

A Noisy Aftermath

Summer and Bruce are fighting.

It doesn't matter why, how, or when the quarrel started. All that's relevant is the fact they're now exasperated at each other. Alone. In a 400 square feet NYC studio apartment. There's nowhere to hide, nowhere for them to go and dwell in reclusive anger.

Summer does what she knows best and buries herself against the black and white of her trusty piano tiles. She sticks to her corner by the only sizable window in the room. Her fingers hit tile after tile, drowning the splashes of rain against the glass on the outside.

Meanwhile, Bruce has headed straight for their miniature kitchen. Once there, he grabs jumbo oats, almonds, almond butter, dried mango, and dark chocolate. Mango cookies are his absolute favorites.

The pianist senses the noise coming from the kitchen and fights it with even more violence in her performance. She's playing an original, composing a bitter melody on the spot. The lyrics are starting to take shape in her mind.

Bruce gets the water to boil for the mango while he listens to the frantic melody of the tiles meeting his fiancée's fingers. He covers his ears, eyes fixed on the kettle. When the water finally boils, one hand goes for the kettle while the other is still on his ear. It's too late when he realizes the risks. His right wrist fails him and boiling water spills, hitting his bare feet.

He groans in pain. At last, his kitchen noises are louder than the piano.

For a millisecond, Summer stops playing. The scream startled her to the point of confusion. In that moment of uneasiness, she allows her fingers to furiously meet the tiles. Now the nail on her pinky is broken, split in half like a piece of shattered glass.

She whispers a curse, slamming her notebook against the floor.

Silence creeps into the room. It echoes in the crowded space.

And then the couple resumes their business.

Bruce leaves the pain on his burnt toes to be, focusing his attention on the cookie batter. The mango is ready now.

Summer picks up her notebook, sighing at it. Her fingers brush the pages before returning to the piano. She continues playing, letting a single tear wash over her cheeks as she loses herself in the sound.

But her momentary peace is quickly disrupted.

The home cook adds the mango to a food processor, blending it with oats and butter. It generates a steady, crunchy noise.

The buzz is enough to send Summer into a frenzy. She attacks the piano tiles, switching to one of her older songs. Her voice is thunderous as she sings the tune at the top of her lungs. Her feet accompany the rhythm as well, going far beyond the pedals. She slams them against the ground for good measure whenever possible.

Bruce is relentless with the blender, adding the almonds and upping the settings until the mixture is ready. Only then does he stop the buzzing.

The piano grows silent at the same time, for Summer leaves her place by the window all of a sudden. She stomps her feet against the wooden floor, marching towards the kitchen.

There, she stands next to the granite counter and looks at her fiancé. Her skilled pianist fingers rest on her hips. At the same time, Bruce puts away the food processor. He maintains her gaze.

Neither of them says a word as their bodies meet in a bashful embrace. At the end of the day, quarantine gets on everyone's nerves.