

## 30. The Rips

The Rips pull Kya into their deadly grip in 1967, as she releases her boat into the sea, determined to face the fury of the water. Driven by an overwhelming emotional storm, she curses as she heads straight into the violent rips of the Gulf Stream, a territory she had always avoided. Kya, experienced in navigating the calmer, more predictable currents of her coastal home, now seeks to confront the much more dangerous waters that symbolize the depth of her anguish and inner turmoil. The rips, with their powerful and unpredictable force, are the perfect metaphor for the emotional battle that rages within her, and she ventures into them with the same determination she applies to facing her own pain.

As the boat is tossed around by the merciless waves, Kya struggles with the sea's relentless fury, mirroring the chaos of her own heart. The rips, unlike the familiar currents of the coast, prove far more difficult to navigate, throwing her off course and testing her endurance. Though she knows the ocean well, this battle is different—her body is battered, soaked, and disoriented, yet the physical pain she experiences on the water pales in comparison to the emotional pain she is trying to escape. The sea's unpredictable violence reflects Kya's emotional turmoil, heightened by her memories of betrayal and abandonment, especially from Chase, whose actions have left deep scars on her heart. Each wave that hits her boat serves as a reminder of the forces of rejection that have shaped her life.

This harrowing encounter with the rips not only highlights Kya's vulnerability but also her resilience, as she continues to fight against both nature and her own feelings of abandonment. Kya's disillusionment with Chase and her growing understanding of how love can so often mirror the deceptive forces of nature are woven into her thoughts during this time at sea. She sees parallels between the false promises of romance and the way the natural world can disguise its dangers under a beautiful surface. She

draws strength from the wisdom she has gained from both nature and poetry, realizing that she must let go of the attachments that have only served to further her solitude. It is in this painful but enlightening moment that Kya starts to understand the importance of letting go of illusions and accepting that she must be self-reliant to find peace.

When Kya finally finds a sandbar amidst the chaos, the fierce waves that once threatened to consume her begin to recede, and with them, a new sense of clarity emerges. Here, on this small patch of land, Kya is able to reflect on the journey she has just endured, both physically and emotionally. Surrounded by the unexpected beauty of the shells that have washed ashore, she finds not only solace but a new sense of purpose. The shells, which she has always associated with her connection to nature, now become a symbol of her inner strength and resilience. In her solitude, Kya realizes that the storms of life may always be present, but she has the power to find peace amidst the chaos, just as she has found beauty in her solitude.

As she prepares to return to the shore, Kya chooses a safer path, symbolizing her growth and the lessons learned from navigating both the sea and her personal struggles. Her journey through the rips, while terrifying and painful, has led her to a deeper understanding of herself and the importance of self-reliance. Armed with the wisdom of the sea and the quiet comfort found in her communion with nature, Kya faces the future with a new perspective. No longer seeking solace from external relationships, she acknowledges that she must face life on her own terms, finding strength in her solitude and connection to the natural world around her. The rips may have tested her, but they also taught her the power of resilience and the necessity of embracing the challenges that come with self-discovery.