

Chapter 10

She watched dogs playing on the grass through the window for the past 15 minutes waiting for Jack to come back to the car with some food. They had a tuff day, and she was starving by this point. It was Thetas birthday tomorrow and she couldn't wait to finish her shift today.

"There you go love?" He said sitting back in the car passing her food.

"Thanks"

"You alright?"

"Yeah, just thinking I need to get a card for Theta after work. The problem is I'm meeting her, so I have no idea how to pull that off without her seeing it."

"Just wait when goes to toilet" he laughed "How come she's not having a party?"

"Can't organize people, everyone's all over the place. She will eventually.... probably next weekend. I'll let you know."

"Oh, did you hear about the sheep?"

"No, what about the sheep?" She frowned confused.

"We had a call yesterday from some woman saying her sheep are being abducted by aliens at night."

"Whaaaa?" She laughed.

"She said she saw strange lights hovering around the farm at night and keeps being woken up by the strange noises coming from the sky."

"What the fuck?"

"So, they went to check it out...Turns out some kids have been flying drones around filming sheep."

"OMG" she laughed.

She just had a few bites of food when they got a call from the station again.

"What's up?" Jack answered the radio.

"Someone reported a horrible smell coming from the house next door and they haven't seen anyone for a while. Can you check it out? 22 Rosewood Drive"

"We're on it. Buckle up Khan"

"I was really enjoying that" she complained putting her food away as her stomach screamed for more.

They knocked on the door but there was no answer. Jack leaned over to look through the window, but the pair of curtains obstructed his view, so they knocked on the door once more. Then Yaz heard something from the back of the house that sounded very much like the back door slamming and the broken pot. And she quickly figured out what it must mean. She darts towards Jack and they're sharing a thought.

"They're getting away" he hits the old wooden side door to the back of the house. From where he's standing, he clearly sees a man climbing the fence at the back of the garden. As Jack runs after him, Yaz carefully makes her way into the house. The smell coming from the inside hit her face and suddenly she no longer feels hungry. From a pile of dirty dishes to rotting leftovers of food and rubbish on every possible surface, the house looked like a scene from a horror movie. She's having to clear her way with a foot through the kitchen to the hallway then make her way into the living room which looks no different than the kitchen. Empty beer cans, half eaten pizza rotting on the coffee table, cigarette buds all over the place and a woman half-dressed lying on a torn old sofa. She looks either passed out, sleeping or worse, Yaz can't decide so the first thing she does is check her pulse.

"He got away" Jack says coming back trying to catch a breath "Fucking hell."

"She's out of it" Yaz points to what looked like drugs on the table.

"I'll call the ambulance."

"I'll check upstairs. Fucking state of this place"

She made her way up the stairs whilst Jack was making a call and checking the woman one more time.

"We need a medic, female in her twenties possible overdose...."

"Jack!" Yaz yelled from upstairs "Fuck....fuck...Jack."

He leaves everything and runs upstairs to find Yaz leaning over the cot picking up a baby

"Jesus!" He gasped horrified then made another call to the station "We need ambulance immediately..."

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Back at the station Yaz changed her clothes. As she closed the locker she leaned her forehead against it. Images from earlier on that day kept playing in her mind. Failing to push them away she thought the sooner she leaves the better, so she grabbed her jacket and car keys rushing out to meet with Theta.

"Hey, Khan" Jack called as she was about to sit in a car "You alright mate?"

"Will be" she pursed her lips

"We came in time, she's safe now."

"I know" she sighed opening the car door.

"Get some rest Yaz, do something nice, go buy that card."

"I will" she gave him a little wave and sat in the car. Tears collected in her eyes as she leaned over the wheel, then wiped her face and started the car.

As she walked down the high street, she saw Theta waiting for her outside Boots looking at her shiny phone with some soft toy hanging from it and Lola parked next to her in a pram. It brought a smile to her face for the first time in hours. She came up behind her and leaned into her ear.

"What's a pretty girl like you doing here by herself?" she said.

"None of your bloody business" she laughed then looked up "Is that your pickup line?"

"God forbid" she chuckled kissing her shortly then leaned over saying hello to Lola who was wagging her tail climbing the stroller "Sorry I'm late."

"It's alright, I had to pop into Boots anyway. Look what I got" she pulled a blue summer dress out of a bag.

"That's pretty "

"Thought I wear it tomorrow." She beamed haply but Yaz seemed a bit absent "You alright baby?" She reached out tucking a little curl behind her ear. It was obvious she was troubled, and her smile seemed forced.

"I am now" she smiled subtly.

"Is it to do with work darling?"

"Yeah...just tiered, that's all" Yaz replied shortly reaching for her hand, sifting her fingers threw hers but Theta knew it was more than that.

"You know you can talk to me about it?"

"I know baby, it's nothing.... really..." She had no intention of ever telling her the truth, There were parts of her job she never discussed with Theta as she figured it was for the best she never knew. Blissfully unaware of just how sick and twisted the world could be. Wishing sometimes she never knew herself. "Come on, let's go to the pet store" She tugged on her hand with a smile and enjoyed the bright side of the world for the rest of the afternoon.

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It was Thetas birthday and Yaz sneaked out of bed early to buy some flowers and get the present she bought for her out of garage where it was hidden for a pass week. The lack of big celebration suited Yaz as it made things more intimate between them. She had it all planned to the smallest detail a month ago, searching for the right kind of present, getting balloons, flowers, and a card. She never spent so much time looking for the right kind of wrapping paper, nor did she ever think that debating between two different shades of pink balloons would ever be such a priority in her life. She got out of the car and scrambled to get her phone out of her back pocket as it was ringing already whiles she was parking.

"Hey Ashley...Sorry I was parking."

"No problem honey, got a minute?"

"Yeah sure. Just going to get some flowers."

"That's nice, did you hear that? She's getting her flowers..." She yelled at her husband making Yaz laugh.

"I get you flowers?"

"You got me a tree for the garden. Hardly the same thing Bob. Sorry, just had to make a point...Anyways, just wanted to ask you for a massive favor."

"Sure, what's up?"

"I made a cock up. I ordered a cake for Theta online, but I didn't click the bloody box for delivery. Then I completely embarrassed myself having a go at them, and they kindly reminded me it was my mistake. So now instead of delivering it, someone has to pick it up.

"Oh boy" she laughed.

"The problem is that I'm not gonna have time now, I got food half done and Bob needs to get to work, I'm not sure when he's coming back, and someone needs to go and get the cake."

"No problem, I'll get it. Which cake shop? When?"

She was more than happy to offer, as at this point, she would drive up to Scotland for that cake if she had to.

"It's the one on a corner from WHSmith the one down the road from you. If you haven't got time, I'll figure something out...I know it's inconvenience..." she said embarrassed

"No, not at all...No problem, when?"

"It's ready for a pickup."

"I'll go and get it now then. I'm going there to get the card anyway."

"OMG you're a savior Yaz. Thank you so much."

"No problem. Theta isn't getting up for at least another two hours" she chuckled "So I got time."

"I owe you one."

"Absolutely, I'll put it on a list." She laughed "Is it on your surname?"

"Yes. Thanks honey. See you soon then. I really appreciate it."

"No problem, really...See you soon."

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She picked up a bouquet of beautiful dusky pink and white roses wrapped up in pearl white paper and finished off with a bunch of matching pink and white ribbons. After spending almost half an hour in WHSmith she picked the most baby glittering musical card she could possibly find with some cute elephant and rainbows then headed to the cake shop. The little bell above the door jingled as she walked inside, and she waited by the counter to be served, admiring the cakes on display. A young woman walked from the back and Yaz's eyes popped opened wide with surprise.

"Ebele?" She looked at the woman stunned.

"OMG Yaaaaz!!!!" The young woman squealed excited.

"Bloody hell!" Yaz smiled as the other woman ran around the fridge to meet her throwing herself at her.

"I can't believe it."

"What the fuck are you doing here? Aren't you meant to be in the US?" They pulled apart after a long hug.

"I got divorced" she said pursing her lips. Her eyes spelled sadness but she quickly changed her expression excited to see her old friend again after three long years of being separated.

"OMG I'm so sorry babe."

"I was gonna call you...I just came back last week. It's been crazy to be honest and I was just in weird head space. I should've written...sorry."

"It's alright, I get it...it's understandable...I'm so sorry babe. What the hell are you doing in a cake shop?"

"My mum's friend owns it. I'm just helping her this weekend, the girl who works here broke her arm. What are you doing here?"

"I came to pick up a cake for my girlfriend."

"Aaaaa new girlfriend...good for you honey. How new?"

"Six months new."

"Happy?"

"Crazy happy." She glowed haply.

"Aaaa look at that smile. I hope she's the one."

"I think so" she giggled.

"Waaaw...I'm so happy for you honey."

"Babe, what about you? What the fuck happened?"

"Ah...long story girl...I don't even know where to start." She sighed deeply "We need to catch up. I'm free on Wednesday."

"Yeah sure. I work morning next week. Please I wanna see you."

"I wanna see you too. I missed you so much."

"I missed you too" Yaz said hugging her again.

"Same number?"

"Yap. Sorry I won't keep you" she said as some other customers walked in

"Khan?"

"No, Ashley McGalagar, her mum ordered."

"Your girl, what's her name?"

"Theta"

"Cuuute. Let me get the cake for you."

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As soon as she parked in the driveway Ashley came outside, followed by a pack dogs as usual. It was a hot day despite being only 10 am the sun was already blasting through the windows, and Yaz was worried the cake would melt at the back seat, and the flowers would wilt, so she kept it covered with her jacket and put the air-conditioning on.

"Oi, stop sniffing my but you" she fought the dogs away bending at the back seat.

"Get off her Rupert!" Ashley dragged her golden retriever away. "You're being rude."

"Hiya, here we go. Cake delivery ma'am" she smiled passing her the box.

"Thank you honey. That's so sweet of you. Fancy a cuppa tea?"

"I do actually, but I'd prefer coffee if you don't mind. Haven't had one this morning."

"Actually, I might have one as well now when you mentioned. How've you been love?"

"Not bad I suppose...." Yaz replied a bit distracted by cuddling the dogs as she followed Ashley back into the house. "Just working a lot of Saturdays. I applied for my passport" she smiled proudly.

"Oh, did you? Looking forward to the trip?"

"I can't wait, I'm so excited. It's my first time to go out of the country."

"You're gonna have a fantastic time, you'll see. Spain is so beautiful. And the smell of air and all those Mediterranean plants aaah...nothing better" she said dreamy
"Waaaw...they've done such a wonderful job." Ashley said, opening the box as soon as they walked into the kitchen.

"Blimey, ooooh she's gonna lose it over that cake. I got her a set of suitcases for birthday."

"Well, that's very practical."

"Buuut not just any suitcases...Little Mermaid. Look" Yaz showed her a photo from her phone

"OMG where did you find those?" Ashley couldn't stop laughing.

"You'd be surprised what they have on-line. She's seen that movie at least ten times. She's such a kid sometimes. But it's nice when you can keep that part even though you've all grown up. It's what I love about her so much."

"I know what you mean...She's like her dad in that. I've always loved that about him. All those toys and his TARDIS. Suppose it also keeps him from losing it sometimes...You know.... doing what he does sometimes gets to him."

"Yap....same here... I see such shit at my work, then I meet up with her after and see her standing there with her dog stroller holding her glittery phone with that fluffy toy hanging off it and I... dunno...Just makes me laugh I suppose...puts a smile on my face when I had a shit day. I should go, thanks for the coffee"

"Thank you"

"No worries. When do you want us to come over?"

"Oh, around five I suppose. Hopefully Bob should be home about six."

"Alright, well, see ya then."

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Theta was up and about by the time she came back. Sitting in the living room still in her pajamas, eating breakfast and watching one of her shows. Yaz quickly pulled the birthday gift inside and hid the flowers behind her back. It wasn't really what she planned. Originally, she was going to leave it all in the bedroom for when she wakes up, so she had to improvise.

"Hi!"

"Hiya!" Theta smiled from the living room

"You're up?" She said surprised.

"Well, when I saw it was almost noon, I figured it's about time for me to get my ass out of bed." She giggled "Where you've been?"

"Oh, you know...just mucking about" she smiled walking in and leaned over dropping her a short kiss "Happy birthday snuggle bug" she smiled

"Thaaaank youuuu" Theta smiled silly then Yaz popped the flowers in front of her face, and she practically jumped off the sofa.

"Flowers!!! They're soooo beautiful." She gushed "Thank you honey" she hooked her fingers at the nape of her neck pulling her for one more kiss.

"C'mere" Yaz tugged on her hand "Close your peepers."

"Do I have to?" She giggled.

"Yees you do" she said positioning her in the middle of the living room "Wait here"

"Yes ma'am!" she chuckled fidgeting excited like a kid, keeping her eyes shut whilst Yaz got her presents out.

"Open"

"OMG...are those suitcases for our holiday?!" She jumped excitedly.

"That obvious?" she laughed looking at the handles poking through the wrapping paper and the pink heart-shaped balloons tied to them "Buuuut...wait until you see what kind of suitcases"

"I'm so excited. And you got me balloons and this paper...I'm keeping that."

"I thought you might" she laughed.

Theta grinned sitting on the floor taking the paper off carefully not to damage it too much, then squealed so loud Yaz burst out laughing. "No fucking way...are you kidding me!..." she yelled "Baaaaby!" She jumped to her feet throwing herself at her so hard Yaz almost lost her balance pissing herself laughing.

"You're strangling me" she laughed closing her arms around her waist.

"You're spoiling me rotten" Theta showered her whole face and lips with kisses.

"It's why I have you" she hummed content rocking her side to side "There might, or might not be a matching make-up bag inside" she giggled.

Theta shook her head smiling "You're crazy...God, I love you" she draped her arms over her shoulders.

"Love you too snuggle bug." She smiled kissing the tip of her nose.

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"Guess who I bumped into today?" Yaz said dropping herself on a sofa while Theta was putting flowers in the water.

"Who?"

"Remember my mate Ebele, the one I told you about who went to US?"

"Really?"

"Yeah, she's back...but back for good. She's got divorced."

"Oh nooo. What happened?"

"Dunno. She works in a cake shop so we didn't have time for a proper chat. I can't believe it they seemed so solid."

"Is she ok?"

"I don't knooooow. She seemed so, but you never know, do you."

"It must be hard. "

"I'd like her to meet you. But I should probably meet up with her alone for the first time."

"Sure, but yes, you should go alone. She might not feel comfortable talking about private stuff in front of me."

"Yeah, that's what thought."

Theta placed the flowers and the card on top of the chest of drawers and tied the balloons behind. "There we go...looks nice, right?"

"Looks cute..." she smiled then went quiet thinking "I wonder how she'll cope with family."

"Why?" Theta asked, making herself comfortable on a sofa leaning against her for a cuddle "Did she have trouble?"

"Well, they weren't happy when she turned up with a woman on a doorstep saying she's getting married. It went down like a ton of bricks."

"Didn't she tell them before?"

"Nooo...she kept hiding it for almost a year. They knew she's seeing someone, just assumed it was a bloke. They were left a bit shocked as you can imagine. At first tried talking her out of it, trying to convince her she was all a bit confused in her head, then it got nasty, so she moved out. Not everyone is understanding and normal about it like your mum and dad" she kissed her forehead "And in all fairness she should've spoken to them earlier, not just come out with it like that. I can't see them being thrilled with her coming back."

"Poor girl. I hope she'll be alright."

"Me too" she said worriedly lacing their fingers together, feeling grateful she never had to deal with the same problem with Thetas family, or her own for that matter. It was something she considered herself extremely blessed for.

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There was garland made of dusky pink and cream balloons tied up above the door of her parents' home and it put a smile on Yaz's face as they pulled up in the driveway. It wasn't a party, just the usual Saturday lunch with the exception of a birthday cake, but she loved the effort her parents put into it. Theta smiled like a bright ray of sunshine when she saw it.

"Blimey...It's so hot" Theta said as they walked out of the car and let Lola run around.

"We're gonna have a hell of a summer again. Maybe we should get air-con. Lola you can't piss all over your grannies flowers every time...Blimey."

"You know what, I think you're right, we should. I'll call the guy who put it in our office."

"Hiya!" Ashley smiled opening the door.

"Hi mum!"

"Happy birthday darling" she said giving her a massive hug

"Thaaaaank youuuu. Well, you did all the work mum it's you who should get the present" she said hugging her "12 hours she's been in labor" she turned to Yaz

"Blimey babe, you were stubborn?" Yaz laughed.

"She was, wouldn't go out."

"It were nice and comfy inside" Theta giggled "Is dad at work?"

"He'll be home around half six. Some emergency surgery"

"Oh, shame. It's not the same without him" she frowned disappointed.

"Your garden looks lovely now when everything bloomed" Yaz said standing at patio door.

"Those roses there, I just potted them this autumn and look at them now. I'll have some nice tomatoes soon, if we have enough sun."

"Oh, I think we'll have plenty by the looks of it mum."

"So, this is from your dad and me. Happy birthday love" Ashley passed her the envelope with a card "We just thought we give you money. You get yourself something nice."

"Thank yooooou. I'll keep it for a holiday."

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"Did Katherine call you?" Her mum asked as everyone was having dinner.

"Nooo" she nodded.

"That human piece of excrement"

"Ashley!" Bob jumped.

"Sorry love" she turned to Yaz who looked confused.

"My aunt" Theta leaned over towards Yaz "Dad's sister."

"Oh"

"It doesn't matter " Theta said dragging the fork over her plate.

"It does matter."

"She doesn't approve of...you know...you and me." Theta turned to Yaz

"Oh"

"It's none of her bloody business who you sleep with. It's not her place to approve or not, nobody asked her. And don't you dare bring her here" Ashley turned to her husband

"I wasn't going to!"

"Good, cause I'm done with her shit a long time ago, enough is enough. Not to even call her for her birthday, fucking bitch"

"Mum, it's alright...Let's just forget her today"

"Sorry honey, it just pissed me off. It's disgusting"

Yaz was surprised to hear Ashley speak like that. She never heard her swearing or get angry like that. She now knew for sure they felt more relaxed in front of her, and she found it comical in a way.

"I didn't expect her to understand in the first place. And I don't really give a shit what she thinks, the only people I care about as far as that's concerned are you and dad. Everyone else can piss right off if they don't like it."

"She always had a broom stuck up her ass" her father casually mentioned leaving his fork on a side.

"New money syndrome" Theta filled in the gaps for Yaz who went quiet "She thinks she's something special."

"She didn't have a pot to piss in before she got married" Ashley added.

"Right...I know few people with a same syndrome."

"Cake everyone?" Ashley smiled brightly getting up as if the conversation didn't happen and Yaz chuckled looking at Theta.

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When they got home Yaz took Lola for an evening walk while Theta stayed home making popcorn. She was about to step inside the building when she got a surprise call from Jack.

"Hey, what's up?"

"I just had a call from Nick, they arrested Mark an hour ago."

"What?"

"He lost his shit down the pub, trashed the place. Pissed as a fart and high as a kite. Just thought I would let you know."

"Bloody hell, I can't tell her, it'll freak her out."

"I know, just keep it in mind. He's probably gonna be out by tomorrow. For now, he's leaving her alone so it might be nothing, but he's definitely out of control."

"Thanks for letting me know."

She hang up and sighed "Fucking cockroach"

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"That smells yummy" Yaz smiled gliding her hands down Thetas arms and kissed her shoulder.

"They're still hot."

"Butter?"

"Yap" Theta smiled popping one in Yaz's mouth.

"Mmmmm..."

"More salt?"

"Maybe just a tiny bit more. Don't wanna shrivel up like a raisin" she chuckled closing her arms around her feeling anxious. But Theta falling into her embrace felt like a warm blanket calming her down.

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