

# when you see him standing in your kitchen

The chapter begins with Kellan and the narrator attempting to fix an old Ranchero, visiting various local talents in search of assistance. They encounter Roy Ess, a clever mechanic who observes Sunday as a day of rest, and Maudie Antoinette, a knowledgeable woman preoccupied with her grown children. After failing to secure help, the duo returns home to work on the car themselves. They struggle with the ball joint's location amidst dirt and rust, and in a moment of clumsiness, Kellan's weight causes the car to fall, leaving him filled with guilt as they both retreat from the scene.

In an effort to escape the tense atmosphere, Kellan retreats to the attic, where the narrator discovers him using nitrous oxide, a substance he seems to rely on for comfort. Kellan shares cryptic drawings of people from his sketches, including a smudged girl and an old man, revealing his deeper musings while under the influence. One character named Werryck comes into the conversation, described with conflicting traits by Kellan, who appears frightened at the prospect of his arrival.

Werryck, described by Kellan as an omnipresent figure, prompts fear and urgency. Kellan suggests that when he arrives, one should flee quietly, emphasizing the unpredictability of Werryck. The narrator reflects on a childhood memory related to a pandemic, which led to the creation of traveling hospitals run by a shipping billionaire, and connects this to Kellan's mention of a "medicine ship," hinting at a possible shared past regarding health crises.

As the chapter draws to a close, the narrator shares his experiences with Lark, who is preoccupied with a book cache she wishes to explore, contrasting with Kellan's turmoil. While narrating their misadventures, Lark's passionate commitment to her work shines through, showcasing a stark difference between their current realities and the tensions of Kellan's struggles with Werryck and his gas habit. This narrative tension provides an intriguing glimpse into the complexities of relationships, escape, and the pursuit of solace amidst chaos.