

She is water. Powerful enough to drown you, gentle enough to cleanse you and deep enough to save you. She wasn't something safe and neither was she something dangerous. She was never dependent on people, but people always depended on her. Her heart was locked, locked in a cage that was never to be opened.

It all started back when Isla Peters caught sight of a notice that claimed to need nurses on the ship; "Friendship". She was always interested in doctor-ship, as her father was a physician. Isla also enjoyed reading, And that was her guilty pleasure. Picking up a new book was like a disease to Isla; an uncontrollable occasion. The next evening, Isla vowed the nursing pledge. She solemnly swore herself before God and in the presence of the assembly, to pass her life in purity and to practice her profession faithfully... "I will abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous, and will not take or knowingly administer any harmful drug. I will do all that in my power to maintain and elevate the standard of my profession, and will hold confidence all personal matters committed to my keeping and all family affairs coming to my knowledge in the practice of my calling. With loyalty, I endeavour to aid the physician in his work, but and devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care." That exact night,

Isla packed her suitcase, and bid farewell to her beloved family. Something in her had left along with her mother, when she passed several years ago. At times, Isla would push her needs away just to make sure everyone else was happy. Loosing such a close loved one was not easy. The most painful goodbyes are those without an explanation.

She carried on like everything inside was completely okay, she made sure only she felt her grief. Greeting the crew with a bright smile, Isla walked to her instructed room because she was a person of much importance. Among a ship filled with one hundred and twenty people, she was one of the only two nurses. Eighty male convicts, twenty-four female convicts and twenty people of the crew. Isla's uniform consisted of a dress, an apron and a hat. She was careful in keeping it clean as she knew that that was the only attire she would receive. As the hours went on, the ship was getting more and more filled. Loaded with convicts, everywhere you turned you would see a person with handcuffs on. It pained Isla to see people in misery.

As she looked around, her eyes caught sight of a playful convict, talking back to one of the Crew Members. Their eyes met and Isla automatically looked away, startled by the tiny moment they just shared. A crimson shade tinted her cheeks. Afraid of looking back, she walked towards her room. Her back connected with the wall and her

heart connected with her mind. This is going to be one confusingly straightforward voyage.

Waking up to a throbbing headache and a sharp twinge in her back, she realised she fell asleep on the floor. Freshening up, Isla makes her way to the deck and begun her first day of work. The nursing cabin already had about two patients who looked severely ill. She then finished serving them, and began to clean up before she took her ten- minute break.

As she came back to the nursing panel, her eyes instantly met a familiar pair of light blue eyes, the colour so innocent yet so sharp, the blue iris colour putting the sea's hue to shame. He sat on one of the beds, alone, holding his leg that was bleeding profusely. Isla rushed to him, not because she found him to be the most handsome man she's ever laid eyes on but because she needs to 'aid the sick'. Her first instinct was to move her hands straight to the cut area on his right leg, obviously causing him pain, he groaned out loud and moved his leg away.

"Don't you know how to aid a man," his voice was laced with a strong British accent and a hint of amusement.

"I am a nurse, of course I know how to aid the sick," Isla replied instantly, as she refused to meet his eyes.

"You wasn't really careful back there, the names William Darbyshire. What's yours?" William said.

"It's supposed to be 'you weren't really careful,'" Isla explains, still refusing to meet his eyes. Fidgeting with whatever she could manage to grab.

"What are you? A nurse and an English expert?" he muttered

"Just a girl who enjoys reading," Isla said.

This resulted in William letting the conversation slowly disappear. Isla felt disappointed, and was frustrated because she did not understand why.

The break was her saviour. After she wrapped Williams knee in a large cast, and cleaned the blood that was uncontrollably spilt, in complete and utter silence. She came to realise that it was not a perplexing silence but rather a comfortable one. As mentioned before, Isla was intimidatingly skilful in hiding what she felt, not because she feared feelings but because she had been neglecting them all this time.

Walking away, still inaudible. But, amongst the stillness was her rapidly beating heart.

The next morning Isla noticed herself staining her lips a rouge tone, she lazily ran her fingers through her messy amber coloured hair and fixed her nursing uniform. Taking her best-loved piece of literature, Romeo and Juliet with her she begun to make her way down to the breakfast buffet. She started to fill her plate with a

variety of delicious foods. Her hand moved to reach for a scone, but instead her hand met another hand, her eyes made contact with a set of two hazel brown eyes. Although being dull and ordinary, it's was no surprise that she got lost in those recognisable eyes. Apologising copiously, Isla realised, he was in fact, the captain of the ship. Known to finish anyone who came in his way. He was merciless and discourteous. His hand moved up, Isla flinched but then noticed his hand was running through his hair. A surprisingly sweet smile fills his face, "My sincere apology milady," Captain Philip spoke.

"My apologies sir," Isla managed to utter out with a stuttering voice. He noticed her frightful behaviour and replied with "it's alright, it was my snag." Isla replied with a warm smile and made her way to one of the benches, far away from where the captain normally sat. She began reading, she started getting lost in the words of her favoured author, Shakespeare. Looking up, Isla noticed that she has been accompanied. Those brown eyes again, she thought. "I've been watching you for a good five minutes now, trying to grab your attention. Must be a good book you have there. What's your name?" the captain finished with a chuckle. With slight hesitancy, Isla replied with; "Isla Peters. And, It's one of my favourites." She closed the book and clutched it close to her heart. "Reading isn't really my

forte," Captain Philip responded. "I'm more fond of films."

"But you don't learn much from films, books are unique, they give a new perspective to what films display," Isla replied. "Your love for books is actually quite fascinating," the Captain retorted. Something about the captain made something inside Isla flutter. Maybe it was the warm smile he had or his agreeable comments. But whenever she looked into those hazel eyes, she only wished they were toned that bright blue she had come to miss.

The next morning, Isla realised today, she would again meet those blue eyes. A shiver ran through her body as she remembered the intensity they held. Tinting her lips that rouge colour once again. She begun her day. Missing breakfast, she made her way straight to the nursing panel. Helping a few patients, she made her way to the back of the room. "How're you feeling?" Isla asked. "Hello Isla," A familiar voice said. Isla's eyes snapped up to his. She's never mentioned her name to anyone but the captain. "How do you know my name?" Isla questioned. "It's a small ship, love. Word travels," William responded. Cutting off further questioning, Isla hesitantly moved her hands to his bandaged leg. Resulting in him groaning aloud. "Watch it," William grunted. "How did this happen?" Isla asks

worryingly. "You're lover, he stabbed a knife right in me," he replied. "And why would he do that?" Isla interrogated. "He does it for happiness, causing others pain, that's his hobby." William spat out venomously. Leaving Isla with unanswered questions. Healing his wound, Isla left without a word or even a second glance. By the end of the day, Isla had been depleted of energy. Her head would not stop throbbing, she closed her eyes, fighting off nausea. Trying, even through the pain, to remember how she could have arrived at this strange, dark place where nothing seemed familiar.

The following day, Isla woke up to a surprise. Consuming all the air inside her lungs, she saw something she knew would haunt her dreams forever. The captain, held a gun straight to William's temple. The ship rocked side to side, and so did her heart. The once bright blue eyes, had lost their colour and had been replaced by a monochrome fear. She lifted one leg after the other, as if she had no control over her body. Before she knew it, she was stood right in front of the gun. Her heart pounding vigorously through her chest. "Put the gun down," Isla's voice barely a whisper. A wicked laugh met Isla's ears. "Move out of the way Isla, or else I'll shoot you both. It'll somewhat be an iconic death, Quite Romeo and Juliet," the captain threatened. "Shoot me," Isla stuttered. Without

realising it, Isla had been pushed out of the way. Her body hit the ground, quickly. Isla realised, that her body was accompanied with the man who made her heart skip a beat. Both, Isla and William lay on the ground. Although Isla still had the ability to breathe, the sight in front of her stole all the air from entering her lungs. The thought of death seemed better than the idea of living.

Some days, she felt everything at once. Other days, she felt nothing at all. Isla didn't know what was worse: drowning beneath the waves or dying from the thirst. His last goodbye never left Isla's mind, the finality of it was something she couldn't comprehend. Some nights she'd stay up with the stars, her only company as she wondered where he was. The aching void of his absence, beside her became all too much to bear.