

Chapter 6

They were already buzzing around the newly restored ship early in the morning. Yaz running over the last instructions with the Doctor, fumbling about the new console, which, while similar to the Tardis, has significant differences and limits. Sandy took the opportunity to double-check her own equipment to ensure she was ready for anything, being now well aware of Yaz's words from not too long ago. She was also going through all the data she transferred on Lanni concerning the experiments they were doing with alien bacteria.

"Well, I think I got it" Yaz said glancing at the Doctor across the console "We'll soon find out."

"If we open the door and see dinosaurs, we know we have a problem" Sandy laughed

"Believe me there's worse places I can think of" Yaz chuckled.

"Just need to remember these ships thrusters are a lot more sensitive than the Tardis Yaz" Doctor said

"And newer" she laughed winking at her

"Oi...excuse me!" she pointed a finger at her

"I mean you must admit..." she laughed

"Mmmwhaa" Doctor scrunched her nose "Suppose so...definitely less milage"

"Still...nothing like the Tardis" she smiled locking eyes with her

"Exuse me..." Sandy said "Have any of you two ever heard of Praxtoria?"

"Say what Sandy?" the Doctor asked, "Did you say Praxtoria?"

"Yap...I think that's what it says? It's hard for me to follow when it's translating to another language" she pointed to her screen "It looks like it's a bacteria which is growing on some fungi"

"Yes Sandy...I very much heard of that. In fact, it is very unique to this planet..." she hopped across the console leaning over her shoulder

"Why? Is that the bacteria that's causing that disease?" Yaz asked

"No..." Sandy said, "But remember when I said to you how they combined it with the alien bacteria to make it reproduce faster?"

"Aaaaaa....of course...Why haven't I thought of that" Doctor jumped " Now that makes sense"

"What's that?" Yaz asked

"I'll show you Yaz"

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They arrived on the other side of the planet. This side has been uninhabited for centuries since the war ended as Doctor explained as side effects could still be felt to this day. Ground was still toxic in some places and not suitable to grow food or drink water. Yaz opened the door and was left speechless.

"Wooooow...."

"Well, that's gonna make quite few stews" Sandy said looking over her shoulder at the massive blue mushrooms towering over their heads like trees

"Meet Praxtoria" Doctor said "see the white stuff on the stems..."

"That's the bacteria, isn't it?" Sandy asked

"Yes...the mushrooms are packed with it which makes these mushrooms grow super-fast" Doctor said

"Is it dangerous?" Yaz asked cautiously scanning a sonic over it

"Not at all Yaz...it was actually anomaly created after the war, soil was soaked in chemicals and toxic waste...horrible stuff...Unfortunately it impacted plants and animals changing their genetical structure, in fact it changed this planet quite a bit from how it used to look like 50 000 years ago. This was one of the milder changes..." she shrugged "At least this was harmless compared to all the other stuff...just big mushrooms"

"Can I take a sample of that Doctor?" Sandy asked

"Speaking my language Sandy...go ahead"

"I would like to run some tests on it. With UNIT's help maybe we can develop a cure"

"Aaaaa....that's smart Sandy" Doctor said

"So if it came from this planet...could it be that...." Yaz looked towards the Doctor

"He made it?" Doctor finished her sentence

"Yeah...Told you...he kept coming here"

"Possibly Yaz...We can't be sure though...too many questions not enough answers yet..."

"Could this be what they needed and blackmailed him for it?" Sandy said while scraping the stem of the massive mushroom

"It is possible?" Doctor said "We need to find out more"

"Maybe this why they killed him" Yaz said

".... Maybe they just didn't need him anymore once the job was completed" Sandy said

"We always thought he was just getting information for them...selling highly classified data...not that he was involved at this level."

"Just more questions" Doctor said

"Alright mushrooms...thanks for that" Sandy looked up squinting her eyes from the sun "They're really big...Reminds me of Alice in Wonderland."

"Mmmm...no giant caterpillars Sandy" Doctor said getting back into the ship "...I don't like those...Believe me you don't want to come across them...Very nervous creatures"

Sandy laughed not knowing if it was a joke or if the Doctor was actually telling the truth. But she tended to believe her more with each day.

"Let's go and speak to his family. Hopefully we'll get out of here with something more than a fungi or Kate is gonna make a penicillin out of all of us together" Yaz said pressing few things on the console "Hold on..." she said pulling the lever.

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"Let me do all the talking Yaz" Doctor said as they walked down the cobbled little pathway "...I know how to speak to these people. They are not so friendly on this side of the hemisphere and they don't like strangers"

"Alright..." she shrugged as they climbed up to one of the houses

Yaz knocked on the door and the older woman opened up "Can I help you?"

"I hope so...I'm the Doctor, this Yaz and Sandy"

"You're a hologram and I don't need the doctor...I think you're at the wrong house" she said and slammed the door

"Did she just slam the door into my face?" Doctor turned deeply offended

"I think she did" Sandy said

"How rude!" she said adjusting her coat

"Well, that didn't go down too well" Yaz chuckled and knocked again

"I said I don't need the doctor" the woman said opening the door frustrated

"We're here about your son" Yaz said putting her hand on the door "...I'm afraid we've got some bad news"

"My son?" the woman stopped as she was about to close the door on them again

"I'm so sorry.... your son was killed"

"Well, that was subtle" Doctor said sarcastically

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The woman was crying her eyes out for over fifteen minutes completely incapable of talking. They sat at the table looking at each other hoping she would calm down enough to be able to get any information out of her.

"I'm so sorry about what happened" Yaz said "But we need your help...Our planet is in danger and it's really important for us to ask you few questions about your sons work"

The woman sniffed wiping her nose with a tissue "I understand...You want the book don't you?" she got up and walked away into the other room

"What book?" Yaz frowned

"Yes!....Yes we do..." Doctor signaled "That's exactly what we came for," the Doctor said as she grinned and looked at Yaz, who was confusedly waving her hands.

"What exactly is she talking about?" Sandy whispered into Yaz's ear.

"No clue" she replied confused as the woman came back

Suddenly there was a sound of broken pottery. Sandy looked down at the table as the red liquid spilled from the broken jug, then looked up. The woman's dress had a damp stain and something green was soaking through the fabric

"Fuck" Yaz grabbed Sandy's arm and dragged her down to the floor as shattered pottery smashed around them.

"Aaaaa!!....Nooo!" Doctor yelled looking at the woman falling to the ground

"OMG" Sandy's eyes locked with the ladies for a split second as life slowly drained from them. She felt dread running through her as she had never seen anyone dying.

A shaking hand delved inside her dress, and she pulled out a little green journal. The Doctor watched helplessly as her final breath left her lips.

"We have to leave...right now!" Yaz said, "Doctooooor!" She yelled for her as she watched her disappear out of the room, then looked around searching for a way to get them out "Window...other side" she pointed "Go, go, go!"

Sandy grabbed the diary and crawled on the floor towards the small window before turning to check for Yaz

"Just good!!.... I'm behind you!" Yaz said securing the door with a sonic and followed her

"Right...I can jump that," Sandy was trying to reinsure herself, staring down at the thin bridge, "Piece of cake." It was a long jump, but she didn't have much of a choice, so she began climbing out.

"Wait! "Give me your hand," Yaz said grabbing her. She lowered her down as much as she could leaving her dangling through the window.

"Let go of me Yaz....it's fine!" Sandy yelled and jumped down as Yaz released her.

She dived down screaming as shots were fired above her head. Yaz used sonic to disable the guns of two people below, then crawled out the window as they fumbled.

"Aaaaaaa....Missed me" Doctor grinned as she hopped from one place to another, "Oh come ooon mate...you can do better than that," she smugged, bouncing again and coming right next to one person, "Booo!" she said, making him jump.

"It's a hologram" one of them yelled turning frantically around trying to find her

"Missed me again!" she flashed in front of him

"Damn hollo!" the other one yelled waving his arms around hysterically as Doctor kept hopping from one person to the next

"Tag...you're next!" she said as she materialized in front of one of them, pointing her finger into his face while he continued blinking and waving his hand through her glitching image.

"I swear I'm gonna fry your damn circuits!"

"Go on...I dare you!" she stood in front of him open arms smug as ever "Neah.. didn't think so" she scrunched her face

Yaz finally caught a glimpse of her bouncing from one place to the next, driving their pursuers insane.

"Well, that's gonna keep them busy" she laughed and grabbed Sandy's hand "Let's go!"

They ran towards the ship as fast as they could. Yaz stormed through the door, yelling "Dooctor!" and flicking the switches, "Time to go!"

"Hiya!" she flashed next to Sandy making her scream

"Doctoor....don't do that!" she said trying to catch her breath

"Oh...so sorry Sandy....didn't mean to scare you"

"Let's go" Yaz said pulling the lever

They were back in Antarctica in a flash. Yaz half wondered when Antarctica suddenly become their base, but there they were yet again.

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"I think we're in trouble," Sandy muttered, sitting on the steps next to the Doctor. She continued nervously twirling the hem of her sleeve as she watched Yaz pacing up and down the control room on the phone.

"With Kate? Neah...don't worry...I know Kate for a long time...And her dad...did I mention that?"

"No" she said worried "How old are you, Doctor?"

"Can't remember"

Sandy's eyes widened like saucers

"...It's all a bit confusing...Also, stopped counting at some point...Maybe 3000...give or take..."

"Holly bananas Doctor...you're older than Rome"

"Yaz...Sandy's not a field operative...She's got no weapons training..." Kate said, "I still don't think you two should be going around alone. I appreciate your experience, but I think I should send you a backup"

"Pleaseeee nooo...you know I prefer working alone. We can handle this...we're a good team...besides I don't use weapons you know that"

"But everyone around you does"

"Well not everyone"

"Yaaaaz!" she raised her voice

"Alright, alright.... I get it...We're fine honest... and we're getting to it..."

"Also, can you make sure you put up some sort of shields, so I don't have to explain why we have an unidentified ship appearing and disappearing from the radar.... I just had to tell some Bafta winning lies to some very important people today"

"Sure...absolutely...shields up from today. I'm still getting used to it, it's no Tardis"

"No, apparently not"

"Well, I will send you all the information as soon we have it"

"Look after yourselves, Yaz...You're doing a great job but if something were to happen to you two, I would despise having to explain it to a certain someone...You are under my care."

Yaz choked for a second at the very mention of that certain someone and glanced towards the Doctor's hollo "No... of course not" she said barely audible "I'll call you" she said clearing her throat.

"Alright..."

"Well?" Sandy asked worried "What did she say?"

"She said she wants you back at the office" Yaz said

"Whaaaaa...but..no..."

"I said no chance in hell" she smiled

"OMG" she exhaled relieved ".... stop that..."

"Right...let's see what's in that diary...Oh...also...do we have shields?"

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A few minutes later Sandy was flipping through the pages of the diary with Yaz looking over her shoulder impatiently. Pages which might as well been written in Japanese meant nothing to her.

"Whaaaat?" Yaz asked glancing sporadically between Sandy and the Doctor

"Well give us a minute" Doctor said

"It's been at least five" Yaz said

"Four and a half to be precise" she said

"Whatever...what does it say? Come ooon I'm gonna combust here..."

"It's all his work Yaz" Sandy said

"Well, I get that much...what work?"

"It looks like he was doing a lot of experiments and researching into rare forms of diseases when he was younger..." Sandy said "This dates back years ago...see, he was maliciously putting dates...There's all kinds of stuff in here"

"Looks like he was trying to find a cure for many of them" Doctor said "...But there's nothing here about this particular one, most I've heard of like this one here.... nasty stuff"

"So, it's a duff diary?"

"Didn't say it was duff...just nothing for now which would suggest any connection to what we're looking for"

"Well, someone wanted it bad enough to kill his mum" Sandy said

"Maybe they just thought it had something in it when it actually doesn't" Yaz said

"There's nothing in this!" Sandy said deflated closing the book

"Well, that was disappointing" Doctor said pouting and turned on her heel.

"Guess I'm just gonna be in a kitchen then...." Yaz turned disappointed "...eating something normal for a change"

"I'm gonna put that bacteria through some tests and I will send all the information I have to the UNIT" Sandy said getting up deflated

"I'll go through the ship log" Yaz said "... If there's nothing in his office or in this diary it must be somewhere on this ship. At least now I can understand the language...If we track his steps, we will find it"

"That's a good idea Yaz" Doctor said

"Right now, it doesn't seem that hopeful" Sandy pouted her lips

"Sometimes the answer is right in front of you..." Doctor said "It's just hard to see from all the other stuff...It gets a bit fuzzy"

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Sandy walked down the long hallway following her little map as she now yet again had to get used to the new layout. The ship reminded her of a jigsaw puzzle. Her little robot was following her around like a puppy, he was squeaking a lot less now but still needed repairing. Coming almost to the end of the hallway she opened one of the doors.

"Waaaaaw" she gasped with a big smile walking into a relatively small but fully equipped lab with machines she had never seen before. But she loved challenging herself and this was quite an intriguing challenge.

"Well that's what's you call a lab" she said exited looking down at her robot and he chirped in response staring at her with his big eyes "You need a name... Okay... let's see how this thing works... Hopefully I can figure this out without blowing myself up," she said as she walked around the large glass tube that came down from the ceiling trying to figure out what it was or how to use it. She was hoping to be able to access some sort of user manual from the ship.

The Doctor was buzzing around the ship. Being a hollo, she could access parts that Yaz couldn't so she was trying to decode the encrypted information that Sandy had downloaded from the factory before the guard robots attacked them.

Yaz has been at the console for nearly four hours. A half-eaten sandwich sat on the plate next to her, and the cup of coffee had long since cooled. She rested her head on her hand and ran her finger across the screen. If this was a Tardis, they'd already be on their way. But this ship was different, and while the appearance comforted her, everything else brutally reminded her otherwise. Every day she became more aware of what the Doctor meant when she mentioned its limitations, but they managed so far and that was the most important thing. She missed humming the most, the dead silence of this ship was maddening.

Suddenly, among the endless boring information flowing across the screen, she came across something that caught her attention. A repetitive destination she had seen before. She typed in the location and a map popped up above the console.

"What are you?" she spun the image in the air. A nameless planet in a galaxy unknown to her, far on the edges of what the Doctor called her universe was intriguing and exciting at the same time. She got up and rushed to find Sandy

"What the hell," Yaz muttered as she walked down the hall. Tremors of the bass could be felt beneath her feet. "What the fuck?" her mouth dropped as she stood by the open door

The music was so loud she could have sworn the petri dishes were bouncing off the round countertop in the middle of the room. A glass tube in the corner that shines some green lights inside and a hologram projection of some sort of microscopic organisms hovering above the table. Sandy didn't even hear her come inside. She was engrossed in her work bent over her computer, her hair in two braids that fell over her shoulders, dressed in a green lab coat that for some reason confused Yaz more than anything else in the room. When and how did she get a lab coat? She almost tripped over the robot on the floor.

"Sandy" she yelled but the music was so loud the one could barely hear themselves thinking "Oi...Banana!!" she shouted finally getting her attention

"Hey!" Sandy flashed her a smile as she turned around

"I need to show you something" she yelled over the music

"Whaaa?" she frowned then walked over to a display on a wall

"I have to show you..." she yelled "Bloody hell...My ears are bleeding" she said relieved when she finally turned down the music

"What is that?"

"Oh, that's the bacteria Yaz"

"I meant that music"

"Oh...Armin van Buuren" she said haply "Like it?"

"Nooo...not really"

"Oh"

"...But if it makes you happy" her eyes caught the row of gummy bears on the table. Lined up from yellow to blue like a little audience right next to her computer. She was stunned for words and afraid to ask for the reason.

"Mmmmm ...hey look" she hopped across the room "This place is amazing...I could do all my tests in less than an hour...It did take me three hours to figure out how use all this though...But look..." she pointed to the hologram grinning "Meet our bacteria."

"Charming"

"I don't have a sample of the actual mutated form...Obviously...and I still can't figure out how they combined the two together, but I did some tests, and this is really interesting"

"What's interesting?"

"See bacteria are prokaryotes, lacking well-defined nuclei and membrane-bound organelles, and with chromosomes composed of a single closed DNA circle...Well this one has five"

"Riiiiight" Yaz's brain felt like it was on fire. She was embarrassed to say it but she felt utterly stupid at this point. She was also hoping it didn't show on her face.

Sandy looked at her face as it was almost in a spasm, she found it cute how she was desperately trying to hide it. "You look confused?"

"No shit"

"Ok...so us humas have 46 chromosomes, 23 pairs, bacteria is just one cell Yaz...one single cell and its DNA presents as a single circular chromosome, although some bacteria may contain two chromosomes, and in some cases the DNA is linear rather than circular but that's beside the point here...What's really odd Yaz is that this particular creature has five of them...Way too many..."

"So, it's alien"

"Aaarh...or something else"

"Ok...what is it then?"

"Not sure" she shrugged "It's what I'm trying to find out. For example, an extra copy of chromosome 21 in humans causes Down syndrome. So, I assume this extra copy is what the Doctor was saying...mutation which happened to the bacteria. Unless...."

"Unless what?"

"Unless alien bacteria have five chromosomes" she shrugged

Yaz looked at her in complete disbelief. She was trying to restrain herself from laughing but it was so silly that her lip twitched, and she just screamed.

"Oi!!!" Sandy frowned and smacked her shoulder

"You've spent all this time here for five chromosomes which may be normal?"

"They may not be" she said smug then started laughing "I may have made a scientific breakthrough"

"May...or its just normal" Yaz laughed even more "Come on Marie Curie" she draped her arm over her shoulder "We're gonna ask the Doctor about this later...Unlike you I have discovered a new planet"

"Are we having a pissing competition?" Sandy laughed

"Maybe" Yaz giggled "What's with the gummy bears?"

"Helps me think if I speak to someone...And my robot needs changing so..."

Yaz burst out laughing "You silly Minion."

She looked at her so tenderly, her green eyes so close she could see the hazel circle around her pupils as the bright light from the ceiling shined on her face. She felt a rush of heat burning her cheeks and turned her gaze towards the hallway, but her hand was stuck over her shoulder as if it was glued there and had a mind of its own. Then Sandy slipped her arm around her waist and that was enough to make Yaz forget to walk for a moment.

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"I'm not familiar with that planet," said the Doctor hunched over the console looking at the projection and reached out to move it, then sighed as her hand ran through it "Arh... Yaz... could you...."

"Sure..." she quickly stepped forward rotating the image

"How did you find it?" The Doctor asked and got no answer then looked towards Yaz who was looking down at the console "Yaz" she repeated softly

"Ha?" She lifted her head "Sorry...what did you just..."

"How did you find it...the planet?"

She swallowed hard before answering, "In the ship's log... It kept coming up, twenty-five voyages in the last year. Seems like an odd pattern."

"Sure is...Well spotted Yaz..."

"What's out there?"

"Honestly...dunno...It's a part of the universe everyone mostly avoids"

"Why is that Doctor?" Sandy asked "Is it dangerous?"

"No... not at all Sandy. See there's parts of the universe, which is very young, new stars begin born, no civilizations, planets which are not inhabitable because conditions on them could not sustain life...It's wonderful but apart from admiring the beautiful scenery not much else to do there. That's why this planet has no name"

"So why go there?" Sandy asked

"That's what makes it even more intriguing...We should definitely have a look...But" she turned towards them "We have to take precautions...This could potentially be a very hostile environment."

"How do we know that?" Sandy asked, "Can we scan it?"

"If we had Tardis we wouldn't have to" Doctor said "But in this case we do"

"May I ask Doctor...Why wouldn't we have to if we had the Tardis?"

"Tardis exists across all of time and space or more precise outside of time, she sees everything, knows everything Sandy..." Doctor turned towards the console "So she would already have that information ready for us" she sighed looking up

"Waaaaaw...that's....waaaw...a bit mind blowing"

"Anyways" Doctor turned, and her eyes fixed on Yaz's over Sandy's shoulder "We should get all the information we need if we get close enough"

"Alright..." Yaz said "We'll go first thing in the morning..."

"That's existing...one more planet...Oh, oh Doctor....I have a question if you have time"

"Always Sandy?"

"It's about the bacteria I took from the mushrooms...."

Yaz chuckled rolling her eyes "Alright....I'm leaving you to it...I'll be in a living room" she said walking out of the control room

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The living room was comfy. Stone-like walls, like the rest of the ship, bathed in a soft warm light, with crooked bookshelves built into them, huge pillows spread on the floor, and a round coffee table in the center. Yaz fell into the soft sofa like into the clouds, velvety fabric felt so soothing against the bare skin of her arms.

The air smelled of honey or something so similar to the willow flowers in a spring. Her gaze was drawn to a large spherical light on the ceiling and a display of starlight sky beyond it. It appeared to be the same as the fake window in her bedroom. But she missed the vibrations and the humming. It all felt like some bizarre version of her past sometimes. Desperate attempt of imitating what's permanently lost, and she half wondered where they both were doing it because it made it easier for them to deal with present. Like they were both stuck somewhere in between, with one foot on each side and she wondered if that feeling would ever go away.

"Hi" Sandy said quietly from the door "Sorry...am I bothering you?"

She was holding mugs of hot chocolate, but now she felt that maybe this was bad timing and maybe she should have left her to herself.

"Heeey..." she looked up behind arching her back

"I made some hot chocolate...but if you rather be alone..."

"Nooo, don't be silly...C'mere" she reached out her arm

"Are you alright?" She asked, concerned, despite the fact that she already knew the answer. Even though she was trying to hide it, her eyes were red from crying "I thought some hot chocolate might cheer you up a bit"

"Thaaaaank youuuu...it always cheers me up" she smiled "So what did the Doctor say about your bacteria?" she smiled sitting up leaning against the side of the sofa "Uuu that smells nice"

"Cinnamon, rum and a touch of chili...Be careful...it's hot" she smiled taking a sip

"Bloody hell Sandy...trying to make us drunk" she laughed

"Maybe I should" she chuckled "Anyway I was right...five chromosomes is way too much as it goes. I'll do more tests tomorrow just thought I check on you before I go to bed. You seemed upset"

"I'm fine...just sometimes..." she looked sideways randomly across the room "You know...I wish..."

"That she's palpable" she said quietly

Yaz inhaled deeply then returned her focus to Sandy "That obvious ha?"

"Sorry... I just can't help but notice... I don't want to..."

"It's alright...I'm sorry...This part of my life is fucked up and you're right in the middle of it...it's not fair really" she said leaving the cup on a table

"Don't say that..." she reached her hand palming her fingers on a pillow "I always knew it's something. I just didn't know what...I do have eyes Yaz, and we know each other for long enough. ... It's just that some stuff is not...it's too private"

She swallowed deep as something pressed on her soul "I am so sorry...I really am...."

She felt like she owed her more than just two words but couldn't find them so instead she hooked her finger to hers, which was hardly apology or explanation. But she wasn't really ready for explanation and Sandy wasn't asking for it either. She also didn't know how to apologize properly and that was just fucked up as much everything else in her life.

"When you're ready I'll be here...And if you never will that's ok too..."

Sandy looked at her with so much compassion in her eyes, that those words cut even deeper. She wasn't sure she deserved it at this point, or at any for that matter. In fact, she felt like a cunt. As much as she did share with her for the past three years it could also be equally measured by those things which she kept to herself. It was a freaky reminder of her past only rolls have somehow reversed and she had no idea when this happened. She looked down to their hands as her thumb had a mind of its own and was brushing gently over the side of Sandy's hand. She had pink nails with glitter, and it was irrelevant at this point in time, but she loved those cute fingers and the person they belonged to. A person she never wanted to hurt but she remembered her own pain, so she knew for a fact she did.

"I'm sorry" she said barely audible still looking down as she had no guts to look up or she might just fall apart to pieces "...for shutting you out all these years...for throwing

you into it without any explanation..." she exhaled deeply and squeezed her hand "I'd never hurt you on purpose..."

"I know that Yaz"

"A fuck...stop being so nice...tell me to fuck off" she looked up with a smile as her eyes glistened with tears "I'm just shit at sharing I suppose...I'm also shitty friend"

"No, you're not"

"Oh yes I am... it's just all so fucked up and complicated ever since I left the Tardis"

"I get that.... I'm not upset, I never was...We all have things that are hard to share. And you're struggling...I can see that...and now I finally understand with what...I just want you to know I'm here if you need me. That's all..." she said and lightly squeezed on her hand

"You always were...there for me" Yaz smiled gently and moved a lock of hair from her face. Her eyes closed as tip of her finger ever so gently grazed over her cheek and blushed from embarrassment when her eyes opened and met Yaz's in a defending silence of the room. Her throat tightened like something pressed on it and her heart quickened as it so desperately desired the one thing which wasn't hers for taking. Now more than ever that became apparent.

"I should go" she said quietly

Yaz's hand retracted leaving her empty and vulnerable like she never felt before. She was struggling to get the next sentence out of her mouth as her voice trembled "I have to wash my hair and..."

"Oh...arh... yeah sure...absolutely" she fumbled grabbing the cushion and pulling it into her lap like it was her favorite stuffed animal

"Leaving at nine?" She said getting up

"Yeah...nine...in the morning" of course it was in the morning, why was she even saying it

"I'm excited" she smiled

"I'm not sure if I am... we still don't know what to expect"

"That's part of the excitement" she giggled

"Oh god...I just saw myself in you ten years ago"

"Is that a good thing or a bad thing?"

"Not sure" she frowned

"I'm sure it's all gonna be fine...Don't stress...we're a good team"

"Yeah...we are" she said with a bittersweet taste in her mouth

"Nightie night captain Khan....Go dream about the stars" she giggled and waived from the door

"It's a flat team structure" she yelled

"Yes captain!" Sandy shouted down the hallway

As soon as she made it pass the first curve, she leaned against the wall with a gasp

"Shit" she pressed her hand on her chest. It felt like she was holding her breath all this time and was able to finally breathe "Stupid...that was so stupid" she shook her head as tears rolled down and she quickly wiped them as she exhaled

"Sandy?" Doctor said quietly right next to her like some apparition out of the horrors

"Holly shi...!!!" she said nearly jumping out of her skin

"Sorry...didn't mean to scare you"

"Evening Doctor" she said with a shaking voice "You sure are quiet" she said as her heart was still pumping in her mouth

"Is everything alright?"

"Yeah...sure... peachy...Just something got into my eye"

"Mmmmm...it happens a lot on this ship" she said

"Whaaa?"

"Whanna take a walk?"

"Oh...I was actually gonna..." she pointed towards her room

"Just a short one...Not like the ship is miles long. If you wanna take a walk around the Tardis that'd be different. Once I walked for five days, then I forgot where I was going in a first place"

Sandy chuckled completely confused and just followed her "I guess I could do with a walk"

"Aaaa...Goodie" she grinned haply and shoved her hands in her pockets "Were you with Yaz?"

"Mmmmm" she nodded

"You two alright?"

"Yeaaaaah..." she smiled a little "Sure...always"

"She likes you...Yaz...talks about you all the time"

"I like her too...She's my best friend"

"She is mine too...was...is...still is...It's complicated"

"Right...I get that much"

"Guess what I'm trying to say is that although I'm here as I am now, sometimes...and more often than not this isn't enough...Or how things should really be.... If you understand what I mean?"

"I think so?" she frowned "But you still have each other..."

"Things are different now, not how they used to be...and she needs something I can't give her...a human with a breath and a pulse, someone who can hold her hand, make her smile, share Na Na rolls with her..." she paused for a long moment "Someone like you" she smiled glancing at her sideways

"I'm not sure that's what she wants Doctor" Sandy said with a disappointing tone

"Sometimes grief and fear prevent us from seeing what we truly want and we get stuck in one place unable to move...And then time runs out"

"Is that what happened to you Doctor? Time ran out"

"Yes..." she stopped and turned towards her "I'd hate it if it happened to you" she said with a soft smile then before Sandy had any time to gather her thoughts Doctor suddenly jumped "Right....Well...It was a nice walk Sandy...You should rest..."

"Arhh...Yeah...sure..."

"I should really check on Yaz"

"Yeah...you should..."

"Well...night, night Sandy"

"Night Doctor" she said as she simply disappeared into the thin air, then realized she was standing in front of the door of her room. It was a strange conversion and her mind grappled trying to make sense out of it.

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"Hiya" Doctor appeared next to the coffee table

"Aaaa!" Yaz shouted spilling drink on herself "Dooctor!" she whined

"Oh, sorry Yaz...I keep forgetting...did that burn you?" she asked worried reaching for her hands

"No... Never mind...God" she looked down as the drink was soaking into her t-shirt and dripping between her fingers "At least it cooled down ...I need a mop...Come to the kitchen with me...and pleeease walk like a normal person"

"Sorry....walking...walking" she kept repeating with each step

"Stop saying that silly" she giggled

"Made you laugh though...you're in right mardy mood"

"I'm nooot"

"Can't lie to me Yaz...I can read all your body functions remember..."

"Yeah...and me mind and god knows what else...Not sure I wanna know...."

"I'm minding my own business.... most of the time...Besides, I can always turn it off"

"Don't you dare..." she smiled pointing a finger at her "I like it..." she said as they walked into the kitchen

"I thought you hated it"

"I just said that when I was grumpy" she said wiping the chocolate stain of her top

"Which you are most of the time"

"Thanks" she said throwing the dirty cloth in a sink

"You're welcome"

"Well...Now I have to change I might as well take a shower"

"I miss hot chocolate" Doctor said running her fingers over the kitchen top

"I knooooow...I'm sorry"

"No need to say sorry Yaz...Just saying"

"I knooooow I just feel guilty eating around you"

"Oh, don't be silly...We spoke about this thousand times"

"Come...I really need a shower"

"Yeah...you actually do"

"Thanks" Yaz giggled rolling her eyes

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"It's a nice room...cozy" Doctor said sitting on the edge of the bed then lied down as her feet dangled over the edge. Yaz could never figure out how she did that but it at least it felt as real as it could possibly be considering everything

"Reminds me of a cave" she said taking fresh clothes out of the cabinet "I like the window"

"Never had a window in your old room...I thought you'd like one"

"Hey"

"Mmmm?" Doctor looked towards her

"Thanks for this..."

"It's alright Yaz" she sat up

"No seriously..." she said walking up to her "It's different...and I miss the humming" she said as her eyes filled with tears "But...this is so special what you did there"

"I'd hoped it'll cheer you up...at least a bit"

"A lot...actually" she reached her arm out opening her palm and Doctor pressed hers against it. Just a slight tingle is all she could ever feel sometimes as the image glitched. She never knew how, or why and just assumed because it was a part of her, so her nerves caught short waves of energy

"Go take a shower...you're all wet. Don't want you getting ill" Doctor said with a softest smile

"I had a nice walk with Sandy" she said laying back down as Yaz went into the bathroom

"When?"

"Just now...she seemed upset"

"Whaat?" Yaz peered from the door frowning confused

"I thought she could do with a walk" Doctor continued "And a chat"

"Is she alright?" she walked out of the bathroom with a towel wrapped around her "I should go and see her"

"Well, might be a good idea to put some clothes on first" Doctor laughed looking down at the pair of bare legs "She's alright Yaz...don't worry...Go take a shower"

She probably should, or she should leave it for tonight, or few days. God only knew as she had too much of a chaos in her head. But it was now bugging her. So she stepped out of the shower and grabbed her phone, starting to type the message.

"Hey...you're probably sleeping...Just checking if you're ok" she wrote then deleted it

"Hey banana, just wanna make sure you're ok" she wrote then huffed and deleted it again

"Fuck sake" She murmured, tossed the phone to the side, and put on her pajamas. "I'm beyond help," she said, running her hands over her face as she looked in the mirror at herself then picked up her phone again.

"Don't know what I'd do without you...Just thought I should say it. Sleep well banana

🍌 +Y=❤️❤�" she wrote and clicked sent before she changed her mind then went to bed trying to pretend, she's fine, which she wasn't but there's not much she could do about it now.

"Yaz" Doctor spoke in her ear quietly

"Mmmm?"

"Be careful tomorrow...."

"I will..." she turned in her arms "Don't worry...Sorry I was in a bad mood...I don't mean to be..."

"I knooooow...I'm sorry about that thing in the control room. Sometimes I forget"

"It's alright...God we're a mess"

"Well, that bit never changed" she giggled

"Nooooo...it didn't, did it" Yaz smiled "I feel so bad about lying to Sandy"

"Lying about what Yaz?"

"Hiding...shutting her out from all of this...It just came up in a conversation."

"Oh"

"Yeah oh"

"Sounds familiar" she scrunched her nose

"No shit cheeky" she giggled

"I hate that language"

"Sorry...Anyway...Felt like someone's twisting my guts in a knot just trying to apologize..."

"I know a thing or two about that knot...I'm sure she's already forgiven you...You forgave me"

"Always" she smiled softly

"You should sleep Yaz...It will be a long day tomorrow darling"

"Mmmm" she closed her eyes "I love you" she whispered.

"I love you too" Doctor purist her lips and stroke her hair even though neither of them could feel it.

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