

Five Years Time

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Five Years Time

by [iclashwitheverything](#)

Summary

A series of drabbles in which Red, Sybil and Boxer attempt to make their relationship work.

No idea if there will be much continuity yet, but most of these stories will be fluffy because there is already too much dang angst when it comes to Transistor canon and fanworks and not enough cute things.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8YCSJpF4g4>

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

Chapter 1: Chapter 1

Sybil wraps her hands around the mug of tea in front of her with a happy sigh at the warmth, her gloves laying neatly on the table beside her, just far enough away to be relatively safe should any spills occur. She looks up at her current companion, meeting his eyes for a short moment before they both turn to scan the streets leading to the café they sat outside, searching for the third addition to their party.

“She’s not usually this late.”

“Red’s a big girl, I’m sure she’s just gotten distracted by something on the way and lost track of time,” The sound of a voice that had over the last year become significantly more tolerable to her made her look at her companion again, finding him watching her with his brow lightly furrowed as he thought about what may be holding Red up.

Sybil leans her head on one of her hands, lips twitching up into a small grin. “True. Or this might be another one of her plots to make us get along better. You never know with her.”

That got a laugh out of him, his eyes wrinkling in the corners in a way that until only a few months ago Sybil hadn’t found endearing. So much had changed in only a year.

“She *would* do that again, although you and I haven’t fought for... what, at least a month and a half? A new record,” He flashes the lopsided grin that their shared paramour found so wonderful, and Sybil too found herself smiling at the topic of Red’s machinations to make them at the very least become friends. “I don’t think it’s something she would pull today though, it’s nearly the anniversary of our little truce right? She takes that sort of thing seriously.”

They both let out thoughtful *hmmmmms* at that, brows knit in near identical expressions as they tried to think of what might be keeping the third and most crucial part of their relationship from getting here on time. Red was far from punctual, often late to anything that wasn’t a concert or some other event that involved her many fans, but nearly twenty minutes had come and gone and still she hadn’t appeared.

“Can you believe it’s already been almost a year?” Once again he knocks her out of her reverie, and she turns to look at him with a raised eyebrow, prompting him to continue. “Well I mean, it feels like it should be longer, but also shorter,” His thoughts stumble slightly as her other eyebrow climbs to join the first “Wh-what I mean *is*,” He lays a fair amount of stress on the word, and Sybil has to hold back a giggle at how he’s struggling to articulate his thought process. “It feels like it should have taken you and I much, much longer to get this comfortable with each other, and yet the time’s flown by!” His arms spread out wide for a second before they cross over his chest again. “You know?”

And she does, oh she does because never in a thousand years would she have guessed that she’d be capable of having a remotely cordial conversation with this man that didn’t have layers and layers of biting sarcasm and passive-aggressiveness, and yet here they both were being positively friendly!

“Mmmm... I do,” Sybil takes a sip of her tea, certain that by now it should be cool enough not to scorch her tongue. “It feels like we’ve made progress far faster than either of us could have thought when we decided to try this for her,” He makes a sound of agreement and she looks up from where she’d been running her thumb over the rim of her mug. “This is much nicer, honestly. Red is happier, and I don’t know about you but so am I.”

They share another grin and settle into a silence that isn’t yet entirely comfortable, but friendly enough and much less tense that it would have been only a few months back. The sound of running feet makes them both look down the street to see Red racing up the sidewalk towards them, foot traffic luckily low at this time of day.

“Sorry I’m late, I went past a new store on my way here and I saw they were selling some instruments and equipment so I had to take a look,” Red plants a kiss on each of their cheeks and takes the remaining seat at their table. “They’re selling some very nice mics at a reasonable price and I was thinking of getting some on the way home, or at least taking another look,” Her face lights right up as she looks at the two of them, “Although it looks like the two of you had a wonderful talk while I was dragging my feet, huh? Seems like my lateness has some uses after all!” Sybil and Boxer trade a meaningful look.

She was totally scheming wasn't she?

Yes. Yes she was.

Instead of answering, Sybil simply leans forward and presses a small kiss to the corner of Red's mouth, Boxer leaning in to do much the same afterwards.

“Shall we make some plans for what to do then? It is our one year anniversary soon, and I for one think it should be celebrated.” Negotiations over what would be the best way to celebrate their shared relationship with Red weren't something they could finish while sitting in front of a café, oh no it would take much too long for that, but the three of them could make a good enough start at it.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

In which Sybil's attachment to both Red and Boxer saves countless lives, possibly.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Sybil often thought about letting Red and Boxer know about the Camerata.

After all, neither of them was entirely satisfied with how Cloudbank currently was. Boxer expressed this through his avoidance of public records and his astonishing skill at staying largely unnoticed in spite of being the bodyguard of one of the most famous singers in Cloudbank. Red displayed her rebellion through her songs that stirred up the hearts of all who listened, urging people to challenge conventional ways of thinking and doing. Her ability to cause emotional responses in others through her music was the source of much adoration, and also much backlash. Boxer was far from an ornamental bodyguard.

Sybil could never let them in on this secret of secrets though, they were both content with these small rebellions, with believing that things would change at their own pace. Red and Boxer wouldn't ever be able to understand the drive nor willingly accept methods of the Camerata, this Sybil knew well. Radicalism didn't suit either of her partners, for all the late night conversations about how frustrating the constant aimless changes could be, neither ever really entertained thoughts of taking action into their own hands. They were both too comfortable with their lives, willing to let the winds blow as they may with only a little interference. It was a secret Sybil was willing to keep from them, one of the few things she would never reveal to them until the time came for the Camerata to play their collective hand.

She knew she would be judged alongside the others for the unsavoury methods the four had resorted to in pursuit of their goal. All she could do was wait and hope that Red and Boxer would be able to see past the blood on her hands to the wonderful future she was working for, she hoped with all her being that when the time came, their love would be enough to let her keep the two people she cared for most.

Of course Sybil knew that Red could be valuable to their goals, anyone could feel the influence her works had on the populace, but Sybil also knew she would never, ever let Red be put in the Transistor's path. She had made it quite clear to the others that even if it would set their plans back, neither Red nor Boxer would be targeted or she would be forced to take matters in to her own hands and do something terrible and drastic.

Her three comrades and friends knew full well the damage she could do when pressed, and so had agreed with varying levels of reluctance to leave the singer be. Sybil's wrath was not one

someone would incur willingly and purposefully, not if there were bearable alternatives.

Chapter End Notes

I finally bullied myself into writing some more stuff for this. Hopefully I'll be able to update this a lot more often in the next while now that I'm dragging myself out of the creative hole I was in for a while there

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Sybil feels a little guilty over the plans she'd made before Boxer convinced her to give sharing Red a shot. Boxer just wants Sybil to relax and stop worrying so much. They both think Red outshines the sun itself.

Red is onstage, pouring her heart out to the jubilant masses that thronged again and again to hear her sing, every sound carefully orchestrated to deliver a message to the listener, though only Red really knew what her messages were. Boxer is one of the few fortunate enough to be present for her every concert. Standing guard over the singer from the side of the stage, wreathed in shadows as she blazed incandescent in her rightful place under the spotlight.

When Sybil had gifted the golden dress, one of the last Darzi originals made, that Red now wore for nearly every show, Boxer had wondered whether or not it would really look as beautiful as promised up on stage, though that Red was already radiant enough that just about anything would look good. Of course he should have known better than to doubt Sybil Reisz, at least in terms of her fashion sense. Every single movement Red makes in that dress is accompanied by a shimmer that reminded one of a gently flickering candle flame, small and warm and comforting, but so potentially dangerous if upset or agitated.

A short lull in the music, between the end of a song and thunderous applause and cheers, brought the sound of footsteps to Boxer's ears. He tensed for just a moment before recognizing the rhythm of a gait that had become a constant in his life for the past few years, visibly relaxing when a petite hand came to rest on his arm and Sybil Reisz leaned against him. For a while the two of them simply stood like that, watching the woman they both adored more than anyone else as Red put on yet another stellar performance, the latest to pack the Empty Set in several weeks. The feeling of Sybil reaching up to thread her fingers with his no longer brought the same level of wonder that it once had, not now that the three of them had settled into a space that previously he had never imagined was possible, and he very gently squeezed, her hand engulfed in his, small pale fingers stark against his own darker ones.

“She’s amazing isn’t she?”

“Yes. We’re terribly lucky.”

The music nearly drowns out their words, their proximity to one another the only reason the two can have any semblance of a conversation as Boxer leans down slightly and Sybil stands as tall as she can to allow them to speak more easily.

“Do you ever wonder what might have happened if you hadn’t proposed that we try to share her?” Sybil’s voice contains a note of something tremulous and dark, and Boxer has a feeling she’s thought on the subject more often than she would care to admit.

“A few times, usually whenever the two of us started getting really chummy during that first year or so.” He grins and she lets out a small huff of amusement, both remembering how incredibly tense that first while had been, both trying their best to get along with someone they had hated at the time for the benefit of their beloved. “I remember every time I caught you staring at me, I thought maybe you were thinking about ending it and trying to get me out of the way for good!” He meant it as a joke, but the feeling of Sybil tensing up against him, her hand suddenly clenching his tightly, it makes him really wonder for a moment what Sybil might have been planning before they’d grown to respect each other.

“Sybil?”

“I won’t let either of you get hurt, you know I’ll protect you against anything I can right?” There’s a sudden, feverish urgency to her words now and Boxer stares as she pointedly avoids his gaze. *She’ll bite through her lip if she keeps worrying it with her teeth like that*, he thinks and reaches with his free hand to brush a strand of hair from her face and stroke the backs of his fingers against her cheek.

“Of course. As if anyone would do something as idiotic as getting on your bad side on purpose. Sybil Reisz, mighty protector of her two helpless damsels whenever there’s distress.” She laughs at that, and though it still has an edge to it she looks much lighter than mere seconds ago. He decides to count it as a win.

“Damn right I am. No one will touch either of you if I can help it.” She pulls free of him to strike a bit of a pose, tossing her hair over one shoulder and scoffing. “Just let them try!” She’s really adorable when she lets herself relax and shed that proper persona of hers, Boxer decides he’ll need to work harder so that he and Red get to see her let go a little more often.

“I almost feel bad for anyone that foolish. Say, shouldn’t you be waiting for Red in her dressing room soon? You’ve been planning that, uh, *surprise* for a while now right?” Sybil flushes and sputters, smacking him lightly on the arm as he laughs, turning back to watch Red begin on her last few songs.

“How in the world did you find out about *that*!? It was supposed to be for both of you!” Her indignation might have been slightly daunting if she weren’t so flustered, free hand tangling fingers in her curls as she pointedly avoids looking at either him or Red.

“I pay more attention than Red sometimes. I noticed you were planning something and I figured I should take a look. If it makes it any better, I don’t think Red will be able to collect herself for at least five minutes after she sees what you’ve set up.”

“If I can make her speechless I’ll be over the moon.” Sybil lets out a tiny sigh that Boxer feels rather than hears before she turns to go back and wait for Red. “Don’t you dare warn her! I mean it!”

Boxer laughs and shakes his head. “I want to see her face as badly as you do, and I’m looking forward to what you have planned. I’ve barely been containing my excitement these past couple days.” He turns just enough to see Sybil stumble a little over that thought, and he can clearly picture the flustered grimace and bright blush that’s probably adorning her face now.

Boxer brings his gaze back to watch over Red, knowing that while Sybil will protect both him and Red with her impressive influence, he too has a large part to play in keeping both of them safe.

Nothing will happen to either of them while I’m here too. I’ll keep you both safe with everything I am.

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

A prequel of sorts in which Red gets advice from slightly frustrated and very amused friends, and one of her friends takes the initiative to help her out.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“I swear they get worse every time I see them! No matter which one of them I’m with they drop snide little remarks about each other, they’re about as close to openly hostile one can get without actually being openly hostile, and none of my attempts to get the two of them to even try to tolerate each other work in the slightest!” Red lets out a groan, pressing her face into Farrah Yon-Dale’s shoulder, leaning into her as her sympathetic but frustrated friend gently pats her shoulder as best she can “I don’t know how much longer I can take it, and I’m running out of ideas.”

Farrah sighs and looks imploringly at the man sitting across from her, making a slightly helpless gesture at the woman curled up next to her in distress as if to say *See? What did I tell you?* She doesn’t even bother speaking on the subject at this point as she’s been the recipient of Red’s woes for the past couple of months. Time for the others to try and offer advice.

“Red.” Wave Tennegan leans in and lightly taps the songstress’ knee to get her attention. “I know Ms. Reisz very well, and I can tell you right now that while she’s very intelligent, observant and an impeccable planner, she’s also as stubborn and as thick as a *mountain* sometimes. Boxer is the same way, from what little I know of him.” He raises his eyebrows ever so slightly. “By the way, I do think you should bring him on our outings more often, he needs to be more sociable and *we* would like to get to know him better.”

Farrah nods. “He does tend to dig his heels in, doesn’t he? I don’t know Sybil very well but I can see her being just as bad if not worse.”

“She’s very stubborn! But only when she thinks she’s right and generally it’s about things that she’s very correct about.” Niola Chien, grinning widely and sitting with an excited tension entirely inappropriate for the level of distress Red is feeling at the moment, chimes in. “If Sybil digs her heels in it’s usually for a good reason I’ve learned, and ignoring her advice tends to end badly. But this is different from planning a gathering or event.” The enthusiasm Niola throws at her efforts in Goldwalk seems to permeate every aspect of her life, the love lives of her friends being no exception. “What you’re going to have to do is be direct Red, and with both of them at once or they might just get jealous all over again.”

“What do you mean *be direct*?” Red’s gaze darts from one friend to another, desperate for ideas on how to salvage her relationships with the two people she cares for most.

“Tell them you want to date them both.” Red and Farrah both turn to look at Wave in surprise while Niola nods, excited to see where this is going. “Clearly you can’t choose just one of them and anyway it seems like doing so in this situation would just lead to you losing whoever you don’t pick.”

Red splutters for a moment. “W-weren’t you a *vicar*?” she finally chokes out over Farrah’s chuckles. “Shouldn’t you be telling me that romance is a sacred bond between only two people and such?”

“Red, do you *really* think I’m that closed minded? Or that the majority of Cloudbank is for that matter?” The broadcaster leans back with a smile. “It worked out quite well for me in the past, you know. Mr. Jallaford and Mr. Kendrell are still very good friends of mine.” Red’s face flushes even darker at that as Farrah and Niola finally lose their battles for composure.

“I-I... I don’t know how to even begin to ask for something like that!”

“Don’t try to dance around the issue since doing that’s only made it worse so far, and don’t let it sit for much longer or the two of them might end up coming to blows over the issue of your affections.”

“Okay. Okay, help me figure out what to say please. And you two stop laughing this isn’t funny this is an emergency!”

Later that day when Red gets home, fully intending to contact both Sybil and Boxer for a meeting as soon as possible, she finds the two of them waiting in her apartment to talk to her.

They have the same idea as her.

“We decided we didn’t want to see you keep tearing yourself up over it.” Sybil later tells her, about six months later when Red finally works up the courage to ask. “Boxer came and asked me to try it out, because we both love you too much to let you keep suffering just because we were too stubborn to share.”

Boxer looks up from his book. “Wave was the one who talked me around to it actually. I was about ready to challenge Sybil to a fight just to try and make her back off.”

“You would have *lost*.”

“Probably.”

Red wishes she could call up Wave and thank him for sharing his wisdom with Boxer as well. She misses him.

Five years later finds Red humming Paper Boats, sleepily tracing patterns on Sybil's bare back with one hand while the other twines with Boxer's fingers as she lays between them, content.

Chapter End Notes

a couple of headcanons for you

1. Wave has a thing for older men (and women, and others)
2. Wave and Asher have this in common.
3. (in both canon and in this au if it has the Transistor, which's still up in the air) Grant is the one who integrates Wave, as he feels it would have been rude to have someone else do it, and felt it was his duty of sorts.

Chapter 5: What I Wouldn't Do (Year 0)

Chapter Summary

“Red doesn’t like us fighting like we always do. She also really hates that she feels like she has to choose between us, right? I mean I’m sure you’ve seen it too, you see damn near everything.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUdOG5IWBE0>

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Her face is just as impassive and unreadable as ever, and Boxer can’t help the rising sense of nervousness at what he’s about to ask. But it must be done. For Red.

“So, uh, I need to talk to you about something important.”

“Really? I thought there might be another reason behind you running down the street shouting after me like a drunkard who’s lost his senses. Clearly I was wrong about *that*.”

He flinches slightly as Sybil’s eyes narrow almost imperceptibly. Suddenly Boxer feels exposed, like he’s being picked apart. He freezes in place as dark eyes flick to and fro, taking in every little wince and imperfection. Under Sybil’s gaze no potential weakness goes unseen, this he knows. He knows how easily she can pull apart someone and find soft spots to exploit. It’s part of why she scares him even on a good day, though he tries not to show it, along with how she hears everything. She seems to have bits and bobs of secrets and blackmail material on just about everyone of note in Cloudbank, an in for every occasion. Sybil may come across as just another slightly air-headed socialite, albeit a very successful one, but both Boxer and Red know better.

Red loves it.

(Boxer does too, on some level. He can still recall with clarity the way Sybil brought about the downfall of a rather famous skypainter just over a month ago by letting slip a tidbit of scandal and then letting the rest come to light all on its own. Foucault never stood a chance. Make way for Farrah Yon-Dale, asshat.)

“I- listen.” He brings his hands up in front of himself, palms towards her in both a gesture of peace and as a sort of shield between them both. “It’s about Red.” It would be impossible to miss the way she perks up at that, leaning toward him with sudden interest. He smiles a little, lets out a nervous laugh.

“Can we, uh, let’s go somewhere a bit more private than the street, maybe?”

They end up in a small café, new, and Boxer finds the little establishment immediately charming. The décor is sleek but slightly outdated, and combined with the lighting and smells it creates a downright homey feel. Sybil steps through the door without breaking her stride and makes a beeline for a back corner. He follows with his head ducked down, silently growing more panicked by the second.

The thought of Red is what calms him, steels his nerves and brings back his resolve as he sits across from the blonde that had caused him so much anguish over the past few months. *This is for Red. If this works, it'll be better for all of us in the long run.*

“Okay, so...” He scratches one cheek restlessly, drums the fingers of his other hand upon the tabletop. Sybil doesn’t fidget, she laces her fingers together and props her arms up on the edge of the table between them, head resting on her hands as she quirks an eyebrow and waits for him to get on with it.

“Red doesn’t like us fighting like we always do. She also really hates that she feels like she has to choose between us, right? I mean I’m sure you’ve seen it too, you see damn near everything. I’m pretty sure she loves us both, much as I hate to say it, and I really don’t like that she feels like, y’know, all that.” *Wow, so smooth.*

She holds herself still for a moment, seeing if he plans to continue without her response before leaning back in her chair with a sigh. “Yes, I know exactly what you mean. It... pains me as well to see her so upset.”

“Right?” It’s his turn to lean forward, pitching his voice so that hopefully only she can hear. “So, I was thinking about it lately and- “

“Careful, don’t strain that lump you call a brain with complex thought.”

“Wow okay that was completely uncalled for. Anyway, as I was saying before *you* decided to be rude, I was thinking about how much this is hurting Red and how bad that must be for you as well because I know seeing her like that sucks for me.”

A waitress comes up to take any orders they may have. Boxer gets a lovely fruit tea and Sybil orders coffee, black if you please. Neither of them speak until she’s out of earshot again.

“So, you were trying to think of a way to fix Red’s problem?” Sybil’s head is on her hands again, and she’s watching him intently.

“Yeah. I was thinking we could maybe just, try sharing?”

Sybil sputters, eyes widening in shock, and he knows that if she’d been eating or drinking anything she’d likely have choked. Boxer can’t help but chuckle at the sight of someone so in control of her emotions and outward responses utterly taken aback and rendered wordless. *Score one to me.*

“I- what?” She’s looking at him like he’s lost his mind.

“Think about it! I’m not saying you and I have to be buddies or anything, we just have to be civil and try to make sure Red doesn’t feel like she has to have just one of us.”

Her face goes into her hands now as she lets out a defeated sigh. Their drinks arrive and Sybil waits until the waitress is once again gone before taking a swing at continued conversation. “I don’t- I can’t- Ugh. What makes you think it would even work? You can’t know if Red would be okay with... that.”

“Well that’s why we have to ask her, obviously. I thought you were supposed to be clever.” He gets a glare in response to that comment, but Sybil seems like she might be considering it.

“If she were to say yes, how would we go about spending our time with her? Make a schedule? I don’t think either of us want to have to spend any more time than necessary with each other, even if Red’s presence always more than makes up for yours.”

“I think details like that should be something we talk through with Red as well. It’d be weird if we made a plan and then it never worked out because her schedule didn’t mesh with it, or if she said no to the whole arrangement.”

“Point. Alright, so how do we proceed? I think we can both agree, for once, that talking with her about this as soon as possible would be best, yes?”

“Yeah. She’ll be home tonight around six or so, she’s having a day out with some of her friends right now.”

“Six? I can come by her apartment at that time, barring any emergencies of course. That does remind me though, I really do need to go, I have a business meeting over lunch and can’t afford to miss it.”

“Alright. See you at Red’s place at six then?”

“I suppose so.”

They down their respective beverages, pay, and leave quickly, heading off in opposite directions. Boxer to continue his wandering and people watching, Sybil to meet up with her three dearest friends and colleagues to review strategy.

When Sybil arrives at Red’s apartment that evening, Boxer is standing outside waiting for her. It’s a strange thought and an even stranger sight, and Sybil isn’t entirely sure how she feels about it. However, he lets her in, and she immediately moves to the kitchen to pull out the very, very fancy and expensive Oolong blend she keeps here. Her familiarity with Red’s apartment, cupboard contents and all, clearly unnerves Boxer to some degree, and she doesn’t even try to fight back her rising smugness.

Red comes home from her time with Wave, Farrah, and Niola to the sight of her two favourite people sitting next to each other on her couch, drinking Sybil's tea while discussing recent news. The discussion that follows that is equally informative, and ends with the basics of an arrangement that would carry them all through several rather blissful years in which all three would grow closer. Red tells the other two that she'd come home with the intention of proposing the very same thing, thanks to a few helpful suggestions from some friends.

The next morning, Wave Tennegan stops broadcasting and moves to the country.

(The Camerata celebrates a successful step toward their goal.)

Three years later, Sybil learns that it had been at Wave's suggestion that Red had intended to propose their arrangement herself. That afternoon she visits Royce's lab, sits down next to the Transistor with her knees pulled to her chest. She eventually brings herself to choke out both a thank you and an apology to a man that she's certain cannot hear either.

Chapter End Notes

It's been forever and I am So Sorry. It's been almost a year but Hey!! I'm alive!!!!!!

End Notes

So this is a thing I'm doing!

Please for the love of all that is good feel free to offer constructive criticism because I want to improve my writing so badly and I know there are a ridiculous number of talented writers in the Transistor fandom.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!