

The Thunderstorm

by A. A. Moore



Splash!

The thick layer of rainwater squelched under Dylan's feet, soaking his socks and shoes, as he sloshed down the long road back to his house. The weather was often unpredictable in Denver, and Dylan had lived in his new home for three months, but he still hadn't adjusted to how different the climate was from his old home in California.

Crash!

A bolt of lightning lit up the sky, followed by a clap of thunder that seemed to shake the whole earth. Dylan closed his umbrella with the metal spike on top and tucked it under his arm. He didn't need to be carrying his own personal lightning rod in a storm like this.

The streets were deserted except for Dylan and a couple of geese splashing in the pond by the side of the road. Dylan always passed the pond on his way home from school, but it had never been so packed with geese before. Another bolt of lightning and another clap of thunder rolled through the air. Dylan raced up the pot-hole filled hill to his house and yanked open the front door.

As soon as Dylan shut the door, the fresh smell of rain and wet grass was drowned out by the sweet scent of his mom's signature rainy-day chocolate chip cookies. Somehow her cookies always smelled better than any other cookie Dylan came across.

"Dylan!" Dylan's four-year-old brother Andy yelled, running across the living room and clinging to Dylan, ducking for safety as another roll of thunder shook the house like an earthquake.

"What's the matter?" Dylan asked.

"There's a monster outside and he's coming to eat me!" Andy wailed.

"Where'd you get that idea?"

"Chester at school told me there's a storm monster!" Andy said.

"There's no monster, Andy, that's just thunder," Dylan assured him, but Andy didn't believe it. Andy wasn't used to such stormy weather, but Dylan knew all about thunderstorms. They were his favorite thing to study in science class. He had been fascinated by them when he lived in Michigan in second grade and had been learning about them ever since. He wondered how he could use what he'd learned about thunderstorms to help Andy be less afraid. He could have explained to Andy about the protons and electrons that caused lightning, or that the rumbling sound of thunder caused by air expanding and contracting rapidly from the heat of the lightning, but he didn't think that would help Andy much. At last, Dylan had an idea.

"You've never heard of storm cookies, have you?" Dylan asked.

"Storm cookies?" Andy asked, "What are storm cookies?"

"I'll show you. Come on," Dylan said.

Dylan led Andy to the kitchen and eyed the two beautiful sheets of fresh, warm cookies. He put a couple of his mom's rainy-day cookies in a plastic container.

The two were spotted by their mother as she came into the kitchen to take another tray of cookies out of the oven. "There you are, Dylan! Your father's been out looking for you, you had us all worried. I'll call him and tell him you're home," she stopped when she noticed several of the cookies missing. "What are you two up to? Stealing all my cookies?" she asked.

"They're storm cookies!" Andy announced, "Dylan's teaching me about them."

Dylan's mom smiled, "Oh, of course! I make storm cookies every time it rains. You boys have fun."

Dylan led Andy to the bay window in the living room and helped Andy up onto the window bench. He pulled the curtains back and Andy jumped. Another flash of lightning struck, making the sky look like a flickering lightbulb in a haunted house.

"What was that?" Andy asked.

Dylan handed Andy one of the storm cookies, "That was lightning," he explained, "Next time you see lightning, count the seconds. You can tell how many miles away lightning is if you count."

"How?" Andy asked.

"It takes the sound of thunder around five seconds to travel a mile. Every five seconds means one mile away."

Flash! Lightning lit up the sky again.

Andy started counting, "One, Two, Three, Four, Five—"

Boom!

"How many miles was that?" Andy asked.

"You counted to five once. That lightning struck one mile away. Guess how hot the air can get where the lightning was?"

"Eighty degrees?" Andy guessed.

"Fifty *thousand* degrees," Dylan said.

"What about the storm monster?" Andy asked, "Where does he come in?"

"He doesn't. The storm monster is just thunder and lightning. As long as you're in a safe place, there's nothing to be afraid of. I promise, he won't eat you, but we can eat our storm cookies and count the lightning. We'll have to count longer as the storm gets farther away."

"Okay!" Andy said, eagerly taking a bite out of his cookie and scanning the sky for another flash of lightning.

1. Where does this story take place?
 - A. Detroit, Michigan
 - B. Chicago, Illinois
 - C. Denver, Colorado
 - D. San Diego, California
2. Which of the following options best describes Dylan's character traits?
 - A. Knowledgeable and caring
 - B. Bored and disinterested
 - C. Curious and distracted
 - D. Nervous and fearful
3. Dylan is knowledgeable about thunderstorms. What quote from the text best supports this conclusion?
 - A. "Dylan lead Andy to the kitchen and eyed the two beautiful sheets of fresh, warm cookies. He put a couple of his mom's rainy-day cookies in a plastic container."
 - B. "Andy wasn't used to such stormy weather, but Dylan knew all about thunderstorms. They were his favorite thing to study in science class."
 - C. "The streets were deserted except for Dylan and a couple of geese splashing in the pond by the side of the road."
 - D. "A bolt of lightning lit up the sky, followed by a clap of thunder that seemed to shake the whole earth."

4. Read this selection from the text:

[Dylan] wondered how he could use what he'd learned about thunderstorms to help Andy be less afraid. He could have explained to Andy about the protons and electrons that caused lightning, or that the rumbling sound of thunder caused by air expanding and contracting rapidly from the heat of the lightning, but he didn't think that would help Andy much. At last, Dylan had an idea.

What conclusion can be drawn from this paragraph?

- A. Dylan wants to help his brother be less afraid of thunder
 - B. Dylan wishes he could go outside
 - C. Dylan wants to learn more about lightning
 - D. Dylan is afraid of thunder
5. What event causes Andy to be less afraid of thunderstorms?
 - A. When Dylan teaches him how to count the distance of the lightning
 - B. Dylan comes home from walking in the rain
 - C. His friend from school tells him about a storm monster

6. Which word below best completes the following sentence?

Andy is afraid of thunderstorms. _____, his brother Dylan is fascinated by them.

- A. Similarly
- B. In contrast
- C. Consequently
- D. As a result

7. Based on the information in the story, how many seconds does it take for the sound of thunder to travel one mile?

8. Find two similes in the text and explain their meaning.