

Stealing Time

It was a rainy day, and her alarm clock went off every few minutes. She reached out and had the urge to throw the phone against the wall. But she didn't, instead she just put it on the second delay and rolled to the other side. She heard a gentle knock on the door and footsteps entering her room.

"Yaz..." a quiet voice called her name

"Go away" she mumbled underneath the covers then felt the bed dipping

"Please...come on. We will have a nice day. You have to get out of the house"

"Please leave me alone"

"I would...but I'm worried about you" Sonya said and gently touched the duvet "Please...I'll buy you a cherry Coke"

"I don't want it"

"Yaz...you need to get on with your life"

"What I need is for everyone to leave me alone"

"You know we can't do that...I love you...I need my sister"

There was a moment of silence and Yaz moved the quilt. Her eyes were still swollen from crying, and her uncombed hair fell on the pillow.

"I know this is hard" Sonya took her hand gently "She would never want you to do this to yourself Yaz"

"No," Yaz said and looked out the window at the raindrops sliding down the glass. "She wouldn't..." she paused for a moment. The rain reminded her of the time the Doctor took her to Paris in 1932 as a special treat for her birthday and they stayed in a hotel right in the center. She insisted that it was all part of the experience and that staying at Taridis would not be the same. She remembered the beautiful dress she had been given and the Doctor's fingers closing it on her back as she chattered incessantly as usual. Her voice echoed in Yaz's head and the memory of the raindrops falling down the window was so vivid in her mind. The smell of the Doctor's skin as she leaned over her shoulder and gave her a quick kiss on the cheek "You look lovely" she remembered the voice and a shiver ran down her spine. Why didn't she turn around then, she thought to herself. It's so easy to be brave in retrospect, but she was bolted to the floor at the time. Her heart was pounding so hard she could have sworn the Doctor could hear it.

"Yaz..." Sonya tugged her hand gently "You're drifting again"

Yaz shook her head and turned her gaze "Sorry" tears rolled down her face

"Come on" Sonya brushed her tear ever so gently "I'll braid your hair" she smiled

Yaz swallowed hard, feeling her breath catch in her throat. The Doctor had done that once, she remembered. She was burning with some strange fever she had picked up on one of the planets and as much as the Doctor had cures for almost everything, this was something she had to go through. They had a movie night and the Doctor brought hot cinnamon buns from the kitchen and some special tea that smelled like strawberries. She saw the other side of the Doctor that night and every other night until she was better, the caring and soft side of the little Time Lord. She remembered her running the brush gently through her hair as if Yaz was made of glass and would break at any moment. Then the beautiful fingers took strand by strand and patiently wove it at the back. She remembered the Doctor kneeling behind her and feeling her breath on her neck when she leaned over as she spoke. Forever speaking, Yaz smiled for a moment. "There...all done...You look much better now Yaz" she smiled

"Yaz" Sonya's voice shook her "I said you're all done babe" she leaned over her shoulder "Come on"

Yaz got up from her chair and took her yellow jacket. She brought it to her face and took a deep breath. It still smelled like the Tardis, like the Doctor. A month had passed, but the smell was still there and Yaz hoped it would never go away. She wanted to wear it, but at the same time she wanted to keep it in a closed box at the bottom of her wardrobe so the scent would never go away, so she could take it out and bury her face in it and soak her tears in it. But when she was wearing it I felt like she was walking beside her, somewhere outside her vision where she could feel her presence. And she needed to feel her presence so much. So she put it on and left the room.

The rain stopped at some point as they walked between the endless rows of clothes. She tried desperately to concentrate, to distract her thoughts. Tomorrow is her birthday and she knew that her sister was really trying. Deep down she felt guilty for dragging her feet as if her ankles were tied with heavy chains, guilty for missing half of the sentences coming out of her sister's mouth and for looking over her shoulder at the woman standing at the till. A woman with a blonde bob, her back to them. She felt her heart skip a beat for a split second until it fell to her stomach. But she still couldn't help but look over her sister's shoulder. She must have started talking, she thought to herself, when that made Sonya turn around.

"Oh Yaz" she sighed deeply "Come hun...let's get out of here. There's plenty more stores" she grabbed her hand and rubbed her finger on a side of it

"I'm so sorry Sonya" Yaz said embarrassed "I'm sorry, I'm not acting right"

Sonya pulled her out of the store and as soon they stepped outside hugged her tightly "It's ok...it really is. You lost someone...everyone feels like that...it's ok to feel sad"

"I don't think this pain will ever go away" Yaz said into her neck "I feel like I'm going mad"

"You're not...it's just awful. It's normal...and it will get better with time..." she pulled back and cupped her face "I promise" she smiled "You'll learn to live with it" she looked down between them "Hey...look what I got you whiles you were wondering lost around the store" she smiled and lifted the bag "I was going to wrap it up...but I think you need it now"

Yaz looked inside of the bag and her eyes filled with tears "Sonya...how did you?"

"I should probably not do this...but I thought maybe it will help..."

Yaz pulled out a blue t-shirt with a rainbow across the chest and pressed it against herself "It's like..."

"He's...I know...not the same...similar...but"

"Oh god" she flew into her and hugged her tightly "It's perfect"

"So you can wear it...or hang it on your wall or whatever you fucking want...I wasn't sure iff it was appropriate"

"Yes it is...it is" she smiled

"Come on...let's get some food" she grabbed her hand smiling "I'm starving...and you must be starving...You haven't eaten...When was the last time you ate?...You lost so much weight"

Her birthday came and went and another two weeks passed. She cried a little less, but at least she left her room. Kate told her to take some time off before starting work. It was a good thing because he wouldn't be able to concentrate anyway. Sonya was taking her out again. She was constantly finding ways to get her mind distracted and Yaz welcomed it with an open heart now, even looking forward to it in some way. She was taking her to a theatre show and told her it was a good way to distract her for few hours. She was probably right because she was finding it difficult to do basic things. Like the other day in a store she saw Custard Cream on a shelf and crumbled in tears.

Her jacket was slowly losing it's smell and tonight she decided it would be the last time she wore it.

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"So did you like it?" Sonya asked as they were coming back towards the building

"I did...thank you so much" Yaz dropped her arm around her sister's shoulder and kissed her cheek

"Aaaa...she smiled...that's a nice change" Sonya said and continued chatting as they were coming close to the entrance "Uff...that wind is cold" she said closing her jacket

"Wait!" Yaz stopped and looked on the ground as the autumn leaves flew into the air "Can you hear that?" she stood frozen

"Hear what?" Sonya looked at her confused

The sound ripped through Yaz's heart and every cell in her body. She was becoming delusional, she thought to herself, finally cracked completely. Then she saw her sister's face

"Yaz!" she grabbed her sister shoulders

Then the door creaked and Yaz closed her eyes for a moment, waiting for her to wake up. She's sure to see the hospital ceiling when she opens them and the nurse hovering above her explaining that she's hallucinating because of the medication. But then a voice vibrated through her whole body calling her name and she opened her eyes.

"Yaz...it's her" Sonya said smiling "Go"

"I'm afraid to turn around" she said tears rolling down her face

"Yaz" familiar voice called her again gently

"Go" Sonya wiped her tears with her thumbs "I'll tell mum" she kissed her face and turned her around

Her beautiful ghost monument stood in its old place and the Doctor spread her arms. Yaz looked at her sister for a second before running as fast as her legs would carry her. Sonya smiled as she watched her sister from a distance throw herself into this woman's arms so hard that her back hit the door of the strange blue box. She turned and went inside.

Yaz inhaled in the scent of the Tardis, motor oil, peppermint and beeswax on the Doctor's coat. She heard her hearts beating faster than usual and felt her fingers in her hair "You came for me"

"Course I did" she said quietly "I can't have a universe without my Yaz" her fingers tangled tighter in her hair pressing her to her chest like never before "I'm so sorry...for being late again...I missed your birthday but I have a present"

"I don't care as long as you're here" Yaz buried her face in her and held her so tight she could have sworn she was restricting her breathing. But she didn't want to let her go. Because if she did, she was afraid that she would disappear again. "How?" Yaz pulled back in confusion and reached for her hand tugging at the sleeve of her coat. There was no orange mist, she gently touched her hand, and the Doctor curled her palm and laced their fingers together. "Regeneration?" she looked up at her beautiful hazel eyes.

"Oh, you know...wibbly-wobbly timey-wimey" she scrunched her nose "You're gonna stand here for the rest of the evening or go inside?"

But Yaz threw herself back into her arms, pressing her face to her hearts, and the Doctor smiled, kissing

the top of her head, then draped her arm around her and led her inside.

She returned to her room, but things seemed off. She knew her room like the back of her hand, but this wasn't the room she left. For a moment it felt strange and unnerving, she felt fear creeping up on her, but then Wibbly-wobbly timey-wimey echoed in her head.

She stepped into the control room and saw her hunched over the console.. Soft light shining on her face. Sleeves rolled up just a bit. She stood there for a moment taking it all in. Her and this place she thought she'd never see again.

"Hey...got yourself settled?" she smiled looking up. Yaz looked so thin, all her beautiful curves had disappeared in her grief, her eyes were tired with dark circles under them and sunken cheeks. She knew why and needed no explanation. It brought pain to her hearts to see her like this, so the Doctor looked down again, partly in pain and partly in shame "C'mere I wanna show you something"

Yaz slowly got down and stood from the other side of the console. "When are you from?" she asked

The Doctor was silent, pretending not to hear her and pretending to have work to do

"Doctor? What time are you from?" she repeated her question softly

She was still looking down. Her hair frames her face, her arms spread across the console. Yaz could see her breathing as her arched back moved with each deep breath. "How did you know?" she asked, avoiding looking into her eyes

"Well you're not shining like a light bulb so that's a dead giveaway, right?"

Doctor smiled from the corner of her lips still looking down

"At first I thought you were healed...somehow you stopped it..." Yaz slowly walked around the console towards her "But then my room isn't the same"

"Clever" Doctor said and shook her head then finally lifted her gaze

"Tell me...what time are you from, because this is making me feel uncomfortable"

"Six months ago" Doctor stood up and swallowed hard "I'm so sorry...I didn't mean to make you feel this way"

Yaz sighed "I thought you were the Master for a moment. But he feels...different...smells different" she felt dread rise within her

"Oh stars Yaz...noo..." Doctor jumped "I didn't think I'm so sorry"

"How?...Tell me...how did you..." Yaz walked one more step slowly

"When I left you...in that park" she looked down again and put her hands on the console "...I came back...to myself...warned myself. I can't stop the regeneration Yaz. It's impossible...or what happened that's my faith...it is what it is...But I can steal some time" she looked up at her with despair on her face "You know...having a Tardis and all that...But I can't change my path. Eventually I'll have to go back...but not yet"

"So this is...what? A joy ride? One last trip? And then you will leave me again?"

"Nooo Yaz," she turned to her and took a few steps forward, but Yaz backed away. The Doctor could see so much anxiety in her eyes and her fear was almost palpable "Not this time"

"How? I don't understand? What are going on about?"

"How long we stay together now doesn't affect what happens in the future. Not if I'm careful and don't get in my way...or yours"

"So you can go back when I—"

"Yeah...don't...I'm just stealing time Yaz...my time...my time is gone...I can't get it back...I can't change what happened to you or me or stop it Yaz...That me from the future is gone...that me...that can never be changed"

Yaz felt tears rolling down her face but she was trying to keep herself together. Her hand gripping the console so hard her knuckles were going white

"I just wanted more time...I need more time...more time with you" the Doctor said and a tear ran down her face and she leaned over the console again "If you want that...?" she said softly

Yaz took a step forward and looked down at her hand. She gently ran her finger over the Doctor's knuckles "That's a stupid question"

The Doctor smiled at the corner of her lips and linked their fingers together. A tear fell on the console

"Why did you really come back? Yaz asked and the Doctor squeezed her hand "Look at me" she said quietly "i need you to tell me"

The Doctor craned her neck towards her chest and took a deep breath. She squeezed her hand so much Yaz couldn't feel her fingers anymore "Pleaseee" she looked at her pleadingly "I need you saying it"

"Because...I love you" she said quietly "And I couldn't just leave you...I can't...it's not what wanted...I.."

"Please look at me," she almost whispered and gently stroked her hair. Something she would never have

done before, but things had changed for her in the last month and a half. Regret does that to a person "I missed you...so much"

"I'm sorry" The Doctor slowly stood up and finally their eyes met. She brought her hand to her cheek and sighed deeply "I'm so sorry... C'mere", she pulled her to her chest and ran her fingers through her hair. She hated herself at the moment and who she was, she hated the regeneration and every cell of her body that made her who she was. Yaz fell apart. She cried softly, her tears running down the Doctor's chest. "I love you," Yaz said into her neck and the Doctor gasped for air

"Oh, Yaz," she pulled back and cupped her face, wiping away the tears with her thumbs "Aren't we a pair...we fight Daleks and Cybermen, we save worlds, but we can be so stupid sometimes"

Yaz smiled a little "We're a mess" she gripped the Doctor's coat like her life depended on it. In a way it did. She released it a long time ago and a last month and a half proved it to herself.

Doctor's eyes were roaming around her face in silence. Their hearts beating so fast they were together beating like drums between them the desperate beats of a love never spoken. The Doctor ran her thumb over her cheek and slowly, ever so slowly pulled her closer. She brought her lips to hers almost shyly, barely touching, asking permission to be there. A whimper left Yaz's lips and she desperately clung to her, putting a hand to the back of her head. One kiss followed another, tender and passionate, lost in the moment, completely surrendering themselves to each other. Doctor's fingers tangled in Yaz's hair, she rested her forehead against hers and smiled.

"So...where would you like to go?"

"Anywhere with you" Yaz smiled and pulled her into another kiss