

the djinn

In a tense narrative, the chapter revolves around the protagonist, who has just crossed to the rocks to meet Sol, a girl who is recovering from a cold swim. She is hypothermic, needing warmth and care, while he is conflicted by a rapid surge of love and fear for her well-being. He provides her with a dry blanket and coffee, and although Sol remains mostly silent, he attempts to keep her alert as they navigate in their boat, ****Flower****. The moment is laced with a mix of parental instincts and uncertainty, heightened by his unfamiliarity with such feelings.

As Sol begins to regain her strength, her fever brings vivid, disjointed memories of an encounter with Alistair, a figure who was caught off guard by flames while Sol, likened to a djinn from ****Arabian Nights****, aided him by retrieving his lost glasses amidst the chaos. Sol shares her tale, revealing her brave actions. She presents the protagonist with a waterproof match and Alistair's heavy spectacles, signifying her triumph over the ordeal.

Eventually, Sol's fever dissipates, leading them to work on the boat, restoring it for their journey while they set sail again, with Sol asleep. They moor at a seawall that hints at forgotten joys, and the protagonist's eagerness to continue their voyage is tempered by Sol's fragile condition. Her health worsens; she struggles to keep food down and often awakens to demand stories.

The protagonist recounts tales from various mythologies to engage Sol, whose enthusiasm for storytelling surfaces amidst her sickness. Particularly, she connects strongly with a story about Molly Thorn, a young girl captivated by a "mystery packet" of seeds, sparking Sol's imagination. This leads the protagonist to introduce Sol to letters and the joy of writing, hoping to instill in her a sense of wonder and creativity.

Despite being hesitant towards the pencil, Sol watches and listens, absorbing the protagonist's lessons on words and their significance, hinting at her desire to learn and leave her own mark in the world one day. As the chapter closes, there's a sense of hope in her eyes despite her fragility, as she begins to grasp the power of stories and language.