

## Chapter 16

Yaz's phone buzzed at half six in the morning, she lazily reached out over Theta to switch it off then reluctant to get up snuggled back into the bed. Feeling relaxed and excited about the first day of their holiday she nuzzled her face into Theta's shoulder running her palm over her stomach. Life finally seemed smile at her, prospect of a career she wanted, woman she adored with every breath she took and the baby on a way felt more than she could ever have hoped for. Her hand gently glided over a bump hoping to catch early morning kicks.

Theta hummed sleepy, her hand automatically finding Yaz's and lacing their fingers together.

"Morning snuggle bug" Yaz hummed gently, her lips pressing soft kiss to her shoulder

"Morning" Theta smiled rolling on her back, her eyes still trying to shake of sleep. She turned just enough to catch first morning kiss from Yaz.

"We should get up" Yaz reminded, knowing how they usually take forever to get up. Only today wasn't one of those days they could afford to be late.

"I knooooow" Theta stretched rubbing her eyes. Yaz's hand trailing the length of her felt too good to be rushed. "You look so tired" she cupped Yaz's cheek

"I am... I could do with another hour. Come on snuggle bug...I'll make breakfast."

Theta smiled softly, her thumb brushing Yaz's cheek lovingly. "Alright love" she leaned in for another kiss before they both started getting up.

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Theta sat in a cab, her brain working behind her forehead "You did switch off the gas?" She leaned through the open window

"Yes" Yaz said as she was helping the driver to put the luggage in the booth.

"Oh, the window in the bedroom" Theta reminded just as Yaz sat next to her

"I closed it"

"We did lock the door? Cause I didn't"

"No, I left it open and hung that 'Help yourself' sign on the door"

"Only asking" she pouted

"Chill out, will ya" she rolled her eyes laughing

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The train ride to London wasn't long. They arrived at the St Pancras International. The station, with its gorgeous glass roof and ornate ironwork was bustling with people. The polished floors echoed with the rolling suitcases and footsteps of people rushing to catch their trains. With about an hour to spare before catching a connecting train for Brighton they made their way past the stores. The smell of the freshly brewed coffee caught their attention, and they found a cozy table in one of many stations' cafes. They settled down with a hot cup of coffee and sandwiches. With plenty of time till their next train they savored in a moment, relaxing amongst the bustling crowd of rushing passengers.

"We got about 40 minutes" Yaz warned looking at the big clock

"That's ok" Theta said as she was picking tomatoes out of her sandwich throwing them on the paper

"You leave out the best bits" Yaz laughed happily eating them and Theta just shook her head disgusted "How's your back?"

"I could do with a bed" she scrunched her nose

"Just take a kip when we come, I'll unpack the bags"

"Thank yooooou" she smiled softly before biting into her sandwich, relaxing in her chair

"Oh, don't be silly.... You've done enough." She leaned into her chair with a relaxed sigh "God I can't wait to get there....Just chilling out."

"Me too" Theta mumbled through chewing making Yaz laugh about how enthusiastic she was about food since she was pregnant

"I can't remember if I packed my factor 50"

"I'm sure you have and if you haven't, it's not like we're going on a deserted island. Just buy another one"

"That's true" she shrugged "Can you imagine if I go into labour in Brighton?" She laughed

Yaz's eyes grew wider "Did you have to say that?"

"I'm only joking" she laughed sipping her coffee

"Don't" she laughed back

"I mean...you never know with these things"

"Theta!!" She jumped

"Alright!" She couldn't stop laughing "I won't go into labour...I'll just push him back up" she continued to laugh

Yaz rolled her eyes "You're giving me hernia as it is."

"Oh, don't worry about it. Women have babies every day ...It's gonna be over before it starts"

"Maybe it's good you think that."

"Mmmm...I just remembered, on Monday I have to have a teams meeting. It won't be long"

"What on a holiday?"

"Mmm...It's important. He's a big client and I want that job. It's a lot of money we could do with. Specially now with the baby. If I get that I'll get nine grand"

"Nine grand?.." her eyes widened

"Told ya" she grinned "Not to be sneezed at"

"What the hell are you doing for nine grand?"

"Company merger"

"In translation?"

"Mmmm..." she swallowed a bite of her sandwich then haply started explaining "It involves due diligence, drafting and negotiating the sale and purchase agreement, handling regulatory compliance...So yeah" she shrugged "Nine grand baby" she grinned

"That's a lot of nappies "

"Yap...I mean...I'm pretty sure I'll get it. But then again nothing is sure until it's signed on a dotted line"

"That's true...Oh babe...We need go soon."

"I'm done" she shoved the last piece of her sandwich in her mouth and rinsed it with a sip of water

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Theta wobbled behind Yaz who was rolling the suitcases. Her attention got caught by some plushy toy in the window, she stopped for a moment as Yaz continued towards the platform.

"I think this is it...Do you wanna be in last cart or at the front?" Yaz asked then when she got no response she turned around and realized Theta was nowhere to be seen "What the fuck?" She looked around, her eyes filled with mixture of panic and confusion. She quickly let go of the suitcases and scrambled for her phone when she heard Thetas voice from the distance.

"I'm coming!" She yelled wobbling as fast as she could down the platform, carrying a bunny rabbit with big eyes and floppy ears practically the size of her

"What the fuck?" Yaz looked at her in complete disbelief

"Sorry...It was only meant to be a minute" she explained nonchalantly "Isn't he just adorable " she shook a toy

"Bloody hell babe...You gave me a heart attack."

"Sooooorry...I was gonna call but my phone died" she kissed her cheek apologetically

"Go on...get your but inside" Yaz rolled her eyes laughing relieved

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Yaz had drifted off halfway into the trip, her head gently resting on Theta's shoulder, her breathing slow and rhythmic as the train hummed along the tracks towards Brighton. Theta smiled, feeling the warmth of Yaz's cheek against her, the quiet comfort of having her so close. She continued to gaze out the window, watching as the green fields and scattered houses slipped by, bathed in the soft morning sun. The countryside stretched out in front of them, vast and peaceful, as if the world outside had slowed down just for them.

Theta reached for another crisp, her hand brushing the crumpled snack bag feeling more relaxed than she had in weeks. She savored the moment, her mind drifting, not just to the journey they were on now, but to the one waiting ahead of them, their baby boy, who would soon be a part of this life they were building together.

She smiled at the thought, picturing their next holiday with him in tow. The beach, the sound of waves, the warmth of the sun on their faces. It was all ahead of them, full of joy and new beginnings. She felt a deep sense of contentment. Her life was the one she had always hoped for, filled with love, security, and the kind of acceptance she had once thought impossible. She turned her gaze from the window to Yaz, sleeping peacefully beside her, her expression soft and serene. The sight of her stirred something tender in Theta, a quiet certainty that this was all she needed.

She reached for Yaz's hand, her fingers brushing gently over her knuckles, tracing the familiar curve of her skin. She was everything Theta had ever wanted out of life, her partner, her lover,

her home. There was nothing more to ask for. In that moment, surrounded by the rolling fields and the quiet hum of the train, Theta knew she had found her place in the world.

She leaned her head against Yaz's, closing her eyes for a moment, letting the peace wash over her. The future was bright, but the present was perfect.

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"It should be here," Yaz said, glancing down at her phone once more to confirm the address. The seagulls called above as the salty breeze from the sea brushed past them. They stood in the heart of Brighton, just steps away from the pier, in front of a charming townhouse with whitewashed walls and a quaint, coastal feel.

"Hello!" came a cheerful voice, pulling them out of their moment. Both Yaz and Theta turned around to see a woman with a friendly smile approaching. "I assume you're here for the apartment?"

"Oh, good morning," Yaz replied, stepping forward with a bright smile. "Yasmin Khan," she introduced herself, extending her hand. "This is my wife, Theta."

"Nice to meet you both," the woman said, shaking Yaz's hand, then Theta's. "You're a bit earlier than I expected, but no worries at all. Follow me." She gestured for them to follow as she led them toward the door of the charming house nestled in the bustling center of Brighton.

"It's a lovely place," Theta commented as they started climbing the flight of narrow stairs, the walls lined with photos of seaside landscapes and small pieces of quirky local art.

"It is, isn't it?" the woman agreed. "My husband and I bought it about ten years ago. We come here ourselves often, but when we're away, we rent it out. Helps keep the bills paid," she added with a little smile over her shoulder. "Here we go..." They stopped in front of a painted blue door, and the woman pulled out her phone to punch in the code for the electronic lock.

"Thank you," Yaz said, anticipation bubbling up as the door clicked open.

"Oh wow..." Theta's eyes widened as they stepped inside.

The apartment was even more charming than in the photos. Sunlight poured in through large balcony windows that offered a perfect view of the pier and the glistening sea beyond. The décor was simple yet elegant, with soft coastal hues, sand-colored couches, driftwood furniture, and seashell accents that gave the whole space a tranquil, seaside feel.

"Oh my God, this is stunning," Yaz breathed, clearly satisfied with her choice. She exchanged a glance with Theta, who was already wandering toward the windows to take in the view.

“You have a small kitchen over there,” the woman said, walking them through the space. “There are pots, pans, plates, mugs.... pretty much everything you need. I went ahead and filled the fridge with a few bits and pieces to get you started. Thought it might help you settle in.”

Theta, who had been staring out at the sea, turned back, surprised and warmed by the gesture. “Oh wow, that’s so lovely of you. We really appreciate it.”

“Thank you so much,” Yaz added.

“Here’s the code for the door,” the woman said, handing Yaz a little note. “And the password for the Wi-Fi is there as well.”

“Thank you,” Yaz repeated, her smile growing.

“Well, I just need to take your details for the booking, and I’ll leave you to enjoy your holiday,” the woman said, pulling out her phone again.

“That’s perfect,” Theta said, still smiling as she took Yaz’s hand. They exchanged a quiet look, both feeling excited.

Once the woman had left, Theta remained by the window, gazing out at the stunning view. The Brighton Pier stretched over the sea, shimmering in the late morning sun and the breeze carried the scent of saltwater through the slightly opened window. Yaz came up behind her, wrapping her arms around Theta's waist and resting her head on her shoulder, her breath warm against Theta's neck.

"Like it?" She hummed softly against her cheek

Theta turned her head just enough to meet Yaz’s eyes, her lips curving into a smile. "It's perfect," she whispered, and leaned in, capturing Yaz's lips in a gentle, lingering kiss.

She squeezed Yaz’s hand gently, her heart swelling with love for the woman beside her. Everything felt right, the trip, the apartment, and most of all, being here with Yaz.

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They showered and changed out of their travel clothes, the early morning journey still weighing on them. Theta started unpacking their bags, folding clothes and placing them neatly into drawers. Meanwhile, Yaz made herself busy in the kitchen, cracking eggs and slicing tomatoes, preparing a simple lunch with groceries the kind host had left for them in the fridge.

"Maybe you should have a little kip after lunch," Yaz suggested, glancing at Theta from across the room. "There’s no rush. I thought we could go for a walk later?"

Theta paused in her unpacking, the thought of resting didn't sound that bad after all. Her back was aching, and her feet felt heavy. "Might do, actually. But right now, I'm starving."

Yaz chuckled, shaking her head. "You ate all the snacks on the train. How the hell can you still be hungry?"

"Oi! I'm eating for two, remember?" Theta smugged as she passed behind Yaz, planting a playful kiss on her cheek. As she did, her hand cheekily brushed over Yaz's bum, a mischievous glint in her eyes.

"Feels more like three!" She grinned, turning back to the stove. "This is done. Can you grab some juice from the fridge, darling?"

"Sure thing,"

She pulled out a bottle of fresh juice, pouring two glasses as Yaz finished plating up their meal, scrambled eggs and a colorful salad of tomatoes and bell peppers.

They sat together at the small table by the window, the sunlight spilling across their plates. As they ate, they chatted lazily, the weight of the day slowly lifting with each bite. The food was simple but delicious, and Yaz couldn't help but smile as Theta practically devoured hers.

After lunch, Theta stretched, her body heavy with the need for rest.

"Go, I'll clean up" Yaz nodded

"Are you sure, you just cooked"

"And you can't keep your eyes open...Don't worry about it"

"Thaaaaank youuuu" as she stood behind her, Theta leaned over wrapping her arms around her shoulders planting a long soft kiss on her cheek.

She hummed lying down on the bed with a satisfied sigh. The journey had caught up with her, and within moments, she was fast asleep.

Yaz, on the other hand, felt wide awake, having napped on the train. She washed up and poured herself a cold drink tapping out to the balcony. She sank into the soft cushions of the wicker sofa making herself comfortable in the shade. The view was breathtaking, the sea stretching out in endless shades of blue, the pier lively with people below.

She leaned back, the gentle sound of the waves and the distant hum of Brighton's life washing over her. It was peaceful, and in that moment, she felt grateful for the quiet, for the simplicity of this time together before their baby arrived and life would become a different kind of wonderful.

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The evening air in Brighton was cool and fresh, the sky painted in shades of pink and orange as the sun slowly dipped below the horizon. Yaz and Theta strolled hand in hand along the promenade, the distant sound of the waves brushing against the shore. The pier was lively with the soft buzz of people enjoying the last light of the day.

Yaz swung their joined hands gently, glancing at Theta with a smile. "You okay? Not too tired?"

"Nope...I'm good," she replied, squeezing Yaz's hand. "It's nice, isn't it? Quiet, but still alive."

"Yeah. Perfect evening for a walk."

They wandered along, occasionally stopping to look at the colorful beach huts or the street performers setting up for their evening shows. The sounds of laughter, the distant music from a nearby bar, and the scent of sea air created a peaceful, almost dreamlike atmosphere. Everything felt easy, like the world had slowed down just for them.

After a while, they passed an ice cream stand that caught Theta's eye. "Fancy something sweet?" she asked with a teasing smile, already eyeing all the flavors on display.

Yaz chuckled, shaking her head. "Of course you spotted that."

They walked over, and Theta immediately started scanning the options, her eyes sparkling like in kid.

"Oh my God, they have honeycomb...and salted caramel...and mint chocolate chip. How am I supposed to choose?" she said dramatically "I'm just gonna have one of each"

"Or, you know, you could have one or two scoops, like a normal person." she teased cheekily

Theta smirked, nudging her playfully. "Excuse me.... I'm pregnant and therefore morally obligated to indulge in at least three scoops."

Yaz burst out laughing, shaking her head.

"What?" Theta said innocently, already leaning towards the counter. "I'm eating for two."

"Or possibly three" she chuckled kissing her cheek "I'm messing you around silly...You should see your face" she laughed "Go on...knock yourself out babe"

Yaz continued laughing as Theta ordered her trio of scoops, honeycomb, salted caramel, and mint chocolate chip, all stacked high in a waffle cone. She watched in amusement as Theta accepted the cone, her eyes wide as if she'd just won a prize.



Yaz, on the other hand, ordered a simple single scoop of strawberry. They found a nearby bench facing the sea. The sound of the waves lapping softly at the shore below them, a gentle breeze rustling their hair.

“So,” Yaz began, turning to Theta with a teasing smile, “how’s that three-scoop mountain treating you?”

Theta took an exaggeratedly large bite, eyes closing in bliss. “It’s glorious,” she said through a mouthful of ice cream. “You have no idea what you’re missing.”

Yaz laughed, shaking her head. “I don’t know, I’m pretty happy where I am.”

“You sure? This honeycomb is life changing.”

“I’m sure,” she smiled nudging her

There was a joy in her eyes as she watched Theta enjoy her ice cream. There was something so light and carefree about the moment, the way they could laugh and tease each other, the simplicity of sitting by the sea as the sky turned deeper shades of pink and purple.

After a while, Theta leaned her head against Yaz’s shoulder, her ice cream nearly finished, though she still licked the last remnants from the cone.

“This,” she murmured softly, “this is perfect. Just us. Here. Now.”

Yaz smiled, resting her head gently against Theta’s. “It is, isn’t it?”

For a moment, they just sat there, taking in the beauty of the evening, the warmth of their bodies close together, and the quiet joy of being in each other’s presence, they had everything they needed. The sea, the sky, the soft laughter between them, and most of all, the love that seemed to make everything around them just a little brighter.

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After having a long and exciting first day in Brighton, the sun had fully set, leaving a soft, dusky twilight that hung over the sea.

They returned to their apartment, their bodies pleasantly tired from the day’s adventures. The air was cool as they stepped inside, and without a word, they both gravitated to the balcony, eager to soak in the last bits of evening before winding down.

Theta settled into the wicker sofa, her body sinking into the plush cushions, and Yaz soon followed, sitting down beside her. Theta leaned into her, resting her head on Yaz’s shoulder, her body warm and relaxed from the day.

The soft glow of the pier's lights twinkled in the distance, the sound of the music from bars and distant laughter of people down below. It felt like a perfect ending to a perfect day.

Yaz's arm naturally wrapped around Theta, her hand resting gently on her growing belly, her fingers tracing small circles across the soft fabric of Theta's dress. They sat like that for a moment, in a comfortable silence, letting the peacefulness of the night settle around them.

"You know," Theta murmured, her eyes half-closed, "...it's so beautiful here. Can you imagine if we had a little apartment like this one day? Something small, by the sea... somewhere we could come and escape to, just us."

Yaz smiled, her gaze drifting out toward the dark horizon. "That would be awesome...A place like this... where we could spend summers."

Theta turned her head slightly, looking up at Yaz with a smile. "A little holiday spot. Maybe when things settle down...perhaps we could look into it. I'd love that."

Yaz nodded, her palm still gliding softly over Theta's belly, the rhythmic movement soothing them both. "I'd love that too..." she said softly, her lips finding Theta's forehead in a gentle kiss

As if planned, the baby suddenly stirred, a small but distinct movement beneath Yaz's palm as if agreeing with their plan. Both women jumped slightly, their eyes widening in surprise.

"Oh!" Theta gasped, laughing softly. "Did you feel that?"

"I did!" her face lighting up with excitement as she pressed her hand more firmly against Theta's belly, feeling the little kicks beneath her palm. "Oh my God, he's really moving around!"

"You think he heard us talking about the flat and he's like 'Yap...I'm up for that' " she laughed

Her own hand joining Yaz's, their fingers intertwined as they felt the tiny but powerful kicks together.

"Or he's probably just having a sugar rush from all that ice cream," Yaz teased then shook her head still amazed, her heart swelling with love and tenderness. "It's just... I can't believe how real this is getting" she looked softly at Theta's belly.

"I know," Theta whispered, her hand still resting on top of Yaz's. "It's crazy. We've waited this for so long, and now... he's almost here."

Yaz melted, her heart overflowing as she looked at Theta, her love for her growing deeper with each passing moment. The thought of becoming a mother, of raising their child together, filled her with an indescribable warmth.

"I'm so excited to see him, to hold him."

Theta closed her eyes, leaning into Yaz even more, feeling the warmth of her body and the comfort of her presence. “He's gonna be so loved” she whispered. “It’s gonna be everything.”

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