

STORM

15 YEARS OLD

The Cosmos is tossed by the raging sea as a flash of blinding light illuminates the dark, dingy kitchen cabin. The dishes rattle as thunder roars like a hungry beast through the electrically charged air. Summer hides under the prep table instead of cooking dinner for the entire crew like she's supposed to be doing. This type of behavior's not normal—unless it's storming. Landon, her only friend and ally, boils the water for rice then places rolls in the oven. They know if dinner isn't served at exactly nine that evening they will be punished. And the whip is to be avoided at all costs.

"Ducky, ye all right?" Landon asks distractedly in his Scottish accent before dumping chicken in a skillet.

She taps twice from underneath the prep table where she hides. One tap for yes, two taps for no. It's their signature language. Before he taught her to read and write, he was great at playing twenty questions.

Summer's silence never falters. Along with her voice, she also left a part of herself back on land. In eleven years, she has yet to place a single toe on solid ground—Captain's orders. She's adjusted to being a slave on the Cosmos, the massive ship she calls home. Sometimes she still loses her breath when the reality hits her, but for the most part she's accepted her life here.

"Ye can't be scared of storms forever," Landon notes.

Two taps and a *I know you're right, and I'm being irrational, but it doesn't change a thing* sigh. He chuckles, understanding.

She's considered talking to Landon before—he's a slave on the ship too—but the fear of her spoken voice is so deeply rooted that she almost has a panic

Laura Kreitzer 4/14/11 1:54 AM

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Setting Analysis 4/14/11 1:25 AM

Comment [2]: This paragraphs sets the scene for the chapter. It's storming, and they're on a ship in the kitchen, cooking.

Character Development 4/14/11 1:02 AM

Comment [3]: We first learn about their relationship. Simple.

Scene Analyst 4/14/11 12:57 AM

Comment [4]: Shows conflict between the two characters introduced, an unknown punisher, and "the whip."

Dialogue Analysis 4/14/11 1:20 AM

Comment [5]: We learn right away that Landon has a Scottish accent.

Character Development 4/14/11 1:03 AM

Comment [6]: We learn Landon is Scottish without it being spelled out.

Character Development 4/14/11 1:05 AM

Comment [7]: We learn more about their relationship—the fact they have their own "signature language" speaks volumes about them without only a couple of words.

Scene Analyst 4/14/11 12:57 AM

Comment [8]: Internal conflict/emotion that has to do with her silence. This is the original conflict unfolding.

Dialogue Analysis 4/14/11 1:21 AM

Comment [9]: We learn for the first time that Summer doesn't have any "dialogue."

Grammar Edits 4/14/11 1:32 AM

Comment [10]: Comma added due to two separate clauses joined by the conjunction "and."

Scene Analyst 4/14/11 12:58 AM

Comment [11]: More internal conflict, slowing showing the reader finally the consequences of the conflict mentioned at the beginning of the chapter.

attack when she tries. He's always been sympathetic and never pressures her to speak, which is one of the things she likes about him so much.

A flash of lightning, another rolling boom of thunder, and she looks around frantically—irrationally—for Jarvis, once a crew member on the *Cosmos*. There was a time when storms didn't scare her. In the past, when it rained, she would run to the upper deck of the ship to dance in the delightful feeling of water tumbling down her abused skin. Dark, ominous clouds with bright blue lightning bringing the world to a massive, windy chaos—storms once fascinated her like that.

Not anymore. Jarvis made sure to ruin that. *Not that the storm helped either.*

"Ye know I'm not as good at makin' chicken as ye are. Captain's gonna know." Landon adds butter and smoke rises into the air with a sizzling noise.

"I can't remember how this goes, Ducky. Help me out. Two tablespoons garlic and one cup Italian dressing? Or was it the other way around?" He knows she takes pride in her cooking and would be offended if he did it wrong.

A little screech erupts from under the prep table as her head pokes up. There's a smear of dirt under one of her brilliant blue eyes, and her blonde hair falls in greasy tendrils around her gaunt face. A light smattering of freckles covers her cheeks from too many days spent scrubbing the upper deck, exposed to the elements. Landon's coffee-brown eyes meet hers from under a mop of dark blonde hair, and he smiles. He's not as tall as most of the crew members, but he's much taller than she is. He holds the garlic powder over the measuring cup and pours it in. "This sure is a lot of garlic," he remarks with a smirk.

What is he up to? She jumps to her feet and dashes toward him like he's about to pull the pin from a grenade. The ship rocks in the chaotic sea, and she tumbles into Landon. Her ragged dress (rags, really) catches on a hook and rips. It's just another hole to add to the collection. He holds her at arm's length and searches her eyes for the alarm and panic he expects any second, but she composes herself quickly. He beams with pride at her confidence and lets her go. Summer snatches the measuring cup and the garlic powder from his hands with a slight smile. Her knuckles rap twice on the counter as she shakes her head, serious now. She's about to pour the garlic back into the container until she realizes it's empty. He tricked her. She purses her lips at him, and he chuckles playfully.

You think you're funny, do you? Summer puts a hand on her hip and gives him her best glare—which isn't very menacing.

Character Development 4/14/11 1:09 AM

Comment [12]: We learn about Summer's silence and how it affects their relationship.

Scene Analyst 4/14/11 12:58 AM

Comment [13]: This mingles the scene/flow of the conflict and brings a new character into the conflict. Not overwhelming, but enough for the reader to keep interested.

Character Development 4/14/11 1:13 AM

Comment [14]: More development.

Grammar Edits 4/14/11 1:35 AM

Comment [15]: Added a comma due to two separate clauses joined together with the conjunction "and."

Character Development 4/14/11 1:14 AM

Comment [16]: A couple of sentences explain what they look like without going into exaggerated details.

Grammar Edits 4/14/11 1:36 AM

Comment [17]: Removed comma. The conjunction "and" does not join two separate clauses.

Grammar Edits 4/14/11 1:35 AM

Deleted: .

Grammar Edits 4/14/11 1:36 AM

Comment [18]: Added a comma due to two separate clauses joined together with the conjunction "and."

Setting Analysis 4/14/11 1:27 AM

Comment [19]: Throughout the scene we are reminded of the storm outside and its effects on their cooking of dinner.

Grammar Edits 4/14/11 1:37 AM

Comment [20]: Added a comma due to two separate clauses joined together with the conjunction "and."

He nods like he can read her mind. Sometimes she thinks he can.

She may not speak, but they have a surprisingly close relationship. They have ways of communicating that no one else on board understands. Landon can read Summer like the words are written across her forehead, and she trusts him to keep them both safe. Being a female on a ship of thieves is dangerous—especially when she's the only girl on the whole ship.

"It was way too easy," he says with a laugh. "There's nothing to fear here; this is our space, Ducky!" He's always reassuring her, but he doesn't hold it against her. It's just another reason why she likes him.

Her shoulders slump in defeat, and Landon triumphs over another battle won. Four years ago he joined her on the Cosmos as a slave. It took months for them to get into a rhythm, but only minutes to fully understand each other. Plus, he saved her from her worst fear—there isn't anything she won't do for him. She would probably even speak for him if he asked her to, but he doesn't. He knows it will only make her have an anxiety attack.

She reaches for Landon's arm to catch his attention and points at the skillet. He places his elbow on the counter and leans in to watch. The way he looks at her is always surprising to Summer. It's always in wonder or fascination. In silence, she shows him exactly how she expects the chicken to be cooked. Her hand gestures and questioning glances amuse him so he just grins at her animated moves, nodding when necessary.

She stabs a fork into the chicken to check tenderness and turns to face him with a raised eyebrow, the gesture asking, *Are you paying attention?* Landon nods with much enthusiasm as she flips the chicken over in the skillet and adds more Italian dressing. Without glancing up, she points toward the bottle of honey. He immediately hands it over. She squeezes the bottle, dumping honey all over the chicken, and flips the piece over and over, making sure she covers all sides.

When the chicken is done cooking, she wraps it in foil to keep warm and stares up at Landon again. Her expression is triumphant and his amused.

"Rub it in—you're better than me at cookin' and I know it!" He wraps a sturdy arm around her shoulders and gives a tight squeeze.

A clap of thunder booms overhead, and Summer slips from his grip like a greased pig and dives underneath the prep table again, shaking. She still hasn't forgiven the storm for its traitorous actions four years ago.

Setting Analysis 4/14/11 1:27 AM

Comment [21]: We learn the ship is a Pirate ship.

Scene Analyst 4/14/11 12:58 AM

Comment [22]: The author slowly ropes the reader into the conflict here, giving just enough information without it being overwhelming.

Character Development 4/14/11 1:16 AM

Comment [23]: nickname

Grammar Edits 4/14/11 1:37 AM

Comment [24]: Added a comma due to two separate clauses joined together with the conjunction "and."

Character Development 4/14/11 1:16 AM

Comment [25]: We learn Landon is patient

Grammar Edits 4/14/11 1:39 AM

Comment [26]: Changed "it" to "honey" because she didn't dump the bottle on the chicken.

Grammar Edits 4/14/11 1:39 AM

Deleted: it

Grammar Edits 4/14/11 1:40 AM

Comment [27]: Added a comma due to two separate clauses joined together with the conjunction "and."

Landon reaches down and holds her quivering hand. "The storm will pass, and I'll still be here," he says, suppressing a sigh. "Ye can't let that troll ruin your life. It's just not like ye to let him."

She grips his hand with more strength than someone her size should have before she lets go and clicks her tongue once. Landon doesn't hold back his sigh this time because when she clicks her tongue it's meant as a sarcastic remark. Once she wrote on a piece of paper "If you can't see, I'm rolling my eyes" and then she clicked her tongue at him. He shakes his head and continues to make the dinner for the crew. It's progress that she came out for even a few minutes. She hopes the storm passes before nine so they can both serve dinner. It's best if questions aren't asked and weaknesses aren't shown. Summer knows that you won't survive long if you're weak, and she is anything but. Still, she must keep up her image of stamina, endurance, and show no fear. She's proven herself on this ship, but mistakes can be major setbacks in the slave-crew relationship. Even minor sickness is considered weak.

Summer only needs thirty minutes; she hopes the storm passes by then.

Grammar Edits 4/14/11 1:40 AM

Comment [28]: Added a comma due to two separate clauses joined together with the conjunction "and."

Character Development 4/14/11 1:18 AM

Comment [29]: The last few paragraphs we see both of these characters developing in the story just by their interactions with one another.

Dialogue Analysis 4/14/11 1:23 AM

Comment [30]: Landon's character & voice stay true to how he was introduced to the reader throughout the chapter.

Scene Analyst 4/14/11 12:59 AM

Comment [31]: This whole paragraph subtly shows the reader what kind of role the two characters play in this novel, and the conflict they both deal with.

Character Development 4/14/11 1:12 AM

Comment [32]: I pointed out several locations in this document where there is character development. In 1400 words we can answer many questions about Landon and Summer, but the chapter didn't overwhelm the reader with too much knowledge about either of them. It was all very subtle with their reactions with each other and how they communicated.

Grammar Edits 4/14/11 1:43 AM

Comment [33]: I only changed the grammatical and technical errors in this chapter. Most of them were over commas, which means this should be pointed out to the author, along with how they can learn to self-edit the commas by learning the technical rules of grammar.

Setting Analysis 4/14/11 1:30 AM

Comment [34]: The scene is set with only the parts of the kitchen coming into play being mentioned. Plates rattling, the stove for cooking, and the prep table where Summer hides. There was no unnecessary descriptions of the ship's kitchen, and the reader isn't left wanting.

Dialogue Analysis 4/14/11 1:22 AM

Comment [35]: Though Summer doesn't speak, she has a voice that comes out clearly in this chapter.