A sky full of stars to guide you home
by pandoraspockz

Summary

After a particularly difficult field case, PC Yasmin Khan is required to undergo a routine psychological evaluation. At her appointment, she's caught completely off guard by Joanna Song, the eccentric psychologist with a bright smile and an affinity for custard creams who turns out to be much more than she appears.

Notes

Hey guys! So excited to get this fic out there, I've had it in the works for quite a while. I hope you enjoy it <3

Infinite thanks and gratitude to my wonderful beta, @antiopesgirlfriend. Your hype is the best motivator I could ask for <33
Yaz could still feel the blood on her hands. She could still remember the weight of the small, lifeless body cradled in her arms as the sirens wailed around them, mixed together with the screams of dozens of bystanders. Or were those her screams? She honestly wasn’t sure, everything melting together in a haze until one of her superiors pulled the little girl out of her grip and ordered her back outside with the rest of the team.

It was going to be a tough job, they all knew that going in, but none of them could have imagined the tragedy it would become.

The call came in early that morning; domestic situation at the home of a couple, last name Latimer, with a young daughter. Neighbours had heard various bangs and shouting and called the police, fearing for the child’s safety. What should have been a textbook de-escalation case went south immediately when Yaz and her team had shown up and the husband pulled out a gun, shoving his wife and daughter into a bedroom and barricading the door.

The stand-off lasted hours, the husband growing more and more agitated the longer it went on. It wasn’t until later, when gunshots rang out from the inside room, that everything went to proper shit. Doors and windows were busted open, shouts and bullets echoing in the small space, until the dust finally cleared and the damage was done. The husband had turned the weapon on himself the moment the officers had forced entry into the bedroom. He didn’t even hesitate. The original gunshots remained a mystery until Yaz opened the closet door and found them; the wife and daughter with execution-style wounds to the backs of their heads. It had been almost two weeks and she still couldn’t blink without seeing the grisly image in her mind’s eye.

Her entire team had been given several days leave, with the understanding that each of them would be sent to Indus Occupational Health for a full psychological evaluation following the case and their involvement in it. Truth be told, Yaz had been avoiding the ordered assessment after returning to work for as long as possible until her boss had marched himself over to her desk that morning and threatened her with desk duty for the next month unless she got her ass over to Indus right after her lunch. As much as she hated the idea of sitting in a stuffy room while someone studied her every word and movement, she had to admit that she hated the idea of being chained to a desk even more. Which is how Yaz found herself sitting in a cream-coloured hallway, waiting to see a woman named Dr. Joanna Song.

She’d never been involved in a case that required a follow up with a psychologist, so the most she ever spent talking to a shrink was their mandatory evaluation every few years. Even then, it was a quick in and out with very little fuss. It was the way she preferred it, much like everyone else at the station; truth be told, the shrinks at Indus seemed kind of weird to most of them. However, the session was mandatory for any officers involved in this kind of case to deduce how much of an effect it had had on them and their ability to perform their duties; so if Yaz wanted to stay out in the field, she’d just have to put up with it.

“PC Yasmin Khan,” a bright voice drifted out through the doorway to her left, breaking through her thoughts to bring her crashing back to reality. She’d been so lost in her own head that she’d nearly forgotten where she was. She stood up, smoothing out the wrinkles in her trousers and rounded the doorway into the office. Sitting behind a small desk was one of the most gorgeous women Yaz had ever seen. She looked up as the officer came through the door and stood to extend her hand with grin.

“Hello,” she greeted, her smile growing wider. “I’m Dr. Joanna Song, head of the psych department
Yaz stepped forward and shook the proffered hand, taking the other woman in as she did so. The doctor was slim and slightly taller than she was with short blonde hair and warm hazel eyes. She was wearing royal blue slacks with matching braces over a white button-down shirt, and Yaz noticed a glint of silver on her left ear where a fine chain connected an earring to a delicate cuff at her cartilage. It was a few more moments of staring before she realized she’d been silent for a bit too long.

“Uh, PC Yasmin Khan,” she stammered. “But you already know that obviously.”

The doctor chuckled, her nose scrunching up slightly. “No worries,” she replied, motioning to the chair behind Yaz. “Don’t be shy, have a seat. Shouldn’t take us too long and then you’ll be free to go about your day. Custard cream?” She held out a small packet of the biscuits toward Yaz, who was slightly thrown by the snack offering.

“Oh, uh, no thank you.”

Dr. Song shrugged, plucking out a couple for herself before dropping the rest back into her bottom desk drawer. Brushing the crumbs from her fingers, she slipped on a pair of black-rimmed reading glasses and began to shuffle through a small stack of papers from an open file in front of her, making a few notes here and there.

“Now, Yasmin,” she began after a few moments before pausing to look back up at the officer. “Do you go by Yasmin, or do you prefer something else?”

“Oh, um, Yasmin’s fine,” she shrugged, noncommittal. “My friends call me Yaz.”

The doctor made a note to the file. “Well then, I’m gonna call you Yaz, ‘cause we’re friends now.”

Yaz had no idea what to say to that, still taken aback by the rather eccentric woman, and simply nodded.

“Right,” the doctor continued. “So, you know why you’re here in my neck of the woods, yes?”

Yaz nodded again. “Mandatory evaluation following the Latimer case,” she affirmed quietly. She noticed Dr. Song give her a scrutinizing look, but the blonde said nothing and merely made another note to the file.

“Correct, though today is not the official evaluation,” the doctor explained, leaning forward on her elbows. “What we’re going to do for now is go through a few things pertaining to the case and to you personally, which will allow me to do a bit of background analysis prior to the formal meeting.”

“Why can’t we just do the evaluation now and get it over with?” the officer asked, unenthused about having to drag the process out.

Dr. Song smiled, used to this kind of reaction when explaining the procedure. “Because I can’t properly evaluate your psychological state if I don’t know you a bit better,” she explained. “I need to know more about your personal life in order to make a properly rounded assessment.” She noticed the young woman looked a bit uncomfortable at that and rushed to reassure her. “I’m not gonna go poking around for your deepest darkest secrets today, Yaz. I just need to get an idea of the person behind the badge, okay?”

Knowing that she didn’t have much of a choice, Yaz nodded reluctantly.

“Brilliant!” the doctor grinned and looked back down at the file. “Now, can you give me a brief
rundown of the Latimer case, please? I’ve got the details in front of me, but I want to hear your take on it.”

Sighing heavily, Yaz talked through the basic facts of the case from her perspective; the call from the neighbors, arriving at the house, the hours spent outside the bedroom trying to talk the husband down, hearing the gunshots, and, finally, the final confrontation in the bedroom. Even being as vague as she was about the details, the memories of that day still made her shudder. “And I understand that you were the one to find the wife and daughter afterward?” the doctor asked gently when she’d finished. “I can’t imagine what that must have felt like.”

“Yeah, um,” Yaz cleared her throat and readjusted her posture. “It was definitely not how I wish the day had ended.” She stared down at her hands, twisting them together while the doctor continued to make notes, the light scratching of her pen the only noise in the room.

“Okay,” Dr. Song nodded, making a final mark on her paper before looking up with kind eyes. “Thank you, Yaz, I know it can’t be easy to relive all that.” Yaz nodded, blinking back tears that she would not allow to show. “Now,” the blonde continued. “Just a few more questions; I’d like to get to know you a little bit better, if that’s alright.”

The officer narrowed her eyes in confusion. “Can’t you just look through my personnel file?”

“I could,” the doctor smiled, closing the case file and reaching into the top drawer of her desk for a small legal pad. “But I’d much rather hear it from you. I find that there’s only so much you can gain from a piece of paper.”

Annoyed but determined to remain professional, Yaz conceded. “Alright, what would you like to know?”

“Oh, just some of the basics should be fine; for instance, can you tell me about your family?”

“Well, besides me, there’s my mum, dad, and sister,” Yaz ticked off on her fingers. “Her name’s Sonya, and she can be a right pain in the arse.”

Dr. Song chuckled and she wrote down the information, cheekily including the last comment with a smiley face. “Younger sister then, I’m guessing. Are you close with them?”

“Yeah, we all live at Park Hill, but I have my own flat. They drive me mad a lot of the time, which is why I live by myself, but I do love them.”

“That’s good,” the blonde continued writing. “To be fair, I think living so close to your family would drive anyone mad from time to time. Have you always been at Park Hill?”

“No,” Yaz shook her head. “We moved there when I was fifteen.”

She expected the doctor to ask why, but she didn’t, instead inquiring what made the young woman want to become a police officer.

“I wanted to help people,” she answered truthfully, but only half so. “Wanted to make a difference.”

Dr. Song gaze up at her, as if expecting there to be more to the statement, and made another quick note when Yaz did not elaborate.

“Oh, Yaz, just one last question,” she looked up from her legal pad. “How do you prefer your tea?”
“What?” the young woman blinked, causing the blonde to smile.

“Your tea. How do you prefer it? Milk, sugar, none of the above?”

“Um,” Yaz hesitated, not quite sure what her tea preferences had to do with anything. “Hint of milk with two sugars?”

“Brilliant,” the doctor grinned, writing her answer down. “Well, I believe that’s all I need PC Khan.” She stood up and held out her hand toward the officer once more. “I’ll send you an email with the date and time of the official evaluation, which will likely be by the end of this week, and I’ll look forward to seeing you then.”

Yaz stood slowly, still a little dumbfounded, and shook the blonde’s hand. “That sounds good, thank you Dr. Song.” Just as she reached the doorway, the doctor called her back.

“How?” the officer turned back toward the blonde, who gave her another wide grin. “My friends call me Jo.”

And with that, Dr. Song sat back down and began typing away at her computer, leaving Yaz to return to work feeling more than a little mystified by this strange woman.
A particularly interesting puzzle

Chapter Notes

Thank you all so much for such a warm response to the first chapter! I've been so excited to get this story out and I'm thrilled that people are enjoying it. The plan at the moment is to update once a week, so a new chapter every Wednesday. Hope you enjoy this latest one! <3

Once again, endless thanks to my beta @antiopesgirlfriend. You're my fave!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Yaz received an email the next morning confirming her evaluation with Dr. Song on Thursday at 9am. She breathed a relieved sigh, grateful to have a couple of days to prepare herself to have to relive what she knew would likely become one of the worst days of her life. However, time seemed to slip by much faster than she anticipated and before she knew it, Yaz found herself walking down that same cream-coloured hallway to her evaluation appointment.

She found her way to Dr. Song’s office easily and knocked lightly against the door. There was a shuffling from inside, followed by the sound of footsteps before it swung open to reveal the smiling face of the doctor.

“Mornin’ Yaz!” she greeted cheerfully. “Please, come right in, I was just getting my notes around.” She ushered the officer inside and shut the door behind her, turning on a small white noise machine just outside the entrance. “Keeps us from being overheard by others passing by,” she explained when Yaz looked at her questioningly.

She rounded her desk and walked over to a filing cabinet in the corner, rifling through various folders and muttering under her breath. Yaz noted that she’d traded her blue slacks in for a pair of grey, high-waisted trousers paired with a dark green blouse that made the hazel of her eyes all the more vivid. Sadly, she thought, the braces were missing, but noticed that the doctor was sporting the same earring with the delicate chain from the other day.

Finally, the blonde found the file she was looking for and closed the drawer of the cabinet with a heavy thunk. She sat back down at her desk, inviting Yaz to do the same, and placed a steaming mug in front of the young woman.

“Hint of milk, two sugars, right?” Dr. Song asked, looking at her for assurance that she’d gotten the tea correct. Yaz, stunned at the gesture, could only nod.

“Uh, th-thank you,” she stammered once she’d found her voice and taken a seat across from the doctor. She noticed a second mug sitting off to the side, a white background with the words “Love Wins” spelled out in loopy, rainbow letters. Yaz eyed it curiously, looking between it and Dr. Song a few times but said nothing; merely filed the little tidbit of information away for possible future reference.

“Not at all,” the blonde shook her head, opening the file and pulling out a fresh legal pad. “Definitely the least I can do for what I’m going to ask you to talk about today.” She slipped on her glasses and made a few marks on her paper before meeting Yaz’s eye sympathetically. “I’m afraid this is the part
where I need to start asking you the uncomfortable questions, but if there’s ever a time when you need to stop and take a breath you tell me straight away. We go at your pace, alright?” Yaz nodded, clutching her tea in her hands.

“Why don’t we start off gently,” Dr. Song began, tilting her head to the side. “Had you ever had a case quite like this one before?”

“No,” Yaz shook her head. “We’ve had difficult ones, for sure; drug busts with young children present, a partner threatening to kill themselves if the other one leaves. Worst one besides this was probably couple of kids drowning in the pool when the babysitter fell asleep. The mother had to be sedated.”

Dr. Song let her talk freely, making notes as she spoke. “And what set this one apart?”

“She were just a kid,” Yaz mumbled after a few seconds, staring into her tea. “Hadn’t done anything wrong and her own father shot her and her mother in the back of the head and stuffed them in a closet.” She looked up at the doctor, her hazel eyes watching her carefully. “I’ll never understand how a person could be capable of that sort of thing.”

The doctor hummed quietly in response, her pen moving smoothly across the paper. “I don’t think any of us will,” she replied. “We confirmed yesterday that you were the one who found them.” Yaz nodded. “You made a comment that it’s not how you would’ve preferred the day to end,” Dr. Song continued. “But the case report paints a slightly different picture. Seems you took it rather hard and it took some coaxing for you to let the little girl go. Would you say that’s accurate?”

Yaz didn’t say anything, her cheeks turning pink from embarrassment. The doctor prodded her gently with those sympathetic eyes again. “I’m not here to judge you, Yaz, an emotional reaction is expected from this sort of thing.”

“It’d been a long day,” Yaz admitted quietly, twisting her hands in her lap. The doctor caught the movement in her peripheral, but said nothing of it. “I was tired, completely spent. And to still lose the girl and her mother after everything was just—it was a little too much I guess.”

Dr. Song nodded, discreetly making notes as Yaz spoke. The hurt was evident, and not at all surprising, but there was more; something beneath the surface that the young woman wasn’t saying, but that was clearly affecting her.

“And how have you been dealing since?” she asked. “How do you manage to put that kind of thing behind you as you move forward?”

Yaz shrugged. “We all took some time off and got some rest,” she explained flatly. “At the end of the day, you gotta look towards the next case, the next person that needs your help.”

The doctor blinked. “Is that all? Seems like a rather detached way of looking at things.” She’d said it softly, curiously, but by the officer’s reaction, she might as well have accused her of negligence.

“That’s the job,” Yaz replied, her voice hard and cold. “It’s difficult and it’s never ideal, but it is what it is.”

Dr. Song didn’t reply immediately, simply nodded as she scratched out something on her notepad with knitted eyebrows. When she’d finished, she looked up at the young woman apologetically.

“I’m sorry, Yaz, I didn’t mean to imply anything.” The officer sighed resignedly and simply waved her hand dismissively, as if erasing the entire exchange.
“I’d like to move on to your childhood now, if that’s alright?” the doctor asked, receiving a small nod as a reply. “You mentioned your family last time we spoke, you seem to have a good relationship with them. How do they feel about your job?”

“Mum and dad weren’t thrilled by the idea at first,” Yaz shrugged. “Concerned for my safety and all that, but they’ve come around. They can tell that I love it and just want me to be safe.”

“Mmhmm,” Dr. Song nodded as she made more notes. “And your sister?”

Yaz rolled her eyes. “Never looks up from her phone long enough unless she wants to annoy me.” The doctor raised her eyebrows. “I think she worries about me, but she’d never say otherwise. We’re quite different.”

“I see,” the doctor flipped through a few of her papers. “You said that your family moved to Park Hill when you were fifteen. Was there a particular reason?”

She noticed Yaz tense up at the question, her jaw tightening up as her back became rigid. In her lap, her hands had started to fidget again. It took a few minutes, the young woman’s eyes darkening by a considerable amount, before she was able to unclench her teeth and speak. Each word seemed as if she were having to force it out.

“I was having issues with another girl at my old school.”

“Can you tell me what kind of issues?” Dr. Song prompted, her voice low and gentle. When Yaz didn’t respond for several seconds, instead staring unblinkingly down at the desk, she tried another approach. “Why don’t we just start with her name,” she suggested. “Can you tell me that much?”

Another tense silence followed before Yaz took a deep breath through her nose and exhaled two words, barely above a whisper. “Izzy Flint,” she muttered, still not looking up.

Dr. Song wrote the name down but didn’t push further, not yet. She watched Yaz, her labored breathing and hands twisting restlessly as she still refused to look up at her. Clearly this Izzy Flint had had quite the effect on the officer when she was younger, so much so that she was still hanging on to some of that anxiety. She hated this part, hated to have to pull the painful memories and experiences from someone, but she also knew that it was necessary; she couldn’t make a proper assessment of the woman’s ability to complete her duties if she didn’t have the full picture.

“Yaz,” she prodded quietly, apologetic. “I know it’s painful, but what happened with Izzy Flint that caused your family to move?”

It was a couple more minutes of silence, Yaz gradually gaining control over her breathing, before she began to speak in a wavering voice. “Izzy had just moved in at the beginning of year nine, and she singled me out pretty quickly,” she began to explain. “I hadn’t done anything, never really talked to her, but that didn’t matter to her; I was different, so I was an easy target.”

“Different how?” the doctor asked, pen flying back and forth across her notepad.

“I mean, the obvious for one thing,” Yaz replied, gesturing vaguely toward herself, and Dr. Song immediately caught on to her meaning; the color of her skin. “She started mocking me, calling me names,” she paused and cleared her throat nervously before continuing. “And then she found out that I’m bisexual, and you’d think Christmas had come early for her.”

“Oh Yaz,” the doctor breathed sympathetically before she could stop herself. Because she had a good idea of where this was going and she knows, oh does she know how it feels.
Yaz sniffed. “The names got worse,” she whispered, tears forming in her eyes. “The taunting was more frequent and we got into quite a few screaming matches in the halls that got both of us detentions.” She paused, wiping angrily at her eyes. “And then one day I just couldn’t take it anymore. She gave me a shove in the hallway, called me a name, and I swung without thinking. Couple of teachers broke us up and hauled us down to the head of year, who called our parents.”

Dr. Song tilted her head to the side, her eyes shining with compassion. “How long had this all been going on before your parents got involved.”

“Three or four months,” Yaz shrugged.

The doctor made a quick note of that. “And were they aware of your sexuality yet?” she asked, though she was certain she knew the answer.

“No,” Yaz replied quietly. “I had to tell them, right there in the head office with everyone else watching.”

“And how did they take it? Once it was just you and them?”

Yaz chuckled humorlessly. “They were honestly more concerned about the bullying than anything else,” she shook her head. “Told me what mattered was that I was happy and they wished I’d been honest with them when everything with Izzy had started.”

“Sounds like they really love you,” Dr. Song murmured. “And did you move right after that?”

“Shortly after, yeah,” Yaz nodded. “They wanted me away from her as soon as possible.”

“Did it help?”

“It did,” she replied. “I started going to a more diverse school. No one cared what I looked like or who I fancied, so I was able to just get on with everything.”

“But you never saw anyone regarding your run ins with Izzy?” Dr. Song asked. “No counsellor or anything?”

“Nah, didn’t really see the point. Problem was taken care of wasn’t it?”

“That’s fair,” the doctor mumbled, scribbling something out on her notepad. Silence fell between the two as the blonde continued to add more notes to her paper, pausing every now and then to review what she had recorded. Finally, she looked back up at Yaz, with a small smile.

“Well Yaz, I think I have all that I need to make a proper evaluation,” she flipped her notes closed and set them on the desk as she stood up. “Thank you for taking the time to come in so we could get this all sorted. I should have the final report in to your boss by the end of the day.”

Yaz stood from her seat and extended her hand toward the woman to shake. “Not at all,” she replied before making to leave. “Happy to help.”

“And Yaz,” Dr. Song called just as Yaz had reached the door to her office. She turned to look back at her politely. “Unrelated, but I’m really glad that your parents were so accepting of who you are. Not everyone is so fortunate.”

Yaz blinked, her eyebrows knitting together slightly as she absorbed the doctor’s words. There was a look in her eyes that was more than just simple compassion; to Yaz, it almost seemed like understanding. She wanted to ask, wanted to know more about the meaning behind the doctor’s
words, but she stopped herself. It wasn’t the time or the place, and it was also not really any of her business. After all, Dr. Song was practically a stranger.

“Thank you,” she replied quietly, offering up a small smile of gratitude. “I appreciate that. Thank you for your time, Dr. Song.”

“Jo,” the blonde reminded her warmly, returning the smile.

“Jo,” Yaz repeated, and then, with a final nod, turned and walked out of the room.

Joanna watched her go contemplatively. Once the door had shut behind the young woman, she sat back in her chair and rubbed at her eyes beneath the rims of her glasses. She crossed her legs and pulled her notes onto her lap, flipping through the various pages and making little additions here and there. Now and then she would consult with the file making connections between Yaz’s actions and emotions in the field to memories she’d recollected from her childhood. Of the various evaluations she had conducted in her time with the police, she had to admit that Yasmin Khan was a particularly interesting puzzle.

Within twenty minutes, she’d made her final assessment and brought the official report up on her computer screen, quickly keying in her observations and formal recommendation regarding PC Khan based upon the interview. She was sure Yaz’s sergeant would be eager to receive her final evaluation and officially wrap up the last loose threads of the Latimer case. With a final keystroke, Joanna sent the report off without a second thought and settled back into her seat with her mug of tea and a handful of custard creams for a well-deserved emotional break.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading, I hope you enjoyed this one! <3

Feel free to come say hi on tumblr, I'm @pandora-spockz and I'm always up to chat :D
PC Khan stormed into her office at exactly eight a.m. the next morning.

“You deemed me unfit for duty?!” she demanded at a volume that was far too loud for so little coffee this early in the day. “Where the hell do you get off doing that for? I’m perfectly suited to be out in the field!”

“PC Khan,” Joanna greeted her dryly as she slipped her glasses from her nose and sat back in her chair. “Please come in.”

She motioned to the seat in front of Yaz on the other side of her desk, inviting her to sit down. The officer glowered at her for a few more moments before sinking down into it, her jaw tightly set. The doctor sized her up, trying to determine the best course of action based upon the young woman’s current disposition.

“Listen, Yas—” she began, her voice placating.

“Yasmin,” the officer interrupted her harshly.

Joanna frowned, taking note of the young woman’s stiff posture and cold gaze. Retracting permission for the doctor to use her nickname was a significant step backward, one she could tell would be difficult to recover by the tone of the officer’s voice. Nonetheless, she would respect her wishes.

“Yasmin,” she corrected quietly. “The fact of the matter is that there were quite a few indicators during our meeting yesterday that suggested that you are not properly dealing with your feelings regarding the Latimer case.”

“I told you, I’m fine!” Yaz exclaimed, throwing her hands in the air in frustration.

Joanna’s eyebrow quirked up. “Yes, that’s quite believable when shouted angrily and at full volume,” she deadpanned. She received stony silence as an answer.

Sighing heavily, she opened the bottom drawer of her desk and retrieved a folder labeled PC Khan, Yasmin and flipped it open to her session notes from the previous day.

“Yasmin,” she continued resolutely, shuffling through the file. “Yesterday we spoke about why you and your family moved to Park Hill when you were younger, and you brought up a specific name; a girl named Izzy Flint.” She glanced back up at the officer, noticing a vein twitch in her jaw before continuing. “There was clearly an animosity between the two of you, instigated by Izzy, which
resulted in a number of altercations, the last one being physical. Do you recall this conversation during our meeting?” Yasmin gave a curt nod but continued to say nothing.

“You made an offhand remark, I don’t even think you realized it, in which you stated ‘One day I just couldn’t take it anymore.’” Joanna looked back up at the officer and leaned forward on her elbows. “Yasmin, your comment and the way you described the altercations, coupled with your response to the Latimer case, suggest that you have a pattern of bottling up extreme trauma until it becomes too much for you to handle.” The young officer was no longer looking at her, but staring down at the desk as her fingers twisted in her lap. “And when that happens,” Joanna continued gently. “Evidence suggests an unconscious predilection toward violence, which is not ideal for an officer of the law.”

Still Yasmin said nothing, continued to avoid her gaze. “Not to mention,” she added. “You seem to wring your hands like that when you feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed.” She nodded her head toward the officer’s restless movements in her lap. “Tends to be a sign of anxiety, you were doing it yesterday as well.”

They came to an impasse, Joanna watching Yasmin carefully; taking note of the number of emotions flashing across her face and her agitated movements as the officer digested the doctor’s analysis of their interactions during their initial meeting. Eventually, her posture loosened slightly and her hands stilled, eyes coming up to meet the other woman’s warily.

“So what do you want from me then?” she ground out through clenched teeth. “What do I have to do to meet your ridiculous standards?”

Joanna knew not to take the woman’s words personally. This was not the first time she was on the receiving end of this kind of attitude after a psych evaluation, and it most definitely wasn’t the worst. She recalled a time she’d had to pull an officer for use of excessive force in the field and he’d rushed into her office the following day, pistol in hand and a wild look in his eyes. It had taken three of his colleagues to take him down and haul him off to a holding cell. She could sense that Yasmin would not be near as violent, but that the challenge would be just as difficult, so she chose her next words carefully.

“Yasmin, I’m going to recommend you for a five-week counselling programme,” the doctor explained carefully. “You would meet with a therapist once a week for ninety minutes to work through your feelings on the Latimer case and hopefully make some progress in your practice of avoiding your trauma and bottling it away.” She paused, giving Yasmin the chance to reply, but the officer said nothing so she continued.

“If, at the end of the five weeks, you would like to continue with the sessions, that can certainly be arranged, but it’s not required,” Joanna added. “Of course, this is under the expectation that you successfully complete the programme.”

“And if I don’t?” Yasmin asked cagily.

“Then you’ll be required to extend your sessions indefinitely, until your progress is considered satisfactory.”

They fell back into silence, Yasmin considering her options while Joanna waited patiently for her answer. After going around and around with it in her head, trying to find some way out of or around the program, the officer had come to an unavoidable conclusion.

“This is the only way that I’m going to be able to get back to work, isn’t it?” Yasmin asked, her expression petulant.
Joanna barely suppressed a smile at the officer’s tone, but managed at the hard look in her eyes. Best not to poke the bear, she reasoned.

“Afraid so,” Joanna nodded. “Keep in mind, however, that’s only in the case that the results of your sessions are found to be satisfactory.”

“And exactly who decides if my results are satisfactory?” Yaz asked with a sinking feeling that she knew the answer.

“As it turns out, that would ultimately be my decision,” the corner of the doctor’s lips curled up apologetically.

“Bloody ‘course it is,” Yaz muttered under her breath. “Fine,” she continued at a normal volume. “I’ll do the stupid programme if it gets me back on the field.”

The doctor nodded. “I’ll get it set up. You should receive an email sometime later today.”

“Brilliant,” the officer acknowledged sarcastically. Without another word, she stood back up and stalked from the room, leaving behind a very amused Dr. Song.

Sometime in the middle of the afternoon, an email alert pinged at the top corner of Yaz’s computer screen. Confused at first, she exhaled heavily with a roll of her eyes when she realized it was a confirmation that Dr. Song had officially enrolled her in that five-week counseling programme they’d discussed that morning. She wasn’t thrilled about the idea of having to talk to some shrink in a stuffy office who likely hadn’t had to experience the kind of field work that she dealt with on a daily basis, but if having to lay on a couch and talk about her feelings for a couple of weeks meant that she got to get back to her job then she’d grit her teeth and bear it.

She opened the message to check the date and time of her first session when she felt her stomach clench unpleasantly. She was scheduled to meet at 6.30pm the following Thursday with none other than Dr. Joanna Song. Yaz felt as if she’d just been ordered to perform clean up duties at a crime scene. The way the doctor had talked, she had been expecting a different therapist, someone unbiased to her situation, but that had clearly just been wishful thinking on her part. Now, she had to face down the reality of being stuck in a room with that infuriating woman for an hour and a half each Thursday for the next five weeks.

Yaz dropped her head heavily into her hands. “You have got to be fucking kidding me,” she muttered miserably.

Chapter End Notes

Please don’t be shy to leave kudos or a comment letting me know what you think, I love reading all of your responses!

As ever, feel free to hit me up on tumblr at @pandora-spockz and say hello!
Chapter Notes

Here we are, first session! I just want to preface this by saying that I am not an expert in psychology; I'm basing a lot of this on my own personal experiences with therapy, so hopefully it comes across as realistic. Hope you enjoy!

Endless thanks to my beta @antiopesgirlfriend! <33

Yaz’s first appointment with Dr. Song came upon her more quickly than she would have liked. She grew more and more anxious as the week wore on until Thursday dawned, cold and overcast, and she felt her nerves fraying at their ends. She spent the majority of her work day spacing out at her desk, trying to imagine what a session with Dr. Song would entail; what kind of invasive questions and exercises she’d be required to complete in order to eventually be able to do her job again. By the time she clocked out at five, Yaz could feel her stomach churning uncomfortably. With an hour and a half yet until her appointment, she stopped off at the nearest chippy to try and put some food in her stomach after hardly eating all day.

She sat on one of the weather benches out front nibbling on her feeble meal, the vinegar sticking to her fingers as she tried to distract herself by watching the other people around her; a couple arguing quietly over paint colors as they walked past, the frazzled server at the counter of the shop struggling to keep up with the sudden flood of customers, a young girl and her father tucking in to a shared basket of chips on another bench nearby. Yaz found herself tearing up as she watched the daughter giggling at a face the man had made, her mind flashing back to the Latimer girl, so small and fragile in her arms. Standing quickly, her half-eaten chips nearly spilling out onto the ground, she disposed of her food in the nearest bin and fled down the sidewalk as fast as she could.

She walked aimlessly down the street, gazing into the various shops as a light drizzle dampened the sidewalks. Not wanting to stay out in the spitting rain, Yaz ducked into the nearest store, a small record shop, to kill a little more time. Checking her phone to confirm the appointment details one last time, she noticed something that had not caught her eye until now. The address listed beneath the time and date of her session was not for Dr. Song’s office at Indus, but was instead over on Penrhyn Road near Endcliffe Park. She realized that this altered her travel time a bit and she would need leave soon in order to be on time.

Stepping back outside, she hailed a taxi and slipped into the backseat, giving the address to the driver. The influx of evening traffic lengthened what should have been a quick five-minute trip into fifteen, dropping Yaz off in front of a row of attractive terraced houses with ten minutes to spare before her appointment with Dr. Song. Glancing back down at the email on her phone, she noticed that she was looking for number thirteen, which would be a little further up the street.

After a short walk, she found it and begrudgingly climbed up the handful of steps that were lined with small potted plants to ring the doorbell. There was a very audible thump from inside followed by a muffled cry of pain and hurried footsteps before the door finally swung open to reveal Dr. Song smiling tightly as she massaged at her hip. She looked much different in simple jeans and a cream colored sweater, her hair tied back in a messy ponytail, and it caught Yaz slightly off guard.
“Hello Yasmin,” she greeted warmly despite the unenthusiastic look the other woman was giving her.

“Hello, Dr. Song. You alright there?” Yaz asked, gesturing toward her hip.

“What? Oh, yeah, of course,” the doctor nodded. “Just knocked it on a chair in the kitchen, no worries. Well, come in, make yourself at home.” She ushered Yaz inside, inviting her to hang up her jacket, and walked them down a short hallway until they entered the kitchen.

“Would you like some tea?” the blonde asked, bouncing over to the stove to put the kettle on.

“Uh, sure.”

Joanna busied herself with pulling a few mugs, sugar, and tea from the cupboard and retrieving the milk from the fridge. While she was distracted with making their drinks, Yaz took the opportunity to gaze around what she could only assume by this point was the doctor’s kitchen. It seemed very—her, for lack of better words; bright and cheerful with a host of mismatched dishes piled by the sink and a collection of photographs, reminders, and magnets littering the front of the refrigerator. Yaz noticed the corner of a rainbow flag sticker peeking out from behind what looked like a grocery list and she filed the information away next to the coffee mug from their meeting last week.

“Dr. Song, why are we here and not at your office?” she asked suddenly, turning back toward the other woman.

The doctor poured their tea—two sugars with a hint of milk for Yaz—and handed the other woman her mug.

“I prefer to do the sessions for the program somewhere a little less stuffy than my office,” she explained, walking back toward the hallway and leading them into the living room. “People tend to be a bit more receptive when they feel more relaxed and comfortable.”

They entered the spacious room and Yaz inspected it much like she had the kitchen. It was a bit cluttered, but it was a very organized kind of cluttered. Books and papers were scattered about on every surface with notes and scribbles marked across them haphazardly and various trinkets and candles could be found here and there throughout the room, yet it seemed like everything had its place; as arbitrary as the arrangement appeared, it all somehow made sense. A homely couch paired with an equally inviting loveseat framed a low wooden coffee table in the middle of the room. The doctor gestured for her to have a seat on the couch as she herself sank down into the loveseat, setting her tea down on the table and picking up a notepad and pen.

“Alright Yasmin,” Joanna began. “If you don’t mind, I’d like to start with focusing a little more in depth on your family.”

Yaz crossed her arms, feeling her earlier resentment toward these sessions resurfacing. “They’re really not that interesting, but if you want.”

The doctor made a few notes on her paper. “Can you start with telling me what your parents do?”

“Dad’s in accounting and my mum manages a luxury hotel.”

“And your sister?”

“Sonya’s just started uni this year,” Yaz continued flatly with a huff. “Doesn’t really know what she wants to do, and probably won’t ever look up from her phone long enough to figure it out.”
Joanna looked over at her, as if there were a comment she wanted to make, but instead moved on with her questions. “And how was your childhood?” she asked, sensing the officer’s growing enmity. “Before Izzy Flint came into the picture?”

“Normal.”

“Yasmin—” the doctor started, growing a bit frustrated by Yasmin’s lack of contribution.

“Look, I don’t understand what my family has to do with anything,” the young woman suddenly burst out, gesturing aggressively with her hands. “We’re here to talk about the Latimer case and my repressed feelings or whatever, so can we just get it over with?”

Joanna observed her quietly, tapping her pen against her notes as she considered her options. Yaz clearly struggled with trusting people; not surprising given what the doctor knew of her history. She liked being in control and had trouble with giving that power up, with being vulnerable. The doctor contemplated for a moment, wondering if it would help Yaz feel more comfortable with their sessions if they were on equal footing.

“Yasmin, I’d like to try something, if that’s alright?” she asked. The other woman said nothing, simply shrugged halfheartedly. “Can you trade places with me?”

“Why?” Yaz asked suspiciously, her eyes narrowing.

“Just go with it for a second.”

Warily, Yaz rose to her feet with Joanna following suit as they maneuvered around each other to switch. The blonde sank down into the couch, pulling her legs up onto the cushions comfortably and stared at Yaz expectantly.

“Right then,” she smiled, gesturing toward the other woman. “The session is yours now; ask me anything you want.”

Yaz brow furrowed in confusion. “Wait, what’s happening?”

“Yasmin,” the doctor began kindly. “I want you to trust me and to feel comfortable talking to me so that we can make the most of these sessions. But it’s very clear that you have problems trusting people that you don’t know, and I also suspect you’re still feeling a bit betrayed by the fact that I had you pulled from the field.” Yaz looked away, the reminder that she was stuck on desk duty until further notice leaving a sour taste in her mouth.

“It’s okay, I understand,” the blonde continued. “So maybe it would help if we flip the tables; you be the therapist and I’ll be the patient. You can ask me anything you want and I’ll answer, I promise. Whatever will help you feel like we’re on more equal ground.”

Yaz just stared at her for a few moments, certain that this had to be some sort of reverse psychology. “What’s the catch?” she muttered, her voice low.

Joanna shook her head. “No catch, I swear.”

The officer continued to eye her suspiciously until she huffed good naturedly. “Just ask me a question, Yasmin. Something easy to get the ball rolling.”

Yaz sighed wearily, realizing she’d have to play along with the doctor’s game. “Okay, um, what—uh, how long have you lived in Sheffield?” she stammered, still quite flummoxed by their sudden change of roles.
Joanna tilted her head in thought. “Must be about three years now,” she said, nodding as she did the math in her head.

“And, uh, what brought you here?”

“Oh, I’ve always bounced around quite a bit, never really sat still in one place for too long,” the doctor replied. “I was down in Cardiff for a bit, but a job offer came in from Indus and I decided to take it.”

Yaz wasn’t sure why, but she perked up a bit at learning that the blonde had a habit of moving around. “Do you like it, Sheffield?”

Joanna nodded enthusiastically. “Oh yes, very much. I love having the best of both worlds, the city and the countryside so close together. And the people are quite friendly.”

“What about your family?” Yaz asked, her curiosity growing with each question despite her initial hostility. “How often do you get to see them if you’re always moving around?”

Something flickered across the doctor’s face at the question and her eyes seemed to lose some of their light. “I haven’t got a family, not anymore; I lost them a long time ago. Just me these days, I’m afraid.”

“I’m so sorry,” Yaz murmured. And she meant it, she truly did. “How do you cope with that?”

She watched the doctor’s eyes glaze over, losing herself in her memories. “I carry them with me,” the blonde replied quietly, a tender smile on her lips. “What they would have thought and said and done make them a part of who I am. So even though they’re gone from the world they’re never gone from me.”

Yaz watched her quietly, let her reminisce in peace and thought that maybe she had been a little too quick to judge this strange woman who was clearly so much more than she appeared. “That’s— that’s really beautiful,” she said after a few minutes of silence, gently pulling the doctor out of her thoughts.

“Thank you,” she replied, much more subdued than Yaz was used to.

Silence filled the space again, but it was different, comfortable even. It was almost as if something had shifted and an understanding had settled between them, burying the animosity that had developed in the wake of their last meeting. Yaz had other questions, wanted to know more about the doctor, but felt that she’d pried into the other woman’s life far enough for one day. Looking back, she was slightly ashamed of her behavior last week when she had stormed into her office and demanded an explanation for simply doing her job. And now she had opened up a painful part of herself to Yaz, just to make the officer feel more comfortable with their situation. Maybe it wasn’t too much to ask that she at least try to make the most of it, too.

“Did you want to ask anything else?” Joanna’s voice broke through her thoughts.

Yaz shook her head. “No, not tonight.”

“You sure? I really don’t mind.”

“Yeah, I’m sure,” she replied. “Besides, there’s always next time, yeah?”

The doctor smiled at Yaz’s mention of their next session, suggesting that she was at least softening to the idea of their meetings together. She looked over at the clock on the wall and stood up. “Well
then, why don’t we call it a night?”

Yaz rose from her chair and checked the time; they still had twenty minutes until their time was up. “Really?” she asked. “We’ve still got some time left, though.”

Joanna shook her head. “Nah, I think we’ve already made some pretty good progress tonight. Let’s leave it on a high note. Same time next week?”

“Sure, that works for me,” Yaz nodded, following the blonde as she led the way back toward the entryway. She shrugged on her jacket and stepped out onto the landing, the chill of the night air causing her to shiver.

“Goodnight, Yasmin,” Joanna nodded, standing in the open doorway. “I’ll see you next Thursday.”

“Yaz,” the officer corrected her quietly with a smile. “My friends call me Yaz, remember?”

The doctor grinned widely, unable to contain her joy at regaining nickname privileges. Yes, they had made some excellent progress this evening.

“Well, then Yaz,” she replied, drawing the zed out slightly. “I seem to recall telling you that mine call me Jo. So enough of the Dr. Song nonsense, it’s far too formal, yeah?”

“Fair enough,” Yaz chuckled. “In that case, I guess I’ll see you next week. Goodnight, Jo.”

“Goodnight, Yaz.”

With a final smile, Yaz turned and walked down the short flight of steps, hearing the door close behind her. She pulled her phone out to ring for a taxi, ambling aimlessly down the street with a slight spring in her step. Maybe this whole therapy programme wouldn’t be as bad as she’d originally expected.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you all so much for the many kudos and comments, they always make my day! Please don’t be shy, let me know what you’re thinking of the story so far, I love hearing from you all.

And feel free to come say hi on tumblr, I’m @pandora-spocks and I’m always up to chat.
Chapter Notes

Hey all, welcome back! I just want to preface this chapter by saying there are mentions of racism and Islamaphobia, so proceed carefully if those are things you are easily bothered by. Hope you enjoy!

As ever, many thanks to my wonderful beta, @antiopesgirlfriend! <3

The next week found Yaz thinking back constantly to her first session with Jo and some of the things she had come to learn about the bubbly doctor. The switching of roles had thrown her off guard originally, but it had had its desired effect in softening the disgruntled officer and creating an even ground between the two women.

It had also succeeded in producing an unending curiosity in Yaz to find out as much as she could about Dr. Joanna Song. The upside to desk duty is that it provided her with a fair amount of free time to browse through whatever information she could find in the station files. Jo had indeed started at Indus just over three years ago as their head of psych. Because of her senior position, the blonde didn’t handle the routine evaluations that were required of the officers every two years, only more serious assessments like the mandatory ones after special cases, which is why Yaz had not seen her before now.

The rest of the information she found was pretty standard; Jo was thirty-three years old and originally from Huddersfield with no spouse and no children. She had indeed bounced around a fair bit, with three separate previous employers listed within the past eight years. She didn’t inquire about her family, knowing that it wasn’t her place to go snooping into something so personal. Judging by Jo’s reaction at their last meeting, it was deeply painful for her to talk about and she’d trusted Yaz enough to share that small part of herself; Yaz wouldn’t even think of betraying that. Instead, she contented herself with the small pieces of the puzzle she had so far, working them over in her head to try and get them to connect into a more complete picture of the enigmatic doctor.

Still, she felt a bit remorseful about going behind the other woman’s back, even if she only looked at her basic profile. So, she resolved to be honest with the blonde during their next meeting, hoping she wouldn’t be too upset by Yaz’s actions. By the time the following Thursday rolled around, she was feeling quite anxious as she climbed the steps in front of Jo’s home and knocked on the door.

“Hey Yaz!” Jo opened it with a smile, stepping aside and waving her in. Yaz hung up her jacket and they headed toward the kitchen for tea before they began their session.

“So, I have a small confession,” Yaz admitted nervously while Jo put the kettle on and gathered everything she would need for their drinks.

She looked over at her from the stove with mock concern. “Oh, that sounds serious,” Jo teased. “Have you implicated me in some undercover plot and now we need flee the country or something?”

Despite her anxiety, Yaz laughed and shook her head at the blonde’s absurd comment. “If we did, what would you say?”
Jo grinned mischievously. “When do we leave?”

For a split second Yaz felt her heart skip a beat in her chest, intrigued by this much more playful side of the doctor that she hadn’t witnessed yet and added a new piece to the ever-expanding puzzle in her head.

“Sorry,” Jo chuckled. “What were you actually going to say?”

Refocusing her attention, Yaz collected her thoughts and cleared her throat. “Right, well,” she began awkwardly. “I kind of did some research on you in my spare time this week.”

If she was surprised by the admission, the doctor hardly let it show; the only tell-tale sign being the slight stiffening of her posture, but she nodded casually as she poured their tea. “And did you find anything interesting?” she asked lightly.

“No, I didn’t dig very deep,” Yaz assured her, resting her hands on the counter as she began to fidget with her fingers. “Just basic stuff; where you’re from, where you’ve lived. That kind of thing. Figured anything else would be invasive.”

She looked up when a slim hand came to rest lightly over hers. Jo was gazing at her kindly, withdrawing her touch when Yaz’s anxious movements had stilled and she found that she immediately missed the warmth.

“I’m not upset Yaz,” Jo reassured her. “It’s okay to be curious and you didn’t go looking for anything that couldn’t be found by a quick Google search.”

“I would never invade your privacy like that,” Yaz promised. “I just wanted to know a bit more about you.”

Jo smiled and set her usual hint of milk with two sugars down in front of her. “I know that, Yaz. Now, why don’t we take this to the living room and get started, yeah?”

They crossed through the hallway and took their spots on the couch and loveseat respectively, Jo balancing Yaz’s file on her knees as she scribbled a few reminders of the things they would be discussing tonight.

“I’d like to try discussing your family again tonight, if that’s okay Yaz?” she asked, adjusting in her seat to curl one of her feet beneath her.

“Yeah, okay,” Yaz nodded, holding her mug between both of her hands to keep herself from fidgeting. “I think I can do that.”

“You know to just tell me if you need to stop and take a second, right?” Jo continued. Yaz nodded. “Okay, good. Now you mentioned last week that your dad is in accounting and your mother manages a luxury hotel?” Another nod. “Can you tell me what your relationships with each of them are like?”

Yaz thought for a moment, deciding where to start. “Well I’ve always been closer with my mum,” she confessed. “Not that I don’t love my dad and we aren’t close, but I was just always around her more; she’d sometimes take me into work with her when I was little or have me help her in the kitchen for meals. And she,” Yaz broke off, a lump forming in her throat. “She was the one who really held me together after the whole Izzy Flint thing.”

Jo, discreetly taking notes as Yaz spoke, paused to look up at the mention of Izzy Flint again. They would get there eventually, but she had already noticed the way Yaz’s voice became strained and her
body would tense just by mentioning the girl’s name.

“I’d like to come back to Izzy Flint later,” Jo forewarned her. “But, first, can you tell me about your dad? You said you’re close with him, as well, right?”

“Yeah, no, dad’s great, we get on really well,” Yaz nodded. “He’s always been the one that I’ve been able to be more relaxed with, watch football or whatever. He’s much more laid back than mum.”

Jo nodded. “And your sister?”

Yaz huffed out a laugh and rolled her eyes. “I mean, I love her, I really do, but she’s a right pain in the arse most days.”

“Siblings,” Jo grinned at her. “Bless. Any legitimate animosity though?”

“No,” she shook her head. “She drives me mad half the time, but I know she’s always got my back if it comes down to it.”

“Sounds like you’ve definitely been fortunate,” the doctor segued as she made a couple more notes. “But every family does have their disagreements. You mentioned in your evaluation that your family hadn’t been thrilled at first when you first became a police officer. Can you elaborate on that a bit?”

“A lot of it came from a place of concern, I think,” Yaz explained as she shifted a bit on the couch to settle in more comfortably. “They wanted me to be safe and I had chosen a job that was very much not that.” She paused for a moment, sorting through her thoughts. “But I think there was more to it,” she admitted. “From a traditional point of view.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“I think it was difficult for them to understand why I chose a job that tends to be more male dominated,” she elaborated. “Which makes them sound really old-fashioned, but that’s kind of the social structure they both grew up in.”

“Have they ever made offhand comments or said anything that would suggest disappointment with your choice?” Jo asked.

“Not disappointment, no,” Yaz replied, shaking her head. “More that they seem to see me as a woman who is a police officer rather than just a police officer, as if my gender is a factor somehow.”

“Can you give me any examples?”

Yaz shrugged. “It’s nothing direct or intentionally mean,” she explained. “Just dad will usually insist on calling me a policewoman, even though I’ve tried to tell him to call me an officer.”

“And your mum?” Jo probed gently.

“She’s always had high expectations for us,” she continued, her voice a bit quieter. “But she’ll sometimes remind me that I have to work twice as hard to earn the other officers’ respect, not just because I’m a woman, but a minority, too. So I’ll pick up an extra shift here and there to make her happy, but I can tell she’s always worried about how I’m treated on the job.”

Jo finished her latest slew of notes and looked up at Yaz with apologetic eyes. “Do you think some of that might stem from Izzy Flint?”
Yaz stiffened, her hands clenching into fists at the name. “Yeah,” she murmured. “I think a lot of it does, actually.”

“I know it’s hard to talk about, Yaz,” Jo spoke gently. “But can you tell me what happened with Izzy a little more thoroughly? At whatever pace you need, okay?”

Swallowing thickly, she nodded and tried to relax her rigid posture. She took a moment, reaching out to pick up her tea to try and steady her trembling hands. The warmth was comforting and helped her breath a little easier as she took a deep breath and began to speak in a low, shaky voice.

“So we already covered that Izzy moved in at the start of year nine and started to bully me, call me names,” Yaz looked up at Jo for confirmation, receiving a soft affirmative hum before continuing. “It wasn’t just stupid school yard names, it was vicious, terrible things to get under my skin and make me feel lesser. I’d hear her mutter Paki under her breath whenever we’d pass in the hallway, or call me a terrorist when I’d slip out of class for salat.” She took a ragged breath. “She even got some of the other kids doing it, too; people I’d thought were my friends or at least friendly enough.”

Tears started to blur her vision and she sniffed noisily. Just as she was looking around for something to blow her nose, a box of tissue found their way into her lap as Jo had plucked them from the end table and handed them to her silently. She let Yaz collect herself in peace, waiting patiently until the younger woman was ready to continue. After a few moments, the officer began to speak again, her voice thick with emotion.

“It got worse when she outed me,” she muttered. “I could deal with her calling me a ‘Paki dyke’ or ‘brownie fag’, but—” Yaz stalled and wiped at her eyes as the tears began to gather again. “Then she—um, then she brought my family into it.”

Her voice cracked on the last few words. Jo reached her hand out across the arm of the couch and Yaz took it gratefully, holding onto it like a lifeline.

“What kinds of things did she say about them?” Jo murmured softly, squeezing her hand. Yaz took strength from the fingers wrapped around her own and took a deep breath before speaking.

“She asked if they’d tried to correct me yet,” she whispered, her voice trembling. “If they’d had a male relative rape me so that I’d stop liking girls.”

“Oh, Yaz…” Jo felt her heart break and held the girl’s hand that much tighter.

“The day I took a swing at her and we got into a fist fight, she’d said that she was surprised my father hadn’t killed me yet,” she continued, barely audible. “Like an honor killing to rid the family of my shame.”

Hearing this final admission, Jo shifted from her spot on the loveseat to sit next to Yaz on the couch, pulling her into a tight hug. She could feel her shaking and ran a soothing hand up and down her back, murmuring soft words of comfort as she did so. Eventually, Yaz calmed down enough to pull back from the embrace and swipe at the tears that were threatening to spill from her eyes.

“Thank you,” she sniffed quietly.

Jo tilted her head and gave her a soft smile. “Anytime.” She took her in; the red-rimmed eyes with tears still shining in them, the shallow breathing, the hunched shoulders. She considered that maybe she’d pushed far enough for the evening, but there was just one last thing sitting at the back of her mind.

“Yaz,” she broached gently. The other woman rose her eyes to look up at the doctor. “There’s just
one last thing I’d like to ask you for tonight, if that’s okay?”

Yaz nodded slowly and straightened up in her seat, bracing herself for Jo’s next question.

“I want to talk more about the guilt you seem to be holding onto, but that can wait until next week,” Jo reassured her, seeing the panic start to enter her eyes. “The only thing I’d like to know is if this is where it began; the guilt that you somehow weren’t good enough or a disappointment of some kind.”

She watched Yaz shift a bit, uncomfortable under the scrutiny, before she nodded reluctantly.

“Yeah,” she admitted. “I hated her for what she was saying, but I also started to wonder if it might be true. If my parents would think I was some kind of disappointment or something if they knew I was bi.”

“And so you started bottling it up?” Jo prompted further. “Those feelings of guilt and inadequacy?”

She nodded again, but didn’t say anything else, her hands beginning to twist anxiously in her lap, and Jo knew this was where they should stop for the evening. “I think we’ll end it here for tonight, okay?” She received another mute nod from the officer as she continued to fidget restlessly. Jo watched her with concern, wondering if she’d asked too much of the brunette too soon.

“Would you like to stay for another cuppa?” she offered, hoping to somehow make it up to her.

Shaking her head, Yaz got to her feet, her movements sluggish. “No, I think I’m gonna head home, I’m feeling a bit drained from tonight. But thank you.”

“Of course,” Jo nodded understandably. “C’mon, I’ll walk you out.”

They said their goodbyes at the door and Jo stood on the landing as she watched Yaz walk down the road, the lights from the streetlamps marking her path. She hoped she hadn’t pushed too far tonight, recalling the way Yaz’s voice had trembled and her hands twisted in her lap as she’d had to relive everything that Izzy Flint had said and done to her.

And yet, in the midst of her worry, Jo couldn’t help but remember how warm Yaz had felt when she’d pulled her into a hug, the sweet scent of her shampoo still fresh in the doctor’s memory.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you all so much for your comments and kudos, they always make my day! Please feel free to let me know what you're thinking of the story.

I'm also over on tumblr at @pandora-spockz and I'm always up for a chat if you want to come say hello!
Over the days immediately following their latest meeting, Jo continued to worry about Yaz and how she was handling herself after their last conversation. She had thought of reaching out, possibly calling her at work just to check in, but was concerned that it would be crossing some kind of professional line. Determined to set her mind at ease, however, she sent the officer an email to confirm their next appointment for the following Thursday. It was something she’d never done, and she was sure Yaz would be confused by the message, but she hoped that it might give her some of the insight she was anxiously wanting. Unfortunately, Yaz was slightly less than helpful, sending back a simple “Of course, see you then” with no further elaboration, which meant that Jo spent the remainder of the week with the other woman constantly on her mind.

When Thursday did finally roll back around, she was practically waiting by the door when Yaz knocked at her usual time. She opened it with a flourish and was relieved to see the other woman grinning back at her, nothing seemingly amiss.

“Alright, Yaz?” she asked, leading them in their now-familiar path to the kitchen.

“Yeah, not too bad,” Yaz replied with a shrug. “Work was boring this week. Being chained to my desk is proper torture, I’ll have you know.” She mock glared at the doctor.

“Well, in my defence,” Jo grinned. “I am working to get you unshackled.” She held up her hand to cut off Yaz’s protest. “The fact that I’m the one who shackled you in the first place notwithstanding.”

The brunette laughed, but decided to keep her cheeky comments to herself. Once their tea was ready, the two of them made their way into the living room and took their usual places on the couch and loveseat.

“Right,” Jo began, flipping back through her notes from the previous week. “Last meeting we finished up talking about Izzy Flint and the perpetual feeling of guilt that it seemed to develop in you. I’d like to explore that further tonight, if you think you’re up for that.”

Yaz took a sip of her tea, thinking for a moment and trying to gauge what her motional capacity might be for the evening. The doctor had not been wrong in worrying that last week had been hard on her; she’d had trouble sleeping the first few days after their appointment and found herself drifting back to memories of Izzy Flint quite often. However, she’d been doing alright the last half of the week, and they wouldn’t be discussing Izzy, just the effects of what had happened.
“Yeah, I think so,” she eventually replied with a nod of her head. “Can’t be much worse than last week, I suppose.”

“Well, regardless, we go at your pace like always” the blonde reminded her. Yaz simply nodded in reply, waiting for her to continue. “You indicated that the guilt and inadequacy grew out of your thinking that you would be a disappointment to your family because you’re bisexual. Do you remember that?”

Yaz nodded again. “Yeah, I do.”

“And was this the case when they eventually found out?” Jo prompted. “You’ve said that you’re close with your family, which suggests they support you, but you still have the habit of bottling things up. Why is that?”

The officer paused for a moment, thinking over her words carefully before answering. “There was some tension when Izzy forced me out,” She admitted quietly.

“How so?”

“My parents weren’t really sure how to handle it,” Yaz explained, staring down at her tea. “They weren’t cruel, didn’t threaten to throw me out or anything. They just had no experience with it, with LGBTQ people. They tried though, they really did; they learned and asked questions. They wanted to understand, it was just really awkward at first.”

“But it got better?” Jo asked.

“Yeah, after a bit.”

“So where do you think the feelings of being a disappointment come from?”

Yaz sighed heavily and readjusted on the couch, tucking her feet beneath her comfortably. “I just always felt like I was letting my family down, because I wasn’t normal.”

“And by normal you mean straight?” the doctor clarified.

“Yeah.”

“Did anyone in your family ever indicate that this was the case?” she asked. “That they wished you had been straight?”

“No, it mostly came from some of the things Izzy had said, about them trying to correct me or—or doing an honor killing.” Yaz paused to take a calming breath. “It just made me feel like it would’ve been so much easier on them if I weren’t queer; if we were just a normal, Muslim family.”

“And so you continued to bottle,” Jo said, taking down her usual notes. Yaz nodded. “And you couldn’t talk to any of them, because you felt like you’d already made things hard enough?”

Yaz nodded again, taking a long drink from her tea.

“That makes sense, honestly,” the blonde reassured her as she finished her notes and fixed her with a kind smile. “It’s not healthy, mind you, but it does make sense. So let’s move forward then; what are some of these frustrations with your job that you’ve mentioned?”

“It’s hard being a woman on the force, let alone a minority woman,” Yaz explained. “They already wonder if I’m up to the job, physically and emotionally, but when your skin is a different color, they
see you differently, too. They have all these built-in prejudices that make me untrustworthy or unreliable in their eyes. I’ve had to work twice as hard as any of them for half of the respect.”

“I understand,” Jo nodded. “At least as much as I can from my perspective.” She scribbled a few more notes before looking back up at Yaz sympathetically. “And that brings us up to the Latimer case. Are you up for talking about it tonight?”

“Not entirely,” the brunette admitted. “But I don’t think I’ll ever fully be ready, so now is as good a time as any.”

The doctor hummed, understanding her trepidation, so she proceeded carefully. “I already know the technical details, so we don’t need to go over all of that; but do you think you can run me through the emotional ones; what was going on inside your head as everything happened?”

“Oh,” Yaz started, her eyes widening slightly. “Um, yeah, okay.”

“Yaz,” Jo spoke gently. “Remember; at your pace.”

“Right, okay.” Yaz took a deep breath, collecting her thoughts and bracing herself to relive the emotions that had been so unbearably raw and intense; searing that day into her memories for the rest of her life. “Well it was fairly routine to start out with, which sounds absolutely heartless, but we get domestics pretty regularly. They’re difficult, always, but it’s part of the job and you learn to compartmentalize; put your emotions aside for the sake of the people involved.”

She could hear the soft scratching of Jo’s pen on the pad of paper in her lap and found herself distracted for a moment by the soothing rhythm. The doctor did not prompt Yaz further, letting her sit in the silence for as long as she needed.

“Um, so it only got more complicated when we found out there was a kid involved,” she continued a few moments later. “It always does, because they have no idea what’s happening or why their parent is doing what they are, and you can only think about getting them to safety; keeping them alive. You get attached, even though you know you shouldn’t.” She paused a moment to allow Jo to finish her latest round of writing, waiting until the blonde looked up at her politely to continue.

“So, like I said, I got attached, and I felt responsible for this little girl and getting her out of the situation alive.” Tears had begun to build in her eyes. She tried to blink them back but a few slipped through and down her cheeks. “My sergeant could tell how concerned I was for her and tasked me with making sure she got out safe once we finally gained entrance to the room the husband pulled them into either by negotiation or by force.”

Jo continued to write silently, but could see exactly where this was headed and kept glancing up at Yaz while she made her notes to keep an eye on her wavering emotional state. It was like watching a reservoir flood; it wasn’t a matter of if the dam broke, it was a matter of when.

“So—so when we heard the gunshots, I felt my heart fall into my stomach,” Yaz began speaking again shakily. “And somehow I just knew.” Her voice had dropped to a whisper and Jo had ceased writing at this, watching the brunette carefully as she went on, noticing how her eyes kept growing dimmer with every word. “When we got in the room and everything had finally settled down and we began to look around, I turned immediately to the closet; like it was almost calling out to me. I knew what I was going to find, but it was like I wouldn’t be able to believe it unless I saw it for myself.” She sniffed loudly, her voice thick with emotion. “And there they were, and it felt like the whole world had come crashing down on me. She’d been depending on us, depending on me, to get her out safe, and we—I—couldn’t—I just couldn’t—”
Jo saw the break a moment before it happened; the light in Yaz’s eyes dulling completely as her bottom lip trembled ever so slightly before her entire face crumpled in anguish. She sprang from her seat and landed right beside the her on the couch just as Yaz’s body gave out and she collapsed right into Jo’s waiting arms, sobs ripping through her violently. She grabbed onto the doctor’s sweater, her tears soaking through the material and into the blonde’s skin, but Jo held on fiercely as she gently rocked them back and forth. She slipped one of her hands into the hair at the base of Yaz’s skull and scratched lightly with her nails, hoping to give her something more soothing to focus on than the memories that she knew were currently at the forefront of the young woman’s mind.

It took several minutes for Yaz to calm down enough to loosen her grasp on Jo’s shirt and another couple until she was able to sit back up without support. She pulled back from their embrace slightly, but did not let go; almost as if she were using Jo as an anchor to keep herself steady. Her eyes were rimmed red from crying, and she took deep, shuddering breaths. When she finally looked up at the blonde she was as fragile as Jo had ever seen, as if she might fall apart all over again at any moment.

“I’m sorry,” she whispered, her voice barely audible despite how close they were sitting.

Jo brushed a few stray tears from her cheeks with the pad of her thumb. “You’re allowed to let yourself feel, Yaz,” she murmured. “You’ve suffered something immensely traumatic, you have every right to fall apart now and then. And this bottling up that you’ve learned to do,” she shook her head knowingly. “It’s a powder keg waiting to explode and take you down with it.” Jo kept her hand in place so that it was now cupping the brunette’s cheek, who leaned into the touch.

“And I’m not going to let that happen,” she whispered. “I promise.”

Yaz sighed heavily, breath still shaky. “Just give me a few more minutes,” she smiled weakly. “Then we can pick back up.”

“Oh no, I think we’re done for the evening.” Jo’s voice was soft but firm as she shook her head, blonde hair swaying with the movement. Her hand trailed slowly from the brunette’s cheek down to rest on her shoulder, leaving goosebumps in its wake.

Yaz looked as if she were about to object, but the doctor placed a finger against her lips. “Don’t even think of arguing, you’ve been through enough for one evening.” She stood up, pulling Yaz with her, and drew her into a proper hug. “How about some more tea?” she asked when they pulled apart. Yaz could only nod, shoulders sagging heavily in resignation.

Jo wrapped her arm around the girl’s shoulder and guided them back into the kitchen, sitting Yaz down in one of the stools at the breakfast bar. She set about making their tea, putting the kettle on to boil as she pulled out the sugar and milk. When the two mugs were ready to be filled, Jo leaned against the counter and reached forward to rest her hand on Yaz’s wrist while they waited on the water.

Yaz was staring down at the counter, her face still pale but breaths evened back out to normal. The red around her eyes was still prominent, but it seemed the tears had retreated for now.

“I’m sorry,” she repeated, sniffing quietly. “I had no idea the case had affected me like this.”

“You have no reason to be sorry,” Jo reassured her, thumb rubbing lightly against the skin on the back of her hand. “We all carry our own guilt around, Yaz. You’re not alone, I promise.”

“Even you?” The look she gave the blonde was skeptical, but the tone was not. It was almost curious, as if she wanted to fit another piece to the puzzle that was Dr. Joanna Song.
Jo hummed humorlessly, turning back toward the stove where the kettle was now boiling. She took her time with pouring the water into the waiting mugs, stirring each one with care before sitting Yaz’s down in front of her and looking back up to meet her eyes. Yaz was startled by the mournful look on her face.

“Yes, even me,” Jo murmured and took a long sip of her tea, clearly contemplating something. It was several, long moments before she spoke again.

“Next Wednesday was meant to be my anniversary,” she admitted softly, staring down at the mug in her hands.

Yaz nearly spat out her tea at this revelation, staring at Jo with shock evident in her wide eyes. “You were married?” she asked incredulously, as if she were seeing yet another entirely new side of the doctor that she’d never considered before.

The blonde shook her head slowly as she continued to contemplate her mug, fiddling with the handle. “No, we weren’t married, but we’d been together for a little over three years. Talked about it on and off, though.”

Yaz had never seen Jo so subdued. In all the time that she’d spent with her, she’d yet to see the doctor without a genuine smile on her face. Even when the brunette was recounting particularly painful memories, her eyes shined with kindness and sympathy. Now it was as if the stars had been stolen from the night sky. Jo had gone quiet, and Yaz found that she didn’t like it when the doctor went quiet.

“Can I ask what happened?” she inquired gently.

The blonde shrugged, though it was a half-hearted gesture. “We grew apart, wanted different things,” Jo explained quietly. “She was never really content with Sheffield. I think she felt suffocated here, by the quaintness of it. She wasn’t made for a quiet life with a picket fence.”

“Doesn’t sound like it was your fault, though,” Yaz said. “What is it that you feel guilty about?” She could have smacked herself the moment the question came out of her mouth. None of this was really her business and yet here she was asking Jo to divulge the details of her personal life. “I’m sorry, that was rude of me to ask,” she muttered. “Feel free to ignore that, and me for that matter.”

Jo finally looked up at her for the first time since the shift in conversation. She had a look in her eyes that the brunette couldn’t quite read. Almost as if she’d never quite looked at Yaz properly before now.

“I don’t mind talking about it,” she assured the officer. “At least not with you.” The way she said the last bit, soft and warm with a hint of a smile returning to her eyes, Yaz could have sworn she felt her heart skip a beat in her chest.

“Besides, I’ve learned quite a few personal things about you, so it seems only fair.”

“That’s not exactly the same, Jo,” Yaz pointed out.

The blonde chuckled, humor back behind the sound again. “Maybe not, but still.” She paused and set her still full mug of tea on the counter, tendrils of steam rising delicately towards the ceiling.

“It wasn’t entirely my fault, no,” Jo admitted. “But my job, the relocation, it was a large factor. She didn’t want to come here initially, but I wanted a place where I could finally settle down and stop bouncing around so much. So, we moved and made the most of it. But she was restless; she wanted a life of adventure that I just couldn’t give her.”
The blonde paused for a moment and Yaz watched as her gaze clouded over with the memories. “She started taking trips on her own; anywhere and everywhere, getting into trouble wherever she could, and it got to the point where she was away more than she was home. It was after her last trip; she came back from Norway and stood in the kitchen with this look in her eyes and I just knew.” Yaz watched as a single tear spilled over onto Jo’s cheek. “We spent the night together and then in the morning she was gone, and her things with her. Just a single note left on the counter; ‘Goodbye, sweetie’ was all it said.”

“Jo...” Yaz began but trailed off, not sure what else she could say.

“So, no, it wasn’t really my fault, not entirely” Jo continued quietly, wiping at her cheek with the sleeve of her jumper. “But I always wonder what might have happened if we hadn’t come here, if I hadn’t been so insistent on wanting to settle down.”

Yaz wasn’t sure what to say to that, knowing that empty words of solace wouldn’t do any good. Instead, she reached her hand across the counter and rested it over the blonde’s fingers, returning the same comfort she’d given her earlier.

“What was her name?” she asked, hopeful that she wouldn’t upset the other woman with her curiosity, but she wanted to know the name of the person that had somehow let Joanna Song slip through her fingers.

“River.”

Even through the pain, Jo smiled fondly as the name left her lips and Yaz felt a sudden, unexplained twinge in her heart. Before she could say anything further, the blonde checked her watch and gasped almost comically.

“We’re nearly an hour over our time,” she said, looking up at Yaz apologetically. “I’m sorry, I wasn’t even paying attention.”

The brunette waved her hand dismissively. “It’s fine,” she assured the other woman. “My place isn’t far. Besides,” she took a deep breath of bravery. “I really like talking with you.”

And just like that, the lopsided grin was back on Jo’s face, her eyes lighting up like a child on Christmas. “Really?”

Yaz chuckled at the hopeful look on the blonde’s face. “Yeah,” she nodded bashfully. “You’re kind of the best person I’ve ever met.”

She didn’t know it was possible, but somehow Jo’s smile got even wider, her eyes sparkling brighter than galaxies. “I like talking with you, too, Yaz.”

They stood there for a few moments, grinning like a pair of proper fools, before Jo came back to her senses. “Still, time to get you home,” she insisted. “You have work in the morning, and I won’t be responsible for one of Sheffield’s finest falling asleep at her desk.”

Yaz chuckled good-naturedly as the blonde led them out of the kitchen and down the hallway toward the entrance. She had just slipped on her jacket and turned toward the door when a hand on her arm stopped her.

“Oh, hang on a second,” Jo said, darting back into the living room before returning moments later with her pen in hand. She patted at her pockets, but came up empty for whatever it was she was looking for. “Damn, I forgot paper. Do you have any, by chance?” Yaz shook her head and the blonde was about to turn back toward the other room again before an idea dawned on her. She
reached forward and grabbed the other woman’s hand, holding it out in front of her as she carefully wrote something down on her skin.

“Uh, Jo,” Yaz said as the doctor continued to write. “I could’ve just put whatever it is down in my phone.”

“Ah, well, too late now,” Jo had finished her task and capped her pen, blowing gently on the back of brunette’s hand for the ink to dry. Yaz felt a swarm of butterflies begin to beat against her ribs at the action and looked down at the doctor’s looping scrawl.

“Wait, is this—”

“It’s my phone number,” Jo nodded. “Tonight was hard on you and I want to make sure that you’re okay, just in case anything happens; any flashbacks, panic attacks, or something like that.”

Yaz just stared at her, lost for words at the blonde’s thoughtfulness, so she did the only thing she could think of; she wrapped her arms around Jo’s slim shoulders and pulled her into the tightest hug she could manage. She felt the other woman stiffen in surprise for a moment before she relaxed into the embrace, her arms snaking around the brunette’s waist.

When they pulled apart, Yaz noticed there was a slight pink tinge to Jo’s cheeks, but didn’t say anything, simply smiled up at her.

“Thank you, Jo,” she said, her voice soft and earning a shy nod from the doctor. She cleared her throat and turned toward the door, the blonde following her to the threshold as she stepped out onto the landing. “I’ll see you next week, then?”

Jo nodded, leaning against the door frame. “Unless you need me before then,” she replied. “And I mean that Yaz; if anything happens, you call me straight away.”

“Promise,” the brunette nodded. “Goodnight, Jo.”

“Goodnight, Yaz.” The doctor watched her descend the steps and walk her usual path down the street as she called for an Uber. She wondered if she’d crossed that thin line between personal and professionalism by giving Yaz her private phone number, but as she’d recalled the way her eyes had lit up, how she’d felt pressed up against her, Jo couldn’t find it in herself to care.

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It was two nights later when Yaz jolted awake covered in a sheen of cold sweat, snapshot images of the very vivid nightmare still flashing through her mind; the blood on her hands, the lifeless eyes staring up at her, the sound of sirens wailing all around her. She tried to sit up, but a wave of nausea rolled through her, forcing her over the side of the bed as the meager contents of her stomach emptied onto the hardwood floor. Trembling violently, Yaz collapsed back against her pillows as the room continued to spin in front of her.

In her panicked haze, she fumbled for her phone on the nightstand, grabbing onto it like a lifeline. Her hands shook as she struggled to type in her four-digit code, succeeding on the third try. She opened her contacts, scrolling quickly down the list until she came to the name she was looking for.

It rang once, twice, and a third time before the tone halted with a click and a familiar voice, thick with sleep, answered.

“Hello? This is Dr. Song.”
As always, thank you so much for reading and please let me know what you all thought of the latest chapter. Seeing all of your lovely comments makes my day!

If you feel like hitting me up for a chat, you can find me on tumblr at @pandora_spockz.
The angry buzzing of her phone against the nightstand dragged Jo from the comfort of sleep, her dreams of flying amongst the stars fading into the recesses of her mind as she cracked her eyes open and fumbled blindly for the source of her rude awakening. She sat up and squinted at the screen of her phone; it was just past two in the morning. Groaning at the late hour, Jo cleared her throat and answered the unknown number, trying to sound far less annoyed than she felt.

“Hello? This is Dr. Song.”

There was a beat of silence, what sounded like a strangled sob, and then the most fragile voice she had ever heard. “J-Jo?”

Now wide awake and throwing off the duvet so she could swing her legs over the edge of the bed, Jo clutched her phone tightly against her ear. “Yaz? Yaz is that you? What’s happened, what’s wrong?”

It took a few more moments for Yaz to speak again. “Jo,” she gasped. “C-can’t breathe.”

Her voice was tight and thin and Jo felt the analytical side of her brain overtake her panic and shift into doctor mode.

“Yaz, I need you to listen to me,” Jo instructed gently. “Focus on my voice, okay? Can you do that?”

“Yes,” Yaz breathed.

“Good, here’s what you need to do: lie flat on your back and place your hand over your middle.” She waited for Yaz’s confirmation before continuing. “Now, breath in for four beats and out for seven and concentrate on the rise and fall of your stomach, okay? I’ll count for you.”

They went through the exercise for several minutes, Jo counting in a soothing, looping rhythm as she tried to help the other woman regain control over her breathing. Eventually she could tell that Yaz’s breaths were becoming far less frantic, almost regular if it weren’t for the slight shaking when she exhaled.

“Yaz,” Jo said, voice quiet as she tried to keep her calm. She heard a weak hum of acknowledgement. “Yaz, I’m going to come over and check on you, alright? Is that okay?”

“Yes, please,” Yaz murmured weakly, and Jo could hear the subtle pleading in the request.
“Do you want me to stay on the phone with you or will you be okay for about ten minutes?”

“I think I’ll be okay,” Yaz replied, exhaustion clear in her tone. “I’ll just keep doing the breathing thing and I can call you back if I have to.”

“Okay, if you’re sure,” Jo relented, standing from the bed and crossing over to the closet to pull out a sweatshirt. “Which flat is yours?”

“Thirty-one. There’s a spare key tucked beneath the mat.”

“Ten minutes,” Jo reassured her before hanging up. She hurriedly pulled the sweatshirt over her head, further mussing her already sleep-disheveled hair, and rushed out into the hall and toward the entryway. She shoved her boots on, not bothering to lace them, and grabbed her purse and keys before yanking open the door and heading for her car.

The drive to Yaz’s was tense and impatient, her speed bordering on irresponsible in certain areas; so much so that she arrived at Park Hill just eight minutes later, jerking the car to a stop and bolting for the stairs, taking them three at a time until she reached Yaz’s floor and still not slowing down until she finally stood outside number thirty-one. Kneeling beside the mat, she found the key easily and let herself in, shutting the door softly behind her.

“Yaz?” she called softly through the dark flat.

“Jo?” a weary voice answered her from the hall to her left. She followed the wooden floorboards, passing a bathroom and a small office before she came to the last room, it’s door slightly ajar. She reached forward and pushed it open and felt her heart break at the sight in front of her. Visible in the dim light of the streetlamps shining through the window, Yaz was curled up on her side facing the doctor; her breathing was shallow, but had at least evened out, and there was a small pool of sick on the floor just over the edge of the mattress. A quiet whimper caught Jo’s attention and she quickly made her way over to the bed, careful to avoid the vomit, and sat gingerly on the edge.

Yaz stared up at her with hollow eyes and tear tracks still shining against her dark skin. Jo reached forward unthinkingly and started to thread her fingers through the brunette’s hair, earning a weak hum of approval. Yaz’s eyes fluttered closed for a moment and Jo felt her start to relax beneath the ministrations.

“Can you tell me what happened?” Jo asked after a few moments, her whisper carrying easily in the darkness. Yaz didn’t speak right away but shifted, curling further into herself until her head was resting on the blonde’s thigh. Jo felt a warmth spread through her from the spot where Yaz had settled against her legs and smiled despite the current situation.

“Had a nightmare,” Yaz murmured, leaning into Jo’s touch still combing through her tangled hair. “It was like I was back there all over again; the sounds, the smells, everything was the same. When I woke up, I couldn’t breathe.” She looked up at the blonde with apologetic eyes. “I didn’t want to wake you, but you were the first person I thought of, I’m sorry.”

Jo didn’t have to ask what Yaz had been dreaming about, and quite frankly she didn’t want to; didn’t want to force her to relieve the memories for the second time that night. Instead, she let her hand drift further down so that it was resting just between Yaz’s shoulder blades and scratched lightly through her shirt.

“Don’t be sorry, I’m glad you did,” she murmured softly, tracing spirals against her upper back. “How can I help? Do you want a cup of tea?” Suddenly, she felt Yaz begin to shake and Jo worried that she might have started crying again, when the brunette looked up at her with the ghost of a grin.
“Is tea your solution to everything?” she teased, her voice hoarse.

“Hasn’t let me down yet,” Jo insisted with a small smile, carefully lifting Yaz’s head from her lap and standing from the bed. “You stay here, I’ll go make you some and then I can clean the mess on the floor.” Yaz looked like she was about to protest, but Jo stopped her with hand on her shoulder, eyes gentle. “I want to help, Yaz. Please let me.”

She waited until Yaz finally gave in with a shaky nod and sank back down into the mattress before heading back through the hallway toward the kitchen, dropping her keys on the counter. She turned on the electric kettle and pulled the milk from the fridge, spending the next few minutes waiting on the water to heat up by searching for the tea and sugar, finally locating them in the cupboard next to the dishes. Once the kettle had begun to boil, she quickly put Yaz’s tea together, adding a splash of cold water and returning the milk to the fridge before heading back towards the bedroom.

In the time that she had gone, Yaz had lifted herself up into a sitting position against the pillows and flipped on the lamp beside her bed, allowing Jo to get a proper look at her for the first time since arriving. Her face was ashen, possibly with the effort it had taken to pull herself up against the headboard, and she was trembling slightly. She looked up when the doctor came back into the room, eyes slightly unfocused and pupils dilated. Jo approached her and gently lifted her hands one at a time so that they were cradling the mug of tea. The warmth of the smooth ceramic against her skin seemed to rouse Yaz slightly and she took a small sip, humming quietly.

Jo watched her for a few moments to make sure she wouldn’t accidently spill her tea and then set about locating the cleaning supplies, finding a generic cleaner and paper towels beneath the sink in the bathroom. She returned to find Yaz still indulging in the mug clutched between her hands, noticing that some of the color had returned to her cheeks. Working silently, she mopped up the small puddle of sick on the floor, giving the affected area of the floor a solid once over with the cleaner. When she’d finished, she returned the supplies to the bathroom and tossed the rest into the bin. She returned to the bedroom, approaching Yaz quietly, and Jo noted that she had adjusted slightly; she was leaning forward with hunched shoulders and her head hanging so that her hair had fallen in a curtain around her face.

“How are you feeling?” she asked, sitting back down on the edge of the bed, resting her hand on the duvet where it covered Yaz’s knee. She lifted her head back up to look at Jo, her eyes still lacking their usual light, and shrugged.

“Better, I guess,” Yaz mumbled, looking down into her tea before tilting it back and draining the remains. Jo leaned in close and gently crooked her finger under the brunette’s chin to better inspect her face. Yaz’s breath hitched as she watched her intently, lips parted, while Jo carefully turned her head left and right a few times before dropping her hand back down to the bed, apparently satisfied.

“Your pupils seem back to normal, and you’re not nearly as flushed as you were when I got here. Breathing’s back to a regular rhythm, too.” Jo drew back, putting a bit more space between them. “I’d say you’re about as alright as you can be.” She stood slowly, taking the now empty mug from Yaz’s hands and set it on the nightstand. “Best thing I think you can do right now is try and get back to sleep, let your mind and body rest.”

It was as if a switch and been flipped and Yaz, who had shown very little emotion or energy since Jo had arrived, sat up straight, her eyes wide with fear and hands clutching at the bedheets. “No, no, no, I can’t—I don’t—please, don’t want to relive that again, please, it’s all I can see when I close my eyes, Jo, please don’t make me—” As she spoke, jumbled and stuttering, Jo realized that her breathing had started to pick up again, coming in short burst between each word.

“Shh, Yaz, shh,” Jo sank back down on the bed and gripped her gently by the shoulders, trying her
best to calm the brunette. “Yaz, you’re okay, you’re safe, I’m right here. Breathe for me, okay; in for four and out for seven, remember?”

She held her gaze, one of her hands reaching back up to comb back through Yaz’s hair while the other squeezed one of her hands, their fingers slotting together easily. They went through the exercise together, breathing rhythmically until Yaz’s had once again returned to a much more normal pace. The younger woman hung her head, clearly exhausted, as Jo continued to stroke through her dark hair. When she finally looked up at the doctor, fear etched clearly in the lines of her face, Jo felt her heart break ever so slightly.

“Please don’t leave,” Yaz pleaded, voice tight and tears shining in her eyes. Jo dropped her hands back to her lap and felt a tug-of-war raging inside her; knowing it was less than responsible to be this close to a patient fixed firmly in her mind, but the desire to protect her friend just as strong. She knew, of course, what the right decision was, the responsible one, but she also knew which decision she would much rather make.

“Yaz, I—” but she trailed off, for once at a loss for the proper words; stuck somewhere between her head and her heart.

“Please,” Yaz repeated, her voice cracking on the single syllable. “I don’t want to wake up alone if it happens again. I can’t. Please, Jo?”

Maybe it was against her better judgment, against every professional boundary that she had set, but the broken look on Yaz’s face was far more persuasive than any kind of moral argument she might have made to try and talk herself out of the idea. Exhaling her reservations, Jo gave into the request with a nod of indulgence.

“Okay, I’ll stay if you need me.”

Yaz sighed in relief but didn’t say anything more, instead shuffling over to make room in the bed and pulled back the covers for the doctor to join her. Toeing off her boots, Jo pulled her sweatshirt over her head and dropped it to the floor to join them before slipping slowly beneath the duvet. Cocooned in the warmth of the bedsheets, the two women lay quietly in the darkness, the sound of their breathing the only break from the silence around them until Yaz turned her head to look over at the blonde.

“Thank you,” she whispered shakily. “For coming over, for staying with me; all of it.”

Jo smiled warmly and sought out Yaz’s hand beneath the sheets, squeezing gently. “Anytime, Yaz.”

She noticed a hesitancy in the younger woman’s eyes; a question and then a decision settling firmly in her jaw. With slow, careful movements, Yaz slid closer to the doctor, eliminating most of the space between them and snaking her arms loosely around her waist.

“Oh,” Jo breathed out in surprise and felt Yaz stiffen beside her before beginning to draw back.

“I’m sorry,” the brunette mumbled, avoiding her eye. “I just—I didn’t mean—” but she was stopped by the feeling of Jo’s arms wrapping around her shoulders, hands pressing firmly against her shoulder blades to pull her back into the embrace.

“It’s okay,” she whispered, a hand drifting up to scratch softly at the nape of her neck. Yaz melted into the touch, arms slipping back around Jo’s waist until they were pressed flush against each other. She tucked her head beneath the blonde’s chin and sighed in quiet relief, Jo smiling softly as she felt the other woman relax in her arms.
“It’s okay,” she repeated as she felt Yaz’s breathing start to even out, tightening her hold around her just slightly. “It’s okay, I’ve got you.”

Chapter End Notes

Thanks again for reading, please let me know what you all thought! And feel free to hit me up on tumblr, I'm @pandora-spockz and I'm always happy to chat :D
Shafts of light streamed through the gaps in the curtains, falling across Jo’s cheeks and pulling her from sleep as she cracked her eyes open and squinted against the glow of the early morning sun. For a moment, she forgot where she was, the room around her unfamiliar in her sleep-deprived state. All at once, however, the events of the previous night flooded back as her eyes fully opened and she was immediately confronted with a mane of dark brown hair tickling her nose. Yaz had shifted in the night and Jo had apparently followed; her arms were wrapped around the brunette’s waist so that her front was pressed warmly against Yaz’s back, their legs mingling together beneath the sheets.

It was comfortable and terrifying all at once.

Jo remained still for several minutes, letting herself enjoy the feeling and the weight of Yasmin Khan in her arms, because she knew that it was something that couldn’t happen again; it shouldn’t have even happened the first time, but her lack of judgment when it came to the brunette had caught her completely off guard. Yaz had caught her completely off guard.

Still mourning the loss of River, Jo had not expected to feel that familiar spark of attraction, the irresistible intrigue of this young officer with a chip on her shoulder and a fire behind her eyes who had strode into her office with a self-assured authority. She was softness and she was steel; she was sunlight and shadows; she was rigid and reckless. She was a mess of contradictions in a leather jacket.

And she was an indulgence that Jo simply could not allow herself, as heavy as the desire to sat within her heart.

So, slowly and carefully as she could to not jostle Yaz, Jo detangled herself from the other woman and slipped quietly from the bed, letting her touch linger just slightly. She stretched her arms above her head, arching backwards with a massive, silent yawn and tried to shake the rest of the fog from her head. Sparing one last glance toward the bed, Yaz still sleeping peacefully, she wandered down the hallway toward the kitchen to try and find a solution to her hunger that was slowly making itself known, her socks whispering against the wooden floor while her stomach grumbled in reply.

There was a brief moment where she worried if Yaz would mind her poking about her cabinets before she realized that her being in the flat at all made the very thought seem absurd by comparison. With very little difficulty, Jo quickly located a canister of flour and pulled the milk, butter, and a box of eggs from the fridge; pancakes seemed a perfect treat after the difficult events of the early morning. Spotting a coffee maker by the stove, she set about finding a container of fresh grounds, eventually finding it shoved to the back of one of the cabinets. Clearly Yaz was not much a coffee person, she observed, but she knew the brunette would be grateful for the caffeine boost. Within
minutes the machine was gurgling away happily as the brown elixir trickled slowly into the pot below.

As she switched on the hob and waited patiently for the pan to heat up, Jo gazed around the apartment; taking in what the distress and darkness of the previous evening had caused her to miss. The room in front of her was bright and airy, sheer curtains of lavender and silver hanging in front of the floor-to-ceiling windows with plush, off-white furniture around a low coffee table and a shag rug of light grey slate occupying the space. It held a certain elegance; just like the woman who inhabited it, thought Jo. In the corner stood a bookcase, stuffed to the breaking point with an assortment of hardcovers and well-worn paperbacks that had clearly known a constant and insatiable touch. Jo had never imagined Yaz to be a bookworm based upon their weekly interactions, and it sent a feeling of warmth through her to learn this new, personal little detail about the other woman.

Turning back to the task at hand, she dropped a bit of butter into the warm pan and set to work on their breakfast. She was halfway through their batch of pancakes when she heard the sound of shuffling feet coming down the hallway. Jo turned to glance over her shoulder and grinned softly when a disheveled and heavy-lidded Yaz slid onto one of the stools on the other side of the counter. She vigorously tried to rub the sleep from her eyes, a yawn slipping from her lips, and gazed around drowsily.

“Did I smell coffee?” she asked, her voice low and gravely. Jo chuckled affectionately and set the pan aside for a moment to pour her a fresh cup, placing it in front of her along with the milk and sugar just in case. Yaz sighed gratefully and set to improving the pitch-black liquid in front of her, adding an obscene amount of milk before chasing it with what seemed to be nearly half of the sugar in Sheffield. Jo stared at her, catching Yaz’s eye who stopped with the cup halfway to her lips.

“What?” she asked, her brow furrowing at the look of disbelief the blonde was giving her.

“I think I might go into diabetic shock just watching you drink that,” Jo shook her head and turned back to finish the pancakes.

“Oh god, you drink black coffee, don’t you?” Yaz muttered, taking a deep pull from her mug.

Jo snorted and flipped the last pancake over. “Oh no, don’t you try to judge me with that atrocity in front of you.”

“Whatever, enjoy your hot bean water.”

Jo laughed and rolled the final pancake into a perfect cylinder, adding it to a plate. Finishing them off with a dusting of powdered sugar and a drizzle of honey, she slid one of the servings toward Yaz and handed her a fork.

“Here, you need to eat something,” she encouraged. “You had a difficult night.”

Yaz took the fork gratefully and wasted no time in tucking into her breakfast, swallowing two mouthfuls before Jo even had time to finish topping her own plate off with the sugar and honey and pour herself a cup of coffee. They ate quietly, the only sounds coming from the scraping of their utensils on the ceramic plates or the dull thunk of a coffee mug being set back down on the counter. Halfway through her meal, Yaz nearly finished, Jo spoke up quietly.

“How are you feeling this morning?”

“Jo,” Yaz sighed heavily, placing her fork down on her empty plate and pushing it aside clumsily. “No offense, but I don’t think I’m ready for a therapy session this early in the morning.”
Jo shook her head, reaching forward to rest her hand on Yaz’s wrist to get her attention. “I’m not asking as your therapist, Yaz,” she corrected her, sympathy shining clear in her eyes. “I’m asking as your friend; how are you feeling?”

Yaz stared at the doctor for several moments, as if she were trying to figure out whether or not the question was some sort of reverse psychology. Jo waited patiently, sipping from her mug as she watched Yaz consider her words. Finally, she saw her shoulders sag, the brunette’s eyes lowering to the counter top with a heavy sigh as she fidgeted with her mug.

“I’m exhausted,” she admitted quietly. “I don’t sleep well most nights anyway, but this is the first time I’ve woken up from a nightmare in a complete panic; can’t breathe or think, just—stuck in the middle, trying to figure out what’s only memories and what’s reality.”

Still gazing down at her coffee, the brunette didn’t catch the dark cloud that passed through Jo’s eyes. “I’m so sorry, Yaz,” she murmured, grip tightening on her own mug. “Dreams can be an unforgiving thing, make us prisoners to our own subconscious.”

She didn’t say anything more, however, and the lack of her usually chattiness caused Yaz to finally look up to meet her eyes, now back to their usual warmth. “What, no questions for me about my inner thoughts or feelings or whatever?” the brunette asked, still expecting Jo to want to discuss the internal causes of her nightmare further.

“No, no questions,” Jo reassured her. “That’s what we have sessions for. Right now, we’re just two friends talking over coffee, okay?”

Yaz nodded, smiling gratefully. “Okay.”

Silence fell between them again, but it was comfortable, relaxed almost, and Yaz found herself feeling nervous about how she could possibly thank Jo for her selflessness over the past several hours. She gradually finished off her coffee, now lukewarm on her tongue as she fumbled over the correct words to say. She’d never been one for turning a phrase, lacking the wit and quick thinking it required to properly express herself, but there was something about the blonde that made her want to try, to be better.

“Um, Jo,” Yaz cleared her throat, setting her mug aside with her plate. Jo looked back up at her with an expectant smile. “I don’t really know how to say this, I’m not great at this sort of thing, but—thank you. I didn’t really know what to expect when I called last night, but it definitely wasn’t any of this.” She gestured vaguely around them.

“Yaz,” Jo replied her voice gentle. “I told you to call me if anything happened or if you needed me. I think this certainly qualified.”

“Maybe,” Yaz shrugged. “But most doctors wouldn’t rush over to their patient’s house in the middle of the night. And it’s not like any of this—staying over, making breakfast—is exactly in your job description.”

“I wouldn’t say that’s exactly true,” Jo replied. Yaz looked at her, eyebrows knitting together in confusion before she continued. “Technically you are in my job description.” Yaz opened her mouth to respond but Jo held up her hand. “If I hadn’t come over, I would have worried myself sick over whether or not you were okay. Your well-being is important to me outside of our sessions, not just when you’re sitting on my couch, Yaz.”

Yaz couldn’t think of a response, struck speechless by the doctor’s words, and simply nodded in concession. Sighing affectionately at the look of bewilderment on the brunette’s face, Jo rounded the
counter and pulled Yaz into a hug, pressing firmly on her shoulder blades as she had done just a handful of hours ago. She felt Yaz’s arms wind around her waist and her forehead come to rest against her shoulder. Slipping her hand into the thick, dark hair, Jo scratched lightly at the base of Yaz’s skull, hearing her hum at the feeling.

After several minutes, Jo pulled back regretfully and rested her hands on Yaz’s shoulders. “I’m afraid I need to get going,” she frowned. “I have some errands to run. Are you going to be alright on your own? I can stay a little bit longer if you need me to.”

Everything in Yaz’s brain was screaming at her to ask the blonde to stay, to be selfish so that she could enjoy her company just a little while more. However, she knew it would be unfair after Jo had already done so much, spent so much of her own time taking care of her. So, swallowing her self-indulgence, Yaz smiled and shook her head.

“No, I’ll be okay, I think I’ll just hang around here all day and try to recharge. Maybe go for a walk later.”

“I think that’s a good idea,” Jo nodded. “I can give you a call later if you’d like? Just to check in?”

Yaz smiled for what felt like the first true time that morning. “I’d like that, yeah.”

Jo grinned. “Okay,” she scratched absentmindedly at the back of her neck. “I should probably get a shift on then. Hang on just a sec.”

The blonde turned and disappeared back down the hallway for a few seconds before returning with her boots on and shoving her sweatshirt back over her head. She picked her keys up from where she’d left them earlier that morning and turned back toward the other woman. “So I’ll talk to you later then?”

“Yeah,” Yaz nodded. “That sounds perfect.” She paused, fidgeting with the edge of her shirt. “And thanks again, Jo, really.”

Jo smiled; a small, soft thing that was unlike any of others that Yaz had seen from her. “My pleasure, Yasmin Khan,” she murmured.

And then she did the last thing that Yaz was expecting; Jo leaned forward and pressed her lips softly to the brunette’s forehead, just at her hairline. With a final smile, the same gentle one as before, the doctor turned and left the apartment, closing the door quietly behind her. Yaz, meanwhile, had yet to move, too shocked by what just occurred for her brain to process anything else but soft lips against her skin.

Lifting her hand slowly, her fingertips grazed against the spot on her forehead, still tingling from the contact. Turning back toward the kitchen, her eyes swept across the counter; taking in the empty plates and mugs, the used pan still cooling on the hob, and finally the warm coffee sitting in the pot. With a smile, Yaz walked over and poured herself a fresh cup, forgoing the milk and sugar and taking a small, tentative sip. The taste was different, much bolder and refined. But, as she smiled and took a slightly larger drink, Yaz felt that it was something she could definitely get used to.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks again for reading, and thank you so much for all of the lovely kudos and
comments you've been leaving. They always make my day and put a huge smile on my face!

As always, I'm on tumblr @pandora-spockz if you ever feel like dropping in to say hello :)

A hopeful tattoo against her ribs

Chapter Notes

New Wednesday, new chapter! :D I've received some especially lovely messages this week, so once again, thank you so much for how enthusiastic you've all been with this story!

Many thanks to my beta @antiopesgirlfriend for her endless patience <3

Jo had kept her promise and called Yaz later that evening to see how she was feeling. They spoke for several minutes, Jo interested in even the most minor details of her day, wanting to be sure that Yaz had done more than just sit and stew on her couch since she had left. Satisfied once the brunette had reassured her that she had not only taken a walk, but also went about tidying her flat, Jo bid her goodbye and vowed to check in again soon before their next session. What Yaz did not expect was for the doctor to call her every evening for the next week, each conversation lasting longer than the previous one as they talked about the ins and outs of their respective days and everything else in between.

Something had shifted between them, Yaz could feel it. The very thin line they’d been dancing along that kept their relationship firmly as doctor and patient had been blurring more and more with each conversation they had. And yet, she lamented, Joanna Song still remained a mystery to her; the puzzle she’d constructed in her mind still only partially put together with blank pieces scattered about and a clear picture that still had yet to materialize. She frustrated her and intrigued her all at once. Yaz wanted to know everything, wanted to unravel the enigma that was the doctor, but, at the same time, she relished in the challenge.

When the Thursday of their next session snuck up on her, Yaz found the prospect of seeing Jo face to face for the first time since the night of her panic attack nerve-wracking; so much so that as she approached Jo’s door, it was with an obscene amount of butterflies beating frantically against her ribs. She climbed the familiar steps and knocked lightly against the door, shifting nervously from one foot to the other. After the now-familiar sound of some kind of collision coming from inside, the door swung open quickly to reveal a grinning Jo, hair pulled back into a disheveled ponytail and an apron dotted with cartoon stars hanging around her neck.

“Hey, Yaz!” she greeted, stepping aside so the other woman could enter. Yaz hung up her coat and turned back toward the blonde with an amused look in her eyes.

“Hey, Jo, what’s with the getup?”

“Hmm? Oh, this,” Jo gestured toward the apron. “Just making some biscuits. Shouldn’t be too much longer.”

“Ah, well that explains the flour in your hair then,” Yaz nodded, eyes glancing up at her hairline.

Jo’s hand flew up toward her fringe, face scrunching up when she felt the powdery substance clinging to the strands. She gave her head a shake, trying to dislodge some of the residue, but only succeeded in dusting her shoulders in a light sheen of white. Shaking her head in amusement, Yaz
reached forward to brush some of the flour from the blonde’s jumper, fingertips just barely grazing the skin at the junction of Jo’s neck.

“C’mon,” she jerked her head toward the kitchen. “Let’s go get you cleaned up while we wait on those biscuits.”

They walked through the hallway and into the next room where Yaz sat Jo down at the counter and grabbed some of the kitchen roll that was hanging beneath the cabinets, dampening it under a trickle of water from the sink before setting it aside for the moment.

“Head down a bit, please,” she requested, moving to stand directly in front of Jo. The blonde obliged and bent her neck just slightly so that Yaz had a better view of the flour that had stubbornly settled itself in her hair. Reaching forward, the brunette hesitated slightly before she began to gently ruffle the doctor’s fringe to rid her of the white substance, fingertips lightly brushing against her hairline as she plucked out some of the more stubborn bits. Once she’d finished, cheeks tinged a light pink, Yaz picked up the damp kitchen roll and carefully dabbed at the fabric of the blonde’s jumper where the flour had been shaken loose, so as not to leave Jo with wet shoulders for the remainder of their session.

With all traces of the flour now gone from the doctor’s hair and clothes, Yaz brushed her fingers through Jo’s fringe one last time and took a step back, looking up at the other woman with a smile. She felt herself falter, sucking in a breath at the intense look in Jo’s eyes; as if Yaz were a sunset whose colors she wanted to commit to memory. Clearing her throat awkwardly, Yaz turned away from the gaze and tossed the kitchen roll into the bin. When she turned back around, the look had left Jo’s eyes and the blonde gave her a polite smile before standing and rounding the counter to make their tea and pull the biscuits from the oven. It was several minutes of awkward silence, of the water in the kettle gradually gurgling to a slight boil, until one of them finally spoke.

“So how have you been sleeping?” Jo asked, her voice tight and an octave higher than usual. “Have you been sleeping?” She turned to fix Yaz with a scrutinizing look as she amended her question.

Yaz gave an impartial half shrug. “Mostly,” she admitted, eyes trained on the counter as she leaned against it. “I haven’t had another nightmare since the—since last week, but I still have trouble sleeping through the night. Usually wake up two or three times.”

“Is that normal for you?” Jo set Yaz’s tea and a plate full of the biscuits down in front of her and blew gently over her own drink.

“Sometimes,” Yaz nodded, curling her fingers around the warm mug. “If I’m stressed out over something.”

Jo hummed humorlessly, but didn’t respond immediately. “Do you think you’re ready to talk about that something, or would you like a bit more time?” she asked eventually, voice gentle.

“Might as well get it over with,” Yaz sighed, picking up her tea. “Doubt I’d ever be properly ready, anyway.” Jo nodded and made her way back around the counter, grabbing a few biscuits as she did so and stuffing them into her mouth.

They moved quietly into the living room, Yaz taking her usual spot on the sofa as she waited for the doctor to occupy the loveseat. However, Jo remained standing, mug steaming in her hand as she glanced between the two pieces of furniture with a frown, causing her forehead to crease. Finally, she caught Yaz slightly off guard as she turned toward the couch and plopped down on the end opposite of the brunette and sat cross legged with her notes landing in her lap. She looked up as she slipped on her glasses and noticed Yaz’s confused stare.
“I’m sorry,” she tilted her head inquiringly. “Are you uncomfortable? Do you want me to move?”

Yaz shook her head. “No, you’re fine, just surprised me a bit.”

“Surprised?”

“Well, yeah,” she pointed over toward the vacant loveseat. “You’re normally over there.”

Jo shrugged, her face scrunching up slightly. “And now I’m here. Is that okay with you?”

Yaz found herself, as she often did, confounded by the blonde’s ambiguity, but the increased proximity was definitely not unwelcome; so, smiling, she nodded her head and received one of Jo’s signature grins in response. It was a few more minutes of papers being shuffled before the doctor looked back up from her notes and fixed Yaz with an apologetic gaze, her eyes soft and warm.

“So I’m going to guess that you already know what I’d like to talk about, yeah?” Jo began, sympathy lacing her voice.

A sound of wry amusement slipped from the back of Yaz’s throat. “I think I have a very good idea.”

“Well, probably easier if we just dive right in if that’s alright?” Yaz nodded, prompting the doctor to continue. “Let’s start simple; what had your day been like before you went to bed that evening?”

“It was fairly routine in the morning,” Yaz shrugged. “I’d picked up a shift that morning. Normally don’t work on Saturdays, but someone had called off, so I volunteered to come in for a few hours. Figured I’d be able to call the favour in later if I needed to.”

Jo nodded as she took her notes. “So it wasn’t a field officer?” she clarified.

“No,” Yaz shook her head. “Just another desk jockey with a mountain of paperwork.”

“Okay, so was there anything particular about that day or the paperwork that brought on the panic attack?”

Yaz hesitated. She knew exactly what it had been that had caused her nightmare that had resulted in screaming herself awake in the early morning hours. The images were as clear in her mind as they had been nearly a week ago.

“There were some reports and scene photographs that needed to be filed from a case earlier that week,” Yaz mumbled, her hands beginning to twist in her lap. “They were for a car accident that resulted in two fatalities.”

Jo watched Yaz carefully, her notes momentarily forgotten as she had a very strong feeling of what was coming next. She waited patiently while Yaz took a few deep breaths, opening and closing her mouth a few times but no sound coming out.

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“There was a child in the car, wasn’t there?” Jo prompted quietly. Yaz nodded as a few tears slipped down her cheeks.

“She was about the same age as the Latimer girl,” she sniffed, taking a proffered tissue from Jo and dabbing at her eyes. “It was instantaneous. Broken neck.”

“And what was it about the girl that caught you so off guard?” Jo asked, pen back in hand now that it seemed like Yaz was not in danger of any kind of emotional breakdown.

“The photographs,” the brunette explained. “Seeing how young she’d been, whole life ahead of her
only to have it end so violently; it put me right back in that bedroom again.” More tears spilled from Yaz’s eyes, and she quickly brushed them away. “Once I’d gotten the report and the pictures filed, I tried to put them out of my mind, but it were all I could see every time I closed my eyes.”

She took a shuddering breath and Jo took advantage of her pause to finish writing down the last of the details from Yaz’s explanation. It also allowed the brunette a few moments to breath and collect herself. Not needing further details or wanting to press further, the doctor moved on to the next part of the story.

“So, when your shift ended, what did the rest of your day look like?”

Yaz shrugged. “Nothing exciting until—well, you know,” she muttered. “Took a shower when I got in and vegged out on the couch to Netflix. Just tried to keep my mind distracted so I wouldn’t keep remembering the photographs.”

“I take it that didn’t work?” Jo asked, her head tilting in the now-familiar display of sympathy.

“No,” Yaz shook her head. “Like, I said, it’s like they were branded on the back of my eyelids. Ended up taking something just before bed to try and hold off any nightmares, which clearly didn’t work.”

“What was it you took?”

“Just an over the counter sleeping pill,” she dismissed. “Take them sometimes after a rough shift so I don’t toss and turn for hours and can get some sleep.”

“When did you get to bed do you think?”

“Probably about ten-thirty,” Yaz guessed. “Didn’t really look at the clock too close, but I don’t normally stay up that late. Habit of having to get up for early shifts.”

Jo grinned, understanding the occupational hazard of early mornings, and flipped to the next page in her notes. “Anything else to add, or does that bring us to where I showed up?”

“Brings us up to you.”

“I see,” Jo mused, tapping her pen against her knee. “And the ten-minute gap until I arrived at your flat; what was going through your mind?”

Yaz shook her head and toyed with the hem of her shirt. “I just tried to focus on my breathing, like you told me over the phone and tried not to throw up again.”

“I didn’t ask,” the blonde said. “But I assumed the mess on the floor was the result of the nightmare?”

When Yaz nodded, Jo made a few notes on her paper, but remained silent for a few moments; apparently lost in thought. When she did finally speak again, it was gently and with an edge of caution.

“Yaz, what are your feelings on medication?” the doctor asked, watching as other woman continued to fidget absentmindedly.

The brunette considered the question for a few moments, her eyebrows knitting together in concentration, before answering. “Never really thought much about it,” she admitted. “Never taken it before, never knew anyone that had to.”
Jo nodded, flipping back several pages in her notes. “And you said that you never saw anyone after the Izzy Flint issue? No counsellor or anything?”

“No,” the Yaz replied. “Once we moved and Izzy was out of the picture, I kind of threw myself into school and things seemed better. ‘Course it turns out I was just bottling, yeah?”

“Mmm,” Jo contemplated, making another note on her paper. “And now? Is it something you’d be open to?”

Yaz shrugged, but didn’t give a definite answer one way or the other. “Maybe,” she pondered. “Do you think it’s necessary?”

“I think it’s definitely something to consider, yes,” Jo nodded, slipping off her glasses for a moment to look at Yaz more directly. “You seem to have a lot of pent up anxiety, perhaps a touch of PTSD.” She nodded towards the brunette’s restless hands. “You tend to fidget non-stop when we speak, even if you don’t notice it. Medication might help calm the racing thoughts and your reactions to them.”

She perched her glasses back on the bridge of her nose and gave Yaz a moment to consider her words. The brunette looked down at her hands, flexing her fingers and curling them into fists a couple of times. She’d noticed her restless movements a lot more often since her sessions had begun and that they only occurred in moments like these; when she had to remember the reasons they occurred at all. She thought back to last week, to her nightmare and the panic that had consumed her as she was jolted back into reality. If medication could help so that she might never have to feel that way again, or at least less often, it was definitely worth the try.

“I think I’d be open to it, yeah,” Yaz finally replied, looking back up from her hands to find Jo smiling softly.

“I can arrange a visit with a doctor for the coming week if you’d like?” she suggested. Yaz took a moment to think over the idea before nodding resolutely. Jo’s smile grew as she jot down a reminder to the side of her notes. Once she had finished, she looked back up at Yaz and leaned forward with her elbows on her knees.

“So, last session is next week,” she announced, pivoting their conversation. “How are you feeling about that?”

Yaz hummed, her smile a touch of bittersweet. “Bit nervous and a bit sad,” she admitted quietly.

“Oh, sad?” Jo raised her eyebrows, a mischievous glint dancing behind her hazel irises. “Quite a turnaround from the morning you stormed indignantly into my office.” Yaz blushed and ducked her head at the memory. “What was it that changed your mind?” Jo asked.

“I mean,” Yaz’s blush deepened as she continued to avoid looking at the blonde. “Honestly, it’s most to do with you.” Jo was taken aback by the admission, but didn’t interrupt. “I expected you to be pretty stuffy and judgmental, but you’ve been the exact opposite; proper amazing, actually. And you really are the best person I’ve ever met.”

For once, words failed the doctor. “Thank you, Yaz,” she managed, but nothing more so that they were both smiling at each other softly, the same tension from earlier wafting in from the kitchen and settling itself comfortably between them.

Eventually Jo cleared her throat nervously. “So,” she trudged forward, determined to move beyond the moment. “How do you think you’ve done over the last five weeks?”

“I’ve still got a ways to go,” Yaz admitted, “I can see that; but I think I’ve improved a lot, too. And I
do want to get better; learn to express my emotions instead of locking them away.”

“I think that’s a good outlook to have,” the doctor nodded. “And you’re right; you’ve made a lot of progress and you should definitely be proud of that.”

“Thank you,” Yaz smiled, her face lighting up at the praise. “So, what happens after?”

Jo waved her hand dismissively. “Oh, we don’t need to worry about that just yet,” she stood up, stretching her arms over her head so that a sliver of the skin was just visible beneath her jumper, drawing Yaz’s eyes to it unconsciously until the doctor put her arms back down and the brunette recovered herself with a shake of her head.

“We can discuss that next session. In fact, we’re over our time,” Jo continued, gazing over at the clock. “Seems to happen quite often with us, doesn’t it?”

Yaz shrugged a shoulder as she stood from the couch as well. “Doesn’t bother me, I like spending time here.”

Jo’s face split into a wide grin. “Really?”

“Yeah, Thursdays are my favourite day of the week.”

Jo’s smile grew impossibly wider as a dusting of pink settled over her cheeks. “Yeah, mine too.”

They stood quietly for a few moments; both avoiding the other’s gaze, but reluctant to be the one that put an end to their evening together. Eventually, as the silent seconds stretched into minutes, Yaz was the first to shift, clearing her throat as she picked up her empty mug.

“Right, well,” she stammered, leading the way to deposit her cup onto the kitchen counter. “I suppose I should head home.” She shuffled halfheartedly toward the entrance and shrugged her coat on, each movement as reasonably slow as possible. “I’ll see you next week then?” she asked, turning her head to meet the doctor’s eye.

“Of course,” the blonde replied warmly, the softness in her voice causing the butterflies in Yaz’s stomach to return in full force.

Jo followed Yaz closely to the door, stopping in the open frame as she turned around for a final goodbye. With a smile, the brunette moved forward and slipped her arms around the doctor’s waist, Jo’s warm hands coming up to rest against her shoulder blades. The embrace was innocent enough until Yaz’s hand shifted and her nails grazed against Jo’s lower back through her jumper, causing the blonde to inhale sharply at the sensation. Hearing the intake of breath and noticing how the doctor had suddenly tensed beneath her, Yaz pulled back and saw the same intense look in Jo’s eyes as before. Yaz found herself trapped in the doctor’s gaze, losing herself in the hazel irises that were holding her own so profoundly, their colour considerably darker than she remembered.

“Yaz—,” Jo whispered, voice strained.

It happened slowly and all at once; Yaz caught herself leaning forward, her fingers curling around the fabric of Jo’s shirt to pull her in. The distance between them closed within inches of contact, noses bumping against each other and breaths mingling when Jo seemed to come back to her better senses and took a step backward. Clearing her throat awkwardly, she stared down at her trainers and clasped her hands nervously in front of her.

“I’ll—um—I’ll see you next week then, yeah?” she stuttered, peeking up through her eyelashes to look at the brunette.
Still experiencing a sensation of whiplash from what had just happened, Yaz could only nod before giving Jo a small wave and timid smile before descending the stairs and making her way down the familiar path of the sidewalk. Jo watched her go until the darkness had effectively swallowed her and stepped back inside, shutting the door behind her before leaning heavily against the polished wood. Mind racing as she recounted the last several minutes, Jo felt a familiar flutter in her chest; a long-forgotten sensation beating out a hopeful tattoo against her ribs.

Chapter End Notes

I'm absolutely not sorry ;)

As always, thank you for all of your comments and kudos, they always make my day! <3

Feel free to come yell at me on tumblr, I'm @pandora-spockz and my inbox is always open!
The searing possibility of finality

Chapter Notes

Happy Wednesday! I got so many lovely/passionate messages and comments about the last chapter and I just wanted to say thank you so much! I always look forward to hearing what you guys will say after each chapter and you never disappoint, I'm so grateful for you all! :D

Two betas to thank today; first, @antiopesgirlfriend for all the work she has put into this story, and second, @the-rainbow-fox-13 for stepping in to help when life got in the way <3

Joanna Song was not often a person who found herself flustered. Quite the opposite, she had always prided herself on her ability to keep a level head in even the most strenuous of circumstances. It was a trait that had seen her through some of the most difficult days of her life, not least of all when River disappeared into the night like a ghost with nothing left behind but a trace of her perfume clinging to the bedsheets.

Even then, Jo had pushed forward knowing that there was nothing to be gained by mourning the loss of a love that had been slipping through her fingers long before she’d woken up to a cold bed and a brief note lying on the counter. No matter how visceral the pain of her loss, she had to keep going; she gave herself no other choice, having her parents to thank for that particular quality.

And yet, now something had managed to completely throw her off balance; or rather someone. Yasmin Khan.

She’d come out of nowhere, barreling into Jo’s life without so much as a warning, pushing all thoughts of River from the doctor’s head as she made herself quite comfortable in the stitched-up crevices of her weary heart. Jo had seen the warning signs; how she perked up at the sound of the doorbell on Thursday evenings, the urge to pull the other woman close as she recounted the most difficult traumas of her life, the fluttering in the pit of her stomach every time they locked eyes. She’d seen every single one, but ignored them all.

Staying the night had been the final nail in the coffin of what remained of her denial. When she’d woken up with Yaz so deliciously pressed against her, Jo knew that she was lost; if she didn’t get a handle on her feelings and her reckless, irresponsible behavior, she could end up ruining both of their careers. Their near-kiss the week before had almost sealed their fate, because Jo knew there would be no going back if she let herself break down the final barrier that existed between them. Something had to be done, quickly.

She’d decided in the days leading up to Yaz’s final session that it would have to be the last time they saw each other; a clean break, so to speak. After Thursday, Jo would hand Yaz off to a general therapist that would report to her about the officer’s further progress, so there would be no need for the two of them to remain in close contact as Yaz continued to improve.

It would work.
It had to.

However, as Thursday crept up on her, Jo could feel her resolve start to waver at the fact that this final session might be the last time she would see Yaz. It felt like a knife twisting in her gut, but she knew that it had to be done. So, she busied herself in the hours leading up to the brunette’s arrival with her notes over the last several weeks, making sure that everything was in place for a smooth transition into the next phase of treatment. As 6:30 drew closer, Jo further distracted herself with making their tea, wanting to dive right into all that they had to talk about tonight and leaving little room for either of them to get lost in their heads.

She’d just set their mugs on the coffee table when the sound of the doorbell echoed through the house. Taking a deep, calming breath, Jo crossed over into the entryway and answered the door with her signature grin; however, when her gaze landed on Yaz, standing there in dark skinny jeans and her usual leather jacket, the doctor felt her mouth go dry as the familiar fluttering appeared in her lower stomach. Clearing her head with a shake, she hitched her smile back up and stepped aside for the brunette to enter.

“Hey Yaz,” Jo greeted, her enthusiasm a touch too cheery even for her. “Come on in.”

Yaz smiled. “Hey Jo,” she replied, slipping her jacket off her shoulders and hanging it up on one of the hooks. She took a step toward the kitchen but found herself stopped by a hand on her arm. She looked down at it, the heat from the touch radiating through her sleeve, and looked up to see wide, hazel eyes staring deep into her own.

“Uhh,” Jo cleared her throat, breaking the moment and taking her hand back from Yaz’s arm. “I, uh, I already made the tea, it’s waiting in the living room.”

She stepped away awkwardly, putting space between the two of them and gestured in the direction opposite the kitchen, inviting Yaz to go through ahead of her and have a seat. Once they’d made themselves comfortable on the couch, Jo slipped her glasses on and began to flip through her notes.

“How have you been feeling this past week?” she asked, glancing up over the rim of her glasses to see Yaz staring down into the contents of her tea. “Any more nightmares or panic attacks?”

Yaz paused for a moment longer before taking a long drink from her mug and setting it back down on the coffee table. “No,” she answered, voice quieter than normal. “No panic attacks, and if I’ve had any nightmares, they’re gone as soon as I wake up.”

“And your sleeping?” Jo prodded gently.

“No better, no worse,” Yaz shrugged. “Still wake up once or twice a night, but you know that’s always been normal for me.”

Jo hummed, adding a few notes to the paper in front of her. “And how are you feeling about today?” she continued. “You sounded quite positive about your progress last session, is that still the case?”

“Yeah,” Yaz replied, though she was avoiding Jo’s eye by playing with the cuff of her sleeve. “Like I said, still got a ways to go yet, but I’ve just gotta keep looking forward and putting the work in.”

“As long as you remember that it’s a marathon, not a sprint, yeah?” Jo grinned.

Despite her gloomier than normal demeanor, Yaz chuckled warmly. “So,” she ventured, finally looking up. “What happens next?”

“Well, there are some terms to your completion of our time together,” Jo explained, glancing back
down at her notes. “Starting next week, you’re going to continue your counseling with a general therapist; her name is Martha Jones. She’ll get you on a medication for your anxiety and will send me an updated report on your sessions with her after about six weeks so we can reassess your progress, okay?”

Yaz nodded but didn’t say anything, waiting for the doctor to continue.

“Okay, good,” the blonde continued. “I’ll think you’ll like Martha; she’s stubborn but well-meaning. Just like someone else we both know.” The comment earned Jo a brief smile from the brunette, and she grinned in return before continuing.

“Right, so there are also three conditions to your reinstatement as a full-time field officer; first, you are to have a partner at all times for the first six weeks until reassessment. Second, you are to turn in a report of all your movements at the end of each day, which will be verified by your partner’s account. And third, no major cases for the first six weeks back.”

She looked up at Yaz, expecting her to object to at least one of the requirements—her money had been on the last one—but the brunette only nodded and murmured a quiet “Okay” in response. Jo set her notes aside and slipped her glasses from her nose, perching them atop her blonde hair.

“Just okay?” she prompted, but still Yaz said nothing. “What are you thinking, Yaz? You’re allowed to have an opinion.”

Yaz thought for a moment, plucking at a stray thread on the cuff of her sleeve. “What about after the first six weeks are over?” she asked quietly.

“What do you mean?”

“I mean after I’ve complied with all of the conditions,” she continued. “What happens after the reassessment?”

Jo had not seen Yaz so reserved since their first few meetings together and it worried her a bit to see the other woman reverting back to her old habit of retreating. Setting her notes aside, she reached across the couch to rest her hand over Yaz’s, stilling her anxious movements, and squeezed gently.

“It’s okay to be nervous,” the doctor reassured her. “But you’ve made a lot of progress and I’m so proud of you. You’re an entirely different person than the one that walked through that door five weeks ago.”

Yaz smiled at the doctor’s words. It was small and timid, but Jo would take it. She gave her hands another reassuring squeeze and grinned.

“You’re going to be alright, Yaz,” she encouraged, head tilting to the side as always. “And after the six weeks have passed, whatever happens, we’ll just keep moving forward and everything will be okay. I believe that, and I believe in you.”

Yaz ducked her head shyly at that, embarrassed by Jo’s unwavering faith in her. Without saying anything, she simply turned one of her hands over to lace their fingers together. After a moment, she glanced back up at the doctor through her eyelashes.

“Thanks, Jo,” she murmured softly. Her eyes shined with unspoken affection and Jo felt a vice tighten around her heart, her smile faltering slightly. Taking a moment to regain her resolve, the blonde took a deep breath and cleared her throat.

“C’mon, let’s have one last cuppa, yeah?” Jo insisted, grin back on her face as she pulled Yaz up by
their joined hands.

Yaz willingly allowed herself to be led into the kitchen, sitting down at the counter and immediately missing the contact when Jo let go of her hand to put the kettle back on. They made some idle conversation while they waited for the water to heat up; where Yaz would be going to see Dr. Jones, what kinds of cases she was allowed to take on the first six weeks, what kind of partner she hoped to have. All of it was used to distract from the looming elephant that was sitting quite firmly in the middle of the room; their eventual goodbye.

Jo put their respective drinks together, setting Yaz’s down in front of her with a smile. The brunette took a sip of it, closing her eyes with a look of contentment on her face.

“You know,” she began, grinning up at the blonde. “You’re the only one who seems to be able to make my tea exactly right.”

“Oh, is that so?” Jo smiled cheekily, bringing her own mug up to her lips.

“Mm,” Yaz hummed. “Everyone always adds either too much or too little milk, but you manage to get it just right.”

Jo snorted into her mug, ending up with tea running down her chin. “So you’re saying I’m the Goldilocks of tea?” she joked, wiping at her jaw with the sleeve of her shirt.

The look on Yaz’s face was one of patient exasperation. “I’m trying to pay you a compliment and your mind goes straight to nursery stories. Typical.”

Jo laughed loudly, throwing her head back and using the counter to keep herself steady. Such a sight as she was, Yaz couldn’t help but join in and soon the two of them were giggling like schoolgirls, clutching at their sides with tears in their eyes. They eventually regained control of themselves, faces still pink with amusement and eyes sparkling with mirth. However, as she watched the blonde settle down the last of her giggles, a sudden realization hit Yaz square in the chest and her face fell immediately.

“What’s wrong,” Jo asked, noticing the moment that Yaz’s mood had changed.

“We’re not going to see much of each other after tonight, are we?” the brunette asked quietly, hands tightening around her mug as she stared down at the counter.

“No,” Jo confirmed, her voice low and somber. “No, I’m afraid we probably aren’t.”

“I see.”

They were silent after that, finishing their tea as slowly as they possibly could while their gazes danced around the room, landing anywhere but where they’d most prefer to be. Once each of their mugs was empty, neither of them moved at first, at a loss for words or actions that would prepare either one of them for what had to happen next.

It was Jo who finally broke the stalemate, knowing what had to be done and determined to see her plan through no matter how much it would hurt. She rounded the counter, giving Yaz an encouraging pat on the knee before leading them back out into the hallway toward the entrance. Taking Yaz’s jacket off the hook for her, Jo held it out to allow the other woman to slip her arms into the sleeves, pulling it on for her and gently smoothing out the shoulders. With tremendous effort, Jo turned towards the door and pulled it open for Yaz to step through, breath hitching when the brunette squeezed her arm in thanks.
They stood in the doorway for several moments, eyes locked on one another but neither daring to make the first move that would put an end to their time together once and for all. The silence pressed in from all sides, heavy and suffocating with the weight of everything that had gone unsaid hanging in the space between them; a million words and emotions, but neither brave enough to voice them aloud. Despite it all, Yaz tried her best to lighten the moment.

“You know I’ve said that I don’t like it when you go quiet,” she teased, pulling a smile from Jo, though the blonde still didn’t speak for several more moments.

“Yes, well,” the doctor muttered sullenly, casting her eyes to the floor as she tucked a stray hair behind her ear. “I don’t particularly like endings.”

She was so endearing in her child-like petulance that Yaz couldn’t help but smile softly and reach forward, her arms finding their now-familiar course around Jo’s waist as she pulled her into an impossibly tight embrace; their bodies slotting together like puzzle pieces, hearts beating in a gentle tandem. One of Jo’s hands came up from her shoulders to rest against her hair, fingers tangling in the dark brown strands as she caught them in a tender grip. Minutes, hours, years passed by; the laws of time slipping away from them as they stood in the entryway, reluctant to accept the inevitable conclusion that they both knew was all but certain. Finally, with a heavy sigh, Jo’s hold on Yaz loosened and she pulled back to look down at the young woman.

Few things had the ability to render Yaz entirely speechless, lost to even the simplest thought. However, it was the look on Jo’s face now, one of quiet wonder that pulled the air from her lungs and left her grasping for any kind of coherency. She wanted to say something, anything, to fill the moment; to relay how grateful she was for this mad, impossible woman that had challenged and changed her. But the words wouldn’t come and the weight of the moment sat heavy upon her shoulders.

Sensing her struggle, Jo smiled; a small, gentle thing that Yaz had never seen from her before, being so used to her large Cheshire grins and cheeky laughs. Pulling the brunette towards her, Jo leaned forward, her breath skating across Yaz’s skin, and pressed her lips lightly against her cheek. She lingered for a moment, feeling the arms hanging loosely about her waist tighten ever so slightly, before pulling back to smile at Yaz once more.

“Good luck, Yasmin Khan,” Jo whispered, giving her shoulders a final, firm squeeze before stepping back to put a respectful amount of space between them once more.

Yaz faltered, both stunned by the feeling of Jo’s lips against her skin and disappointed by the loss of contact between the two of them. When she came back to herself, she managed a half-hearted smile before she began to shuffle toward the door, Jo following in her wake as always. Yaz turned around on the doorstep, drinking in the sight of Joanna Song one more time and wondering when she might possibly see her again, if ever. That last thought, the searing possibility of finality, sent a lancing pain through her heart.

“G-goodbye, Jo,” Yaz murmured, words sticking like glue in her throat. “And thank you, for everything.”

Jo nodded, the same soft smile still tugging at the corner of her lips. “My pleasure, Yaz,” she assured. “Take care of yourself, yeah?”

Yaz nodded, anything else she could possibly think to say dying on her tongue with a taste of bitter disappointment. Finally, with a desperate strength, Yaz ripped her gaze away from Jo and began her reluctant descent down the familiar steps and into the dim light of the streetlamps. Behind her, she heard the door shut with a decisive click. It was then that Yaz let herself crumble; tears steadily...
slipping down her cheeks as she gasped quietly for air, her footsteps slow and halting down the cobbled pavement. As she reached the corner, she paused and turned back for a final glimpse of the familiar terrace, catching the number thirteen glinting slightly in the murky glow of the porch light. Yaz took a deep, shuddering breath and faced forward once again, continuing down the street as the loss of the doctor weighed heavily upon her heart.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading! All of your kudos and comments are so appreciated, and they always make my day <3

I'm @pandora-spockz over on tumblr, feel free to come over and say hello!
Ticking away like a bomb in a birdcage

Chapter Notes

It's Wednesday! This chapter comes with a few warnings for mentions of homophobia and assault, so please be warned if these are things you are bothered by.

Thanks as always to my betas, @antiopesgirlfriend and @the-rainbow-fox-13 for all of their help!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It had been three weeks. Three long, agonizing weeks since the last time Yaz had seen or heard from Jo, and she felt like an addict trying desperately not to scratch her itch. When the first Thursday without a session had come around, she’d wandered aimlessly around the city, desperate for something to do with herself, but lacked any kind of purpose or direction. It was like she’d lost a piece of her own identity.

She liked Dr. Jones well enough; she was straight to the point, just as Jo had said she would be, and had a dry wit about her. All the same, the two sessions they’d had thus far in her office left Yaz with a sense of longing for comfortable couches and a fresh cup of tea.

Ryan wasn’t that bad either, in fact the two of them got on rather well. She’d been paired with him the Monday immediately following her final meeting with Jo, much to her reluctance at being stuck with someone who was just fresh off of probation. However, the two of them had managed to find a rhythm, and Yaz found herself enjoying the benefit of having a partner; while their cases were still regulated to puff jobs like parking disputes, having someone to share in the monotony made it all the more bearable.

Still, Yaz constantly found her mind drifting back to Jo; how she was, what she was up to now that their sessions were over, whether or not the blonde missed her, too. She’d been so sure, with their increased affection and near misses, that there had been something between them; a mutual longing that their professional relationship had kept at bay. With the end of their sessions together, Yaz had expected that they might be able to explore the blooming seeds of possibility between them. However, Jo’s maintained absence killed off any of her remaining hopes like frost over a garden.

So she threw herself into work, taking up extra shifts and keeping herself as busy as possible to try and ignore the constant, dull ache that was nothing more than a reminder of what she had lost. As the days progressed, the chief had started to loosen Yaz’s restrictions a bit, allowing her to assist on clean up at minor crime scenes; gathering evidence, talking to witnesses, and any other small jobs that required her attention. It was something that Yaz was grateful for and kept her from tearing her hair out on the days that the parking disputes seemed to be never ending.

It was that kind of call that came in on a Tuesday night, nearly three weeks since the last time she had seen Jo. It was close to nine o’clock, and Yaz and Ryan were just finishing up patrol before heading back to the station for the change in shifts.

“Report of an incident at Endcliffe Park, Brincliffe, S11,” the radio crackled over the speakers. “Do we have cars nearby?”
Yaz’s ears perked up at the mention of the address, so close to Jo’s house on Penrhyn Road, and she felt something settle in the pit of her stomach. She nodded to Ryan who picked up the CB mic to respond.

“We’re in Fulwood, S10,” he replied, Yaz ready to make any change of direction if necessary.

“Please respond to incident at Endcliffe Park on Ecclesall Road in front of the Hallamshire Tennis Club. Harassment leading to assault, possible hate crime. Suspects have fled the scene. Postcode: S11 8TA.”

Yaz felt herself grow cold, the uncomfortable feeling in her stomach evolving into a gnawing sensation. Assaults were normally a nasty business to have to sort out on their own, but hate crimes, though it wasn’t often that she had to deal with them, had truly shown her the depths of depravity and hatred that festered within the very worst of humanity. Getting a call to one always left her with a sickening anxiety at whatever awaited her on the other end. Gripping the steering wheel with white knuckles, she swiftly turned the car around and flipped on the lights and sirens.

“Oh our way,” Ryan replied, clipping the mic back onto the radio.

It took them not even five minutes to reach the scene, a paramedic ambulance parked along the sidewalk where a large crowd had gathered, being held back by a couple of other officers that had arrived on the scene. As they got out of their car and approached, Yaz could see one of the paramedics kneeling in front of someone sitting on the edge of the pavement while the other stood upright, passing off supplies to his partner. It wasn’t until a moment later, when the medic with the supplies shifted to pull something else out of his kit, that Yaz felt her entire world tilt violently.

Sitting on the pavement, dried blood staining her disheveled blonde hair, was Jo. She was hardly recognizable with fresh bruises starting to contrast against her alabaster skin and her bottom lip split and bleeding. Her shoulders were hunched, tear tracks shining on her cheeks, and she looked a far cry from the bubbly woman that Yaz had grown so accustomed to; like she had no idea who she was or how she’d arrived there. Willing herself to remain professional, Yaz sucked in a deep breath through her nose and turned to her partner, her movements stiff and slow.

“Ryan,” she instructed. “Why don’t you go take statements from the witnesses, and I’ll go talk to the victim, yeah?”

“You sure that’s a good idea?” Ryan asked, concern clear on his face. “Wouldn’t it be better if I—“

“Ryan,” Yaz interrupted him in a tone that gave little room for argument. “Just go, please?”

She glanced over her shoulder at Jo, whose gaze was still glassy. Looking back and forth between the two women, something seemed to click in Ryan’s head as he recalled a few conversations they’d had about her therapy program. “Oh mate,” he breathed in understanding and then, without another word, patted her sympathetically on the shoulder and strode over to the gathered crowd.

Summoning every ounce of her courage, Yaz turned back toward where Jo was still sitting on the pavement, an EMT still hovering over her, and began to take careful, measured steps over to them. She immediately recognized the woman tending to the doctor’s injuries, having met up with her on a number of drunk and disorderly calls.

“What, Rose?” she greeted her quietly. At the sound of her voice, Jo’s eyes immediately flashed in her direction, shock and panic swirling behind the familiar hazel. Yaz made a point not to
acknowledge any kind of relationship between her and the blonde; at least not yet.

“Hey Yaz,” the paramedic replied, looking up from her current task of tending to the nasty cut just above Jo’s left eye. “I’m just about done here and then you can take over.” She paused a moment to apply liquid stitches to the injury. “How’s the, uh, recovery period going?”

Yaz shrugged, still avoiding Jo’s eye. “Ah, you know, nothing exciting; mostly just traffic disputes at the moment.”

Rose nodded, now inspecting the blonde’s wrists, which Yaz only now noticed were red and raw. “So how come you’re here?” she asked matter-of-factly. “Should think this is something they wouldn’t want you on just yet.”

“We were the closest car,” Yaz replied. “And they’ve been letting me assist with minor clean ups lately.”

“Ah, bending the rules a bit,” the paramedic acknowledged with a slight nod. She finished applying a cream to Jo’s wrists and gave her hand a gentle squeeze. “I’m going to leave you with PC Khan, okay?” Rose directed toward the blonde. “She’s just gonna talk to you a bit and ask you a few questions, are you alright with that?”

The doctor’s eyes, still unfocused and dim, slid from the paramedic over to Yaz before she nodded mutely and wrapped her arms around her knees to pull them to her chest. Rose stood, picking up the remaining supplies, and stepped in close to Yaz.

“From what I could get out of her,” the paramedic murmured, speaking low enough so that Jo couldn’t hear. “She was walking home from the park when two men confronted her. Started making some lewd comments, I guess they noticed her bracelet.”

Yaz glanced past Rose to take note of the string of bright colors wrapped around Jo’s wrist. Returning her attention to Rose, she nodded for the other woman to continue.

“When she tried to walk away, tell them she wasn’t interested,” Rose continued. “One of them made a grab for her. She shook him off, and he didn’t take the rejection too well.”

She didn’t need to go into further detail for Yaz to get the picture. “What happened to her wrists?” the officer asked quietly.

“Consistent with some type of restraint,” Rose explained. “Possibly a tie or a thin belt. Likely to keep her from fighting back.”

Yaz could feel bile start to rise up in the back of her throat. “And did they…?” she trailed off, unable to finish the thought, but Rose appeared to get her meaning.

“No evidence of sexual assault or any kind of attempt at the moment,” the paramedic reassured her.

Yaz released a breath and felt a relief that might have been slightly inappropriate given the current circumstances, but she’d take every small victory she could get at the moment.

“Thanks, Rose,” she held out her hand to shake, which the other woman took immediately. “If there’s nothing else to be done for her medically, you and David can head out. I’ll take over from here.”

“Cheers, Yaz,” Rose smiled wearily. “Hope we see each other under better circumstances next time.”
“Me too.”

With a final smile, Rose carried her supplies back to the ambulance where David was leaning comfortably against the rear doors as he filled out a report form.

Finally alone with Jo, Yaz took a deep, calming breath and turned, once again, to face the weary blonde sitting hunched over on the pavement. She looked small, almost childlike, and Yaz found her heart aching at the sight of someone who was so unrecognizable from the cheerful, cheeky woman that she had come to know. Taking a step forward, careful so as not to startle the other woman, Yaz sat down on her heels and folded her hands in her lap.

“Hey,” she greeted softly after a few moments. Jo didn’t say anything, just lifted her eyes and nodded jerkily in acknowledgement.

Trying not to take it too personally, Yaz swept her gaze over Jo, taking in the blossoming bruises across her cheeks, the split lip, the cut just above her eye; it was all enough for tears to sting at the corners of her eyes, but she willed herself to keep her emotions in check. For Jo’s sake, if nothing else.

“So, I know Rose and David looked you over,” she continued gently. “But do you think you need to get checked out at the A&E?”

Jo shook her head immediately. “No, no I never go anywhere that’s just initials,” she explained, voice low and broken.

Yaz had no idea what she could possibly mean by that, but decided to chalk it up to her current emotional state. “Okay, what about your place?” she asked instead.

Without warning, Jo suddenly came to life, panic lighting up her eyes and sending a newfound energy through her stiff limbs. “No! No, no, no please, no,” she began to ramble, hands reaching forward to grasp Yaz’s wrists in a vice-like grip. “They said—they said they’d find me, find where I live—said they’d finish what they’d started, Yaz please—”

“Jo, Jo, hey it’s okay,” Yaz tried to soothe her, keeping her voice calm but all the while alarmed at the sudden change in the blonde’s demeanor. “Did they get your name, your address, anything that would help them figure out who you are?”

Jo shook her head, trembling violently as her voice shook. “I don’t know, but please don’t take me back there, Yaz, I can’t, I just—”

“Okay, okay I won’t take you home,” Yaz promised, turning her hands over so that she could squeeze Jo’s and smooth her thumb over the pale skin. “Where then? What about my place? Would that be okay?”

Jo thought for a moment and then nodded, calming down and sinking back into stoic silence.

“Alright, my place it is then,” Yaz gave the blonde’s hands another squeeze before standing back up. “I’ll be right back, okay?”

After receiving acknowledgement that Jo had heard her, Yaz scanned the area before she found Ryan still interviewing members of the crowd. She walked over to him, pulling him aside momentarily.

“Listen, mate,” Yaz said in a low voice. “I hate to ask this of you, but can you catch a ride with someone else?” She glanced over her shoulder to indicate the blonde still slumped on the pavement.
“She doesn’t want to go home tonight. Too scared of whoever did this, so I’m gonna take her back to my place.”

Ryan looked reluctantly between the two women. “You sure that’s a good idea?”

“Not exactly,” Yaz admitted. “But she’s my friend and she needs help. So, do you mind?”

“Nah, I s’pose not,” Ryan shook his head after a moment. “Just take care of her, yeah? I’ll catch a ride back with Walsh.” He jerked his head over in the direction of some of the onlookers to indicate one of the other officers taking down notes.

Yaz smiled in relief. “I owe you one, thanks Ryan.”

After a few more words about their usual report at the end of the day, the partners departed and Yaz made her way back over to Jo. Ducking back down, she laid a gentle hand on the woman’s knee.

“You ready to get out of here?”

Jo nodded and unfolded herself to stand, taking Yaz’s proffered hand for help. They walked slowly to the squad car, Jo acutely aware of all the eyes that were trained on her as she shuffled past the crowd of witnesses. Once safely inside the vehicle, she sank down into her seat, leaning back against the headrest and closing her eyes. Yaz noted that it was the first time she looked visibly relaxed since she and Ryan had arrived, and she smiled just slightly at the thought.

Neither of them spoke on the way to Park Hill, the blonde’s eyes remaining firmly shut. Yaz had joked before about how she didn’t like it when Jo went quiet, but this was different; eerie. Almost as if the blonde was trapped and screaming inside a soundproof box; clearly in pain but unable to communicate the help that she needed. It was like her body had gone into a kind of self-preservation and disassociated her from any kind of thoughts, feelings, or emotions. Quite honestly, that scared Yaz more than any of the physical injuries possibly could.

Less than fifteen minutes later, the car came to a gentle halt in one of the available parking lots outside the complex. Unbuckling her seatbelt, Yaz rounded the vehicle and opened Jo’s door for her, taking her carefully by the elbow to help her out of the passenger seat before slipping an arm around her waist for support as they walked toward the towering structure of the Park Hill flats. They moved slowly, Jo clearly favoring her right leg, as they made their way toward the elevator that would take them up to Yaz’s deck floor and to her front door; all the while, Jo still didn’t say a word.

It wasn’t until they were in the kitchen, the fixtures over the breakfast bar providing the first good source of light that Yaz had experienced all evening, that she was able to truly take in Jo’s injuries. The left half of her face was a mottled mess and fresh blood was shining on her chin from the split lip. Dried blood was streaked unevenly through her hair, and for the first time, Yaz noticed that her shirt had been torn in a few places. Placing her keys on the counter and locking the door behind her, the brunette turned toward Jo and tried to give her an encouraging smile.

“How about a bath to get you cleaned up,” she suggested. “I could even wash your hair if you like?”

The blonde remained silent, a new trait that Yaz was quickly learning to dislike, but nodded and stepped aside for Yaz to lead them down to the bathroom. Flipping the kitchen lights back off, she guided Jo into the bathroom, sitting her down on the toilet to wait while she drew the bath. As the water filled the tub, sloshing and echoing through the small room, Yaz rumbled around in a cabinet before producing a bath bomb and some bubble bath. Once the tub was half-filled, she dropped the vanilla-scented bath bomb into the water, letting it fizz and disperse for a few minutes before adding in an obscene amount of bubbles. She turned off the taps when the water reached the
top and turned back to Jo, whose eyes were staring blankly off into the distance, and knelt down in front of her to gain her attention.

“Would you like help getting undressed?” she asked kindly. “Or would you rather do it yourself while I step out of the room?”

Jo shook her head and lifted her eyes to look at Yaz, something akin to apology passing through them. “Help, please?” she whispered, almost desperately.

Yaz gave her knee a light pat and stood back up as Jo did the same, waiting for the blonde’s cue. Receiving a nod, she began to help Jo out of her clothes; sliding the jeans down her legs so she could step out of them while the blonde peeled her shirt off, pulling it clumsily over her head. The bruising against Jo’s ribs was extensive, darkening splotches ringed in red littering the right side of her torso while her ankle had swollen to twice its usual side. Yaz felt her stomach churn at the sight, knowing the type of violence required to cause those kinds of injuries and the amount of pain that Jo had to be in. Swallowing around the lump in her throat, Yaz extended her hands to the blonde. The other woman stared down at them and then glanced up at Yaz, as if trying to determine her motives, before reaching out shakily and grasping them in her own. Guiding her to stand by the tub, Yaz ducked down to catch Jo’s eye.

“Is it okay to help you with the rest?” she asked quietly. “I can turn around or step out for a moment if you’d prefer the privacy.”

Jo stared at her for a moment, her eyes distant and hollow, before shaking her head. “Hurts too much,” she whispered, glancing down briefly. “Can you—please?”

Catching her meaning, Yaz stepped up behind Jo and carefully undid the clasp of her bra and helped her slip it from her shoulders to discard it with the rest of her clothing. She allowed the blonde a moment to slide the underwear from her hips, letting it fall to the floor of its own accord, before stepping out of it and kicking it aside. Taking her hands once again, Yaz helped Jo step carefully into the tub and sink down into the steaming water with a low moan of relief as she settled down to soak.

Leaving the blonde to relax and let the bath work its magic on her tired and injured muscles, Yaz started to search through the various cabinets until she managed to gather up everything she would need for the next task; shampoo, a decanter, and a couple of towels. Carrying it all back over to the tub, she set the towels aside and placed the rest of it on the floor beside her.

“Jo,” she coaxed quietly, the blonde cracking her tired eyes open to look at her. “Can you sit up a bit? Your hair needs to be washed and I don’t want to get water all over the floor.”

But Jo didn’t move right away. “You don’t have to do that, Yaz,” Jo rasped, her voice still hoarse and weak. “You’ve already done enough, I can—”

But Yaz cut her off before she could continue. “Jo,” she implored. “I want to help you. Please let me.”

Gazing at the brunette for a moment as if she’d never seen her clearly before, Jo eventually relented and sat up a little straighter. Reaching forward, Yaz placed her fingertips against the doctor’s shoulders and gently encouraged her to move away from the edge of the tub.

“I’m gonna run some water through your hair and then start with the shampoo, okay?” she explained, making sure that Jo was comfortable. After the other woman nodded, Yaz dipped the decanter into the colorful contents of the bath and carefully poured it over Jo’s hair, mindful to avoid her eyes. She then collected a small amount of shampoo in her palm before beginning to work it into
the blonde tresses.

As she combed her fingers through the doctor’s hair, massaging the lather into her scalp to rid it of the dried blood and dirt, Yaz noticed as Jo leaned into her touch and sagged back down into the water so that she was nearly up to her chin in bubbles. As she was making sure that she’d covered every bit of the blonde hair from nape to hairline in shampoo, Yaz heard Jo hum lowly when she reached the curve behind her ears. Smiling at the sound, she reached for the decanter next to her on the floor.

“Can you sit back up for a second?” Yaz requested quietly. “I’m just gonna rinse real quick.”

Jo obliged and tilted her head back so the water flowed down through her hair and cascaded over her shoulders. Once Yaz had finished, she tapped the blonde lightly on the shoulder to indicate that she could sink back down into the bath.

“I’m gonna give you another wash with the shampoo, okay? Just to be sure that we got everything.”

Jo nodded and Yaz squeezed a second lot of shampoo into her hand. She would be remiss if she didn’t admit to herself that the second round of shampoo wasn’t just a little bit selfish on her part. After hearing Jo’s reaction to Yaz’s fingers scratching just behind her ears, the brunette was curious about what other spots might earn such sounds from the doctor. That’s not to say that she didn’t want to make sure that Jo was able to relax and deserved a bit of pampering after the night she’d experienced.

So, with nimble fingers, Yaz settled down on her knees and kneaded the shampoo into Jo’s hair, fingernails scraping gently at her scalp. Within minutes, Jo had surrendered completely to Yaz’s ministrations, leaning heavily against the edge of the tub. The brunette discovered quickly how to pull sounds of comfort from the other woman, paying extra attention to the same spot behind her ears and the nape of her neck, which had earned Yaz an honest-to-god purr when she traced her nails along the fine hairs.

So that’s why she always scratched there when we hugged, she thought in amusement.

Enjoying the experience just a little longer, Yaz caressed, scratched, and massaged until she felt the tiled floor start to dig painfully into her knees. Sighing reluctantly, she reached for the decanter again and tapped the blonde’s shoulder. She smiled when a reluctant groan slipped past Jo’s lips as she sat back up sluggishly.

“Head back,” Yaz reminded her, amusement in her voice. She rinsed Jo’s hair out thoroughly, making sure that it was clear of every last bit of shampoo, before standing up and reaching for one of the towels.

“Come on,” she coaxed, holding it open. “Let’s get you out of there before you get too wrinkled.”

With a weak smile, Jo pulled herself slowly back up to her feet, allowing Yaz to drape the towel around her before taking her hand to help her step back out of the tub.

“Here,” Yaz offered her the second towel. “Why don’t you finish drying off and I’ll go find you something to sleep in.”

After Jo nodded, she exited the bathroom and went in search of a spare set of pyjamas. Rummaging around in the bottom of her wardrobe for a few minutes, Yaz eventually found an old pair of cotton trousers that were littered with stars and a matching top with a moon on it. Smiling in triumph, she crossed back through the hallway and knocked lightly on the door.
“Jo,” she called, cracking the door open to slip her hand holding the clothing inside. “These should fit you. Take your time and I’ll wait for you in the bedroom, okay?”

She didn’t receive an answer, but the pyjamas were pulled from her grasp a moment later and she pulled the door shut once more to go wait for the blonde in her room. It was five minutes later when Jo shuffled through the door, rubbing at her damp hair with one of the towels. She worked at it vigorously for a couple of minutes, as if trying to rid herself from the memories of that evening as well as the water, before she let the towel fall limp in her hand and stood helplessly in the center of the room.

“You can just toss that in the hamper over there,” Yaz instructed, pointing toward the basket by the dresser.

The brunette watched her movements; timid and unsure and so unlike the Jo that she was used to. It made her heart ache, to see the doctor’s light be so diminished by the violence that she had been subjected to in the last handful of hours. When Jo turned back towards her, Yaz beckoned her over, making a space for the other woman to sit down. The silence stretched between them, delicate and dangerous; ticking away like a bomb in a birdcage. Finally, hesitantly, Yaz cleared her throat and broke the quiet spell.

“Do you want to talk about it yet?” she asked, her voice as gentle as a breeze.

Jo shook her head.

“Is there anything I can get you?”

Another shake of her head.

“Do you just want to sleep for a while?”

At that suggestion, Jo looked up at her meekly with tears that threatened to spill shining in her eyes. “Please,” she whispered, voice weak and pleading.

Yaz nodded reassuringly. “We can do that.”

She stood from the bed, Jo following, and pulled back the duvet so that the blonde could slip beneath the sheets. With a quick flick of the light switch, the room was bathed in darkness as Yaz slid into the bed beside Jo, leaving a respectful distance between the two of them. She thought back to the night of her panic attack, musing ruefully at their reversed roles and how far they had come since that night that somehow felt like a lifetime ago. So lost in her thoughts for a moment, she didn’t immediately notice the whimpering coming from the woman next to her and how her body shook with quiet gasps.

“Jo?” Yaz asked, worry coloring her tone. “Jo, what’s—?”

Before she could finish her sentence, Jo shifted without saying a word; turning at an angle and curling up so that her head came to rest in Yaz’s lap. Silent sobs wracked her body as she buried her face in the duvet, pressing herself into the brunette as close as she could get. Caught off-guard by the sudden change of position, Yaz sat stunned for a moment until the sound of Jo’s agonized gasps pulled her back into the moment. She settled down a little further so that she could drape an arm over the doctor’s waist and comb soothing fingers through her still-damp hair.

“It’s okay,” Yaz whispered as Jo’s fragile, broken body shook in her arms. “It’s okay, I’ve got you.”
Chapter End Notes

Still not sorry :P

Thank you so much for reading and for all of your kudos and comments! They mean the world to me <3

You can come yell at me over on tumblr if you'd like, I'm @pandora-spockz and my inbox is always open. If you have a twitter, I'm also over there as @emeraldsandivy.
More than worth the risk

Chapter Notes

Penultimate chapter! Can't believe the story is nearly over, but I also can't wait to see what you guys have to say when it's finished. Hope you enjoy!

Thanks as ever to my betas, @antiopesgirlfriend and @the-rainbow-fox-13 <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The first thing Jo noticed was the shaft of sunlight falling across her cheeks, shining behind her eyelids and pulling her gently from a dreamless sleep. The second thing she noticed was the feeling of fingers combing through her hair, blunt nails scraping hypnotically against her scalp and threatening to lull her back into the void of slumber. Shifting slightly, she realized that her arms were wrapped around something solid, holding on tightly as if she might drift away if she let go. Finally blinking her eyes open, she was confronted with the sight of warm, brown skin and the familiar scent of mint and eucalyptus.

Suddenly, the events of the previous night came flooding back to her, and Jo shot upright, but was met with a screaming protest from her ribs and collapsed back against the mattress with a cry of pain. Breathing heavily, she felt the bed shift before a mess of black curls appeared over her, concerned brown eyes staring into her own.

"Jo," Yaz murmured frantically, hands smoothing down the blonde's hair. "Are you okay? What’s wrong, what hurts?"

Unable to speak through her pain, Jo indicated mutely to her ribs.

Looking to Jo for permission first, Yaz carefully lifted the other woman’s shirt so that her torso was exposed, revealing the angry bruising that stained her skin. The patches had darkened overnight, deepening into dark blues and purples that glared harshly in the early morning sun. Swallowing the lump in her throat at the sight, Yaz gently prodded around the bruising; whispering quiet apologies whenever Jo hissed or whined at the touch. When she’d finished, Yaz replaced the blonde’s shirt and leaned back against the headboard, her hand returning to comb through Jo’s hair.

“I don’t think anything is broken, but you probably have a few fractures,” she explained softly, getting no other response than a single nod. After a few minutes, Jo’s breathing returned to normal and she cracked her eyes open to look up at Yaz, who was gazing down at her with an unreadable expression but didn’t speak.

They stayed like that a little longer, the space between them tense with the echoes of a hundred things left unsaid. In the three weeks they’d been apart, it was as if a wall had been erected between them, stifling the communication between them that had once come so naturally.

"Are you hungry?” Yaz asked quietly after a while, desperate to break the silence that was suffocating her.

Before she could even open her mouth to answer, a deep rumble sounded from Jo’s stomach and spilled out into the quiet room. Chuckling slightly, Yaz carefully detangled herself from Jo and got to
her feet to stretch.

“I suppose that’s a yes,” she grinned, arms extended over her head as she tried to rid herself of the stiffness that still clung to her limbs. Once she’d loosened up, she stepped back up to the bed and held out her hands.

“C’mon,” she encouraged, wiggling her fingers. “Let’s get something in your stomach, you have to be starving.”

Wordlessly, Jo reached forward and slid her hands into Yaz’s. With patience and careful movements, the two of them managed to get the blonde into a standing position. Slipping her arm around Jo’s waist for support, mindful of her bruises, Yaz began to guide the other woman slowly from the bedroom and down the hallway, relishing just slightly in the feeling of having Jo pressed up against her. Bypassing the kitchen, she instead lowered Jo onto the couch in the open living room, where she propped her up against a pillow.

“How do good, old fashioned eggs and some toast sound?” Yaz asked, still holding onto her hand as she tried to catch her eye. However, Jo was choosing to look anywhere but at the brunette, focusing instead on a loose thread at the hem of her shirt. She nodded her agreement at the choice for breakfast, but remained quiet. It was starting to remind Yaz of the previous evening and she did her best to remain calm, trying to tell herself that Jo just needed a little more time to shake off the remaining fog from her attack. At least she seemed a little more receptive this morning.

Yaz set about making their breakfast while Jo stayed on the couch and toyed absentmindedly with the hem of her shirt. It didn’t take long before the brunette was stirring a pan filled to the brim with fluffy, yellow eggs and a fresh pot of coffee was gurgling happily away on the counter. Once the toast had popped up, she buttered it quickly and carried their two heaping plates back over to the couch, nipping back momentarily to grab their coffee.

“Still on track to develop diabetes by the time you’re thirty, I see,” Jo teased her dryly, indicating her cup of cream-colored coffee.

“Still enjoying the taste of bitter disappointment, I see,” Yaz shot back good-naturedly with a grin. It wasn’t a full return to their normal, comfortable banter, but it was a start.

They ate quietly, Yaz watching as Jo poked harshly at her eggs while her features gradually clouded over in thought. It was clear what she must be thinking of, memories from the previous evening coming to the forefront of Yaz’s own mind and gnawing at her stomach; images of Jo sitting brokenly on the pavement as she stared off toward nothing. It had shaken Yaz in a way she did not expect, and she couldn’t focus on anything else but the well-being of the woman sitting across from her on the couch.

“How are you feeling?” Yaz prodded gently after a few minutes, knowing they’d have to broach the conversation eventually, so it might as well be now.

Chuckling humorlessly, Jo stabbed at her eggs with a bitter force. “Like I had the shit beat out of me,” she muttered harshly. Immediately stalling her movements, she let out a heavy sigh and looked up at the brunette ruefully. “I’m sorry, that was rude of me.”

“It’s okay,” Yaz shook her head. “You had a night worse than I can imagine, you’re allowed to be upset about it as much as you want.”

Jo didn’t respond, just kept staring despondently down at her food as she pushed it around her plate. After several minutes, Yaz worked up the courage to ask the one question they both knew would
have to come sooner or later.

“What happened, Jo?”

The blonde shook her head, gathering up a forkful of eggs and bringing it up to her lips. “You know exactly what happened,” she answered matter-of-factly without any further elaboration.

“Had you ever met them before?” the brunette pressed cautiously, her police instincts kicking in as she wanted to know what could have possibly provoked the two men to attack a stranger so viciously. “Was there some kind of altercation with them before anything happened?”

Jo snorted derisively into her coffee. “Of course not,” she insisted. “They were just your average, everyday homophobes. Can’t be helped.”

“Jo-“

“It’s fine, Yaz,” the blonde cut in sharply, clearly ready for this conversation to be over. However, Yaz wasn’t one to give up so easily.

“It’s not fine,” she insisted, her teeth gritting in frustration. “They could’ve killed you if the attack had lasted much longer.”

“But they didn’t,” Jo shrugged.

“Jo!” Yaz practically shouted, hardly believing that the other woman was acting so dismissive about what had happened.

“Look, Yaz,” Jo responded, her own voice colored with impatience. “This isn’t the first time I’ve experienced homophobia and it won’t be the last.”

“But it’s not all the time you’re assaulted in the process,” the brunette argued.

“Maybe not, but it’s not the worst I’ve experienced.”

Jo’s words stopped Yaz clear in her tracks and sent an icy thrill down the length of her spine. Whatever she had expected the blonde to counter with, it most certainly had not been that. She stared at the other woman; the bruising along her cheeks, the split lip, the cut just above her eye. She’d been beaten and broken in the street, because she had the audacity to say no, and yet here she sat claiming that it wasn’t the worst she’d experienced. A million and one scenarios ran through Yaz’s head, each worse than the last, but she shook herself from the possibilities, knowing that speculating would only make things worse. Instead she gathered up all of her courage.

“What do you mean it’s not the worst you’ve experienced,” she asked lowly.

Jo took a deep breath, realizing that she couldn’t very well put the cat back in the bag now that she’d let her anger run away with her better judgement. “Yaz, do you remember the first day you came to my office,” she began. “And just before you left, I said how great it was that your parents had been so supportive of you.”

Yaz nodded, remembering the moment vividly, as it had stuck out to her even then. “You told me that not everyone was so lucky.”

“I did,” Jo nodded. “And though I’ve never said it outright, I’m sure you’ve figured out by now that I’m gay, yeah?”
Despite the situation, Yaz chuckled. “Subtlety is not your strong suit, Jo,” she winked, earning a weak grin from the blonde.

“No, I suppose not,” she admitted before taking a breath and regaining her composure. “The thing is, I didn’t know I was attracted to women until I was well into my twenties,” Jo continued. “Until then, I’d exclusively dated men, even came close to marrying one, but there was always a part of me that knew something wasn’t quite right.”

If Yaz was surprised by the confession, she didn’t let it show, and Jo supposed it was down to her police training that allowed her to keep a neutral response. “So how did you figure it out?”

“River,” Jo murmured, that same affectionate tone she always had for the name in her voice. “She came crashing into my life, all curves and curls, and somehow I just knew. Suddenly things finally made sense; why I had trouble with communication and intimacy, the little flutter in my stomach when my favorite barista would smile at me; and I own a suspicious amount of braces.”

Yaz burst out laughing, the absurdity of the comment catching her off guard. “About as many leather jackets as I own, maybe?” she countered with a wink.

For the first time since Yaz had brought her home, Jo cracked a genuine smile. It was small and timid, but it was there, and Yaz felt her heart swell at the sight.

“Yeah, maybe,” Jo agreed, taking a sip from her coffee, the ghost of the grin still on her face.

Once they’d both settled back into silence, Yaz reached forward and carefully rested her hand on top of Jo’s knees, waiting a few moments to see if the blonde shied away or showed any signs of discomfort.

“So what happened next?” she prompted quietly.

To Yaz’s surprise, Jo shifted so that she could tuck one of her legs beneath her and slip her hand into the one resting on her knee, holding onto it as if it were all that anchored her to the couch.

“I knew that I had to tell my parents,” she continued. “They were…less than thrilled.”

“Why do I get the feeling that’s an understatement?” Yaz asked suspiciously.

Jo looked back up at her, pain evident in her eyes. “I haven’t spoken to them in almost four years.”

“Oh, Jo…”

Jo shook her head, tears shining in her eyes. “They called me a good number of things that I don’t care to repeat,” she sniffed. “But, to put it simply, they said they never wanted to see me again. So, I walked out the door and haven’t looked back.”

Two solitary tears spilled over from each of the blonde’s eyes, and she reached up to quickly swipe them away. She startled slightly at the feeling of Yaz’s thumb brushing against the back of her hand and squeezed all the more tighter. She took a few calming breaths before she spoke again, Yaz giving her all the time she needed.

“After that, River was all that I had,” Jo murmured, her voice growing more and more quiet with each word. “That’s why I held onto our relationship for so long, despite knowing that it couldn’t last, because I didn’t think I’d be able to survive without her. And when she finally left, it felt like I was drowning, like it was only a matter of time until I slipped under for good.”
“So, what saved you?”

There was a long pause as Yaz’s question hung in the air like the moment before a bomb explodes. An eerie calm settled between them and Jo finally looked up from her their joined hands to catch Yaz in her hazel eyes. And, just like that, the wall between them fell.

“Yasmin Khan, do you really have to ask me that question?”

The look in Jo’s eyes was so vulnerable, so intense, that Yaz found herself unable to hold her gaze, turning away as tears stung at the corners of her eyes. “Jo, I-“ she began, but the words died on her tongue and the blonde smiled softly.

“You know, it was almost like déjà vu,” she chuckled. “You came storming into my life just like River; full of fire and passion and the temper of a spewing volcano and I just couldn’t help but find myself enraptured by you.”

“Enraptured?”

“Oh, absolutely,” Jo nodded. “You, Yasmin Khan, are quite the interesting puzzle to piece together. So many riddles and contradictions; it was like trying to catch the wind in my hands, but I never wanted to stop trying.”

“Then why did you disappear?” Yaz asked quietly, dropping her eyes down to stare at their hands, fidgeting with Jo’s fingers.

Jo was silent for several moments, guilt clear on her face as she thought about her answer. Eventually, she reached forward to crook her finger beneath Yaz’s chin so that she could guide the brunette’s gaze back up to her own.

“Because I was afraid,” Jo admitted. “River took so much from me that I didn’t know if I had anything left to give that I wasn’t willing to lose. And of all things, Yaz, I wouldn’t want to lose you.”

Yaz took Jo’s words in slowly, feeling that familiar flutter start to beat against her ribs. Every lingering touch and near miss they’d had in the five weeks they’d spent together replayed on a loop in her head as Jo held her gaze earnestly.

“You were afraid?” she repeated, wanting to understand.

Jo nodded. “River broke me, Yaz,” she explained, her voice cracking slightly. “I didn’t know if I could survive being hurt like that again.”

Jo’s hand had since retreated from Yaz’s chin to rest against her thigh, spreading a warmth through her body, emboldening her.

“And now?” she whispered, her breath ghosting across Jo’s cheeks as they both leaned in closer.

Jo’s eyes flickered down to Yaz’s lips for the briefest of moments. “Now,” she traced her hand higher up the brunette’s leg. “I think you’d be more than worth the risk.”

Jo’s hand slid up to Yaz’s waist and pulled her in. Their lips ghosting against each other before Yaz retreated sharply.

“Jo, your lip,” she protested, indicating the injury.
With a huff of frustration, Jo grabbed Yaz by the collar of her shirt and tugged her forward once more. “Yaz, just shut up and kiss me,” she muttered before finally crashing their lips together.

Weeks of pent up feelings came pouring out as the two of them found a rhythm, Jo’s hand letting go of Yaz’s shirt to slide into her dark curls while Yaz slipped her arms around Jo’s waist, her fingers finding their way beneath the blonde’s shirt to trace the sensitive spot at her lower back. A purr escaped from Jo’s throat and Yaz took the opportunity to slip her tongue past the other woman’s lips and deepen their kiss. Jo’s purr evolved into a moan as she pulled Yaz closer so that the brunette was all but sitting in her lap, fingertips tracing along her collarbone.

They broke apart panting, their foreheads coming to rest against each other as identical smiles lit up their faces. Jo brushed the back of her hand along the curve of Yaz’s neck and pressed another kiss to her jawline.


Yaz shook her head and the blonde’s antics and pulled back to inspect her injuries. “You’re bleeding again,” she replied, reaching over toward the coffee table for a tissue to dab at the fresh blood.

“Worth it,” Jo grinned, wincing immediately at the pain.

“You’re ridiculous,” Yaz rolled her eyes, grabbing the other woman by the chin to clean her up.

“Maybe,” Jo conceded, holding still while Yaz worked. She twisted slightly to allow the brunette better lighting and gasped in pain, her hand flying up to press against her ribs.

“Jo,” Yaz’s hands came up to cradle her face. “What happened, what hurts?”

Jo took a couple of deep breaths before giving her torso a light pat. “Ribs,” she gasped, eyes screwed shut in pain.

Clamoring off of her, Yaz lifted the blonde’s feet up onto the couch so that she could lie down. Hurrying over to the kitchen, she pulled a bag of frozen peas from the freezer and brought them back over to Jo, lifting the hand up that was clutching her side, to rest the makeshift ice pack against her injury. With a sigh of relief, Jo peeled her eyes back open and smiled up at Yaz weakly.

“Thank you,” she muttered, appreciative of the numbness starting to spread along her bruises.

Yaz leaned down to press her lips to Jo’s forehead. “No worries,” she smiled, brushing her fingers through the blonde’s hair. “I’ve got you. Always.”

Chapter End Notes

Thank you all so much for reading and for all of your comments, kudos, messages, etc., I appreciate you all so much! <3

Feel free to come say hello on tumblr, I'm @pandora-spockz and I'm also on twitter as @emeraldsandivy :)
Here we go, final chapter! Thank you all so much for giving this story a chance, I've loved writing it and your enthusiasm toward it has meant the world to me!! <3

A final, massive thanks to my two betas, @antiopesgirlfriend and @the-rainbow-fox-13. You've both been a brilliant help to me and I appreciate each of you so much! <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

3 months later

Jo thrashed against her captor, swinging her arms wildly in hopes of landing a hit, but it was fruitless. She remained tightly bound in the man’s arms as she was forced to watch the scene before her; Yaz curled up on the ground as she tried to shield herself from the flurry of kicks being aimed at every available part of her body. Her cries of pain rang out through the night air, piercing through Jo’s heart as she continued to struggle to break free. Tears flowed freely down her cheeks, blurring her vision so that she could just see Yaz’s anguished face looking up at her, pleading for help.

“Jo! Jo, please, help!”

Sobs ripped through the doctor’s body as she fought ever harder to free herself, desperate to the brunette crying out for her. Her head began to swim as she grew more frantic, darkness beginning to creep in at the edges.

“Jo! JO!”

With a firm jolt, Jo’s eyes snapped open as she launched herself forward, gasping for air. Whipping her head around in all directions, she took in her surroundings, piecing together the thoughts that were running wildly through her mind; a dark room, tangled sheets around her legs, someone’s hand rubbing soothingly along the dip of her lower back. Blinking slowly and giving her head a shake, Jo’s eyes finally managed to focus in the dim light shining through the sheer curtains as the landed on the figure next to her, concern shining in her eyes and a small cup in her hand.

Yaz. Safe and whole and warm against her.

Taking a deep, shuddering breath, Jo sagged into her and reached over to give her knee a light squeeze of reassurance.

“So it was my turn tonight, was it?” she rasped warily, taking the cup from Yaz’s hands and drinking deeply.

“I’m afraid so,” Yaz murmured, carding her fingers through Jo’s messy blonde hair as the other woman leaned heavily against her.

The pattern had remained consistent over the last few months; a nightmare, one of them pulling the other from sleep, the next few hours spent curled up together before they felt safe and calm again. Lather, rinse, repeat. However, as exhausting as it could be, the both of them surviving on copious amounts of coffee and the odd cat nap, it had also brought them closer in a way they wouldn’t have
changed. It was a special kind of intimacy that grew from being the only one who was allowed to see a person’s brokenness, and it had forged a bond between them that they’d never expected. So much so, that they rarely left each other’s side, sleepovers becoming a permanent habit.

Yaz took the now-empty cup from Jo’s weak grip and set it back on the bedside table before pulling her more securely into her arms. “Do you want to talk about it?” Yaz asked her quietly. “Or was it the same one as last time?”

“Same one,” Jo murmured wearily, sinking into the embrace. Yaz hummed sympathetically and guided Jo to lay back down so that her head was resting in its now familiar spot in the brunette’s lap. They laid like that for a while, Jo’s arms wrapped securely around her waist while the other woman played idly with the tips of her hair.

“Jo?” Yaz murmured sometime later, her voice breaking the silence.

“Hm?” the blonde answered, turning her head lazily so that she could look up at her through heavy eyes.

“Why me?”

Jo’s brow furrowed in confusion and she sat up to face Yaz more fully while she loosely crossed her legs. “I don’t understand the question.”

“I just mean, why did you pick me? Open up to me, of all people?” Yaz clarified.

Jo didn’t answer right away, choosing her words carefully as she toyed idly with a loose thread at the cuff of her pyjama bottoms.

“Why did you call me the night of your panic attack?”

Yaz was taken aback by the question, not expecting it in response to her own.

“I..don’t really know,” she admitted quietly. “You were just the first person I thought of, like a reflex.”

“I’d hoped for that,” Jo admitted sheepishly. When Yaz gave her a puzzled look, she continued. “I saw a lot of myself in you Yaz; the broken girl who just wanted to be loved and accepted for who she is,” she explained. “And as you started to make progress, I really wanted to be the one who you could turn to.”

“Why?” Yaz asked, entirely perplexed.

“Because, Izzy was your River,” she explained. “Not nearly in the same manner or capacity, but we’d both been hurt by people who left us shattered and trying to make sense of the broken pieces only to find that they didn’t quite fit back together like they used to.”

Yaz didn’t speak, too stunned by Jo’s confession and explanation. She’d never really thought about the similarities in their stories, of the pain they’d been left in when they were at their most vulnerable.

“But with you, the pieces started to make more sense,” she heard Jo continue. “Like I just needed a new perspective to see them clearly. And I finally began to feel like myself again, just as you were starting to turn a corner, as well.”

“But?” Yaz asked, sensing that there was more.
“But I was scared,” Jo admitted sadly. “I don’t like endings, and I knew that ours would be coming all too soon. I had to make it a clean cut, or I knew I’d be lost to you for good.”

“What changed your mind?”

The blonde was quiet, pensive, for a few moments before speaking. “The night I was attacked,” Jo murmured. “You took care of me without a second thought, saw me at the lowest I had ever been, and you didn’t flinch.” She smiled, raising her hand up to brush the back of it along Yaz’s cheek. “It’s when I realized that you were in this, too, trying to guide me back to who I used to be.”

Jo smiled, tears stinging at the corners of her eyes. “Like my own personal north star.”

Yaz sat there stunned for several moments, Jo’s last words sinking in and nestling themselves somewhere deep in the centre of her heart.

“Come here,” she finally whispered, standing up from the bed and holding her hand out to the blonde. Jo looked at her for a few moments, clearly perplexed, but took the offered hand anyway and allowed herself to be pulled to her feet and led through the apartment toward the front door. Yaz grabbed their coats off of the hooks and helped Jo slip into hers before bounding over into the open living room and grabbing the largest, fluffiest blanket she owned. Passing it off to the other woman in order to get her own coat on, Yaz grinned mischievously once she’d managed to slide the fabric onto her shoulders and swung to door open to welcome in a gust of cold air. Grabbing Jo’s hand, Yaz led them out of the flat into the clear winter night.

As they walked along the deck walkway toward the stairs, Jo’s curiosity finally got the better of her.

“Yaz, love,” she murmured, slipping her arm through the brunette’s. “Where exactly are we going?”

“You’ll see,” Yaz replied cryptically, her grin stretching wide across her cheeks.

Once they’d reached the stairs, Yaz confused Jo further by pulling her up rather than down, heading toward the upper decks floors of the complex and, eventually, the roof. Rather curious to see what Yaz had planned, Jo didn’t question any further and allowed herself to be led to wherever the brunette wanted; to the very edge of the world and beyond if she so desired.

Eventually, they reached the top of the stairs, the door leading to the roof opening with ease, and Yaz guided Jo back out into the frigid air and over to an old wooden bench that looked like it had seen much better days. Taking the blanket from Jo’s arms, Yaz shook it open and settled it tightly around their shoulders to chase away the chill.

Silently, Yaz slipped her hand into Jo’s, slotting their fingers together, and nodded up toward the night sky. The blonde lifted her eyes above them, an audible gasp falling from her lips. Above them, the stars shone brightly against the inky black sky, the moon hanging high above the horizon. The lights of the city were usually so bright that the natural display of the heavens was muted to the point of invisible. However, late at night when Sheffield was finally sleeping, the sky became a spectacle of stardust and constellations.

Yaz looked over at Jo and grinned at the childlike wonder shining across her face, the stars above them nothing compared to the ones shining in her eyes. “What do you think?” she asked quietly.

Jo tore her gaze away from the sight to smile at her. “It’s brilliant,” she breathed. “Thank you for bringing me up here.”

“Anytime,” Yaz murmured, squeezing Jo’s hand. “You deserve to see every single star in the sky.”
“As long as they always bring me home to you.”

Jo leaned over and brushed their noses together, grinning gently before capturing Yaz’s lips in a soft, slow kiss, pulling the blanket tighter around their shoulders to force the brunette to scoot in closer. Once they were flush against each other, Jo pressed her luck a little further; she gave Yaz’s sides a gentle squeeze, causing the other woman to jump slightly in surprise, which allowed Jo to guide her hips over to pull Yaz onto her lap.

Their languid pace soon became more fervent, a mixture of teeth and tongues as they greedily chased their growing desire, the blanket falling back against the bench, forgotten. Yaz shifted so that she could swing one of her legs over to the other side of Jo’s, effectively straddling her as she sank her fingers into the blonde’s hair. She gave a gentle tug, hearing a low moan rise from the other woman’s throat and took advantage to lick her tongue further into Jo’s mouth.

It was the feeling of tentative fingers tracing along the waistband of her sweatpants that finally broke through Yaz’s lust-filled haze and pulled her back so that she could gaze down at Jo, whose eyes were watching her with a heart-stopping intensity. It wasn’t until a sudden gust rose up around them, its icy tendrils snaking beneath their coats, that they remembered where they were.

Wordlessly, Yaz rose to her feet, pulling Jo and the blanket up with her, and began to lead them back toward the stairwell and down to her flat. It wasn’t until the door had shut behind them, that Yaz felt Jo resist her movements, tugging on the brunette’s hand to spin her around and push her firmly against it so she could mouth hungrily at her neck. Yaz gasped, her need beginning to far outweigh her patience, and she gently pulled Jo back to look her in the eyes.

“Bedroom?” she breathed hotly.

“Yes please,” Jo murmured, her lips finding their previous spot against Yaz’s pulse point, drawing a moan from the brunette.

They followed a slow path to the bedroom, finding too many opportunities for backs to hit walls and articles of clothing to be tugged unceremoniously from bodies. When they finally stumbled into the darkened room, Yaz took the control once again and walked Jo backwards until her legs hit the edge of the mattress. Crawling forward to push the blonde up against the headboard, Yaz resumed her previous position of straddling Jo’s lap, the heat between their bodies sending a delicious shiver down her spine.

It wasn’t until she saw the look in Jo’s eyes, one of absolute vulnerability, that she finally paused her intentions and settled back onto the blonde’s legs.

“Hey,” Yaz whispered, tracing the Jo’s jawline with her fingertips. “Are you alright? Are we going to fast, do you want to stop?”

The doctor shook her head. “No, I just—” she broke off, turning away from Yaz’s gaze.

“Jo,” the brunette coaxed, gently turning her head back to look at her. “What is it?”

Jo cleared her throat a few times before raising her eyes back up to look at Yaz. “I just haven’t been with anyone since the night when River—and then she—and I—” she broke off, her body shuddering with silent sobs.

“Shh, it’s alright, babe,” Yaz soothed, her thumbs tracing back and forth against the blonde’s cheeks. “I’m not going to disappear, I promise. I’m right here.”

“I’m sorry,” Jo whispered, a single tear slipping down her cheek, which the other woman quickly
wiped away.

“It’s okay,” Yaz murmured, leaning forward to rest their foreheads together. “It’s okay, I’ve got you.”

“Always?”

It was such a simple question, yet it held the weight of galaxies behind it; of promises made and promises still to come, of endless possibilities and unavoidable tragedies, of the very best and the very worst of what it meant to be human. For Yaz, she knew that there was only one possible answer.

“And forever.”

Chapter End Notes

Once again, THANK YOU for reading my story! Every comment, kudo, and message has meant so much to me, I can't possibly tell you all how grateful I am. I have plenty of plans and ideas in the works, so hopefully I'll have something new up soon.

I'm also thinking I'd quite like to turn this story into a series and add little one-shots to it of their life together, so if you have any ideas or anything you'd like to see from these two, feel free to send me a message or a prompt!

Until then, feel free to come say hello to me on tumblr, I'm @pandora-spockz
I'm also on twitter, if that's your thing, I'm @pandoraspockz

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!