

the Greenstone Fair

In the chapter titled "the Greenstone Fair," we find the protagonist waking up alone in his house by the lake, a place known for its turbulent nature—although on this day, it's surprisingly calm. He reflects on the lake's sentience, recalling past events including ominous clouds and shipwrecks, while enjoying the serene environment. After a brief interaction with his housemate Kellan, the protagonist prepares breakfast, acknowledging Kellan's reserved nature and his unique appearance—the fearful look in his eyes and his unusual hand.

Kellan, who has recently made a significant book delivery to Lark (the protagonist's companion), is depicted as nervous yet oddly familiar. They engage in conversation while sharing breakfast, where Kellan hints at his uncertain plans—“farm” and “Ontario.” Their exchange reveals Kellan's backstory, including a recent acquisition of an old Ford Ranchero in need of repairs.

The two decide to visit Greenstone to seek auto parts. As they drive, Kellan shares anecdotes about his eccentric family, revealing a kid-brother-like dynamic between him and the protagonist, who feels a protective instinct toward Kellan. Throughout the ride, Kellan discusses his aspirations in microbiology, particularly wanting to work in a more prestigious field related to astronauts, only to face disappointment when revealing it's a metaphor for the powerful elite.

Upon reaching Greenstone, the protagonist describes the vibrant market atmosphere filled with color and activity, contrasting Kellan's growing anxiety. They navigate through various stalls, and as Kellan scours for parts, he inadvertently witnesses a confrontation involving a brutish officer known as Apeknuckle. This encounter escalates quickly when Grabo, a vendor, resists the officer's bullying, showcasing her strength and sparking a chaotic scene.

Despite the commotion, Kellan finds joy in a small compass he purchases, intending to gift it to the protagonist. However, his mood dims as they return home, hinting at his troubled past. Kellan reveals a burden of expectations and contracts, suggesting he feels trapped and discontented with his situation. After a humorous mishap involving heavy automotive parts tucked away in his coat, Kellan requests the protagonist's help to install the ball joints.

As the protagonist reflects on the day's events and prepares for a music gig, he struggles with the complex feelings of attachment to Kellan, worried about the direction their relationship may take, especially in light of Kellan's circumstances. The chapter closes with a tender moment between the protagonist and Lark, emphasizing Kellan's artistic talents that capture their essence in his sketches, signifying the budding connection among them all.