

# our bright & zippy Kellan

In this chapter, the narrator finds themselves in Thunder Bay, experiencing a moment of hunger that drives them toward a bustling market set against a scenic lake. Upon arrival, they attempt to purchase grilled chicken with U.S. currency, only to be reminded that they are in Canada, where the currency exchange is necessary. The narrator frantically seeks a solution, recalling that they have an amplifier they could pawn to acquire Canadian money for food.

At the pawnshop, they negotiate for the value of their amplifier, encountering a skeptical broker. However, in a twist of luck, the broker pulls out an enticing Epiphone hollow-body guitar, prompting the narrator to listen to the broker play it with newfound interest. Their transaction secures them some Canadian currency, allowing them to return to the market and reclaim the chicken they had set aside.

After enjoying the chicken and gathering supplies, including eggs, bacon, and ice, the narrator feels a shift in the weather as a storm brews on the horizon. They reflect on their past encounters with a woman at a service station, revealing a dark history tied to a town called Gold, which had tragically disappeared. Amidst their errand, they come across a missing persons bulletin board. To their shock, they find a poster of Kellan, their companion, labeled as "our bright & zippy Kellan," stirring feelings of concern and complexity regarding Kellan's fate.

As they prepare to leave, the narrator buys a phone and contemplates making a call about Kellan. After some hesitation, they dial the number on the poster, which leads to an unexpected conversation with Werryck, a character associated with Kellan's past. Tension escalates as Werryck attempts to justify his actions and the chaotic situation surrounding Kellan, as well as Lark's tragic circumstances. The conversation reveals Kellan's dubious activities connected to a therapeutic substance called Willow, which complicates the narrator's feelings about his character. Ultimately, they are left grappling with the implications of Kellan's choices and Werryck's ominous offer to provide information in exchange for help. The chapter concludes with rising conflict and the narrator's determination to break free from Werryck's manipulations.