Say That the Wind Won't Change On Us

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Say That the Wind Won't Change On Us

by HappilyCorrupted

Summary

Direct sequel to my prev fic "Say that you'll hold me forever"

Trinity and Samira following their Fourth of July evening

Notes

hey guys :)))

as seen in the tags, there is a small self-harm scene. it's not super graphic, but if you'd like to skip it, skip after the paragraph starting "Huckleberry probably slept at Amy's" to the next divider line. It's not far, about 200 words.

Anyway my lovelies, hope u enjoy :]

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1

Getting ready to sleep is a quiet affair.

Samira leads Trinity to the bathroom and leaves her with some soft old clothes and a spare toothbrush. It's another reassurance given quietly and without comment, another little pinprick in Trinity's long-established walls. She gets changed in the comfort of privacy, not having to worry about any sideways glances at the ridges on her thighs, or choke down the shame that comes with it. Not that Samira would, but that conversation is not something Trinity can face right now.

The calmness of the night stays, silent except for the hum of her heart. She seems to have forgotten how to do anything other than smile.

She takes a moment as she washes her face to try calm down, be more normal about this, but the twist to the corner of her lips stays firmly in place. The stars sparking in her mind, similarly, don't budge. Trinity basks in it. She feels drunk. Like a fizzing glass of cola someone's dropped a mento in, bubbling and warm and overflowing. It's stupid, but accurate.

She takes her time in the bathroom, trying to slow the pace of her racing heart, rein herself in before she gets too far ahead of herself, but every fibre of her is thrumming with this new *thing*. Something tonight has broken open inside her after being sealed tight for so long, and it's hard to resist the relief.

When she joins Samira in the bedroom, she's running something through her hair with her fingers. She looks up at Trinity in the mirror, a sort of tired, contented look on her face around her smile. Something about the lax curve of her shoulders and the openness of her expression draws Trinity closer, like a leaf pulled by a stream, getting caught in a whirlpool and happily swirling in it.

She waits as Samira finishes combing it through, simply letting this moment flood her senses and sink into her memories. Then she lets the feeling tug her forward. She moves to Samira's shoulder and meets her dark gaze in the mirror. She feels all the better just to be near her like this, to feel her warmth.

Samira sinks back into her, eyes slipping shut with a bone-deep sigh while she drops her head back. Trinity watches with awe. *How does she get to have this?* Samira, good and kind Samira, resting in her arms with trust, seeking comfort from her. Everything about this feels so precious and so, so wondrous. Trinity wraps her arms carefully around Samira's middle and chuckles at herself for the way her stomach flips when Samira hums happily.

"Don't you want to actually get into bed?"

Samira imitates a groan, humming again, and turns her face sideways into Trinity's neck, breath puffing across her throat, warm skin smooth against her own. Trinity's mind fixates on the soft lips just centimetres from her skin. The gentle smell of coconut meets Trinity's nose. She starts to sway.

Within these walls — this night — it's like whatever armours they live in have been forgotten; now just two souls standing bare with each other, sharing each other’s warmth in the dark.

She runs a thumb along the corner Samira's jaw, and follows the line of her neck, taking in the smooth warmth of her skin simply because she's dying to.

"Come on, princess. You’re really tired, and my feet hurt," she coaxes, pulling away and leading Samira with a trailing hand. Trinity would gladly have stayed just like that all night, but she knows they're both long overdue proper rest.

Trinity slips in the far side, leaving Samira to be next to her various nick-knacks at the bedside, and lets her muscles melt into the mattress. She can see Samira's full-bodied sigh at the respite, too, in the way her limbs slump and her eyelids flutter.

Samira flops a hand up between them where they face each other, flexing lazily with her eyes barely open.

"Thank you for staying with me," she exhales, more air than actual speech.

Something akin to pride warms Trinity at the words, spiralling in her chest. She isn't sure what to say to that, but she's always preferred doing anyway. She runs the back of her finger over Samira's hand, starts tracing Samira's knuckles, and watches her fingers brush over smooth skin, noting the small flutters of Samira's hand at the slight tickle. Even this simple touch is sparking so much inside her.

Samira tangles their fingers together, halting her little exploration, instead winding them tight as her eyes drift shut. She looks so at peace. That same urge to reach out and trace the contours of her face, caress her and hold her close, resurfaces. She softly switches out the hand in Samira's grip to do just that. Eyelashes flutter dreamily as she tucks some hair behind her ear, a light lift of Samira's lips as Trinity lazily follows the line of her jaw back and forth.

Trinity hasn't felt this full in a while.

After an unignorable yawn, she drops her hand to cradle Samira's wrist where they're still joined between them. She measures her breaths against the flutter of Samira's heart under her fingers, and lets her own eyes slip shut.

Sleep, for once, doesn't take long to come.

Morning comes with light spearing through her eyelids and a deep ache in her bones. The feeling isn't entirely unfamiliar after so many months at the Pitt, so nothing stirs in her subconscious about this morning being abnormal.

The smell of coconut and the weight pinning her arm down do, though.

She isn't home; she never lets people sleep in her bed. Where was she? Who is she sleeping with? What happened last night?

All her clothes are on, and the bedroom door is open.

Good.

The fog over her memory inches away. Samira is on her arm, sprawled and facing away from her.

Not good.

It starts pouring back like an avalanche.

She's in Samira's bed. Samira, who she spent the whole night with. Samira, who laughed with her and held hands with her and talked about her family with her. Samira, who she kissed, foolish and giddy. Samira, who made her lip tremble and her heart pound.

No. Fuck-

Samira, who had a freak day at work and was strung high— who didn't want to be alone after a long day. Who Trinity was an escape for. Who just wanted someone to connect with. Who went from hell to laughter to sincerity in hours— that kind of emotional whiplash is enough to leave anyone confused. Make them think they're feeling something they're not, want something they don't.

And here's Trinity, who just happened to be there, happened to be feeling vulnerable, and her guard slipped. Trinity, who let herself be held so tightly, believed the waking dream, and now she'll never forget the feeling. Who wants what she can't have. Who craves what is never returned. Who took what she shouldn't have. Took *advantage*.

She feels sick.

She needs to get the fuck out of here. Before Samira wakes up— before the light of day clears her senses. She was tired and emotional. She got so caught up in it that she sought comfort from Trinity Santos of all people- And '*it was a terrible idea',* and *'I don't know what was going on with me last night',* and *'no, it didn't mean anything, don't worry'.*

Trinity cannot stick around for the awkward, stuttering fallout.

With a jackrabbit heart thudding in her chest, she extracts her arm. *Mohan*, thank god, doesn't stir.

There's burning in Trinity's cheeks and behind her eyes. *Why did she let this happen?* Yes, it felt good, amazing even— intoxicating, exhilarating —but Trinity knows better than this. She thought she knew better than this.

She gathers her clothes from yesterday, still folded from last night in the bathroom, still a reassuring heft to her trouser pocket, and changes into them quickly. She leaves the borrowed pyjamas in their place, and grabs her things from the table.

She does not look back at Mohan's sleeping form. She firmly keeps her back to the two mugs marking the spot where she'd pressed Samira gently against the counter and somehow

believed she could have this while she crosses to the door. She does not look at the pacman on the shelf.

She slips out.

Speed walking, phone in one hand for maps and other thumb running repetitively over the ridges of the scalpel in her pocket, she doesn't give herself any extra time to dwell.

She left at 06:53. She's in her apartment by 07:04.

Huckleberry probably slept at Amy's. Their shift was more than long enough to warrant it, and he's spent the night for less. She doesn't bother being quiet as she slams through the door and beelines for her bathroom. There's no one to notice, anyway.

She doesn't stop moving until she's sat and the blade is hovering over her thigh. The hurricane that her determined *moving* had been staving off rears in the front of her mind. It roars, and it screams, and she can't keep her balance or catch her breath.

She needs it to *stop*.

She moves.

One thin red line draws across her skin.

A dark pearl runs.

She glimpses the eye of the storm. Aims for it.

She pulls another. Just a little deeper. Just to stop the screaming.

There's a buzz in her ears after pushing aside the thunder, emptiness between. Curled up in the centre, she drowns out the roar. Each breath is still a fight.

Another.

She stills. The wind can't reach her.

Her chest fills with air, unbound. It judders on its way out.

Warm paths track down the side of her thigh.

They zigzag slightly, from her skin's texture, or hair, or something. A pattern is created. It pools on the floor.

She lifts her hand again. One more, just to soften the edges.

She watches them bleed until her breathing is smooth and even.

Until she feels just a little bit faint.

By the time Whitaker gets home, the bathroom is spotless.

Trinity's mind is clearer, and there's a steady stinging tucked safely under her shorts. Curled up on the sofa, she's paying diligent attention to the TV — as if her life depends on it. It kind of feels like it does.

Everything is being pushed *back* and *away* in favour of these random idiots struggling through stupid challenges. If all that matters is how the red team is going to win, there's no room for the shame and the despair and the fucking fury at herself for what she did yesterday.

The brunette on red is just about to sneak into the lead when Whitaker comes in. He still looks exhausted, but there's a enviable ease and bounce to his steps regardless. Of course he gets to float back in on his happy, everybody-loves-me cloud after touring the everybody-loves-me city. Asshole.

"Come crawling back, have you?" She barbs. He doesn't even blink.

He replies jovially, "It's not like I live here or anything." *Who can be fucking jovial this early on a goddamn weekend?* He starts pottering about in the kitchen.

"Not for long. You're moving out, right?" Just another person to leave her and remind her why she shouldn't let anyone under her skin. Maybe it's a good thing; apparently she needed the reminder.

"I, uh-" He reaches for a pan. "I was thinking I'll just check in on Robby's, instead, like I mentioned."

The rock in her throat swallows her.

"Seriously? Are you a fucking leech? Don't you think maybe you should hurry up and leave me to my goddamn space?" She's acid. She dredges every word in it. This needs to end now, while she is in control, before she inevitably settles too much again, and before this can sneak up on her later and rip her apart.

His head snaps to look at her over his shoulder, expression lacking the anger it should. There's a parcel of hurt there, but predominantly just fucking *concern*. It tugs her heart. She feels like a bystander, watching some strange iron visor clamp shut over her and spit every awful thought.

"You've been a goddamn parasite for almost a year now- how much more do you fucking want?"

His eyebrows draw even closer and he puts down the pan. "Hey, what's… What's that for?" He turns to face her fully. "What happened?"

The pressure under her skin doubles. The cuts on her thigh are doing nothing to loosen it. *Why can't he just yell at her and leave?*

Why can't she just break and let him help her?

"What happened is that you've freeloaded off me for too long! I need you to get the fuck out of here already-" the words choke her, cloying her throat.

She turns away from him, dragging in deep, rattling breaths. *He needs to* go— she can't stand the piercing of his gaze or the so called care in his eyes. It's all too much. She needs to hide.

Socked feet shuffle closer, rounding the couch hesitantly.

Trinity fixes a knot in the floor with a glare, willing it to keep the hot, prickling press of *everything* from her eyes. She pulls her knees in tighter. Little crescents line her shins.

The sofa dips, not touching her. Whitaker slumps back, letting out a sigh. "What happened last night?" He asks to the ceiling, head dropped on the backrest. With the modicum of space, she feels like she can breathe, just a little bit.

He doesn't look at her, just waits. Evidently, he's doing that thing where he waits her out *oh so patiently* until it all just spills out. He's not going anywhere.

That doesn't mean he won't *leave her*. Eventually.

But, still… That child hidden under her ribs wants to reach out.

She was doing so good at trying. Yesterday. But… look what came of that.

Still, he's done this willingly; she may as well use it one last time before he's gone. He knows enough of her secrets by this point, what's one more? She even felt a little better some of the other times.

"It's all fucked up…" she says, quietly.

He inhales slowly. Someone on the TV screams a laugh. He threads his hands together behind his head.

"It might be… but why do you think that?"

Eyes screwed shut again, she holds her breath. *Where to even start?*

"I kissed Samira," slips out, flooding the room. Hot remorse dogs her shoulders. She looks down to where she's ripping her cuticles in her lap. Something hot, tangled, and angry writhes in her stomach, all the while a glowing, flushed *something* flutters beneath it at the memory. It's unbidden and traitorous. Even as it rises, she tastes bile. *How can she have enjoyed that? What kind of monster is she to feel pleasure at a stolen kiss— one that wouldn't have been given under* any *other circumstances?*

"Oh," he shuffles a little, "what's wrong with that?"

Everything.

"She… We…" she cuts herself off. "Everyone had a shit day yesterday, right?" She doesn't wait for Whitaker before continuing. "Well, she had a shit day. I had a shit day. And we were

all emotional and exhausted- and probably goddamn delirious. She can't have meant it, you know? She was just looking for someone to hold on to, and I was just… there. She just went along- because she was lonely or something, I don't know."

Despite some of the pressure fizzing out at having it out finally, she feels even more vile to lay another of her misdeeds bare in front of another.

"Did she say any that?" His voice is calm, like he's being *sensible*.

"She didn't have to," Trinity scoffs, "*Nobody* would want-" the last word doesn't make it out, but Dennis seems to hear it anyway. She feels him turn to look at her.

"You may think that, but don't you think she should get to choose?" He says it gently, and she finally looks up at him. Yup, puppy dog eyes. Placating. "You should talk to her, Trin. Ask her."

He's not entirely wrong. Samira hasn't *said* anything to confirm Trinity's beliefs yet, but, to have this confirmed, told to her face— Trinity couldn't take it. There's that insistent spur of care in her chest now, and to hear Samira confirm what she knows, that she did wrong, and she's just as bad as the men she so hates...

"Mohan doesn't strike me as the type to do anything she doesn't want."

That, at least, rings true. Samira is nothing if not sure. Doesn't mean she doesn't make mistakes, or get caught up in the moment.

"She *thought* she wanted it, Huck." Trinity sighs long and deep, a modicum of stillness starting to claim her, finally. She's been through this before — pining after something unattainable, at least. The awful churning in her gut at being anything like *him*, though, is awful.

Whitaker's watching her with a quizzical eyebrow. She gives him a flat look. He doesn't seem to care.

"I don't follow your logic, Trin. Will you just tell me what actually happened?"

Phantom feelings and too-raw memories pulse through her veins. She's braced better this time, but it still leaves a bitter taste in her mouth. *She'll never get to have that again*.

Steeling herself, she starts. She runs through the evening, trying to keep to the bullet points, clinical and factual. None of that stops her throat from tightening as she nears the end.

"Then, I walked her back to her place..." She blinks each flash away quickly: shared smiles, tangled fingers, how Samira's eyes shone when she looked at her. "She invited me up, and we had tea, and I, uh, I kissed her." Little tugs on her jacket, lips so tender, a quiet giggle and an infectious smile. Trinity takes a thirsty breath and clears her throat. "She said it was okay. Even said I should do it again." That hurts all the more, the laughing way she had pulled Trinity back in. Her prickling eyes blur. "She asked me to stay so I... did. We slept. I left before she woke up."

Running through the facts… actually makes it all feel a tiny bit more manageable. Displaying them this way, it looks like maybe it's not as bad as she fears, like maybe there's some hope. Maybe. But probably not.

After a moment to steady her off-kilter heart, she pulls her eyes up to Dennis.

He's wearing a goddamn smile— like she's a cute puppy to pity. *Rude.*

“And you think she didn't want to kiss you... Why?” He asks, all gentle teasing and ‘knowing’ eyes. *Why doesn’t he get it? Look at the big picture!*

“Because that was yesterday! It was basically midnight after one of the worst shifts she's had! She was emotional, she wanted comfort! She would've taken anything anyone offered!"

"Trin, I don't think you get to make that conclusion without *talking to her*."

Trinity looks away from him. Each moment with Samira gets turned over in her mind slowly, looking for the flaws and the cracks that would give them away as false. She doesn't find much.

"You know how Mohan is. She thinks everything through. Why not give her the chance to say?"

In spite of herself, she believes him. Some flimsy part of her is holding onto the moments from last night and saying they're true. She *liked* the thrill of putting herself out there, and even if this thing with Samira is as fake as Langdon's apology, Trinity knows *that's* something she wants to keep trying. She wants to be better. Plus, if there's any chance at all that Samira actually wants her… She's not sure she can leave that chance behind. And if she was wrong, too pushy, too *taking*, then she deserves to bear the fallout— Samira deserves a proper apology. It's unavoidable. He's right. She needs to do this.

"I'll talk to her."

Dennis' grin is triumphant.

"Good! But you gotta eat with me first. I know you haven't eaten today."

How the fuck does he know that?

"I was gonna have lunch." *It's not like she was going to fast the whole day — people skip breakfast all the time.* Her thigh itches.

He looks at her with another raised eyebrow and something akin to understanding.

"It's almost 3pm." Then, with a soft smile, he gets up to head to the kitchen. "Come on, I'll make something quick."

Where did all that time go? She trails after him, thoughts still stuck on how on earth it got from 7am to 3pm. All she did was the… bathroom… and TV. She could have sworn it was only a couple hours.

Trinity arrives at Samira's front door a while later, well-fed, calmer, but with her hands shaking. Hope fizzes stubbornly in her breastbone while leaden dread drags her stomach. It's not a pleasant mixture. Dennis' words had seemed so reasonable, so sensible, that those flames of want and hope are stubbornly licking at her heart as if they were never doused. She supposes weren't, she had simply blocked them from view as best she could.

Still, Trinity hesitates.

Uncertainty is safety. It has deniability: there's a chance it's everything she hopes. But that deniability goes both ways: there's also agony knowing she could be what she most hates.

She needs to know.

Trinity braces a deep breath in her chest and knocks. *Any shot at this has to be worth taking,* she repeats, willing it to feel true.

It's an agonising, silent wait. *This was a terrible idea*. She should just leave Samira alone until they are inevitably on shift together again, and act like absolutely nothing at all ever happened.

The door opens halfway.

Samira stands in the gap, braced against the door and the frame with tired, red eyes. God, she's stunning. Trinity hadn't allowed herself to remember anything other than what she *did,* and the sharp reminder of how breathtaking Samira is squeezes her heart. The underlying harsh set of her jaw and the wariness in her eyes are new and painful. All the openness Samira gave her last night is gone, and that loss throbs and kicks.

Everything she wanted to say is forgotten. Her mouth is dry. *She's here,* close enough to touch, errant curls in her eyes. Trinity isn't sure she's breathing anymore.

Samira just watches her, guarded and silent.

Something deeper inside breaks. She didn't think there was anything left that could. Trinity drops her masks entirely, hoping — *praying* — that Samira will see right through her, into her mind, her *soul*, again. See *her*, for all her faults and wants. If she does, maybe she'll read the sincerity stamped on her heart.

Speaking is a herculean task.

When she manages, it punches out like a bullet.

"Was last night real, or was that just the emotional fallout of a shitty day for you?"

It comes out more standoffish than she intended, and Samira baulks. Her face flickers, too fast to read, falling into something that looks a lot like sorrow. Her jaw unhinges ever so slightly. Her foot scuffs the ground. The door creaks.

"*Of course* it was real," Samira whispers.

Trinity's chest fills. Some of the dreadful anchors let go of her. Maybe it's okay. Maybe she *can* have this. The hope hurts for its intensity.

"You mean that?" Even to her own ears, her voice sounds small. "You actually want… this?"

Samira looks up at her, properly and clearly now, as if realising something. Until now, she'd been looking at everything half focused, hazy and walled. That crystal clarity is back now, reaching inside Trinity's chest once more, peeling everything back to read the patterns of her heart. She takes comfort in it and stands her ground. Simple understanding lines Samira's face.

"Yes," she says again, quiet and sure, and Trinity breaks. "I want *you*, Trinity. Whatever you want to give me."

Trinity swallows thickly around the tightness in her throat. Hot pressure presses behind her eyes and awing relief floods through her limbs. She could easily collapse into her, succumb to the incessant gravity and longing that controls her whenever Samira is near. The guilt and the shame slowly melt away.

Something must show on her face, because Samira's reaching for her, hand hesitating just inches away from her cheek. It takes Trinity a second to realise that Samira's *asking permission*. Trinity tilts her head, knowing Samira will take it for what it is, since Trinity isn't quite sure she can speak.

Oh so gentle fingers brush against her cheek, wiping away moisture Trinity didn't even feel fall, then settling warm next to her neck. Samira opens the door wider, angling her in.

"Do you want to come in?"

Trinity nods. She's still in disbelief, and the sharp emotional pivot has left her with vertigo. She follows Samira in blindly, a weird haze of wonder and joy over her, dropping onto the couch once Samira does the same. She doesn't think much of the vacuum shoved to the wall, or the rubber gloves on the counter, only Samira Mohan looking at her like she matters.

"I… " Trinity stops, feeling the burn of embarrassment rise up her neck at how *wrong* she had this. "I'm sorry I left."

"It's okay." Now that something has clicked for Samira, all she's giving Trinity are fond looks and far too much grace. "I can't say it was *nice* waking up alone after everything, but I… think I understand. If you want to tell me about it, though…"

It's an invitation, but also a gentle request. Trinity can sense that Samira won't be upset if she doesn't explain, but she is also clearly asking to know. Trinity felt braver last night. She can get back to that, at some point. Right now, she does *not* want to spend any more time ruminating on the stress and the hate and the relapse that the morning brought. She shakes her head slowly. "Not right now… But later?"

Samira looks happy at that, maybe even proud. Trinity ducks her head and looks around the space properly and takes some breaths. Every surface seems to gleam.

"Doing some stress cleaning?"

Samira chuckles. "Yeah, a little."

God, hearing that again feels good. "You talked to your mom?"

She nods. "It wasn't too bad, actually, but talking to her always leaves me… I don't know… Restless?" She looks at Trinity sideways, dropping her gesturing hand to her own thigh. "Plus, I kind of thought you weren't coming back."

The guilt pulses, and Trinity watches Samira's hand fidgeting minutely. She'd soundly memorised the sensation of holding her hand, but even still, memories never satisfy. She creeps her own hand over, gently picking Samira's up and entwining their fingers. The sorrow that had filtered onto Samira's face starts to clear. Trinity can't help it, she traces the ridges and planes of Samira's hand with her other hand idly, watching the goosebumps spread up her forearm with a small smile. Even this simple pleasure, being able to do this, is making her soar.

"What happened with her?"

Samira glances up from Trinity's lazy tracing, chin propped on her other hand. There's a lift to the corner of her mouth that has Trinity's heart fluttering.

"She's still going on the trip, and she still wants to sell the house. But she agreed I should come up for a while, meet this guy and sort out the house with her. There's a chance I can do something other than sell it."

Trinity smiles at her, seeing the added shine in her eyes. "That's good."

"Yeah," she says. "I'll get to say goodbye to it, at the least." She sniffs. "But I don't even know when I can visit, and everything's always so crazy here…"

"Samira, you've done *more* than enough overtime. You'll get the time off. This place is *always* crazy. Just take the break when you need it, the pitt will be fine."

"I guess." Samira turns towards her a little more, their knees brushing, her shoulders rising. "But Robby…"

It starts setting in that this Robby thing might go a lot further than Trinity had thought. The sheer amount of weariness and hurt in the way Samira breathed his name… *fuck*. Trinity wants to gently untangle it, unwind every bit of pain and *bad* that Robby's strangled her with in her mind. Here Trinity sits, having treated him as a safe harbour only yesterday. How much has she missed? And how much has Samira been putting up with? What she heard echoing through the halls, now that she's away from the noise and the intensity of the ED, hits her with just how brutal it must've been for Samira.

Trinity knows that feeling. She recalls it all too well. Turning herself into an untouchable statue just so she wouldn't crack while Langdon tried to rip her apart, or while her mom

screamed the importance of respecting your elders at her, of not spreading harmful rumours. She shivers, hot rage flickering at the thought of Samira facing that while she barely noticed.

"Robby's gone."

Some of the vehemence makes it to her voice.

Samira's exhale is a little shaky, but her shoulders untense. She nods once, resolutely. "He is."

Trinity wants to know everything that's clearly playing behind her eyes right now, her mind clearly flitting from memory to memory. She resolves to find out, piece by piece and moment by moment. She wants to know everything about Samira. For now, she just caresses the hand threaded with hers and lets the quiet settle.

Now, when her eyes wander, landing on the kitchen and remembering their kiss, she lets herself enjoy everything it brings. Butterflies kick up in her stomach again at the care behind each movement and touch, the overwhelming craving for *closer* that she was allowed to act on. The way Samira had held her after, as if she were safe and real, with steady fingers scratching softly between her shoulder blades. Trinity's cheeks feel warm. That dreadful craving is definitely back now, it feels like every fibre of her is pounding for it.

"I'll speak to Dr Al. Figure something out," Samira says.

She looks a little less lost in her thoughts, meeting Trinity's eyes in earnest, in that intense and fixing way. Trinity can't look away, and she doesn't want to. If she's allowed, she'll happily spend every moment of the rest of her life lost in those eyes.

"Good." She smiles and nods back at Samira. "And if you need anything from me…" she trails off, knowing she doesn't need to specify to Samira. Trinity wonders what would happen if she kept going, asked what she's biting back and keeping tucked behind her teeth. *Take me with you. I want to see everywhere you've ever been. Show me everything that's ever meant something to you.*

But that's unreasonable, and far too much for a less-than-twenty-four-hour old... *something*.

"Thanks." And Samira smiles back. "But I don't want to think about that anymore right now. Something'll sort out."

As she says it, she seems to genuinely believe it, and something about her whole posture is just a little lighter than yesterday — a bit more loose and free — like maybe she's not constantly waiting for the other shoe to drop, or for something to jump out at her and ruin everything. She's still not properly *relaxed*, but it's a step closer, and it's about the level Trinity's seen her at for months.

"I was going to order some takeout and watch something stupid tonight. You want to join?" Samira asks.

While Trinity now knows for a fact that Samira wants her there, each extra confirmation comes with a wave of relief. It's as if as soon as she's not focused on the facts (which is hard

when Samira's stealing all her thoughts), her subconscious forgets she's *allowed* to be here.

"That sounds perfect."

"Chinese okay? I fancy noodles," Samira says, shifting a little as if she's bracing to stand up.

"I could murder a stir-fry right about now, yeah."

With a grin, Samira stands, turning to pull Trinity up by their linked fingers and lead her merrily along to the kitchen area.

It definitely does nothing to Trinity to lean against the counter from the night prior with Samira and a takeout menu. Trinity is one hundred percent thinking about food choices, and absolutely not thinking about the taste of Samira's lips or the lightness of her touch. She scans the options while her heart rate spikes, hoping that any and all heat rising to her cheeks isn't noticeable. It's just the site of a kiss. No reason to be this affected by it.

Thankfully, Samira does not seem to notice her flustered nature, she simply takes out her phone and starts ordering, letting Trinity add hers. But maybe she's just being gracious; she does that a lot.

Then Trinity catches the tilt of her lips, and realises just how close Samira's shoulder and hip are pressed to hers when there's so much available counter space, and thinks maybe Samira is wholy aware of her swooping stomach: maybe she's doing it on purpose.

They order, and despite Trinity's racing pulse and fluttering feelings, Samira makes it so *easy* to just exist with her.

The food arrives, and they settle on the couch to eat and mindlessly watch some old cop show, talking about anything and everything— the show, their favourite foods, places they've been, Whitaker's strange cooking habits. Trinity quickly finds safety and comfort once more, deeper now than the simple presence of another person. Now, it's the calming weight of a gaze on her that sees, and wants to see. Samira, for her part, also seems to be relaxing. With each episode, she sinks a little further into the couch, her knee rests against Trinity's a little heavier, her eyes slowly lose that raw and red quality, and her voice softens from a tight wire to something as easy as breathing.

To Trinity, it's like watching the most gorgeous sunset: beautiful; deeply soothing; like a lung full of crisp fresh air; making her want to run straight into it with open arms.

By the time night has fallen, Samira's head is on her shoulder, and she's toying with Trinity's fingers. The show was good, it let them laugh and forget and talk, but they're tired and they're both on shift tomorrow, so when the credits roll Trinity doesn't queue up the next episode. She's not entirely sure Samira was even paying attention to the last one, or if she was simply letting her mind drift and weave while she rests against Trinity.

Now that Trinity’s mind and body feel stable enough once more, she's definitely drifting, too. The cuts on her thigh sting a little while there's nothing distracting her, so she finds herself circling the events of the morning, stringing together different phrases and explanations.

She's grateful for the steady weight on her side, without it she may get sucked away into the darkness she's mapping, nothing to tether her to now and to security. It all feels just that crucial bit more manageable, like she's studying the tiger from outside the glass as opposed to right next to it.

She feels strangely split: that tornado of a person was her just this morning, but it feels both so alien and so cuttingly present. Like looking at herself in a darkened mirror, everything slightly twisted, just on the other side, out of reach, but also… her? She can feel each wound she sees, but they're… detached. They're *there* and not here.

Trinity keeps her eyes on the TV and her arms relaxed when she speaks, words soft in the silence.

"When I left, I thought you'd just latched onto the first person you found." Besides her fingers hesitating for a moment, Samira doesn't react. "I thought after everything that happened, you were carried away, and when you woke up you'd realise you didn't want anything to do with me. I know I'm not the best company…" Breathing. Breathing's important. "I-" Fuck. *Breathe*. "I thought I'd taken advantage of how fucked up you felt. I didn't want to make any of it worse. So I left before I could."

Air in, air out. Samira slowly lifts her head and turns to look at her, Trinity can see her eyes flicking all over her face.

"I want everything to do with you."

Trinity meets her eyes, reads her sincerity. Once more, she feels stripped bare, but that itself is more bearable. *Complete shock: repetitive, measured exposure to something does in fact improve one's reaction to it*. It also helps that she feels she can see Samira's heart in turn, brandished on her sleeve and shining in the brown of her eyes.

"I wanted every second," Samira adds. "You didn't do anything wrong." Once more, she manages to strike that silky soft tone of undeniable fact and tender care.

Trinity drinks the words in, dissolving them into her blood and willing every part of her to take it as fact, know them innately. *Samira wants this. Samira wants* me. *I'm allowed to want this too*. Those pesky, determined little reflexes that pop up to deny it get socked squarely in the face and locked away with stern reminders of Samira asking Trinity to take her at her word.

Samira's so close to her, face open and insistent, inches away, and her hands are now curled firmly around Trinity's.

Despite so much time touching Samira and being near her in a short twenty four hours, Trinity is just as affected as the first time. She's breathless. Reeling. Can't seem to do anything other than take in each contour of Samira's face.

Trinity's eyes are wide, but the thickness in her throat dissolves.

"I really like you, princess," she mumbles, a little clumsily.

Samira doesn't seem to mind her lack of suave lines, and her smile grows warm and true as she giggles.

"Not going to let go of that, are you?"

Her body's turned a little more to face Trinity, those affectionate eyes so near, and she raises her hand with her elbow on the back of the couch to gently tuck a strand of Trinity's hair behind her ear, touch feather-light and cautious. The movement was slow, she made sure Trinity could see it coming, and she trails her finger down the side of Trinity's face, lingering. That absolutely does not help Trinity's complete mental shutdown. She can't suppress the fireworks down her spine .

"I really like you, too," Samira whispers.

The line on her cheek continues to burn, despite Samira's finger having left.

Samira's head is tilted just so, her eyes shining a particular way, that it looks like she's leaning in— even though she hasn't closed any of the space. Maybe she wants to: is thinking about it, but resisting the urge. Trinity wishes she wouldn't; she's been dying to kiss Samira again all night — every part of her aches for it — but she's been resisting that urge, too. She doesn't even know why. Fear? Needing Samira to set the pace? Trinity not knowing how to bridge that gap again?

The air is thick.

Quietly, holding Trinity's gaze, Samira asks, "Can I kiss you?"

Her eyes flick between Trinity's and she licks her lips.

"I really want to kiss you," she continues.

Trinity's breath catches. Samira's eyes are heavy on her, flickering to linger on her lips, but she still hasn't leaned in. She's searching Trinity's eyes.

Trinity nods.

And then she does close the distance, and Trinity's senses are filled with nothing but Samira, Samira, *Samira*. Soft lips moving reverently, smooth skin, hot against hers, the light smell of vanilla body wash and *her* filling Trinity's nose, the flex of Samira's wrist gripping the back of the couch where Trinity's reflexly held her, the taste of her…

Samira's other hand alights on her neck, settling over her pulse, thumb stroking. Samira shifts, tilting, humming. The hand threads back into her hair, pulls her a little closer, strokes her cheek, cradles her jaw, drives her a little crazy.

It's all indulgent leisure again, but that veil of tentative caution has dissolved. Samira's kissing her sure and slow, as if trying to learn her. Once again there's not even a hint of that ravenous hunger that other's lead with, just pure relish. Trinity makes sure not to break that, but she takes her time exploring and testing, high on ecstasy. She catalogues exactly what

makes Samira's lip quiver, what places on her neck make her shiver when she brushes them, the slight gasp and following hum when Trinity tastes her lip.

When they separate, it's slowly and not far, heads still tilted together. Trinity can feel every word against her lips.

"I've been wanting to do that all evening," Samira says, a little breathless.

Trinity almost laughs. She's so very drunk on Samira. She feels melted, settled.

"Me too," she mumbles, stealing another soft kiss now that she knows she can. *God, she's addicted*.

Now, Samira does laugh. "You could've asked," she says, teasing while she cards through Trinity's hair from the back of the couch. She sobers slightly, pushes for a little eye contact. "You can ask. Any time."

"Any time?" She wanted to tease, but it sounds vulnerable instead.

Samira nods, forehead rocking against hers and neck flexing under Trinity's palms. Her eyes are barely open now that her gaze is on Trinity's lips but her smile sparkles.

"I *might* say no if we're in the centre of the ED, but you should ask anyway. I want to know."

Fuck, that's incredible. Samira's saying this can *be* something. She wants to keep Trinity, too.

As normal as she's being about her lips being this close to Samira's, she still craves it.

"In that case, Mira… Can I kiss you?" She's giggling but it's so genuine, and Samira laughs again as she closes the minute distance.

Trinity feels like victory.

This time, when Samira asks her to stay, Trinity doesn't hesitate or assess, she just says yes and texts Huckleberry. She doesn’t give him specifics — he doesn't need to know everything just because she vented to him earlier — but she says that everything's okay and that she's not coming home.

When he responds with far too many capitals and happy emojis, she ignores him. Never mind that Samira clocks the smile it left on her face.

They clear up slowly, washing their dishes side by side. Trinity doesn't want to leave the comforting weight of Samira's gravity, doesn't want to be anywhere other than next to her. She can't keep herself from glancing at Samira every few seconds. Each time she marvels at how *this is real* and how relaxed Samira looks— how she, too, can't keep a smile off her face, even as she's cleaning dirty dishes.

When they're done, Samira turns to her with a lazy, satisfied look.

"Do you want to borrow some clothes again?"

She's so damn stunning. Her joy is infectious, like feedback loop it matches Trinity's, spurs it brighter and brighter. Trinity shuffles a step closer; that gravity never stops pulling.

"Yeah, please."

Samira circles her wrist with a hand and strokes her thumb across Trinity's forearm.

"Help yourself to anything from the wardrobe in my room, I'm just going to pack away some of this," Samira says, chuckling at herself cutely when she gestures to the vacuum and the spray bottles around.

Trinity nods, and heads that way with a squeeze of Samira's hand. *Who knew she'd be so damn clingy once she let herself get over that one stupid wall?*

She shakes her head at herself. *It's fine to act like this- hell, Samira is doing it right back. Embrace it.*

She heads to the dresser and takes a proper look around the room, she didn't much pay attention last night. There's no posters all over the walls or art in the corners, but there's a few more pictures up on a shelf, a nice lamp and a book Trinity doesn't recognise on the bedside table, very cosy navy patterned sheets, and even a notebook left open on a small desk filled with writing. Trinity doesn't snoop.

She picks a soft, dark t-shirt and some comfy joggers and changes, before wandering back out to Samira. In an echo of yesterday, she's at the kettle setting out a couple of mugs. Maybe it's some sort of nightly routine for her. Cute.

"Is one of those for me?"

Samira looks over her shoulder at the sound of her voice.

Trinity's still filled with this overwhelming need to *touch*, to keep knowing she's here, to keep feeling that warmth on her. She perches her elbows on the counter next to Samira.

"Yeah. I wasn't sure if you wanted one again, but you don't have to drink it."

It's those small things again that stick in Trinity's throat. It was the same when Huckleberry moved in, he started doing all these little things without comment: making enough breakfast for two, leaving her favourite spot on the sofa set up for her, always setting out her favourite cup and cutlery. Being known, not just the broad strokes, but in the minute details as well, feels incredibly intense. Terrifying but warming. Each act is like being affirmed as part of someone's world anew, to be reassured as wanted.

"I will. Thanks."

She hopes Samira hears some of the sincerity. She only hums lightly as she finishes making them, putting the honey and lemon juice away. Exactly like yesterday, she hands one to Trinity as she spins, and settles back against the counter in that same manner.

She *must* know it's making Trinity only be able to think of what happened here last night.

Trinity accepts the cup, maybe standing a little too close, but Samira's eyes are filled with amusement, she doesn't seem to mind.

"Are you just doing this to get me to kiss you again?" Trinity asks with a smile.

Samira's smirk increases, laughter in her eyes. She takes a slow sip of her tea, eyes not wavering from Trinity's over her mug.

"I don't know what you're talking about. I'm just enjoying a hot drink, but if there are any *side effects*…" Her face is so mischievous. "I won't complain."

Trinity hums, torn between not giving Samira the satisfaction and caving in.

She steps forward, a hand on the counter at Samira's side, hips flush, Samira's eyes a little wide and her hands holding her mug trapped to her chest. She's obviously trying to keep her expression nonchalant, but Trinity can see her breath coming shallower.

She leans close, ghosting across Samira's cheek… Samira doesn't breathe, her eyes start slipping shut.

Trinity leans past her, over her shoulder, and takes a swig of her own tea, not bothering to hide her chuckle when Samira huffs and shoves at her shoulder in playful annoyance.

"You know," Trinity says, staying close near the side of her face, watching something in her jaw twitch. "You could just ask," she parrots.

She pushes Trinity back gently to free her trapped mug and rolls her eyes. "Yeah?" She quirks an eyebrow, amusement still lining her face.

"Yeah," Trinity replies, delighting in this.

Samira drinks again, apparently too stubborn to do anything about it herself. Trinity only chuckles some more and does the same, not at all minding just sharing this closeness and soothing drinks.

They actually finish their tea this time, sharing amused glances and the constant contact. At some point Samira's hand lands on her hip again, thumb drawing idle circles, and it's so easy for Trinity to think it's always been like this.

Samira finishes first, and she pushes off the counter lightly, brushing an easy kiss on Trinity's cheek as she slips away. Of course *that* simple detail is what brings a blush to Trinity's cheeks. Samira pads away to her room with a quick line about getting ready for bed, and Trinity's stays there, nursing the rest of her tea and a blissful smile.

Maybe Samira's softened her, because after she rinses her mug, she does reply to Dennis.

Admittedly, she tells him to shut up and be normal about this, but she also tells him it went really well, and even thanks him.

Then, she flicks off the lights and follows after Samira, giddy at the thought of holding her, being near her. This won't just be for the night, it'll last.

She falls asleep smiling.

End Notes

thanks for reading! Hope you enjoyed.

I do plan to continue this series, but it is currently on pause tbh bc part 3 took my entire LIFEBLOOD to write, and i got to 13k and just wasn't. happy. with it. I am starting over, but i'm also really taking my time, so bear with me. Future instalments will be added as chapters onto this fic, but I'm never really going to leave it in a place I'm not happy with it finishing, i can't handle cliffhangers pft

Comments will make my week and may make it onto my wall, lots of love <3

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!