

O God that Maple Fretboard

O God that Maple Fretboard, the protagonist finds themselves arriving at a public dock after enduring a grueling three-day storm. The once turbulent waters now rest in tranquility, and the boat is gently rocking against the dock as the protagonist disembarks. Almost immediately, they encounter a young girl sitting in the cockpit of the boat, who, with a teasing smile, jokingly remarks about the condition of the boat and the protagonist's fishing skills. The air is thick with tension, but her playful demeanor lightens the moment, offering a brief respite from the intensity of the recent storm. However, beneath the surface of their conversation, there is an unmistakable unease, and the protagonist is keenly aware of this tension. The girl then offers her assistance in finding supplies in the nearby town of Winton, where her uncle, referred to as "King Richard," runs a shop. She casually mentions that King Richard is not really a family member, a statement that piques the protagonist's curiosity and concern. As they make their way towards Winton, the girl opens up more about her past, revealing the burdens she carries, and the protagonist is struck by the weight of her words.

Once they reach Winton, the protagonist begins to feel a deep sense of unease about the town and its inhabitants. The streets appear rundown, and the people who walk through them wear hardened expressions, some of them visibly armed. The sense of hostility and distrust is palpable, making the protagonist more wary of their surroundings. They eventually arrive at King Richard's store, only to find it locked. The girl suggests they go to Richard's house instead, and the protagonist reluctantly agrees, still uncertain of what to expect. Upon reaching the house, they are greeted by King Richard, a rugged and intimidating figure who seems to embody the harshness of the town. He carries himself with an air of authority and seems completely unfazed by their presence. The protagonist offers a pistol in exchange for supplies, but King Richard dismisses the offer with indifference, showing more interest in the pistol's history than in the trade itself. This brief exchange with Richard only deepens the protagonist's concerns, especially about the girl's safety and her relationship with this man who is supposed to be a guardian but acts more like a captor.

The protagonist's suspicion grows as they engage in conversation with King Richard. Despite the tense exchange, it becomes clear that the girl's freedom is at risk under Richard's guardianship. The protagonist, now determined to take action, decides to free the girl from her oppressive situation. They engage in a negotiation, and the protagonist offers up his beloved bass guitar in exchange for the girl's release. The guitar, once a cherished possession, is now traded for something far more valuable—the girl's safety and freedom. After some haggling, the deal is struck, and the girl, whose name is Sol, is freed from her stifling life with Richard. As they leave the house, a sense of liberation fills the air, but the protagonist can't shake the feeling of responsibility that now rests on their shoulders. With Sol now free, they leave the oppressive environment behind, but a new chapter begins, filled with uncertainty and a heavy sense of duty. The protagonist, still processing the loss of their guitar, is left with the weight of the decision they made. While there's a sense of hope in their newfound freedom, the cost of that freedom is evident in the sacrifice made. As they return to the boat, ready to set sail once again, the protagonist contemplates the future ahead, unsure of what it will bring but knowing they must move forward, carrying both the joy of their victory and the burden of their choices.