

Skeletons Climbing Stairs in the Rain

Skeletons Climbing Stairs in the Rain, the scene in the Shambles is one of suffocating heaviness. The air, thick with the smell of hot tar and the constant, monotonous hum of bilge pumps, fills the space with a sense of perpetual discomfort. Rainy, immersed in this grim setting, feels the weight of looming dread, especially as he is summoned to carry out his duties. As he moves through the darkened corridors of the ship, the silence is broken only by the distant noises from below, reminding him of the impending crisis. Marcel, who operates the incinerator, approaches Rainy with unsettling news that only deepens his anxiety. He informs Rainy that the children, including Sol, are now part of a new program involving “trials” for compliance therapeutics, a procedure that Rainy knows all too well is dangerous. This news triggers a deep sense of dread in Rainy, especially when he recalls Kellan’s escape from a similar situation. The tension heightens, as the trials are said to be legal as long as a child’s guardian gives consent.

Rainy’s thoughts immediately turn to Sol’s guardian, Griff, and he begins to suspect that the agreement may have been made hastily or without full awareness of the program’s true nature. He soon learns that the trials are targeting minors who are considered noncompliant, with a rating system based on their behavior, making Sol’s fate even more uncertain. The fact that the program specifically targets children who are perceived as problematic only intensifies Rainy’s anxiety. As Rainy contemplates the gravity of the situation, his mind races with possibilities of how he might intervene. His only hope now lies in speaking with Werryck, the only one he believes might have the authority to prevent this from happening. However, Marcel’s skepticism about Werryck’s willingness to help adds to Rainy’s feelings of helplessness. He wonders if Werryck will be willing to risk anything for Sol’s sake or if, like others, he will choose to stay distant from the issue.

In an attempt to change the course of events, Rainy approaches Werryck, hoping to appeal to his past affections for Sol. Their conversation is fraught with tension as Rainy pleads with Werryck to take action. Unfortunately, Werryck dismisses Rainy’s concerns with indifference, claiming that the medical decisions surrounding the trials are beyond his influence. He makes it clear that these matters belong to another realm, one that is detached from his own responsibilities. The coldness in Werryck’s response shocks Rainy, who tries desperately to remind him of Sol’s progress, hoping that Werryck might have some emotional connection to her. However, the more Rainy speaks, the more it becomes apparent that Werryck’s stoic demeanor is impenetrable. Rainy’s frustration builds as he realizes that his words seem to have little impact, and Werryck’s unwillingness to help leaves him feeling defeated.

As Rainy walks away from the tense conversation, the weight of the situation continues to press down on him. Werryck excitedly tells him about the capture of twelve newcomers, found stumbling from an abandoned cabin. These newcomers, frail and broken, plead to return to the ship. As the newcomers are brought in, Rainy is immediately struck by the sight of their shattered spirits. Their appearance—gaunt, hollow, and ghostly—leaves a deep impression on him, and among them, he recognizes Kellan, whose once vibrant presence is now reduced to a shadow of its former self. The sight of Kellan, now frail and vulnerable, cuts through Rainy’s heart, as it’s a reminder of the cruelty of their environment.

Werryck, as always, remains detached, evaluating the situation through a cold, clinical lens. He speaks of the resources that have been spent on the newcomers’ recovery, his tone devoid of empathy. Werryck implies that Kellan will face consequences for his actions, a remark that only deepens the sense of despair within Rainy. Despite the suffering and trauma these newcomers have endured, Werryck remains focused on the logistics and the cost of their recovery, highlighting a disturbing lack of compassion. As the chapter comes to a close, Rainy finds himself shivering—not just from the cold, but from the weight of his emotional turmoil. The situation feels increasingly hopeless as he contemplates the suffering of the newcomers, particularly Kellan. The chapter leaves Rainy pondering the fragility of life aboard the ship, wondering how much more he can endure as the oppressive atmosphere continues to tighten around him. The sense of despair grows,

leaving Rainy to question the humanity of those around him as they face the crushing weight of their circumstances.