen, realizing drawers have been pulled out, cupboards emptied, and furniture overturned. The sudden switch from relief to horror reveals that others had invaded their home. The narrative builds tension as the protagonist rushes upstairs, finding more destruction, leading to a climactic moment when they discover Lark's injured form. The chapter concludes with a visceral depiction of Lark's injury and the stark, eerie imagery that underscores the turmoil of their existence, as the narrator feels the crushing weight of their circumstances against a backdrop of a strange, storm-battered world.