

## Chapter 60

As they still stood there in the middle of the control room baffled about the whole thing the Doctor gulped, her earlier confidence crumbling as she fumbled for an explanation. "Erm... well... it's not exactly a glitch... more of an, um, unexpected detour?"

"Unexpected?!" Yaz echoed, glaring at the castle looming in front of them. "We're in the middle of god knows where and when with my entire family! Again!"

"Not exactly..." the Doctor muttered, glancing at the console.

"What?"

"Sheffield!" she pointed proudly at the monitor. "23rd of May, 1348. So, I do know where we are."

"Oh, really? That's fantastic," Yaz said with dripping sarcasm.

"It is, isn't it? I've always wanted to come back."

"I'm being sarcastic!" Yaz rolled her eyes.

"Oh." The Doctor's enthusiasm deflated. "Well... look on the bright side," she scrunched her nose, "...family reunion?"

"Brilliant. This was supposed to be a romantic evening, you know," Yaz sighed.

"Why are we here?" Sonya asked, confused.

The Doctor's sheepish grin returned as she tried to sound hopeful. "We can still make it romantic! There's a castle, stars..."

"And my mum," Yaz interrupted, gesturing to Najia, who had already made herself comfortable on the stairs.

"Okay, I admit it's not perfect... a bit of a challenge. But dinner in the castle? Candlelight? A medieval banquet? I haven't seen Thomas in centuries..."

"I'm not talking about the dinner!" Yaz yelled. "What is my family doing here? What are we all doing here?"

"We were watching a movie when you scooped us up," Hakim chimed in.

"Oh!" The Doctor looked baffled and rushed back to the console. "Sorry about that... must've been a glitch or something. See...where we are is the exact location of Park

Hill...No panic... I'll just take you back home."

"So that's Sheffield Castle there?" Sonya asked intrigued and the Doctor nodded with a grin.

"That's alright, I don't mind a trip," Hakim said cheerfully.

"You wouldn't, would you." Najia muttered, shooting him a look.

"Just give me a minute and you'll be back before the credits roll." Doctor flipped a few switches and pulled the lever. The ship lurched to a halt, and she opened the door.

"We're still in the same place," Yaz said, raising an eyebrow.

"That's strange..." The Doctor rushed back to the console and tried again, but the ship wouldn't budge. When Yaz opened the door once more, they were back where they started. "It's like she's refusing to leave." the Doctor scratched her head.

"What else is new?" Yaz rolled her eyes.

"So we're stuck again?" Sonya asked, sounding disappointed.

"Looks like it," Najia replied.

"Well, it's getting late," Hakim shrugged. "We should all just get some sleep and figure it out in the morning."

"I agree," the Doctor raised her hand.

"Well, I suppose I could do with a holiday," Najia said.

"How am I going to explain this to Ryan?" Sonya groaned.

"On a happier note...your rooms are all set!" the Doctor announced, trying to sound cheerful.

"I don't believe this," Yaz muttered watching as her family nonchalantly left the control room. Her eyes darted between them and the Doctor, who gave a sheepish shrug.

"At least we didn't leave the stove on" Najia commented as she was leaving

"I don't have my make-up...Can TARDIS make make-up?"

"Seriously?" Nadjia rolled her eyes

"Sorry about that," the Doctor said, zooming back around the console toward Yaz. "We

could still have a date night," she added, grabbing Yaz's hand.

"I'm not in the mood anymore," Yaz pouted.

"Heeey, it's not that bad," the Doctor pulled her closer. "Come on, you're gonna love it. Tomorrow, we'll go into town...walk the same streets, only six centuries earlier!"

"It's not that," Yaz sighed, tugging at the Doctor's braces. "I just wanted some time alone, you know? Just you, me, Anaya... doing normal things. You can't tell me you wanna deal with all this right now?"

The Doctor huffed, stepping back towards the console. "Not really..." she admitted. "But I can't ignore it either, Yaz, you know that. I don't know why the TARDIS brought us here."

"I know..." Yaz pursed her lips. "I just wish the universe could be a bit more patient sometimes, that's all." She walked over to the steps and sat down. "A year and a half ago, we decided to take a break from everything. But all we've been doing is running around. I was hoping that when the baby's born, we could finally slow down."

The Doctor's hearts ached as she looked at Yaz, her cheerful facade slipping. She sat beside her and gently took Yaz's hand. "I promise... no more trips after this."

"You can't promise that," Yaz replied softly, meeting her gaze. "I know you want to... but you can't."

The Doctor slumped, her eyes drifting back to the console as the weight of her reality settled over her. She wasn't alone anymore, she had a family and yet she felt like she was failing at something so simple. But then Yaz smiled gently, reaching out to cup the Doctor's cheek, turning her head so their eyes met. "I guess that's why I love you so much."

"Yaz, I..."

"Come on," Yaz stood, pulling the Doctor to her feet. She wrapped her arms around her waist, a teasing smile on her lips. "We've got at least two hours before she wakes up again."

The Doctor's mood instantly brightened, a wide grin spreading across her face. "I'd say an hour," she laughed, grabbing Yaz's hand. "Come on...no doddling!" she exclaimed, darting across the control room towards the bedroom, pulling a giggling Yaz behind her.

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Just before leaving the TARDIS the Doctor went around giving everyone a shot in the neck.

"Ouch!" Sonya flinched "What's that for?"

"Oh, you know...just a percussion"

"For what?"

"The odd bug and all that...nothing to worry about" she hopped around to Nadjia

"You never did this before" Najia darted her a look

"Well, there's a first time for everything" she dismissed "Right...ready to go?" she grinned haply strapping Anaya on her chest

"Yeah...I suppose so." Najia rubbed her neck suspiciously

"Bottles, nappies, baby wipes..." Yaz checked the bag one more time "Right, ready!" She announced exited pulling the bag over her shoulder

The morning sun cast a pale light over the cobbled streets as they walked into the heart of medieval Sheffield. The air was crisp, carrying the earthy scent of wood smoke and damp stone. Yaz pulled her jacket tighter around her shoulders, glancing around at the unfamiliar yet strangely familiar landscape.

The town bustled with life, though it was a far cry from the Sheffield Yaz knew. Wooden stalls lined the narrow streets, merchants shouting their wares, fresh bread, cured meats, woolen fabrics, and leather goods. The smell of freshly baked bread mingled with the pungent odor of tanned hides, making Yaz wrinkle her nose. The streets were muddy, and people walked quickly to avoid the filth under their feet. Chickens pecked at the ground near doorways, and stray dogs weaved between their legs.

Yaz blinked as she took in her surroundings. Gone were the bustling cars, the modern shops, the hum of the city she knew. Instead, she saw narrow, winding roads lined with uneven cobblestones, patched with dirt where the stones had worn away. Wooden houses with thatched roofs huddled together, their timber beams exposed and darkened by age. Many of the buildings leaned slightly, as if time had pulled them out of alignment, and small gardens full of herbs and vegetables grew in every available patch of earth. She travelled a lot and far with the Doctor, but seeing her hometown six centuries earlier somehow hit differently.

"Wow," Yaz muttered, half in awe, half in disbelief. "This is Sheffield?"

"Looks a bit different, doesn't it?" the Doctor grinned, one hand in her pocket and another one on Anaya, who was strapped around her chest as she strolled beside Yaz.

"Just a bit..." Yaz chuckled, glancing around as villagers in rough woolen tunics and cloaks moved about their morning chores, some carrying firewood, others herding goats or chickens down the narrow streets. It was all so... simple. She had studied history, of course, but being here, really being here, felt surreal.

A cart rumbled past, drawn by a horse, its wooden wheels clattering against the stones. The driver tipped his hat in acknowledgment, giving them a curious glance. Nearby, a group of women were gathered at the well, drawing water with buckets and chatting in low voices. Their faces were weathered, but they wore soft smiles as they talked, pausing every now and then to glance up at the strangers in their strange clothes.

“Is it weird that I can smell everything?” Sonya wrinkled her nose. “Like... everything?”

Yaz chuckled. “Yeah, it’s definitely more... earthy.”

“The smells were... shall we say, less filtered back in the day,” the Doctor said cheerfully. “Not like Babilon or Egypt...there was no plumbing, no sewers, and no soap like we know it now. I suppose It’s all part of the charm.”

Sonya groaned, looking as if she regretted leaving the TARDIS. “I’m not sure if I would call it a ‘charm.’”

Hakim, however, seemed fascinated. He was gazing at the buildings with wide eyes, a smile tugging at the corners of his mouth. “Look at that craftsmanship,” he said, pointing to a house where the beams were intricately carved. “It’s beautiful...All done by hand.”

“Yeah, and I bet those hands were filthy,” Sonya muttered.

“Don’t be so dramatic,” Najia said, though even she seemed a bit unsure, glancing around cautiously. “It’s just like the village where your grandmother grew up... a bit rougher, maybe.”

Yaz’s eyes wandered further up the street to the small market square ahead. Stalls were already being set up, traders selling everything from vegetables to woven baskets. Chickens clucked as they were crated in wooden pens, and a donkey stood idly by, chewing on straw.

But it was the people that really struck her. As always, wherever they travelled, she always loved studding the locals. They moved slower than people in the modern day, less hurried, but their faces were marked with the harshness of a life lived so close to survival. There was a certain weight in their expressions, a weariness in their eyes, but there was also resilience. A strength born from living in a time when life was fragile, uncertain.

“I was really hoping for a coffee,” Yaz giggled messing around.

“Coffee’s a few centuries off.” The Doctor said with a smirk.

Yaz shook her head, her eyes drawn to a small church at the far end of the street. The stone building looked ancient, its small stained-glass windows weathered and dim. “I can’t believe how different it is...I keep thinking which street is this in our time. But it’s

fascinating.”

The Doctor slowed her pace, walking closer to Yaz. “It’s a simpler time. No distractions, no phones, no cars. Just people living their lives, finding joy in the little things.”

“Yeah, and trying not to catch the plague,” Sonya muttered darkly.

Najia shot her a warning glance. “Don’t even joke about that.”

The Doctor’s expression grew serious for a moment. “She’s not entirely wrong. The Black Death is on its way, but we’re a bit early for that.” She waved it off quickly. “But we won’t be staying that long anyway.”

Yaz tried to shake off the grim thought. She looked at her family, the way they were taking it all in, her dad admiring the architecture, her mum watching the people, and her sister, as always, complaining about the smell.

“So,” the Doctor began, breaking the silence, “fancy a medieval breakfast? Fresh bread, maybe some honey and cheese?”

“I’m definitely up for it,” Hakim said, his eyes twinkling with excitement.

“Please tell me there’s something other than goat cheese,” Sonya muttered.

Yaz laughed, lacing her hand with the Doctor as they walked further into the town. It was strange, surreal, and definitely not what she had planned, but for a moment, as she looked around at the peaceful medieval streets, it didn’t seem so bad after all. She leaned in planting a small kiss to Anaya's head.

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The group made their way to the small market square, where the scent of freshly baked bread mingled with the earthy smells of livestock and hay. They approached a simple stall run by an older woman with silver hair tucked beneath a fraying linen bonnet. She eyed out their unusual appearance. Her face was lined with age, but her smile was warm as she greeted them.

“Morning! Fresh bread and honey, if it pleases ya. Cheese, too, if you fancy.”

“I love honey” the Doctor grinned

Yaz eyed the rustic offerings. The loaves were dense, browned from the stone oven, with rough crusts that flaked slightly under the woman’s hands. Bowls of golden honey sat on the table, gleaming in the early light, and small rounds of cheese wrapped in cloth waited nearby.

"Alright," Yaz said, "I guess we'll take some bread and cheese please."

"Good choice," the Doctor chimed in, nudging her. "You're really getting into the spirit now! We will take some honey as well."

The woman handed them a small basket with some sliced bread, a chunk of cheese, and a wooden jar of honey. "Find a spot and help yourselves."

They took their simple breakfast to a nearby wooden table beneath a wide oak tree at the edge of the market square. The benches were crude, nothing like the ones they were used to back in Sheffield, but the view of the bustling village, with people trading and talking, gave the whole thing a kind of charm.

"Here we are," the Doctor said, plopping herself down onto the bench with a satisfied grin. "A medieval feast! Well... a modest one."

Yaz sat beside her, and her family spread out on the other benches, their faces still marked by curiosity and mild unease.

"Bread and cheese for breakfast. Classic," Hakim said, taking a bite of the bread. "This reminds me of my grandfather's farm. Simple but good."

Najia eyed the honey, dipping a finger into the jar and tasting it. "Not bad at all, actually."

"Mum, would you mind" Sonya said grossed out by her mum dipping her fingers in food.

"Babe...I need to feed her" Yaz reached into the bag for meals TARDIS has prepared for Anaya.

"I'll do it." The Doctor haply offered. She waited a long time to be able to finally feed her and she never missed a chance to do it now.

looked around at the quiet town, with its thatched roofs, smoke curling from chimneys, and animals lazily roaming the streets. A dog barked in the distance, chasing after a chicken that had escaped its pen. Children, dressed in ragged tunics, ran past them, laughing and playing with sticks. It was so... peaceful. Nothing like the Sheffield she knew, but somehow familiar at the same time.

"I gotta say," Sonya muttered, pulling apart a piece of bread, "it's not terrible. I was expecting worse."

"See? Told ya!" The Doctor grinned, clearly pleased with herself as she spread some honey onto a chunk of bread and offered it to Yaz.

Yaz accepted it with a small smile. As strange as it all was, there was something nice about sitting here, sharing a meal with her family, even if they were in the middle of 1348

Sheffield. She could hear her mum and dad talking quietly, and Sonya grumbling as usual, but they were here, together. It was like a bizarre little picnic in time.

"I could never imagine Sheffield looking like this. I like it..." Yaz smiled, her voice soft as she looked at the Doctor.

The Doctor nodded, her eyes scanning the square. "Life was simple, but hard. People didn't live as long, but they made the most of what they had. Life was all about survival, but it wasn't without its beauty."

Yaz nodded, taking a bite of the honey-soaked bread. The sweetness hit her tongue, and for a moment, she let herself forget about all the things that weighed on her mind. The reason why they were brought here in a first place not far from her thoughts...

Najia was watching the villagers with a thoughtful expression. "You know, it makes you think. We've got so much back home, technology, medicine, everything, but I always find it so peaceful in a past?"

Sonya huffed. "A shower wouldn't hurt."

"She's happy" Yaz stroke Anaya's head as the Doctor was feeding her.

"Well," the Doctor said, "once we're done here, how about we take a stroll through town? Maybe we can find out why TARDIS brought us here."

"God I hope just for sightseeing" Sonya commented

"You and me both" Yaz added

As they continued their breakfast, the villagers around them began their daily routine, vendors hawking their wares, farmers bringing in fresh produce, and children laughing as they played. For a brief moment, Yaz felt the weight of their adventure lift, and she was simply there, in the moment, sharing bread and honey with the people she loved.

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As they finished their breakfast and stood to leave, the Doctor adjusted the strap of the carrier, pulling it snug against her chest. Little Anaya was nestled comfortably, her tiny hands clutching at the fabric of the Doctor's coat. Her bright eyes darted around, curious and wide, taking in the strange new sights and sounds of the medieval town. Every so often, she'd let out a soft coo or gurgle, kicking her little feet with excitement.

Yaz smiled at the sight, but her mother had a more anxious expression. She kept glancing nervously at Anaya, her brow furrowed.

"Are you sure it's safe for her here?" Najia asked, her voice tinged with concern. "I mean,



it's the middle ages. People got sick all the time, didn't they? There's no medicine, no vaccines...it's no place for a baby Yaz."

The Doctor looked down at Anaya, her face softening as she rocked slightly on her feet to soothe the baby. "Oh, don't worry, Najia. Anaya's vaccinated against every known illness in the universe," she said confidently, giving Najia a reassuring smile.

Najia didn't seem entirely convinced but nodded, still keeping a close eye on her granddaughter. "I just worry, that's all...You hear all those stories... plagues, diseases. I couldn't live with myself if something happened to her."

Yaz slipped her arm around her mum's shoulder. "Mum, she's fine. Besides, look at her...she's loving it," she said, gesturing toward Anaya, whose head was swiveling around, completely fascinated by the town.

The Doctor winked at Yaz. "Her first trip...Exciting right?" She kissed Anaya's head

They continued their walk, weaving through the narrow, cobbled streets of 1348 Sheffield. The morning sun was now higher, casting a golden light over the stalls and rooftops. Villagers bustled about, exchanging goods, chatting away and carrying baskets filled with produce. As they passed by a stall selling wooden carvings, Anaya's eyes fixed on something. She squirmed in the Doctor's carrier, reaching her tiny hands toward the stall.

"Aaaa, what's this?" the Doctor said, following her daughter's gaze. "See something you like munchkin?"

The stall was filled with simple toys, wooden horses, dolls with straw hair, and carved animals. One small figure in particular, a little wooden owl, caught Anaya's attention. The owl's painted eyes were big and round, just like hers, and it had tiny wings carved into its sides.

The Doctor picked up the toy, holding it in front of Anaya's curious face. "You like this? A wise old owl for our wise little owl."

Anaya gurgled happily, her tiny fingers trying to grasp the toy. Yaz smiled at the sight, leaning closer. "Looks like she's made up her mind."

The Doctor grinned. "I'll take it," she told the vendor, handing over a few medieval coins from her pocket. The vendor nodded, pleased with the transaction, and the Doctor handed the owl to Anaya, who clutched it immediately shoving it into her mouth, her eyes wide with wonder.

Najia watched the exchange with a worried look, "I'm not sure she should be chewing on that," she said, more to herself than anyone else.

"Muum...stop worrying.... Do you honestly think we would let her get sick?"

"Your father and Ryan got sick Yaz...I don't know...look at this place."

"OK.. let me rephrase that...do you honestly think that TARDIS would let her get sick?"

"I suppose not..." she admitted after a moment of thought "Still makes me cringe"

"Little bit of dirt never hurt nobody" Doctor added

"Says a woman who is licking corpse dust" Sonya added

"Oi!!" Doctor jumped

"All I'm saying it's your daughter all over" Sonya laughed nudging her playfully

They continued exploring, passing by a blacksmith hammering at his forge, the clang of metal ringing through the air, and a weaver's stall where colorful fabrics hung, swaying in the breeze. Anaya's attention flitted from one thing to the next, her little owl clutched tightly in her hands.

Hakim chuckled as they walked. "I'll admit, this is... actually kind of nice. Different, but nice. I swear this is where the corner shop is in our time.

"And how did you come to that conclusion?" Najia challenged his statement laughing

"It's about fifteen minutes walk towards the Castlegate, I've been counting"

"Nice, sure, but can we talk about the smell?" Sonya, ever sarcastic one, continued to complain "Place could use some modern plumbing."

Yaz laughed, nudging her sister. "Bloody hell...Will you just enjoy it. It's not every day we get to walk through history of Sheffield."

The Doctor was leading the way, her enthusiasm contagious. She pointed out little details as they walked, the intricate stonework of the church, the way the market was organized, even the medieval fashion trends. "See those shoes? Hand-stitched leather, the best. Almost as good as my boots."

Yaz stayed close, her eyes darting between the Doctor and Anaya. For a moment, she felt a wave of contentment wash over her. Here they were, walking through a time...the Doctor, and Anaya, her little family together for their first joined trip. Yaz looked ahead, watching her family as they chatted and laughed, taking in the simple beauty of the medieval town around them. For once, everything felt just right.

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As they made their way through the bustling streets of 1348 Sheffield, the towering silhouette of Sheffield Castle loomed ahead. It was a striking contrast to the humble wooden houses and muddy paths of the town, its stone walls rising like a fortress of power and wealth. The castle itself was imposing, its battlements sharp against the cloudy sky. The sound of clinking armor from the guards and the steady flow of townsfolk coming and going added to the sense of importance.

The Doctor, with Anaya still nestled securely against her, led the way with her usual confident stride. Yaz, her family in tow, followed closely behind. As they approached the castle gates, flanked by stern-looking guards in chainmail and leather, a brief flicker of concern passed over Najia's face.

"How are we supposed to get in there?" she muttered under her breath, eyeing the guards warily.

The Doctor winked at her and pulled out her trusty psychic paper. "Leave it to me."

One of the guards stepped forward, blocking their path with his spear. "What business do you have at the castle?"

Without missing a beat, the Doctor flashed the psychic paper in front of him. The guard squinted at it, "Official Royal Inspectors of Castle Comfort and Medieval Banquet Standards. Plus, one baby." he said out loud, his expression changing from confusion to one of respect. Najia frowned confused restraining herself from laughing.

"Oh, my apologies, my lady!" the guard said, stepping aside quickly. "We didn't realize you were expected. Please, go on ahead."

The Doctor gave him a polite nod. "Thank you, good sir. Much appreciated."

As they passed through the gates and into the courtyard, Yaz's family exchanged glances, still baffled by how this worked.

"I'll never understand how that works," Sonya muttered, shaking her head.

Inside the courtyard, Sheffield Castle was even more impressive up close. Tall stone towers rose at each corner, and the walls were thick and weathered, covered in creeping ivy. Wooden scaffolding lined part of the outer wall, suggesting repairs or improvements were being made. Servants bustled about, carrying barrels of goods and crates of food, while soldiers in armor marched along the perimeter.

The castle's main keep, with its massive wooden doors, beckoned them inside. The Doctor led them in confidently, knowing the layout as if she'd been here countless times before, which, of course, she had.

Yaz couldn't help but admire the craftsmanship of the stonework, the high archways, and

the tapestries that adorned the interior halls. The castle was a place of power and prestige, but there was something warm about it too, the fires roaring in the hearths and the smell of roasted meats wafting through the air. It was surreal to see it filled with life when so little of it remains today.

The family who ruled the castle, the de Furnivals, were among the most influential in Yorkshire at the time. As they were led to the great hall, a man in his early forties appeared. He was dressed in fine, yet practical clothing, a thick woolen tunic and a fur-lined mantle resting on his shoulders. He was none other than Thomas de Furnival, the lord of the castle.

"Ah, Lord de Furnival!" The Doctor called out, a broad grin on her face.

Thomas paused, his expression curious. "Do I know you?" he asked, raising a brow. "Forgive me, but your face is unfamiliar."

"Well, not this face," the Doctor admitted with a chuckle, gesturing to herself. "But I'm the Doctor. You might remember me from a few... centuries ago...well, for me at least."

Thomas's eyes widened in recognition, and a slow smile crept across his face. "The Doctor!" he exclaimed, stepping forward. "Of course! How could I forget? Though... you seem a bit different."

"New face, same me," the Doctor replied with a grin. "It's wonderful to see you again, Thomas."

"I'll never get used to this face-changing business of yours. Still convinced it's some kind of magic."

"I promise you, it's not," the Doctor chuckled.

Thomas glanced at the group accompanying her, his brow raising. "And you've brought company, I see."

"Yes," the Doctor said proudly. "This is Yaz, my wife, and her family, Najia, Hakim, and Sonya. And this little one," she added, giving Anaya a soft bounce, "is our daughter, Anaya."

Thomas's smile faltered, clearly trying to wrap his head around the strange circumstances. But he masked his confusion with a gracious nod. The Doctor admired his willingness to accept a world so foreign to his own, one that constantly challenged the very core of his beliefs.

His smile softened as he looked at Anaya. "A fine little lady," he said warmly. "You are all most welcome here. I trust you will stay for a meal?"

"That would be lovely Thomas, thank you"

"You must be tired, please do stay as my guests at least for one night."

The Doctor turned to the others "What do you say fam?... Makes sense."

"Why not" Hakim agreed, and others nodded.

Najia, still cautious, leaned toward Yaz. "I still it's better for the baby to be in the TARDIS..."

Yaz smiled. "Come on, it's gonna be fun...Just go with it, Mum."

Thomas led them through the grand hall, where servants hurried to prepare for the evening meal. The hall was adorned with thick tapestries depicting battles and family crests. A long wooden table, set for a feast, ran down the center of the room, and the air was thick with the smell of burning logs in the large stone hearth.

As they walked through, a woman appeared at the far end of the hall, her posture tall and regal. She was dressed in rich, dark velvet, her hair intricately braided. This was Thomas's wife, Joan de Furnival.

"Joan," Thomas called out, gesturing to the group. "We have guests! This is the Doctor and her family."

Joan approached with a graceful stride, her sharp eyes studying them. "The Doctor," she said with a knowing nod. "I've heard stories about you."

"Good stories, I hope," the Doctor replied, offering a playful grin.

Joan smiled, though her eyes remained sharp. "Mostly."

"Oh you know, rumours...This is Yaz, Najia, Hakim and Sonya...and my daughter Anaya"

"Please to meet you all." She smiled

Yaz watched as her family stood somewhat awkwardly, but Joan and Thomas were gracious. They invited the group to sit by the fire, offering them a place to rest and warm themselves. As they settled in, the Doctor couldn't resist bringing up the historical significance of their surroundings.

"Sheffield Castle is one of the most important fortifications in the region," the Doctor explained to everyone "It's withstood battles, seen royal visits, and been at the heart of power struggles for centuries."

Thomas, clearly proud of his ancestral home, nodded. "And it shall continue to stand as long as the de Furnivals protect it."

"Not much left of it in our days" Sonya added

"Sonya!" Yaz frowned nudging her

"Whaaaa?"

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After a short chat by the fire they were led through the dimly lit corridors of Sheffield Castle towards their rooms where they would prepare for the dinner. The flickering light from the sconces cast long shadows across the stone walls, and the air was cool, carrying the faint scent of damp earth and burning wood. As they walked up the stone stairs, the group's footsteps echoed softly, filling the silence with a sense of history, a tangible reminder of just how ancient this place was.

As they continued down the stone corridors, Sonya lingered for a moment, then rushed up to Yaz, leaning in whispering to her ear. "Hey...You don't think there's fleas in the bed? Or, like... creepy crawlies?"

Yaz frowned. "Fleas? I wasn't thinking about that... but thanks for planting that in my head."

"Just saying, you know? Plague, fleas, Middle Ages, all that."

Yaz hesitated, the unwelcome thought now stuck in her mind. She glanced at Sonya, who gave her a nudge that clearly said, 'ask the Doctor'. Sighing, she hurried up the stone stairs to catch up with her wife, tugging on her sleeve to get her attention.

"Hey babe..."

"Mmm?"

"You don't think there's, like... fleas in the bed, do you? You know, plague and all that medieval stuff."

The Doctor stopped in her tracks, frowning as her nose wrinkled. "Fleas? Oh, nahhh, nothing like that. I've slept here before, no problems. Well, except for a few spiders." She trailed off, catching Yaz's alarmed expression, and quickly tried to backpedal. "Small once...really small, like you can bearley see them...and just a couple of harmless bugs."

"Whaa?"

"I mean, it's the 14th century Yaz...not exactly modern is it..."

Yaz raised an eyebrow, clearly not reassured. "You're not helping."

"Really...nothing to worry about I promise...100% no fleas...80 definitely..."

"What about the other 20?" She asked horrified  
"I'll sonic the rooms..." she grinned

Yaz stared, unimpressed, while Sonya caught up  
"So? What did she say?"

"She says we're fine."

As they reached their rooms, the Doctor gave one last awkward smile. "Trust me, no fleas... probably."

Sonya's eyes widened, and she flinched as her hair dropped to her shoulder. Suddenly she felt itchy all over.

As they reached the rooms, one by one, the family was led inside. Sonya, still worrying about fleas, peeked into every corner of her room and once reinsured that everything seemed clean, at least on a first glance sighed relieved. The bed looked cosy and grander than she expected.

"Well, this is better than I expected," she said with a grin.

Hakim and Najia exchanged a look of quiet approval as they stepped into their chamber. "This is... surprisingly cozy for the Middle Ages," Hakim admitted.

"Looks beautiful" Nadjia said with a smile "Look, they left us clothes" she pointed at the garments on the bed

Once Yaz, the Doctor were finally shown to their room, they found themselves in a space similar to the others, though this one had a grand canopy bed draped in thick, luxurious blankets, with tapestries on the walls depicting scenes of knights and battles. The stone floor was softened by woven rugs, and a small hearth crackled in the corner, casting a golden light across the room. In the corner was a wooden crib, its design simple yet sturdy, likely crafted by hand for the noble children of the castle.

"This is beautiful" Yaz smiled

"Told ya" Doctor grinned "She likes it" she glanced at the baby, who was looking wide-eyed at everything around her.

Speaking of Anaya," she said softly, "I should feed her and get her ready for bed." She glanced around the room, realizing that the medieval surroundings didn't exactly provide the essentials for caring for a baby. Before she could voice her concerns, a knock interrupted her thoughts.

"Come in," the Doctor called, stepping toward the door.

An elderly woman entered, her face kind and warm. "My lady...We thought you might need

this... for the baby.”

Behind her, two younger women entered, carrying a small wooden tub, buckets filled with warm water, and soft linen towels.

Yaz blinked in surprise. “Oh... wow, thank you,”

The elderly woman nodded, gesturing toward the two younger women, one of which set the tub by the hearth to keep the water warm, while the other arranged the towels. They lined the tub with a linen cloth and added lavender oil into the water.

Yaz stood there for a moment, taken aback by how hospitable they were. “I didn’t expect all this...Thank you so much.”

“If you need anything else madam, just call for us,” the older woman added before they left, bowing slightly as they exited.

Yaz exchanged a glance with the Doctor, who grinned haply. “See? Nothing to worry about. They’ve got it all figured out.”

"Bloody hell...I'm impressed"

Yaz knelt by the tub, running her fingers through the warm water. “This is perfect...It smells so nice”

The Doctor undressed Anaya, who was now fascinated by the flickering light of the fire and lowered her into the tub. The baby cooed softly, kicking her tiny legs in the water.

The Doctor crouched down beside Yaz, watching Anaya with a grin. “Look at her, loving it already,”

"Why do you think TARDIS brought us here?"

"Dunno...everything seems fine for now...Maybe it was just a glitch" she shrugged

"I doubt that...It's never a glitch" she sighed and refocused on Anaya

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Once dressed, Yaz felt like a princess in typical gown for the time and the Doctor wore woolen tunic over her trousers. In spite the kindness of the servants and their offer to keep an eye on Anaya, they both refused to leave her with strangers and took her with them. She didn't seem to complain sleeping comfortably in a woven basket they gave them.

"I'm taking a pram next time" Yaz commented on her way out of their room.



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The warm glow of the fire filled the great hall as the group gathered around the long wooden table for the evening meal. Servants moved swiftly, setting out platters of roasted meats, fresh bread, and thick stews. The aromas of hearty medieval fare wafted through the air, and the sounds of clinking mugs and low chatter echoed in the hall. Anaya slept in a basket, placed near the fire.

Yaz's family sat wide-eyed at the feast laid before them, while the Doctor looked completely at ease, as though dining in the 14th century was an everyday occurrence. Once everyone was seated, Lord Thomas, his wife Joan at his side, raised a goblet of wine.

"To our guests," Thomas announced with a warm smile. "May your stay in Sheffield Castle be as memorable as it is pleasant."

The group raised their goblets as they settled in for the meal. After a few bites, Thomas leaned toward the Doctor, a curious look in his eyes.

"So, Doctor," he began, "what brings you and your family to these parts? The last time you were here, things were rather eventful, if I recall."

"Ah, well... that's the thing, Thomas. I'm not exactly sure why we're here."

Thomas furrowed his brow. "Not sure? But you never arrive anywhere by accident."

"You'd be surprised" Sonya muttered

"We were in the TARDIS and something glitched. Next thing we know, we're here, in 1348. Not exactly what I planned... but here we are."

Thomas exchanged a worried glance with his wife. "So, you don't know why you've come?"

The Doctor shook her head, her usual playful demeanor softened by the weight of uncertainty. "No... it's a bit worrying I must admit... The TARDIS doesn't just bring us somewhere for no reason."

Joan, who had remained quiet, folded her hands on the table and looked at the Doctor with concern. "You mean to say that trouble is on its way?"

"I wouldn't really say trouble" she fumbled

"Doctor, you've never been one to visit during peaceful times. I remember the last time you were here..." Thomas raised an eyebrow

"I was a different man back then. Bow ties, lots of running...."

"Dragons" Thomas added

"Wait... What?" Yaz frowned

"It's nothing, really" she scrunched her nose but Thomas pushed

"Almost destroyed the city" he chuckled and continued, the Doctor fidgeting in her seat

"Almost...just the barns" the Doctor justified herself

"We were preparing for the feast of Saint George, and you were running up and down the castle, trying to prevent some... what was it again? A clockwork dragon?"

"Nothing major ...just a malfunctioning automaton Yaz, designed to look like a dragon. It got loose and nearly torched the whole place. Fun times."

Thomas smiled wryly, though he was still clearly concerned. "Fun, perhaps, for you. For the rest of us, it was chaos.... And don't forget the jousting tournament," Thomas added, his eyes twinkling. "You insisted on entering, even though you didn't have a horse. Ended up borrowing one from the stable and nearly got thrown off."

Yaz grinned as she imagined the Doctor, in her past form, doing something so absurd. "You? In a joust?" she asked, shaking her head in disbelief.

The Doctor shrugged with a modest smile. "What can I say? When in the Middle Ages..."

The group laughed, the tension of their mysterious arrival easing a little. Even Najia seemed to relax slightly, though her protective instincts flared up again when she glanced at Anaya.

"I still don't like the idea of the baby being here," she said quietly, leaning into Yaz. "I don't know how you two will manage these things"

"We have you for that" Yaz grinned haply

Najia didn't look impressed, but she nodded, her eyes softening as she watched the baby contentedly sleeping by the fire. "She's been so quiet today."

Yaz smiled. "She's curious, like her mum," she said, nodding toward the Doctor. "And... probably a bit overwhelmed"

Thomas, still chuckling over the Doctor's previous exploits, leaned back in his chair, his gaze lingering on the Time Lord. "I must admit, Doctor, your presence here does make me wonder what sort of trouble lies ahead. But for now, we're honored to have you and your family as our guests."

“Thank you, Thomas,” the Doctor said sincerely. “Let’s hope it’s just a peaceful visit this time.”

The meal continued with lively conversation, and as the evening wore on, the warmth of the fire and the comfort of the castle began to lull them all into a sense of ease. For the time being, the past and the future seemed to align in harmony, and as they shared stories and memories, the Doctor couldn't help but feel a flicker of hope that perhaps, just this once, things might remain calm. But the worry was still humming in the corner of her mind, she couldn't shake the feeling that something was on its way.

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Back in their room, Yaz gently took Anaya from the Doctor's arms, settling the baby on her chest as she prepared to feed her. “I do get worried about why we’re here,” she murmured

The Doctor leaned against the canopy bed, her eyes clouded with concern as her carefree façade slipped away. “Me too...” she admitted, “Joke aside, Yaz, wasn’t planning on a trip like this...not with Anaya. I don’t like this at all.”

Yaz glanced up, her brow furrowed. “Do you think it might just be a fluke?”

The Doctor shrugged, the worry in her eyes now plain as day. She twirled her sonic absently in her hand. “Might be. I was fixing the circuit before we ended up here... Maybe something just glitched. But the sooner we get out of here, the better. I’ll check on the TARDIS tomorrow. I just didn’t want to alarm everyone.”

Yaz sighed. “I knooow. Mum’s not happy with Anaya being here, though. She keeps giving me that look.”

“What look?” The Doctor frowned, confused.

“The ‘irresponsible parent’ one,” Yaz chuckled softly. “Can’t really blame her. If I’m honest, I’ve been thinking it too.”

“Mmm...” The Doctor nodded in agreement, pushing herself off the canopy bed and walking over to them. She brushed her fingers gently over Anaya’s head. “I’d never let anything happen to her, or to you, Yaz. If things get out of control, I want you both back in the TARDIS.”

“What?” Yaz looked at her, surprised.

The Doctor met her gaze, unwavering. “We’ve talked about this. Whatever it is, I can handle it as long as I know you two are safe.” She turned to look out of the window, her silhouette outlined against the dim glow of the moon. “I can’t worry about both of you and myself. It’s too much.”

Yaz, feeling the weight of her words, reached out and took the Doctor's hand, gently bringing her knuckles to her lips. "I love you," she whispered, her voice soft but full of certainty.

The Doctor smiled, the tension in her face softening as she stroked her thumb tenderly over Yaz's cheek. "Love you too," she whispered back, leaning in to press a gentle kiss against Yaz's forehead.

Once fed and changed, the baby yawned and closed her eyes, settling into the crib with surprising ease. The crackle of the hearth and the gentle light of the fire provided a peaceful atmosphere, and as Yaz leaned over the crib to watch Anaya fall asleep, she let out a contented sigh.

The Doctor, now standing at the edge of the bed, smiled warmly at the scene. "It suits you...being mum," she said, her voice tender as she watched Yaz.

Yaz turned to her with a small smile. "It's not always easy, but... I love it."

The Doctor crossed the room and took Yaz's hand. "You're brilliant at it."

"So are you..." she smiled wrapping her arm around her waist

They stood there for a moment, in the quiet warmth of the room, watching Anaya sleep.

The Doctor sighed, her gaze shifting to the window, where the distant stars could be seen just beyond the stone walls.

"We'll be out of here soon, I'm sure of it," she said quietly.

Yaz nodded, leaning into the Doctor's side. "I know."

The Doctor smiled and pressed a soft kiss to Yaz's temple, her lips lingering as she hummed into her skin. "Let's get into bed. You're getting cold," she whispered, her fingers gently tracing down Yaz's arms, brushing warmth into her chilled skin.

They climbed into the grand canopy bed, the weight of the thick blankets immediately cocooning them in softness. The fire in the hearth crackled gently, casting flickering shadows on the walls, the golden glow making the room feel like a hidden sanctuary.

Yaz snuggled closer, her arm wrapping instinctively around the Doctor's waist, seeking her warmth. She let out a contented sigh as their bodies melded together beneath the blankets, finding peace in the simplicity of the moment. The usual rush of adventure and uncertainty seemed distant now, replaced by the comforting rhythm of their breaths and the warmth they shared.

The Doctor gently tucked a loose strand of hair behind Yaz's ear gazing at her softly.

"You know," she murmured "I wouldn't mind staying like this forever."

Yaz chuckled softly, her lips brushing against the Doctor's collarbone. "Mmmm... but knowing us, forever might just last until morning."

The Doctor smiled, her hearts full. She leaned down, her lips finding Yaz's in a gentle, lingering kiss. It was a kiss that held all the things they couldn't always put into words, love, trust, and a deep, unspoken bond that only grew stronger through time and space.

As they settled back into the quiet, the Doctor held Yaz a little tighter, her lips brushing her forehead one last time. "Nightie night cupcake."

"Nightie night my lovable weirdo." Yaz whispered back, her hand resting over the Doctor's, as they drifted into sleep, wrapped in the warmth of each other and the quiet of the night.

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