

Chapter 8

"Got it" Yaz said finally reaching the cable from underneath the console. Somehow, she again found herself on a ship which needed constant work. She knew Tardis like the back of her hand, but this ship was still very much a puzzle she was trying to resolve so it felt in many ways like she was back to basics. Thankfully one of them knew exactly what to do.

"Brilliant" Doctor smiled satisfied "...connect that how I told you Yaz...should work."

"Done" she said and got up then took a cloth off the console and wiped her hands half listening to what Doctor was rambling about the ship "I kissed her" she interrupted her looking down to the floor.

"Whaaa?" Doctor blinked.

"Sandy...I kissed her."

"Did ya?" she jumped haply with a massive smile.

"Why are you so happy about it?You're making this weird"

"Why Yaz...I am happy?"

"Happy about what?" Sandy walked in carrying her robot.

"About the ship" Yaz said.

"Snow" Doctor said at the same time scrunching her face looking at Yaz who frowned at her "Ship in a snow" she smiled at Sandy.

"Riiiiight ... " Sandy almost burst out laughing how transparent they both were but decided to change the subject "I need help...He needs help" she popped her robot pet on the floor.

"What's wrong?" Doctor asked.

"He needs a new battery...I've been trying to fix him but" she shrugged "Can't charge him."

Yaz hopped across the control room and scanned it "Well, he is old and, in all fairness, you did find him in a junkyard" she said looking at the sonic

"I knooooow...but I need him, he can't just die."

"We could go and get the new battery Yaz" Doctor said.

"We can?" Yaz asked surprised.

"Oh yeah...it's only hop away we can be back by the lunch time."

"Pleaseeee" Sandy put her hands together "I need him."

"Hey, you two...we have a train to find."

"We also have a time machine" Sandy flapped her lashes pouting and Yaz could feel herself being totally disarmed in a second then she looked towards the Doctor who was fighting impatiently, turning on a heel around the console and she knew for a fact that if she could, she would be already pulling the lever.

"Oh, alright then...I suppose we could all do with a break."

"Yees!!!!" Sandy jumped hanging herself around her neck.

"If we get fired it will be your fault" Yaz laughed.

"Brilliant! ...I know just a place Sandy" Doctor chirped exited.

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"Finally, a warm place" Sandy sighed haply as they stepped outside and put her sunglasses on

"What is this place?" Yaz asked confused looking at the huge warehouses spreading for miles.

"Seria N9 Yaz" she said as she was marching in front of them "...they are the biggest tech producer in this part of the universe...it's like Amazon...what ever you need the chances are you will find it here...Tempting though" she looked at them over her shoulder "Last time I was here I got all kinds of junk I didn't need"

"It reminds me of Kerblam" Yaz said with a shiver.

"What's a Kerblam?" Sandy frowned.

"A place with killer robots"

"Aaaa...but it wasn't robots who did the killing Yaz."

"I knooooow...they are still creepy."

"Now you're just being..."

"Robophobic...I know" Yaz laughed.

Between the two Sandy was even more confused but she was getting used to not getting a proper answer from either of them.

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"Welcome to the biggest tech store in the universe" Doctor spread her arms up in front of the door as they walked inside.

Sandy stopped right at the entrance and lifted her sunglasses "Holly bananas!"

What opened up in front of them was nothing short of unbelievable. A massive store with no end to it. From robots, technical equipment, household appliances to even high tech toys filled endless isles shelf after shelf.

Yaz glanced at Sandy as her eyes grew wider by the minute and she could swear she was shaking from excitement. But then her eyes shifted towards the Doctor who walked around longingly looking around the shelves and her heart dropped to the floor. She caught up with her and smiled. "Hey"

"Yaz...aren't you gonna look around? There's some really cute stuff here."

"That's alright, my hollo is all I need" she smiled as Doctor turned with a softest gaze "Do you want something? We can get it together."

"Neah...no use for hollo hands Yaz...but we could look for some fun stuff for the ship" she grinned haply

"Yeah...let's do that" she smiled "OMG" she burst out laughing when she noticed Sandy over Doctor's shoulder wearing goggles on her head and some robotics on her hands flapping her arms around "What on earth is she doing?"

"Aaaa...sensory augmented reality game...it's really fun Yaz...you should try it" Doctor chirped haply

"This is amazing Yaz...I can actually feel the saber tooth tiger."

Almost an hour into it they were still walking around and behind them hovering a high tech version of a trolley packed out with stuff they needed and many they didn't. Yaz still wondered why it was necessary to get a shoe dryer, an annoying hovering companion orb, self heated mugs with a moving display of some fluffy animal with big bulging eyes which Sandy lost her shit over insisting it will feel sad if she doesn't buy it, or a space version of an electric toothbrush which feels like she shoved a vibrator into her mouth. But somehow Sandy convinced her it was a fantastic idea to have one. Between them two she also somehow ended up with a pair of fluffiest slippers she'd ever seen in her life which had an inbuilt heater and a foot manager, and she had no idea how she got talked into it. She was sure she just gave up towards the end. On a plus side they found a new battery for Sandy's robo friend and some cool stuff for the ship. She never felt more relieved seeing the till in her life.

As the lady finished scanning through the mountain of stuff, she turned towards the Doctor swiping a scanner over her. "Oh, no code"

"Excuse me!" Doctor jumped.

"Oh shit" Yaz rolled her eyes.

"Madam, you should not be taking things out of their original packaging."

"What?...Do you mean?...Oh no no...she's not from here...she's mine" Yaz said

"Oi....I'm not for sale...How rude!"

"I'm sorry but if you have no conformation of purchase or certificate of ownership, you will have to pay for it, or we will consider it stolen goods"

"Pay me? Did she just say pay me?...That's outrageous...I made me I'll have you know...You don't have this technology here" Doctor yelled

"What?" Yaz frowned "What are you going on about? She's not one of your items."

"Hey...she didn't steal anything" Sandy jumped in "And I'm sure you have this place under video surveillance system. You can check we came in with her. That's disgusting just accusing someone of shoplifting."

"Enough of this..." Doctor said "We need to talk to your superior.... Kinda" she looked at her name tag.

Lady completely ignored her as if she wasn't even there and processed to talk to Yaz "Also I think this one is malfunctioning, we can exchange it if you'd like."

"Mal....malfunctioning!!!" Doctor jumped so much she almost fried her own circuits.

"Wait!" Yaz stepped in "Can everyone just shut up!....Look I don't have any confirmation...it's complicated...I also didn't steal anything. Can we just find a normal solution instead of turning this into a complete circus. I came here to relax I don't this shit. "

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"Well, I can add being paid for to my resume" Doctor stomped offended "That's a new one"!

"You weren't cheap if that makes you feel any better" Yaz laughed, and Doctor scrunched her face in response.

"It could be worse" Sandy giggled "...they could've resold you."

"Oi you two" she pointed her finger, but they just kept laughing.

"Hey, cheer up...at least I now have a receipt for you, for future reference" Yaz laughed.

"Very funny" she scrunched her nose then started laughing herself.

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"Here we go...you're like new now" Sandy smiled putting her robo friend on the ground and he chirped happily starting to zoom around the lab almost knocking Yaz to the floor when she came inside.

"Blimey...he's fast" she laughed.

"I knooooow right" Sandy smiled "Hey, look what else I found..." she hopped around the lab to the computer "Remember my bacteria...and the extra chromosomes...I did some more research and compared it to this diary and all his previous studies..."

Yaz smiled half listening, her mind focused on her curls falling over her shoulders and adorable tiny freckles sprinkled across her cheeks. She had no make-up and Yaz luxuriated studying every detail of her face storing it in her memory.

"Yaz...Are you even listening to me?" She frowned and looked even more cute when she was grumpy.

"No" she giggled and pulled her by the wrist.

"We should not be smooching now you know...this is serious" she said as she was being pulled closer.

"I know, I am serious" she giggled "About kissing you" she wrapped her fingers around her face and Sandy smiled slipping arm around her waist. She could kiss Yaz all day long and keeping a healthy amount of distance required a huge amount of effort and self control, which she just felt losing rapidly by the second. But when her breath hit her lips even a tiny amount, she was still clinging on to was gone, and she let herself be pulled in into the softest deep kiss which made her knees tremble and her stomach flip. One of Yaz's hands wrapped around her lifting her with ease on top of the desk.

"This is not professional" Sandy giggled as Yaz settled between her legs with a cheeky smile.

"I know...I can reprimand us both" she giggled kissing tip of her nose "Maybe we should be suspended...we are way out of order."

"Totally inappropriate" Sandy chuckled closing her legs around her "Also, complete abuse of authority...boss" she hooked her finger between the buttons of her shirt pulling her into one more kiss, longer and more passionate than the previous one. Pulling apart from it meant even more effort from both of them as they were quickly losing themselves in it. She brought her arms up, resting them on Yaz's shoulders and smiled so bright Yaz was fighting the urge to snatch another kiss from her.

"Hey, I got something for you" she reached into her pocket and gave her a small box "I was trying to hide it today."

"You got me a gift?" Sandy melted "OMG Yaz, new earphones!"

"Super high tech, some extra sound specifically made for ADHD" she smiled "Should help you more with concentration...I think" she said as she played with her hair. Her eyes floated across her face. Somehow now it felt almost as if she was seeing her for the first time, whatever that meant. It was all still confusing but beautifully freeing to allow herself feeling it.

"OMG...thaaaank yooou...that's so sweet of you" her heart almost jumped out of her chest, and she had to control herself from bursting into tears as all the emotions she was suppressing for such a long time suddenly flooded her. She cupped her face kissing her gently. "I should get on with my work" she said quietly melting into every single touch as Yaz's fingers gently trailed down her spine.

"Me too" she snapped herself out of it with every ounce of willpower and lowered her down to the floor.

"I'm making progress, I think I know now how he combined it together, and if I do find it Yaz, we can slow down the progression of the disease and treat it normally."

"That's fantastic...We still have to find that train and I'm so afraid we're running out of time."

"Doctor said we can't possibly run out of time with a time machine."

"Technically no, but we still can't take months."

"We won't, we will find it Yaz...we're making progress but we're not miracle workers."

"I know...things just seemed to be somehow...I dunno...faster before...Anyways...I need to get on with it" she kissed her forehead "Movie date later?"

"Definitely" she smiled then went back to her desk and plugged in her new earphones "Holly bananas!!!" She yelled when the music started.

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Yaz circled the console and put her coffee cup down. She has been drinking way too many lately. Spending more time at the console working late hours. Often after watching a movie instead of going to bed, she would go back to the control room and spend hours going over and over again through all the data in hopes of finding something new. She pressed a call and splayed her arms over the console.

"Hey girl" Martha's voice echoed across the room.

"Heeey"

"Waaaw...is this the ship?"

"Yeah...look" she moved from the monitor "Cool right?"

"That's fantastic...I'm jealous. Just so you know...Also, shame on you not to call me...I was packed and ready."

Yaz laughed "I can be there in a second, but I can only offer free food and accommodation...sorry" she laughed.

"On a second thought, I think I'll pass, we know how that ended up last time."

"Tell me about it.... listen I need a favor."

"Shoot..."

"Remember the first case we were working on, that case involving an alien pathogen"

"Yeah...sure"

"Can you dig up a file for me. There's a name that rings a bell in my head and I might be wrong."

"What name?"

"Blue line biogenetics"

"That does sound familiar."

"Good, means I'm not going mad...if you find it, can you please send me everything."

"Sure, no problem"

"Thanks babe...oh and thanks for taking care of my cat."

"You're not getting her back you know."

"Very funny" she laughed.

"She loves me Yaz."

"Bye"

"I'm serious"

"See ya"

She laughed hanging up then picked up the unusual piece of equipment which Sandy picked up from the floor of the facility just before the whole thing blew up and inserted it into the console for analysis. Unlike the Tardis the ship took much longer to analyze these kinds of data, so she leaned into the chair resting her feet on top of the console and flipped through her phone whilst waiting. There was folder inside it which she kept ignoring, filled with photos from several years ago. WhatsApp messages, the last one dated three years ago. The Doctor's number still in her contacts list. She wondered if it worked. There were times she was tempted to call, but the fear of hearing a strange voice on the other side was bigger than her heart's desire. Almost an hour later she was still scrolling through TikTok when she heard buzzing in the room.

"Lab calling bridge do you copy?"

Yaz turned around confused then realized the voice is coming from the hover orb above her.

"No fucking way" she laughed.

"Bridge do you copy?"

"Affirmative" Yaz replied pissing herself laughing as the the orb hovered closer right in front of her "Can you see me?"

"Eyes on captain Khan"

"You're proper crazy."

"What are you doing?"

"This is weird" she laughed "I'm trying to analyze that thing you picked up from the lab. It's fucking taking forever.... I really miss my Tardis...you?"

"Waiting for the computer to compare all the research from that diary. I transferred all the information in it."

"Well, you're more productive than me then...I'm watching carpet cleaning."

"That can be productive."

"Yeah, how's that?"

"Maybe you will have to clean a carpet one day...you never know."

She shook her head laughing.

"I'll finish in about an hour...Are we still watching a movie?"

"Absolutely" Yaz smiled.

"Ok...well, enjoy carpet cleaning see yaaa"

"See ya silly."

"Over and out.... oh...I think your analysis is done."

"Is it?" she turned towards the console "Finally."

"Over and out...bye"

"Bye babe"

She sighed, turning the chair towards the monitor. It turned out that what Sandy salvaged was some sort of communication device. It contained messages as well as the video calls. Over 300 videos and more than 750 messages. It meant a long night at the console and suddenly the movie date was not so plausible.

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With her head resting on her arm and cheek a few centimeters from the console, she was practically falling asleep watching the endless footage of the video calls. She yawned checking the time. It was almost 4 am and she wasn't sure how much longer she could stay awake. Then the smell of freshly brewed coffee and a hot sandwich filled the room, and she perked up.

"Hey" Sandy placed a tray on a side and leaned over her shoulder.

"That smells nice" she turned over her shoulder with a smile and got a short kiss in response.

"You should stop...it's late" she said, burying her face into her hair.

"I'm knackered" she moaned and pulled Sandy's arm around her inhaling the smell of fabric conditioner from her fluffy pajamas. She hasn't been held like this in years. She was kissed with a meaning deeper than just pure lust for the first time in her life and her mind struggled to accept it as normal. There was unmistakable absence of the Doctor today and she knew it was purposeful. As thoughtful and loving the gesture, it was also too sudden and painful. She needed time to adjust, to learn how to balance her past and present without inflicting pain on herself or anyone around her. She tugged Sandy's arm settling her in her lap and tucked her face into her shoulder. She never felt more vulnerable in her life and was almost ashamed of how she felt as she suppressed tears. It was stupid and she was ruining the moment, so instead of feeling sorry for herself she tightened her arms around her because holding her felt so amazing. And who was she fooling, she wanted to hold her so badly, and kiss every single inch of her, bury her face into her hair and curl up falling asleep in her arms, feeling physical touch and hot breath on her own skin. It was terrifying and beautiful at the same time. And then as if Sandy read her thoughts, there was a gentle kiss into her hair, and she fell apart into thousand pieces squeezing her tight like she was the most precious thing in the universe.

"Did you find anything?" Sandy asked keeping her lips on the same place where she just placed a long kiss and vibrations of her soft voice traveled down Yaz's neck.

"Noooooo" she mumbled into her pajama "I have never listened to more trivial conversations in my life...But I'm still convincing myself that I might find something meaningful in all of this."

"I think you should go to bed...you're burning out."

"I knooooow" she looked up "I'm sorry for the movie date."

"I'll take a rain check" she smiled and palmed her face. Gesture she wanted to do more times she could count. "Eat your sandwich, you didn't eat anything today" she said reaching for the plate.

"Smells nice."

"Tastes even better." she leaned over to get the coffee then her eyes glanced over the monitor "What's that?"

"What?"

"This behind that guy who's talking..."

"Just some warehouse...dunno...They are taking about the fucking snowstorm coming."

"Yeah, I know it's a warehouse, but that over there looks very much like a train cart to me."

"What!!!" Yaz put the plate on a side and leaned more towards the monitor "What the fuck...why didn't I see that."

"You're tired...I can make the picture sharper Yaz...maybe there more footage from the same facility...maybe some other angle."

"And maybe we can find clues where this was recorded" she smiled excited "Good job banana" she kissed her shoulder.

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