Alone No Longer

by LizzieXX

Summary

Evy lost her brother on the Valiant but regenerated, revealing who and what she is to the Doctor, his Link. How will he handle having a Time Lady travelling with him, especially one with a startling connection to him? How will Donna react to two of them? What will happen when Rose returns?

10/OC
Time Lady

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Evy smiled softly to herself as the Doctor pulled away from listening to her hearts. He reached out and took her Perception Filter in his hands, just fiddling the small hourglass between his fingers. "Why did you wear this?" he asked her quietly.

She sighed, "I really wouldn't be able to tell you…" she held up a hand as he went to protest, "You honestly wouldn't believe me. Trust me. I know you."

"Whatever it is, I know you too, you'd find a way to prove it."

She looked down for a moment before nodding to herself, "I can prove it but on one condition," he stared at her expectantly, "You need to turn around and promise me, promise me, you won't look at me till I tell you to, alright?"

He frowned in confusion, it was a bit of an odd request, but if it would get her to tell him why she felt the need to hide the fact that she was a Time Lady from him…he turned around to face the back of the TARDIS.

She sighed and reached up to unclip the Perception Filter. She dropped all her mental walls, allowing the full Time Lady consciousness to stream forward, but there was one specific moment she needed him to see.

She heard him gasp. Her eyes widened as he started to turn around so she quickly snapped the Filter back on, blocking everything just before he faced her once more.

"I thought I asked you not to do anything till I said so?" she asked, just a bit harshly. The Filter was
still active, even if he wasn't looking right at her, being so close, right behind her, as long as she wore it his mind would react to its presence. She'd taken it off so nothing would block his senses or his mind, but she hadn't wanted to risk him Linking to her just yet, hence the turning away from her. If he looked at her, into her eyes, without the Filter in place, he would have just then had she not been as quick as she was.

"You're my Link?" he breathed, realizing what she had been trying to tell him. He'd seen it in his head, from her mind, the exact moment she had Linked to him. He'd heard her voice in his head for just a moment, filling the silence that had settled there when his people were destroyed, making the current silence almost unbearable. He could almost feel her emotions, everything she felt for him, her thoughts were that powerful, he could almost feel the Link through her, "But…why…" he looked at the Filter as though the only thing he wanted to do was rip it off her and destroy it. He'd been alone for so long, thought that his Link was dead for so long and with her any chance of someone possibly loving him the way only a Link could, and now, to have her so close to him, but so far away…

"You're not ready," she smiled sadly, "To let go."

"...I'm not following," he shook his head.

She looked straight at him, "Tell me, now, while you're Link free, would you be willing to give up Rose if the Link should turn romantic?" he couldn't answer, "That's why," she stepped forward and put a hand on his cheek when he looked at the floor ashamed, "There's nothing wrong with it Doctor," she reassured him, "I've waited centuries just to find you again…I can wait until you're ready."

"But…Rose is never coming back," he argued, looking up at her, "Why can't we just…"

"I've been in your head Theta," she laughed a little to herself, "Since just before you left Gallifrey, I know you. I know how you think. I know how you feel. I know how you felt about Rose. I...I don't want to push you into something you're not ready for," she left it at that, not wanting him to hear all the reasons. She was emotional enough as it was, he didn't need her to start crying about how she was terrified he wouldn't feel the same or any of the other reasons.

"I'd get over it," he argued, "Once the Link is formed it won't matter and…"

"But it will," she insisted, though she couldn't help but feel a shiver at his words, he seemed to think that the Link would lead to romantic feelings towards her. She would love for that to happen, but she also didn't want him to try and force the Link to go that way just because he was lonely, she had to wait till he'd calmed down and sorted himself before she could let him Link to her, "Deep down, you would be mourning the loss of your connection with Rose. And...I don't want to be responsible for putting you through that. So...for now...please, just let me do what I think is best."

He stared at her, seeing her concern for him, the depth of her love for him. It hurt him more than he wanted to admit that he was scared of the Link, scared to Link to her. She was right, he wasn't ready to get over Rose...yet. And, when he thought about it...she would know the ins and outs of the Link far better than him.

But still...there was a part of him that regretted not looking up that day on Gallifrey when he'd heard someone trip up the stairs after he'd barged into the President's house. He would have seen her...he could have Linked to her then, avoided all the pain he was in currently...though he knew his experience, his pain even, were what made him who he was.

He took a breath before nodding his acceptance to her, "Fine...for now," he added, before smiling
and twisting the Filter around in his hand, "But…can we do something about this?"

She looked down at the Filter, confused.

"I just mean, lower its power a bit. I just…it's meant to make me think you're human right? Can we at least let my mind sense you as a Time Lady? Please, I need to hear you in my mind. It's been so quiet for so long…"

"That's actually my fault," she grinned sheepishly, "The Filter took a lot of damage during the regeneration…it's really only powerful enough to keep your mind from sensing me as your Link and letting you Link to me…"

"You're blocking your thoughts from me," he stated, following along, "Why?"

"I…wasn't sure how you would react. To me being a Time Lady and hiding it from you," slowly though she let her mental walls down, allowing him to see all her thoughts, at least those that lingered on the surface of her mind.

'I'm sorry…'

He smiled softly, hugging her as he heard her voice in his head, the first voice he'd heard since the Time War as the Master's had been hidden by the Archangel Network.

But suddenly he pulled away, realizing something, "Why don't you go put on a pot of tea?" he asked quickly, ushering her towards the kitchen, "I'll join you in a bit, have something to take care of here…"

She raised an eyebrow at him but was in no position to argue, she still wasn't too sure if he'd fully forgiven her or even if he wasn't angry anymore, she still couldn't hear him in her mind, now he was the only one blocking his thoughts.

She tensed as she entered the kitchen, trying to ignore the quiet in her mind. It was odd, even on Gallifrey when others shielded their minds, she could always hear the Doctor's in the forefront of her mind, even across time and space. To not hear him at all…it was disconcerting…

She sighed, setting a small pot of tea on and sitting on a counter to wait till it boiled.

She didn't have to wait long when the TARDIS suddenly gave a severe jolt and sent her flying onto the floor. She pushed herself up, shuttering off the tea and racing back to the control room to check on the Doctor, only to skid to a stop and hide behind the doorway at the top of the gantry, spotting something by the console.

She glanced around the frame to see the Doctor seeming to be talking with a man in a white jacket with a stick of celery pinned to his lapel. Her eyes widened as she laughed to herself, she recalled this meeting from the fifth incarnation of the Doctor. Oh, this would be brilliant to watch.

"…Universe goes bang in five minutes but…brilliant!" her Doctor exclaimed.

"I'm the Doctor, who are you?" the fifth Doctor asked.

"Yes, you are!" he grinned, "You are the Doctor."

"Yes, I am. I'm the Doctor."

"Oh, good for you, Doctor," the Doctor was now grinning madly, Evy could only roll her eyes at
"Is there something wrong with you?" the fifth Doctor asked the question Evy had asked herself many, many times.

"Oh there it goes! The frowny face, I remember that one!" he reached out and grabbed his fifth self's face, smushing his cheeks. Evy slapped herself in the forehead and shook her head at him, "Mind you, bit saggier than it ought to be, hair's a bit grayer. That's because of me, though, the two of us together has shorted out the time differential, should all snap back in place when we get you back home. Be able to close that coat again. But never mind that! Look at you! The hat, the coat, the crickety cricket stuff the...stick of celery, yeah. Brave choice celery, but fair play to you, not a lot of men can carry off a decorative vegetable."

"Shut up!" the fifth Doctor shouted, "There is something wrong with my TARDIS and I've got to do something about it very, very quickly, and it would help, it really would help, if there wasn't some skinny idiot…" Evy snorted, "Ranting in my face about everything that happens to be in front of him!"

"Oh," the Doctor mellowed, "Okay. Sorry, Doctor."

"Thank you," the fifth Doctor breathed, turning to the TARDIS console.

"Oh!" the Doctor was grinning again, "The back of my head!"

"What?"

"Sorry, sorry, not something you see ever day, is it? The back of your own head. Mind you, I see why you wear a hat. I don't want to seem vain, but...could you keep that on?"

"Oh God," Evy mumbled to herself.

"What have you done to my TARDIS?" the fifth Doctor demanded, looking around, "You've changed the desktop theme...what is this one then, coral?"

"Well..." the Doctor trailed.

"It's worse than the leopard skin," the fifth Doctor exclaimed, pulling out half moon glasses and putting them on.

"Oh!" the Doctor laughed, "There they come! The brainy specs! You don't even need them, you just think they make you look a bit clever."

They do, Evy had to admit, she was always a fan when the Doctor whipped out his brainy specs. Just then an alarm sounded.

"That's an alert!" the fifth Doctor's eyes widened, "Level five. Indicates a temporal collision. It's like two TARDISes have merged, but there's definitely only one TARDIS present. Looks like two time zones at war in the heart of the TARDIS. That's a paradox. Could blow a hole in the space time continuum the size of..." the Doctor nonchalantly pushed the monitor on the console with the information to face his other self, "...well, actually, the exact size of Belgium. That's a bit undramatic, isn't? Belgium?"

"Need this?" the Doctor asked, pulling out the sonic screwdriver.
Evy rolled her eyes, he was far too dependent on that thing.

"No, I'm fine," the fifth Doctor waved him off.

"Oh no, of course, you mostly went hands free didn't you? It's like 'hey, I'm the doctor, I can save the Universe with a kettle and some string, and look at me, I'm wearing a vegetable!'"

Evy shook her head.

"Who are you?" the fifth Doctor looked at him.

"Take a look."

"Oh...oh no," the fifth Doctor's face fell.

"Oh yes."

"You're...oh no, you're..."

"Here it comes, yep, yep I am."

"A fan!"

Evy had to slap a hand over her mouth to keep her laughter from being heard.

The fifth Doctor turned away from the Doctor, a look of disgust on his face, before going to the console.

"Yep!" the Doctor shouted, before realizing what the fifth Doctor had said, "What?"

"Level ten now," the fifth Doctor looked at the alarm, "This is bad. Two minutes to Belgium."

"What do you mean 'a fan?' I'm not just a fan, I'm you!"

"Okay, you're my biggest fan. Look, it's perfectly understandable. I go zooming around space and time saving planets, fighting monsters, and being, well, let's be honest, pretty sort of marvelous..." the Doctor looked smug. Evy could only roll her eyes again, both of them had an ego the size of the Earth, "...and naturally every now and then people notice me...start up their little groups. That LINDA lot...are you one of them? How did you get in here?" he pointed a finger at the Doctor, "Can't have you lot knowing where I live."

"Listen to me, I'm you!" the Doctor yelled, having enough, "I'm you with a new face," he slapped his own cheeks this time, "Check out this bone structure Doctor, because one day, you're going to be shaving it."

The cloister bell began to ring, "The Cloister Bell!" the fifth Doctor looked up, alarmed.

"Yep, right on time, that's my cue," the Doctor rushed over, running around the console.

"In less than a minute we're going to detonate a black hole strong enough to swallow the entire Universe!"

"Yeah..." the Doctor paused, a bit embarrassed, "That's my fault, actually, I was rebuilding the TARDIS, forgot to put the shields back up. Your TARDIS and my TARDIS...well the same TARDIS, different points in its own time stream, collided and, oops, there you go, end of the Universe, butterfingers. But don't worry, I know exactly how this all works out. Venting the
thermal buffer, flooring the Helmic regulator, and just to finish off, lets fry those Zeiton crystals."

"You'll blow up the TARDIS!" the fifth Doctor tried to stop him from hitting the rest of the controls.

"It's the only way out."

"Who told you that?"

"You told me that!" he shouted before pulling a lever. Everything went white, the light actually blinding them all for a moment.

"Supernova and black hole at the exact same instant," the fifth Doctor breathed.

"Explosion cancels out implosion," the Doctor agreed as Evy smiled, proud.

"Matter stays constant."

"Brilliant!"

"Far too brilliant," the fifth Doctor turned to look at him suspiciously, "I've never met anyone else who could fly the TARDIS like that."

"Sorry, mate, you still haven't."

"You didn't have time to work all that out, even I couldn't do it."

"I didn't work it out, I didn't have to."

"You remembered."

"Because you will remember."

"You remembered being me, watching you, doing that," he looked down at the console then back up at the Doctor, "You already knew what to do because I watched you do it."

"Wibbly wobbly…" the Doctor began before the both finished, "Timey wimey!"

Evy face palmed. She never should have said that on the video to Sally, now the Doctor had just taught himself the phrase. But she couldn't help but laugh when she looked up to see the Doctor try to high-five the fifth Doctor who just stared at him, confused, before another alarm went off.

"What?" the Doctor turned back to the console, "TARDISes are separating, sorry, Doctor, time's up, back to long ago...where are you now? Nyssa and Tegan, Cybermen and Mara and Time Lords in funny hats and the Master? Oh he just showed up again, same as ever."

"Oh no," the fifth Doctor shook his head, "Really? Does he still have that rubbish beard?"

"No...no beard this time...well, a wife…"

"Oh," the fifth Doctor called, starting to fade, "I seem to be off. What can I say? Thank you...Doctor."

"Thank you," the Doctor smiled.

"I'm very welcome," the fifth Doctor grinned.
He faded away completely before the Doctor realized something and flipped a switch, bringing him back so he could hand him his hat back.

Evy smiled, this was her favorite part of the conversation.

"You know...I loved being you. Back when I first started, at the very beginning, I was always trying to be old and grumpy and important, like you do when you're young. And then I was you...and it was all dashing about and playing cricket and my voice going all squeaky when I shouted...I still do that! The voice thing, I got that from you. Oh!" he put his foot on the console to show him his shoes, "...and the trainers and..." he pulled out his brainy specs and put them on, "...snap. 'Cos you know what, Doctor? You were my Doctor."

"To days to come," the fifth Doctor tipped his hat.

"All my love to long ago."

The fifth Doctor smiled and Evy took a breath, that was her cue.

"Doctor!" she called, stepping out onto the gantry, both Doctors looked up at her, "Was that Martha? Did she change her mind?"

The Doctor smiled, realizing what she had done. He remembered this as well, it was how he knew he'd be meeting the fifth Doctor. He remembered standing there as a beautiful woman with black hair stepped onto the gantry calling for a woman named Martha. He knew Evy couldn't be down there during his conversation with himself, the fifth Doctor would have sensed her as a Time Lady and he, in his present incarnation, would have known there was one out there, which he hadn't. She had to wait till he was fading, caught in the separation of the TARDISes where he couldn't sense her, to speak. She was giving the fifth Doctor a clue to the future, to prepare him for this moment as well.

"No," the Doctor called back up, "Just saying goodbye to an old friend," he turned back to the fifth Doctor, "Doctor," he nodded.

The fifth Doctor tipped his hat again, nodding to the girl on the gantry as well, before disappearing.

"Oh, Doctor, remember to put your shields up," his voice called back.

The Doctor smiled before pushing a button on the TARDIS just before there was the sound of a ship's horn blasting. Both he and Evy went flying to the floor as dust blew into the air. Evy coughed, pushing herself up and looking below at the Doctor sprawled out on the floor, pushing himself up again.

"What..." he coughed.

"Doctor," Evy called, picking up at life preserver as she walked down the steps to join him.

"What?" his eyes widened, seeing TITANIC painted on the side of the preserver.

They both looked up to see a ship sticking out into the side of the TARDIS.

"What!" he demanded.

To be continued...
I am very excited to write out Series 4 with Evy, I love Donna so much. This is just a little filler till I get Voyage of the Damned up and we officially start Series 4.

Next chapter...the Doctor's Time Lord mood swings act up, Evy's skills come to good use and her brilliance shines through, but there's something wrong with her that she won't tell the Doctor...
Voyage of the Damned (Part 1)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Evy had to admit, she was more than a bit shocked to see a huge ship sticking out and into the TARDIS, especially the Titanic. But it seemed the Doctor was just as surprised as she was, as he was still on the floor. She ran to his side, helping him stand as they both rushed to the console and began powering the TARDIS up for a teleport. They managed to push the ship out and get the TARDIS to reappear within the ship so she could have time to repair herself.

The Doctor headed to the door and stepped out, looking around a moment at what appeared to be a supply closet. He nodded back at Evy and stepped out with her following. She gently shut the doors behind her as the Doctor peeked his head out of the closet for a moment. Evy stood there, eyeing him cautiously, a frown on her face. This was the longest the Doctor had ever blocked his thoughts from her…it was beginning to unnerve her greatly. She thought he wasn't mad at her anymore, but she just couldn't work out another reason for him to be blocking her like he was.

He glanced back at her, nodding towards the hall and stepping out. She came out a moment later to see a wood-paneled room decorated with plants and Christmas decorations. There were people dressed in early 20th century clothing just wandering around while waiters and waitresses served some of the Doctor's beloved nibbles and champagne. There was a band playing a slow version of 'Jingle Bells' in the background. They walked cautiously into the room, trying not to be noticed as the Doctor stopped briefly in front of two golden angels garbed in white. They jolted a bit, mechanically, robots.

He frowned, reaching forward to touch one when Evy's voice drifted over to him, "Doctor…"

He turned to see her standing at a large window, looking out of it. He walked over and stood beside her, his eyes widening as he saw the Earth floating there in space.

"Right…" he murmured, realizing that they were in an intergalactic sort of cruise ship.

As though reading their minds the loudspeaker announced, "Attention all passengers. The Titanic is now in orbit above Sol 3, also known as Earth. Population: Human. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Christmas."

~8~

They had quickly returned to the TARDIS, seeing that they would be stuck there as the TARDIS finished repairing herself and it would do better to blend in. The Doctor had quickly changed into his typical black tuxedo, much to Evy's chagrin as she was almost certain they would be in a life or death situation now…that suit was probably cursed.

She herself had managed to find a lovely dress in the TARDIS's wardrobe. It was a light blue gown with a v-neckline, sleeveless with a slight poof at the shoulders, it was tight around her waist but flowed out to the ground. There was a small floral pattern under the neckline in dark blue, and she completed the attire with a simple set of elbow length white gloves. She'd curled her hair and pinned it up, simply done. Nothing too fancy…and yet, the Doctor was, once again, rendered frozen amidst putting on his tie when she stepped out of the wardrobe.

"Is this going to be an ongoing occurrence with you?" she asked as she stepped forward to fix his
"I…what?" he managed to get out as Evy stepped back.

She just shook her head and walked out of the TARDIS, holding the doors open for him to follow. They walked back out to the main hall, looking around when a small video screen caught Evy's eye. She walked over to it, the Doctor following along, and played the message waiting there.

Suddenly a bald man with a ridiculously thin moustache appeared, sitting behind a desk, "Max Capricorn Cruise Liners, the fastest, the farthest, the best. And I should know because my name...is Max," he grinned, his golden tooth glinting, before the screen faded to the cruise line logo.

"You've got to be joking," Evy remarked, her eyes wide as she stared at the video screen. Not only was the man himself ridiculous looking but really? A glinting tooth? The whole message was just too over the top for her.

She looked up to see the Doctor fiddling with his tie and rolled her eyes, brushing his hands away and straightening it herself. She patted it in place before stepping back. The Doctor shot her a grin before taking her hand and pulling her with him towards reception.

"Merry Christmas, sir, ma'am," a steward greeted as they walked by.

"Merry Christmas," they replied as one, laughing as they entered the room from earlier.

"It's not a holiday for me, not while I've still got my vone," a man was saying, quite loudly, as he spoke into some sort of device, "Now do as I say and sell."

The Doctor and Evy watched him walk off before another robotic angel caught the Doctor's eye and he headed off towards it.

"Evening," the Doctor nodded at the robot, "Passengers 57 and 58. Terrible memory. Remind me. Uh, you would be..."

"Information: Heavenly Host supplying tourist information," it replied.

"Good, so, um...tell me, 'cos I'm an idiot…"

"He really is," Evy agreed, patting his arm a bit in mock sympathy.

The Doctor rolled his eyes at her, but grinned nonetheless before turning to the robot, "Where are we from?"

"Information: the Titanic is en route from the planet Sto in the Cassavalian Belt," it answered as Evy let out a whistle, that was quite a fair distance, "The purpose of the cruise is to experience primitive cultures."

"Titanic…" the Doctor trailed, "Um...who...thought of the name?"

"Information: it was chosen as the most famous vessel of the planet Earth."

"I take it no one told you why it was famous?" Evy frowned, not having a good feeling about this at all. She didn't necessarily believe in jinxes or anything like that…save for the Doctor's suit…but something about building a ship to look like the Titanic, in memory of the Titanic, and called the Titanic…it was just begging for a catastrophe.
"Information: all designations are chosen by Mr. Max Capricorn, president of Max...Max..." it began repeating Max, the name becoming more high-pitched as its head jerked.

"Ooh, bit of a glitch," the Doctor commented as he reached into his pocket for the sonic, only to be stopped by Evy putting a gentle hand on his arm, halting him.

"Sir, we can handle this," a steward rushed forward a moment later. He waved for others, each helping to switch off the robot and drag it away, "Software problem, that's all. Leave it with us, sir. Merry Christmas."

He quickly walked off with the other stewards, leaving the Doctor and Evy alone, both feeling something was most certainly going on here. But their thoughts were unable to linger on the robot very long as the sound of breaking glass reached them. They looked over to see a blonde waitress standing before a tray of drinks she had dropped on the floor, the business man from before standing before her.

"For Tov's sake, look where you're going!" the man shouted, "This jacket's a genuine Earth antique."

Evy snorted, even from there she could tell it was a knock off.

"I'm sorry, sir," the waitress apologized, kneeling down to pick up the broken glass.

"You'll be sorry when it comes off your wages, sweetheart," the man continued, "Staffed by idiots..." the Doctor had to grab Evy's arm to keep her from going over there and smacking the man like he had no doubt she wanted to if the expression on her face was any sort of clue, "No wonder Max Capricorn is going down the drain."

"Careful," Evy said, coming over to help the woman with the glass as the man stormed off, "Let me help."

"Thank you," the woman looked up at Evy, grateful, if a bit shocked, that someone so well dressed was on her knees helping, well, the help, "But...I can manage."

"I know you can," Evy winked at her, continuing to help, "I'm Evy, by the way," she nodded up at the Doctor standing next to her, "That's the Doctor."

"Astrid, ma'am," she replied, "Astrid Peth."

"Nice to meet you Astrid," Evy grinned, reaching out to shake the woman's hand, "Merry Christmas."

"Merry Christmas," Astrid breathed, shocked at the woman's kindness, but she quickly shook her head to clear her thoughts, "You enjoying the cruise?"

Evy shrugged and glanced over at the Doctor, she was sure she would be having a great time if it wasn't for the silence in her head, but she quickly buried that thought deep inside so the Doctor couldn't read it off her.

The Doctor frowned, as Evy's thoughts suddenly shifted to counting the glass on the tray. He looked down at her, concerned, "Um...yeah, I suppose. I don't know. Quite nice, suppose, us on a cruise."

"What about you Astrid?" Evy asked suddenly, standing up with the tray, "You're a long way from Sto."
"Doesn't feel that different," Astrid admitted, "I spent three years working at the spaceport diner, travelled all the way here..." she seemed to notice Evy was the one with the tray and reached out to take it from her, "And I'm still waiting on tables."

She sighed and turned to walk away, but Evy and the Doctor followed her, "No shore leave?" the Doctor asked.

"We're not allowed," Astrid replied, clearing a table by a window, "They can't afford the insurance. I just wanted to try it, just once. I used to watch the ships heading off to the stars and I always dreamt of...it sounds daft..."

"No it doesn't," Evy smiled, reaching out to gently squeeze the woman's arm, "You dreamt of another sky with a new sun in it, breathing new air, seeing new life. The whole Universe just teeming with life. Why should you stand around when there's all that life out there?"

Astrid had begun smiling at Evy's little speech, as had the Doctor who was now looking at the Time Lady with a fond expression. That was exactly how he'd felt his entire life on Gallifrey.

"So...you travel a lot?" Astrid asked, shaking herself out of the daydreams inspire by Evy's words.

"All the time," the Doctor grinned, "Just for fun."

"That's the plan," Evy smirked, nodding conspiratorially back at the Doctor, "Never quite works out with him around."

"Must be rich, though," Astrid commented.

"Haven't got a penny," the Doctor replied, before leaning forward, and whispering, "Stowaways."

"Kidding?" Astrid eyed them, not really believing them.

"Seriously," Evy grinned.

"No!" her eyes widened.

"Oh, yeah," the Doctor nodded.

"How did you get on board?"

"Accident," Evy shrugged.

"I've got this, sort of, ship thing," the Doctor continued, "I was just rebuilding her. Left the defenses down, bumped into the Titanic. Here we are. Bit of a party, I thought 'Why not?'"

"And then he dragged me into it," Evy added, though not sounding at all upset.

"I should report you," Astrid told them.

"Go on then," the Doctor replied, smiling as though he knew she wouldn't.

Astrid hesitated a moment, when something caught her eye. Evy's face had tensed and she was biting her bottom lip, her entire body tense now that she really looked. She seemed like she was in a lot of pain...

"I'll get you a drink..." she said, more to Evy than the Doctor, but he didn't seem to notice, then she whispered, "On the house," she walked off quickly, wanting to do something to help the nice
woman who had been so kind to her.

The Doctor watched as she walked past a group of first class passengers who were laughing and pointing at a heavyset couple dressed in purple country western outfits, sitting at a table, eating buffalo wings.

Evy's body relaxed only a bit before it tensed for another reason, following the Doctor's gaze. Before the Doctor knew what was happening, Evy had walked over to him, linking her arm with his and leading him over to the table. She threw a glance over her shoulder at the group of passengers, making sure that she showed them the full view of her body which, if the Doctor's reaction was anything to go on, was very nice. She glared at them, sticking up her nose before sitting down with the couple, smirking to herself as the other table fell quiet. The Doctor grinned widely, seeing what she had done and sat down beside her.

"Ignore them," Evy shook her head at the other table.

"Something's tickled them," the Doctor commented as he turned to the couple.

"They told us it was fancy dress," the woman replied, "Very funny, I'm sure."

"They're just pickin' on us because we haven't paid," the black man added, nodding at the woman, "We won our tickets in a competition."

"I had to name the five husbands of Joofie Crystalle in 'By the Light of the Asteroid.' Did you ever watch..."

"Is that the one with the twins?" the Doctor asked, sounding a bit unsure.

"That's it," the woman nodded, "Oh, it's marvelous."

"Probably not good enough for that lot," the man nodded at the table who, while they had stopped their blatant laughs, had settled to quiet whispers and looks over at the large couple, "They think we should be in steerage."

"Can't have that, can we?" the Doctor mumbled, casually reaching into his pocket for the sonic. He held it under his arm, pointed at the table behind them, and flicked it on moments before the champagne on the table popped and sprayed the entire table with its contents.

Not one to be outdone, Evy concentrated hard just as one of the women at the table's hair flew up in the air, revealing it to be a wig! She ran from the room in embarrassment.

Unfortunately, that was not the wisest move, especially so soon after regeneration, she winced and pressed her palm to her head, turning away from the Doctor as though to watch the table jumping about and fleeing so he wouldn't see her pain.

"Did...did you do that?" the woman asked the Doctor.

"Maybe," the Doctor smirked, sliding the screwdriver back into his pocket.

"We like you," the woman told him, smiling at Evy as her head felt better and turned to face them, making sure she caught the trail of blood from her nose before it could fall and leave a stain, "And you!"

"We do," the man agreed, reaching out a hand to the Doctor, "I'm Morvin Van Hoff," and then kissed the back of Evy's hand, "This is my good woman, Foon."
"Foon," Evy smiled warmly at the woman, shaking her hand, "I'm Evy."

"I'm the Doctor," he introduced, taking Foon's hand as well.

"Ooh, I'm gonna need a Doctor by the time I'm finished with this buffet," Foon remarked, nodding to the pile of food before them, "Have a buffalo wing. They must be enormous, these buffalo, so many wings."

The Doctor reached out to take a wing, holding it up to offer it to Evy, but she just shook her head a bit and he shrugged and went to eat it.

"Attention please," the loudspeaker announced, "Shore leave tickets Red 6-7 now activated. Red 6-7."

"Red 6-7," Foon said, pulling out a red ticket with Morvin, "That's us," she stood up, looking at the Doctor and Evy, "Are you Red 6-7?"

The Doctor looked at Evy who shrugged, "Why not," she said.

"Come on," Morvin put an arm around Foon, "We're going to Earth."

As Morvin and Foon headed off, the Doctor stood, offering Evy a hand to be pulled up with. She stumbled but the Doctor seemed not to have noticed the usually graceful girl's trip as he led her away from the table and over to where Morvin and Foon were now running towards an older man holding up a red 6-7 sign.

"Red 6-7!" the older, slightly balding, man called, "Red 6-7. This way, fast as you can."

"I got you that drink," Astrid appeared, holding out a tray with two drinks for Evy and the Doctor, but she was focused more on Evy who looked a bit pale.

"And we got you a treat," the Doctor grinned, taking the tray from her and setting it on a table, "Come on."

"Red 6-7 departing shortly," the man continued.

The Doctor reached into his pocket and pulled up the psychic paper, holding it up for the man to see, "3 Red 6-7s."

The man squinted, seeming to see the ticket on the paper, "Uh quickly, sir, and please take three teleport bracelets if you would."

He did as instructed, handing one to Evy as he slipped on his own.

"I'll get the sack," Astrid whispered, concerned.

"Brand new sky," Evy whispered back, handing her a bracelet. Astrid looked at her a moment, seeing that the woman seemed a bit better, and took it.

"To repeat, I am Mr. Copper, the ship's historian," the man introduced, "And I shall be taking you to old London town in the country of U.K. ruled over by good King Wenceslas," the Doctor and Evy frowned, "Now human beings worshipped the great god Santa, a creature with fearsome claws, and his wife Mary," Evy and the Doctor exchanged an odd look, "And every Christmas Eve the people of U.K. go to war with the country of Turkey," Evy raised an eyebrow at that, "They then eat the Turkey people for Christmas dinner...like savages."
"Excuse me," the Doctor cut in, unable to stand the complete inaccuracy of the man's speech any longer, "Sorry, sorry, but, um...where did you get all this from?"

"Well, I have a first class degree in Earthonomics," Mr. Copper replied, "Now standby..."

"Where did he get that degree?" Evy hissed to the Doctor, "A college attached to a dry cleaners?"

Before the Doctor could reply a small red alien with short spikes along his head rushed over to the group, "And me!" he shouted, his voice very high, "And me! Red 6-7!"

"Well, take a bracelet, sir," Mr. Copper offered.

"Um, but, um, hold on, hold on," the Doctor interrupted again, "What was your name?"

"Bannakaffalatta," he answered.

"Ok, Bannakaffalatta...but it's Christmas Eve down there. Late night shopping, tons of people. He's like a walking conker. No offence, but you'll cause a riot 'cos the streets are going to be packed with shoppers and parties..."

The group was suddenly teleported down to Earth, the Doctor still mid-ramble, only to arrive on an entirely deserted street.

"Oh," he paused, looking around.

"Now, spending money, I have a credit card in Earth currency if you want to by trinkets or, uh, stockings or the local delicacy, which is known as 'beef' but don't stray too far, it could be dangerous," Mr. Copper told them, "Any day now they start boxing..."

"Doctor," Evy remarked, her eyes trailing the abandoned streets while the others of the group stared around in awe, "Something's wrong...where is everyone?"

"It should be full," he agreed, looking around, confused, "It should be busy."

"But it's beautiful," Astrid breathed.

"Really?" the Doctor frowned, turning to face her, "Do you think so? It's just a street. The pyramids are beautiful, and New Zealand..."

"But it's a different planet," Evy smiled, recalling her own thrill at seeing other planets.

"I'm standing on a different planet!" Astrid repeated, "Th...there's concrete...and shops, alien shops, real alien shops! Look, no stars in the sky. And it smells..." she inhaled deeply, "It stinks!" she gasped, turning to them, "This is amazing! Thank you!"

She ran to give the Doctor and Evy a hug each in her excitement.

"Yeah?" the Doctor smiled, catching her enthusiasm.

"Well come on," Evy linked arms with Astrid, "Let's take a look."

And with that, she led Astrid across the street to a newsagent's booth, the only thing that seemed to be open on the street. There was an old man sitting there, bundled in his winter clothes.

"Hello there!" the Doctor greeted, "Sorry, uh, obvious question, but where's everybody gone?"
"Oh ho, scared!" the man replied.

"Right, yes," the Doctor nodded, before frowning. "Scared of what?"

"Can't you guess?" Evy turned to face him, "London at Christmas?"

The Doctor just looked confused.

"Where have you been living?" the old man frowned at him, "Not safe, is it?"

"Why?" the Doctor's frown deepened.

"Well, it's them, up above," he pointed up at the sky.

Evy sighed, the Doctor could be rather slow at times, "The Christmas before last, the Sycorax and blood control, and then last year, the um, 'Christmas Star' electrocuting everything..." she looked at the Doctor meaningfully, "...draining the Thames."

"And this year," the old man shook his head, "Lord knows what. So everybody's scarpered, gone to the country. All except me...and Her Majesty."

He stood proudly and looked at a small TV he had playing, "Her Majesty the Queen has confirmed that she will be staying in Buckingham Palace throughout the festive season to show the people of London, and the world, that there's nothing to fear," the news reporter announced.

"God bless her!" the man saluted, "We stand vigil."

"Well, between you and me, I think her Majesty's got it right," the Doctor told him, "Far as I know, this year, nothing to worry about..."

Evy's eyes widened, "Don't say that!"

Then suddenly, they disappeared, teleported back to the ship.

"I was in mid-sentence!" the Doctor grumbled.

"And about to jinx us!" Evy argued, already feeling like doom was eminent.

"Yes, I'm sorry about that," Mr. Copper explained, "A bit of a problem. If I could have your bracelets..."

Evy saw the chief steward step up and quickly grabbed Astrid's arm, pulling her behind her and the Doctor so she wouldn't get caught.

"Apologies, ladies and gentlemen, Bannakaffalatta, we seem to have suffered a slight power fluctuation," the steward explained, "If you'd like to return to the festivities. And on behalf of Max Capricorn Cruise Liners, free drinks will be provided."

As the man walked off with a few other stewards Astrid stepped out from behind the two, "That was the best, the best!" she handed them her bracelet and went off to get back to her job.

The Doctor approached the chief steward as Evy deposited the three bracelets into the bin and followed.

"What sort of power fluctuation?" the Doctor asked.
Unfortunately the chief steward was called away before he could reply.

The Doctor sighed and turned to face Evy, watching her as she grew concerned with their situation. Something in his heart tugged at him and before he knew it he was holding out a hand for her to take. She looked up at him, a bit startled, but took his hand nonetheless and was led onto the dance floor.

From there, she could see everything going on around her. There were Foon and Morvin eating at their table while the stewards were keeping tabs on the robotic angels, the rude man from before was winning at roulette, Bannakaffalatta was dancing around a little ways away from them, and Astrid was standing off to the side, watching them with a smile on her face as she served drinks around.

She was really starting to enjoy the dance when the Doctor suddenly led her off the dance floor and over to a video screen playing a loop of Max Capricorn.

"...and I should know because my name...is Max," the video said.

Evy frowned as the Doctor pulled out his specs and the sonic, flashing it across the frame. She bit the inside of her lip, she still couldn't read the Doctor...she had no idea what he was planning or even thinking. She reached up and rubbed her head, she could already feel a hole forming in her mind from the silence. Centuries of nothing but constant voices in her mind from her family, friends, and the Doctor, and then years of just the Doctor...and now nothing...it was like going through withdrawals.

"The fastest, the furthest, the best...my name...is Max," the video faded as the Doctor pulled the frame open and began to flash the screwdriver around. Evy sighed and turned to lean against the window and looked out...only for her eyes to widen in fear at what she was seeing.

The Doctor shut the frame, a new video playing, the radar of the *Titanic*. But perhaps he didn't need that as Evy's gasp drew his attention. He leaned over to look over her shoulder at that meteorites headed straight towards them.

He glanced back at the screen, his own eyes widening when he realized the shields were offline.

He quickly flashed the sonic again, patching himself into the main control room, "Is that the bridge? I need to talk to the captain. You've got a meteoroid storm coming in..." he went to look at the location but Evy was one step ahead.

"West 0 by North 2," she finished.

"Who is this?" an older man appeared on the screen, one who could only be the captain.

"Never mind that," the Doctor waved him off, "Your shields are down. Check your scanners, Captain. You've got meteoroids coming in and no shielding!"

"You have no authorization," the captain told him, "You will clear the comms. at once."

"Yeah?" the Doctor shot back, "Just look starboard!"

"Doctor," Evy said quietly, "...he knows."

The Doctor looked over at her, startled at her words, but even more disturbed when he realized she was correct. The captain knew the shields were down and the meteorites were coming, he wouldn't be arguing with them so much if he didn't.
Before he could even tell the captain off for his insanity, a group of stewards appeared, grabbing him between them, another grabbing hold of Evy and trying to lead them away.

"Come with me, sir, ma'am," the chief steward turned to led them out.

Evy opened her mouth to tell the steward now crushing her arm in his grip to let her go, but a sudden wave of pain overtook her. She was cursing herself, she hadn't given herself enough time to recover from her regeneration. Usually she would be fine after a few hours or so, but she had been fighting the aftereffects the entire time, not allowing the golden energy to escape her but keeping it contained, because she didn't want the Doctor to worry about her or force her to stay behind and rest while he rushed off into danger so she'd been hiding it from him...it hurt, so much...but he didn't even seem to notice.

"You've got a rock storm heading for this ship and the shields are down!" the Doctor was arguing as the stewards dragged him through the reception area. He managed to break away from them for only a moment, running onto the stage where the band was playing, "Everyone, listen to me! This is an emergency! Get to the lifeb..."

One of the robots grabbed the Doctor, covering his mouth and pulling him away. Evy struggled to get out of the steward's grip, but after the Doctor's escape he held onto her tighter. She was shoved through the doors just barely managing to catch sight of Astrid, Foon, Morvin, and Bannakaffalatta watching in surprise.

"Look out the windows!" she could hear the Doctor shouting behind her as they both struggled in the stewards' grips. She could just make out the sound of extra feet following them as she and the Doctor were led below deck.

"If you don't believe me, check the shields yourself!" the Doctor called.

"Sir, I can vouch for him!" Astrid's voice rang out, followed by Morvin's.

"Look, Steward, he's just had a bit too much to drink..."

"Sir," Mr. Copper stepped forward, "Something seems to have gone wrong. All the teleports are down."

"Not now!" the chief steward shouted, leading the two struggling guests through the maintenance corridors.

"The shields are down," Evy gasped, as the steward twisted her arm, "We are going to get hit."

"Oi!" another voice joined them, it was the rude man from before, "Steward! I'm telling you the shields are down!"

"Listen to him!" the Doctor shouted, "Listen to him!"

The chief steward stopped suddenly and spun to face them, ready to give an angry retort, when they were suddenly jolted violently to the side as the ship was hit by the meteoroids. Evy felt herself hit the wall hard as she was half thrown out of the steward's grip and fell to the floor, holding her arm in a tight grip.

Things were sparking around her and everything was in chaos...she could feel a flash of fear strike across her when suddenly she felt herself being pulled into someone's arms. She looked up to see the Doctor leaning over her, protecting her as they were thrown back to the floor. They huddled there for a few moments more as things seemed to calm down.
The Doctor was on his feet in an instant, "Shh!" he hissed at them, listening intently, "It's stopping."

Everyone seemed to settle down at that.

"You alright?" he whispered, reaching out to help her to her feet. He frowned, seeing her rubbing her arm and moved to look at it, but she just shook her head and pulled back.

"I'm fine," she smiled at him, bending her arm to show it was just a bit bruised. She moved over to the other passengers and went to help them up, starting with Mr. Copper and then Astrid, "You ok?"

"I think so," Astrid replied, shaken but seeming fine.

"Bad name for a ship," the Doctor commented, looking around at the destruction, "Either that or this suit is really unlucky."

"That suit is definitely bad luck," Evy remarked.

He smiled at her, kneeling down to examine one of the stewards, but he was gone.

"My name...is Max," the voice of the video played over the system behind them, "My name...is Max. My name...is Max."

Evy rolled her eyes and moved over to the comm. panel, pulling a side piece off and tweaking a wire, shutting down Capricorn's voice.

"Ev...everyone..." the chief steward stood, trying to remain calm but his shaking voice betrayed his fear, "Ladies and gentlemen, Bannakaffalatta, I must apologize on behalf of Max Capricorn Cruise Liners. We seem to have had a small collision."

"Small?" Morvin asked, indignant, as he held Foon to him.

"You know how much I paid for my ticket?" the rude man demanded.

"If I could have silence, ladies, gentlemen..." the chief steward began, but everyone seemed to be ignoring him, continuing to argue amongst themselves.

A high-pitched noise quickly silenced them as they looked over to see Evy letting go of two wires that had caused horrible feedback to resound. She took a breath and turned to the steward, "Steward, if you would?"

"Thank you," he tried to smile, but it was more a shame filled grimace than anything, "I...I'm sure Max Capricorn Cruise Liners will be able to reimburse you for any inconvenience. But first I would point out that we are very much alive."

"Are you alright?" Astrid asked, seeing a cut on Mr. Copper's head. She knelt beside him and began to dab at it. Evy, seeing this, went to join her, the Doctor following to examine the injured man.

"She is, after all, a fine, sturdy ship," the steward continued, "If you could all stay here while I ascertain the exact nature of the...the situation," he turned around and went to open a hatch.

"Don't open that!" Evy shouted, alarmed.

But it was too late, the hatch opened and the steward was sucked out into space. Everyone grabbed
a hold of anything near them that was secure enough to keep them in place. The Doctor managed to make his way over to the comms., flashing the sonic over the computer, reactivating the oxygen shields. Immediately the vacuum dwindled and the group let go of the piping.

"Oxygen shield stabilized," the computer announced.

"Everyone alright?" the Doctor looked around, "Evy?" Evy looked up, from gasping, leaning against the wall next to Astrid and nodded, "Astrid?"

"Yeah," Astrid panted.

"Foon?" he turned his attention to the rest, "Morvin? Mr. Copper? Bannakaffalatta?"

"Yes," Bannakaffalatta answered.

"You," the Doctor nodded to the rude man, "What was your name?"

"Ah, Rickston Slade," the man smirked.

"You alright?"

"No thanks to that idiot."

"Don't make me slap you," Evy glared at him at the same time that Astrid said, "The steward just died!"

"Then he's a dead idiot," Rickston waved them off.

Astrid gasped and Evy took a step towards Rickston with every intention of actually smacking him when the Doctor called them all back.

"Alright, calm down," the Doctor said, "Just stay still, all of you. Hold on," he walked over to the hatch opening and looked out, Evy and Astrid going to join him.

"What happened?" Astrid asked, seeing Evy and the Doctor examining it, "How come the shields were down?"

"It wasn't an accident," Evy breathed, she'd been so hoping that she had been wrong, but all evidence said otherwise.

Astrid turned and looked out at space, only to see the bodies of the guests and staff floating amongst the rubble, "How many dead?"

"We're alive," the Doctor replied, "Just focus on that."

"We'll get you out of here, Astrid," Evy reached out and took the girl's hand, sensing her sorrow and fear, "I promise," Astrid nodded.

"If we can get to reception, I've got a spaceship tucked away," the Doctor looked around, trying to determine the best way back, "We can all get on board..."

"Doctor," Evy cut in. He looked at her, but she just pointed outside.

He turned and followed her direction, "Oh."

"What is it?" Astrid looked out, not seeing what was going on, "What's wrong?"
"That's my spaceship over there," the Doctor pointed with Evy.

"Where?"

"There, the box," Evy nodded at the TARDIS floating by, "The blue box."

"That's a spaceship?" Astrid asked incredulously.

"Oi, don't knock it," the Doctor defended.

"It's a bit small."

"Distant too," Evy added.

"Trouble is," the Doctor frowned, "Once it's set adrift, it's programmed to lock onto the nearest center of gravity and that would be..."

"The Earth," Evy finished as they watched the TARDIS fly back to the planet.

She turned away from the portal and walked back to the comm. panel, kneeling down and began fiddling with the wires again.

"What are you doing?" Astrid asked, seeing her walk away. The Doctor turned around as well.

"We can't be the only one's still alive," she reasoned, "The bridge would have to be heavily protected in case of an emergency..." she tweaked a wire, twisting it with another, "I'm just trying to..." there was a small spark which made Astrid jump but Evy grin, she stood up and flicked a button, "There we go."

"Brilliant!" the Doctor grinned, stepping forward and leaning over to the microphone, "Deck 22 to the bridge. Deck 22 to the bridge. Is there anyone there?"

There was the sound of static for just a moment before a voice responded, "This is the bridge."

"Oh hello, sailor," the Doctor breathed a sigh of relief, "Good to hear you. What's the situation up there?"

"We've got air. The oxygen field is holding. But the captain...he's dead. He did it..." his voice broke, "I watched while he took down the shields. There was nothing I could do. I tried. I did try."

Evy elbowed the Doctor out of the way, "Alright. Just stay calm. Tell me your name. What's your name?"

"Midshipman Frame."

"Nice to meet you Mr. Frame," Evy smiled, though she could see the Doctor frowning at her for some reason out of the corner of her eyes and her smile dimmed, "What's the state of the engines?"

"They're um...hold on..."

There was a sudden groan over the speaker, "Have you been injured?" she asked, her eyes wide.

"I'm alright," Frame replied, "Oh my Vot. They're cycling down."

"That's a nuclear storm drive, yes?" the Doctor stepped forward.
"Yeah."

"The moment they're gone, we lose orbit," the Doctor sighed.

"The planet!"

"Oh yes," he nodded, even if Frame couldn't see it, "If we hit the planet, the nuclear storm explodes and wipes out life on Earth."

"Mr. Frame," Evy cut in, "I need you to fire up the engine containment field and feed it back into the core."

"This is never going to work," Frame told them.

"It'll keep the engines going until we can get to the bridge," Evy replied, switching off the comm. and looking up to see the Doctor looking down at her.

She frowned, he was wearing an expression that seemed almost a cross between disappointment and shock. She looked away as the Doctor spun around to face the others. She really had no idea what to make of it.

"We're going to die!" Foon wept.

"Are you saying someone's done this on purpose?" Mr. Copper asked.

"We're just a cruise ship!" Astrid argued.

"Okay, okay," the Doctor cut in, "Tch, tch. First things first. One: we're going to climb through this ship. B…"

"Two," Evy corrected quietly.

"Right, two..." the Doctor amended, smiling at her.

Evy frowned at that, she knew Time Lord mood swings could be extreme, but this was ridiculous! One minute he was disappointed in her, the next he was amused...she wished he would lower his mental shields so she could see what he was thinking. It was driving her mad!

"We're going to reach the bridge," he continued, oblivious to her frustrations, "Three or C: we're going to save the Titanic. And, coming in a very low Four or D or that little 'iv' in brackets they use in footnotes: why? Right then, follow me."

"Hang on a minute," Rickston called, forcing the Doctor to turn around from his dramatic exit,
"Who put you in charge and who the hell are you anyway?"

"I'm the Doctor," he introduced seriously, "I'm a Time Lord. I'm from the planet Gallifrey in the constellation of Kasterborous. I'm 903 years old and I'm the man who's gonna save your lives and all six billion of the people on the planet below. You got a problem with that?"

"No," Rickston nearly gaped.

Evy couldn't help but smile through the Doctor's spiel, she loved it when he got all heroic and speechy around others and all take charge. She could feel her hearts beating rapidly in her chest.

"In that case," the Doctor grinned, "Allons-y!"
He turned on his heel and stalked off down the hall, reaching out and taking Evy's hand in his own as he passed her, pulling her with him as the others followed behind.

They didn't get very far as the only door at the end of the hall was blocked by debris. They managed to clear it, the Doctor pushing it open to reveal a stairwell, littered much worse with debris than the hall had been. Cables were hanging everywhere, sparking.

"Careful," he warned as he pushed through and climbed into the stairwell, "Follow me."

Evy followed after him, the Doctor reaching out a hand to help her through as Astrid came next, then Bannakaffalatta, Mr. Copper, Rickston, and finally Foon and Morvin.

"Rather ironic when this is very much in the spirit of Christmas," Mr. Copper commented as they climbed the stairs, "It's a festival of violence. They say that human beings only survive depending on whether they've been good or bad. It's barbaric."

"That's not true at all," Evy replied as the Doctor began tossing some debris away to clear a path, "Christmas is a time of peace and love and..."

"What are you on about?" the Doctor turned an amused grin back at her, "Christmas is always like this," he laughed at her roll of the eye before turning back to see a dormant robot lying there, partially crushed beneath some rubble, "We've got a Host. Strength of ten. If we can mend it, we can use it to fix the rubble," he looked at Evy, knowing her knack for fixing things, when Morvin called out.

"We can do robotics, both of us!"

"We worked on the milk market back on Sto," Foon explained, "It's all robot staff."

He looked at Evy who shrugged, they would probably have a better chance at fixing a robot they were used to working on than she would trying to figure it out as she went, even if she was pretty fast.

Seeing her train of thought now that her mind was open to him the Doctor nodded to them, "See if you can get it working," he then turned back to Evy and Astrid, "Let's have a look."

Everyone but Morvin and Foon began to climb the stairs only to find their path blocked by more wreckage.

"It's blocked," Astrid frowned.

"So what do we do?" the Doctor asked out loud.

Evy grinned, "We shift it."

"That's the attitude," he returned her grin, "Rickston, Mr. Copper, and you, Bannakaffalatta...look, can I just call you Banna? It's gonna save a lot of time."

"No!" Bannakaffalatta replied, indignant, "Bannakaffalatta!"

"Alright then, Bannakaffalatta, there's a gap in the middle," he nodded at a small path through the rubble, "See if you can get through."

"Easy," the red alien nodded, "Good."

He knelt down and began to crawl through with ease, managing to make it to the other side just as
the ship lurched, sending loose debris falling around them.

"This whole thing could come crashing down any minute!" Rickston shouted.

"Oh, Rickston, I forgot," the Doctor turned to him, "Did you get our message?"

"No," he frowned, "What message?"

"Shut up!" Evy shouted, the man was starting to severely irritate her.

"Bannakaffalatta made it," a voice called from the other side of the path.

"I'm small enough," Astrid said, pushing herself towards the hole and crawling through, "I can get through."

"Careful!" Evy replied.

"I'm fine," Astrid called back.

"Thing is, how are Mr. and Mrs. Fatso gonna get through this gap?" Rickston snorted.

"We make the gap bigger," the Doctor glared at the man, shoving him a piece of metal while Evy watched out for Astrid, "So start."

Evy glanced over at the path down the stairs, knowing that Foon must have heard them, "Don't you dare Foon!" she shouted, startling the men, "Don't you dare listen to him…he's just jealous that we actually want to save you and Morvin and not him!"

The Doctor laughed out loud at that remark, having heard Foon beginning to sniffle, though she was now chuckling.

"That's right," they could hear Morvin agree, "Don't listen to him!"

Evy looked back at the tunnel, seeing Astrid through the other side. She leaned forward, about to muscle her way through as well when the Doctor reached out to stop her, "What are you doing?"

"I'm going to go help Astrid," she replied, but the Doctor didn't let go of her arm, she sighed and turned back. She could already feel another jolt of regeneration coming and with the Doctor looking at her like that, she wouldn't be able to hide it, "There's bound to be a way to clear it from that side, and even with Bannakaffalatta's help she'll need more power, I'm small enough, I can help."

The Doctor frowned at her, worry evident in his eyes, she reached out before she knew what she was doing and rested a hand on his cheek, "I'll be fine, I promise."

He sighed and nodded, letting go of her arm to allow her through. She smiled at him and began to crawl through, getting halfway in before a wave of pain hit her.

"Evy!" Astrid gasped, leaning over to look back and seeing Evy's face scrunched in pain and fearing she'd been hurt in the jolting.

"I'm fine," she hissed, the pain passing. She glanced back to see that the Doctor's attention had been on Rickston who had just made some sort of comment about a donut or something.

She ground her teeth and crawled the rest of the way.
"What's wrong?" Astrid asked, helping her up, "Are you hurt?"

"It's nothing," Evy answered quickly, too quickly if the look Astrid was giving her was anything to go on, "I'll be fine, but we've got to clear this mess first," she leaned over to look through the tunnel, "We should be able to clear it from this side!" she called back to the Doctor, "Tell me if anything starts moving."

"Bannakaffalatta, what's wrong?" she heard Astrid say and turned around to see the small alien lying on the ground.

"Shh," he held up a finger to his mouth.

"What is it?" Evy asked, walking over to kneel on the other side of him with Astrid.

"Can't say," he mumbled.

"Are you hurt?" Astrid asked, moving to check on him.

"Ashamed."

"Of what?" Evy frowned.

"Poor Bannakaffalatta…" he lifted his shirt to reveal cybernetic components.

"You're a cyborg," Evy's eyes widened, not from disgust or anything, but rather shock, she hadn't even noticed.

"Had accident long ago. Secret."

"No, but everything's changed now," Astrid reassured him, "Cyborgs are getting equal rights. They passed a law back on Sto. You can even get married."

"Marry you?" Bannakaffalatta looked between the two of them.

"Taken," Evy responded automatically, "Sort of."

"You can buy me a drink first," Astrid winked.

"Come on," Evy smiled, pressing a button, "Let's get you all charged up."

"Just stay there for a bit," Astrid told him as they got up to get back to clearing.

"Tell no one," he said.

"Promise," Astrid replied as Evy nodded.

"What's going on up there?" the Doctor's voice called back to them.

"I think Bannakaffalatta and Astrid just got engaged," Evy called back.

The Doctor's laugh echoed through the tunnel as Evy and Astrid got back to work clearing the damage.

"Almost done!" Morvin called moments later.

"Good, good, good," the Doctor grinned when the comm. started to crackle, "Mr. Frame, how's things?"
"Doctor, I've got life signs all over the ship but they're going out one by one," Frame informed him.

Evy paused in her ministrations hearing that.

"What is it?" the Doctor asked seriously, "Are they losing air?"

"No," Frame replied, "One of them said it's the Host. It's something to do with the Host."

"It's working!" Morvin called as the robot sprang to life.

"Kill," it said, "Kill. Kill."

"Turn it off!" the Doctor shouted, his voice growing fainter as he ran away from the tunnel.

"Doctor!" Evy shouted.

"I can't, Doctor!" Foon called, trying to shut the robot off.

"Go!" the Doctor ordered.

"What's going on?" Evy leaned down and looked through the tunnel, seeing Foon arrive but the Doctor nowhere to be seen, "Doctor!"

"Locked!" the Doctor shouted back to her, "Double deadlock!"

"Doctor!" Evy yelled, her eyes wide at that bit of information.

"Okay, go upstairs!" the Doctor said to Morvin.

"Run, darling, run!" Foon called down to him.

"Information: kill, kill, kill..." the robot repeated.

"Foon!" Morvin called, the stairs echoing as he rushed up them, "Foon!"

"Rickston!" the Doctor shouted, "Get them through!"

"No chance!" Rickston called back, pushing himself through the narrow tunnel instead.

"You bastard!" Evy shouted at him, stepping back as he pushed her out of the way to get out on their end.

"Rickston!" Mr. Copper called in disgust.

"I'll never get through there," Foon breathed.

"Yes, you can," Evy called back.

"Let me go first," Mr. Copper offered, being slightly bigger than Rickston, he moved in, trying to push away as much debris as he could as he climbed through.

Evy peered through, just managing to see the Doctor reach the comm. panel and breathed a sigh of relief, he was alright.

"It's the Host!" he called into the comm., "They've gone berserk! Are you safe up there?"

There was no reply.
"No, I'm stuck!" Foon called as she tried to push her way in after Mr. Copper.

"Come on, you can do it!" Astrid called, grabbing her arms and pulling.

The tunnel began shifting, Mr. Copper ran to it, grabbing a metal pole as it began to move, using it as a lever to hold the space open, "It's going to collapse!" he called. Evy ran to his side, seeing him struggle with it, and grabbed the pole as well, the two of them widening the space enough for Foon to make it through, "Rickston, Vot damn it, help us!"

"No...way..." Rickston panted.

"Morvin, get through!" the Doctor called from the other side as Morvin tried to squeeze through as well. But he was having a tougher time than Foon.

"Kill," they could hear the robot repeating, drawing nearer, "Kill. Kill."

"Doctor, he's stuck!" Astrid called, grabbing Morvin and trying to pull him as she did Foon.

"Mr. Van Hoff, I know we've only just met but you'll have to excuse me," the Doctor said as Morvin began to move more. Clearly he was shoving the man from the other side.

With a grunt, Morvin made it through.

"That's it," Astrid helped him up, "We've got you."

Evy motioned for Astrid to take her place as she went to kneel by the tunnel, looking through at the Doctor, "Doctor, come on, get through!"

The Doctor rushed into the tunnel just as a robot appeared behind him.

"Information override!" Evy called, the first thing that popped into her mind.

"You will tell me the point of origin of your command structure!" the Doctor finished, seeing the robot hesitate.

"We can't hold it!" Mr. Copper called, straining.

"Information: Deck 31," it answered.

"Thank you," the Doctor smiled as Evy grabbed his arm and half pulled him through the tunnel. He scrambled the rest of the way, getting up to take Mr. Copper's place. He hesitated a moment, waiting for the right time before shouting, "Let go!"

He and Astrid released the pole, the beam it had been holding up crashing down onto the robot's head. Everyone took a moment to collect their breath before walking through the nearest door, finding themselves in a kitchen.

"Morvin, look, food!" Foon shouted, catching sight of a pile of leftovers on a table.

"Oh great," Rickston commented, rolling his eyes, "Someone's happy."

"Don't have any then," Morvin shot back at the man.

Evy ignored the bickering, despite how desperately she wanted to smack the man with the frying pan she had caught sight of, to head to the comm. link. She flicked a button, calling the bridge, "Mr. Frame are you still there?"
"Yes, ma'am, but I've got Host outside," Frame replied, "I sealed the door."

"They've been programmed to kill," the Doctor informed him, coming up beside Evy. "Why would anyone do that?"

"That's not the only problem, Doctor, I had to use a maximum deadlock on the door, which means...no one can get in. I'm sealed off. Even if you can fix the Titanic, you can't get to the bridge."

"Yeah, right, fine," the Doctor nodded, "One problem at a time. What's on Deck 31?"

"Um, that's down below," Frame answered, bringing up a schematic for them to see, "It's nothing. It's just the Host storage deck. That's where we keep the robots."

"What's that?" Evy frowned, pointing at a section of the schematic, a long black rectangle. The Doctor put on his specs, squinting, "See that panel?" Evy looked up at him, tapping the screen, "Black. It's registering nothing. No power, no heat, no light."

"Never seen it before," Frame commented.

"100 percent shielded," Evy added.

"What's down there?" the Doctor asked in thought.

"I'll try intensifying the scanner," Frame told them.

"Let me know if you find anything," the Doctor said, taking off his specs, "And keep those engines going!"

"Saved you some," Astrid called, going up to them with a tray of food, "You might be a Time King from Gaddabee but you need to eat," she smiled at Evy, "And you too, us humans can't go too long either."

"Thanks," Evy smiled, taking the food and sitting down next to the Doctor, "But I'm sort of like him," she nodded at the Doctor.

Astrid's eyes widened, "You're a Time Queen?"


Astrid sat back a little, letting out a breath, "I should have known."

"What do you mean?" Evy asked, taking a small piece of fruit to eat.

"Well, you're with him, aren't you?" Astrid asked, nodding at the Doctor, "And you're far too beautiful to be a human."

Evy frowned, she really needed to see a mirror and figure out why everyone kept looking at her longer than necessary. She couldn't be that pretty by any stretch of the imagination, none of her previous regenerations were.

"So..." Astrid trailed, looking for something to say, "You look good for 903."

"You should see him in the mornings," Evy swallowed a piece of fruit.

"Hey!" the Doctor cried indignantly, "I'm not that bad."
"Oh, so you didn't just about give Martha heart attack when you walked into the kitchen that one time?" she raised an eyebrow at him, "Your hair all mussed, bags under your eyes, a bit of drool…"

"Oi!" he cut in, looking a bit embarrassed.

Evy just shook her head and laughed to herself with Astrid laughing out loud.

"Doctor, Miss Evy," Mr. Copper interrupted lightly, coming over to them, "It must be well past midnight, Earth time. Christmas Day."

"So it is," the Doctor nodded.

"Merry Christmas," Evy greeted.

"This Christmas thing, what's it all about?" Astrid frowned, sensing that everything Mr. Copper had been spouting before had been quite wrong judging by Evy and the Doctor's reaction.

"Long story," the Doctor replied, smirking at Evy, "We should know, we were there, well, us and another friend of ours. We got the last room."

"I still can't believe you made us do that!" Evy commented, "That poor woman giving birth in a manger and you…"

"If we hadn't taken that room then the whole of Christian mythology would have been altered."

"Well, it's my opinion that something like that shouldn't be a fixed event in time. Honestly! Making women…"

"Next time we encounter a virgin giving birth to a child that will become the next messiah of a major monotheistic religion, I'll take the manger," he rolled his eyes playfully at her, knowing he'd have to stop the argument before it got started. There were always ongoing debates on Gallifrey about exactly what could constitute a fixed point in time, if it could be altered just a bit without throwing off the whole of time itself, and so on. Even though they couldn't have the conversation now, what with crazy robots after them, he looked forward to having just such a debate one day, "Happy?"

She nodded.

"But if the planet's waking up, can't we signal them?" Mr. Copper asked, "They can send up a rocket or something."

"They don't have spaceships," Evy informed him.

"No, I read about it. They have shuffles, space shuffles."

The Doctor looked at Evy for a moment before they turned their attention back to him, "Mr. Copper," the Doctor hesitated, "This degree in Earthonomics...where's it from?"

"Honestly?" he asked, sitting down.

"Just between us," he promised.

"Mrs. Golightly's Happy Travelling University and Dry Cleaners," he answered, mopping his head with a hanky.

"I knew it," Evy whispered quietly so that only the Doctor could hear her.
"You…you lied to the company...to get the job?" Astrid's eyes widened.

"I…I wasted my life on Sto," he admitted, "I was a travelling salesman, always on the road and I reached retirement with nothing to show for it. Not even a home. And Earth sounded so exotic."

"Hmm, I suppose it is, yeah," the Doctor mumbled, lost in thought.

"How come you know it so well?" Astrid looked at them.

"We sort of...found ourselves homeless, a few years ago," Evy answered, taking the Doctor's hand and squeezing it reassuringly, she didn't blame him at all for what happened on Gallifrey, she really couldn't, not with the hand she and her family had played in it all.

The Doctor nodded, "And um, there was the Earth."

"Thing is, if we survive this, there will be police and all sorts of investigations," Mr. Copper continued, "Now the minimum penalty for space-age fraud is ten years in jail. I'm an old man. Well, I won't survive ten years."

Astrid looked at the old man sadly while the Doctor and Evy shared a slightly conspiratorial look, as though both coming to the same idea. Evy turned to the man, about to speak when there was a fierce banging on the door.

The Doctor was up and on his feet before Evy could even put the food in her hand down. He ran to the door on the opposite end of the room, "A Host! Move! Come on!"

The pounding continued, creating dents in the door. Astrid screamed as they all raced to follow the Doctor. He pulled out the sonic screwdriver and flashed the door, opening it to reveal a large space with a large fire at the bottom, the engines, and only a makeshift bridge, a fallen strut, as the way across.

"Is that the only way across?" Rickston glancing around.

"On the other hand, it is a way across," the Doctor responded optimistically.

"The engines are open," Astrid looked down.

"Nuclear storm drive," Evy commented, kneeling at the edge and leaning over, holding onto a railing to support herself, "As soon as that stops, the Titanic falls to Earth."

"But that thing," Morvin focused on the beam as he held onto his wife, "It'll never take our weight."

"You're going last, mate," Rickston commented.

"It's nitrofine metal," Evy glared up at him, pulling herself up.

"It's stronger than it looks," the Doctor agreed.

"All the same, Rickston's right," Morvin stressed, taking a step forward, "Me and Foon should…" he took another step, right on a weak piece of metal near the edge…the railing gave way and Morvin fell off the ledge and towards the engines, his scream echoing up to them.

"Morvin!" Foon shouted, reaching for him, but unable to move as Evy had rushed to her side to hold her back.
"I told you!" Rickston shouted as everyone watched in horror, "I told you!"

"Just shut up!" Mr. Copper snapped, "Shut up!"

Foon fell to her knees, taking Evy with her as the Doctor rushed over to them, "Bring him back!"
Foon begged, looking between Evy and the Doctor, "Can't you bring him back? Bring him back, Doctor!"

"I'm sorry, I can't," he frowned.

"You promised me!" Foon cried.

"I know," he looked away, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry."

There was a bang on the door, the Host had found them.

Chapter End Notes

Poor Evy, having to deal with her regeneration, her new personality, and the mental 'silent treatment' from the Doctor. But, awww, he cares...when he's not going through mood swings and confusing her lol.

Next chapter will see Evy discover a new reaction to the Doctor being an idiot, the Doctor gets a lesson in using plurals, Evy attempts the impossible (will she succeed?), and someone has a breakdown.
"Doctor, I rather think those things have got our scent," Mr. Copper said as the banging of the Host reached them.

"I'm not waiting," Rickston replied, starting across the makeshift bridge.

"Careful!" the Doctor called, getting up and rushing around the group to watch Rickston, "Take it slowly!"

There was a rumble as the ship rocked, nearly knocking Rickston off the beam.

"Damn it!" Evy hissed, drawing Foon and Astrid's attention, "So close," she didn't actually wish death on the man, but he was seriously gnawing at her last nerve, which was hard to do considering the patience of a Time Lord.

"Vot help me," Rickston mumbled.

"You're okay," the Doctor told him, "One step at a time. Come on, you can do it."

"Kill," they could hear the robots repeating as they drew closer, "Kill. Kill."

"They're getting nearer!" Mr. Copper shouted.

"Doctor," Evy twisted to face him, "Seal us in."

He looked at her a moment before nodding and whipping out the sonic, flashing the door to do just that.

"Leaving us trapped, wouldn't you say?" Mr. Copper asked.

"Never say trapped, just inconveniently circumstanced," the Doctor replied.

"Oh," Mr. Copper nodded.

"I'm ok!" Rickston called, as though they cared. He was halfway across.

"Maybe he's alright," Foon mumbled. Evy looked back down as she and Astrid hugged the woman, "Maybe…maybe there's a gravity curve down there or something. I don't know. Maybe he's unconscious."

"I'm sorry, Foon," Astrid began, tears in her eyes as she hugged her more.

"He's gone," Evy confirmed.

"What am I going to do without him?" Foon cried desperately, breaking down between them. Astrid and Evy shared a concerned look before hugging the woman as best they could.

"Yes!" Rickston shouted, making it across, "Oh yes! Who's good?"

"Bannakaffalatta, you go next," the Doctor ordered.
"Bannakaffalatta small," the alien agreed.

"Slowly!" the Doctor warned as the alien tried to scamper across. Bannakaffalatta slowed down, being more careful.

The robots pounded on the door.

"They've found us!" Mr. Copper called.

"Astrid," the Doctor reached out, pulling Astrid up, "Get across right now."

"What about you?" she asked, looking at him and Evy.

"We'll be fine," Evy assured her, rocking Foon a bit.

"Just do it," the Doctor pushed her, "Go on," she started across, "Mr. Copper, we can't wait. Don't argue," he nudged Copper towards the beam as well. He turned to Evy and Foon, nodding at Evy who began to heft the woman up, "Foon, you've got to get across right now."

"What for?" she mumbled brokenly, "What am I gonna do without him?"

"Doctor!" Rickston called, "The door's locked!"

"You're gonna live," Evy told the woman.

"Just think...what would he want, eh?" the Doctor agreed.

"He don't want nothing, he's dead!" she sobbed.

"You think he'd want you to die too?" Evy asked, stepping in front of the woman and lifting her face, "Is that really what you think he'd want?"

"Doctor, I can't open the door," Rickston called, "We need the whirring key thing of yours!"

The Doctor looked torn between the two groups of people, the humans trying to survive or the woman he knew was his Link who seemed unwilling to leave Foon. He reached out towards Evy, gently taking her arm, but she wrenched free, "I'm not leaving her," she stated.

"She'll get us all killed if we can't get out!" Rickston called over to them, seeing them hesitate.

"I can't leave you," the Doctor admitted, "Please Evy," he whispered, resting his forehead against the back of her head, "I can't lose you too, I...I can't be the last one again..."

Evy let out a breath, shaking her head a bit before turning her attention back to Foon, "Foon," she lifted the woman's head again, looking her straight in the eyes, "We are coming back for you, alright?" she left no room for argument from the Doctor with her tone, not that he would argue, he wanted to help the woman just as much as she did.

Foon nodded and the Doctor gently pulled Evy away from her and towards the beam. He sent her across first, following close behind, both trying to ignore the metal creaking under the weight of all five of them crossing.

"Too many people!" Bannakaffalatta called back.

"Oi!" the Doctor yelled back, "Don't get spiky with me! Keep going!"
"It's gonna fall!" Astrid shouted.

"It's settling!" Evy reassured her, "Just keep going!"

Suddenly it became very quiet, the pounding stopping.

Evy tensed, "Doctor..." she looked over her shoulder at him, "Why's it stopped?"

"They've stopped!" Astrid shouted, happily.

"Gone away?" Bannakaffalatta frowned.

"Why would they give up?" the Doctor asked himself.

"I don't think they have," Evy shook her head, they had to be up to something.

"Never mind that," Rickston called, "Keep coming!"

"Where have they gone?" the Doctor looked back at the door for a moment before turning to Evy as though she would have the answer, "Where are the Host?"

She could only shake her head, she had no idea.

"I'm afraid..." Mr. Copper's voice drifted over to them, "...we forgot the tradition of Christmas..."

they looked over at him to see him staring up, "That angels have wings!"

He pointed and they all looked up to see the robots gliding down from above and circling them.

"Information: kill," they said, reaching for their halos.

"Doctor..." Evy mumbled, he looked over at her as he stood up, "When we get back to the TARDIS...I'm burning that suit."

He would have laughed at her had the robots not moved to the ready, preparing themselves to throw their halos, "Arm yourselves!" he shouted to the rest, "All of you!"

Everyone reached around them for pipes and bits of metal to defend themselves with as the robots threw their halos. Evy grabbed a fairly light pipe and slammed a halo with it, batting it away. She twisted the metal with her wrist, prepared and ready to hit the next one. She was doing slightly better than the rest of the group, having managed to hit a halo back at the robot it came from, cutting off its head. But her attention was broken by a grunt from behind her. She turned to see a halo flying past the Doctor, him holding his arm as he was grazed.

"Doctor!" she called, "Are you alright?"

"I'm fine," he groaned, swinging the pipe and smashing a halo away again.

As Evy turned around to focus on the disks, one flew right past her. She managed to lean over enough to avoid it, but it was too much, she fell off the side of the beam.

"Evy!" the Doctor shouted, reaching out for her, but a disk flew past him. He stumbled back, managing to catch his footing and looked over to see that Evy had managed to grab onto the edge of the beam. He ran to her side and began pulling her up.

She gasped as she managed to climb back onto the beam as Mr. Copper called out as well. Evy looked over to see Astrid falling to her knees, "I can't," the young woman gasped.
Bannakaffalatta stood up, "Bannakaffalatta stop! Bannakaffalatta proud! Bannakaffalatta cyborg!"

They watched in awe as the small alien lifted his shirt, discharging energy, completely disabling the robots which all fell into the engines below save one that fell onto the beam just behind the Doctor.

"Electromagnetic pulse short circuited them," Evy gasped, looking over the Doctor's shoulders as he held her to him. She almost breathed a sigh of relief when another wave of regenerative pain hit her, she tensed.

"Oh, Bannakaffalatta, that was brilliant!" the Doctor called, his arms still around Evy, who was shaking just a bit in his arms. He rubbed her arm, trying to calm her down, assuming she was shaken from their close encounter with the Host.

But then Bannakaffalatta fell back, Astrid scrambling to his side, "He's used all his power!" she called back to them.

"Did good?" the small alien asked, looking up at Astrid.

"You saved our lives," she told him.

"Bannakaffalatta happy," he smiled.

"We can recharge you, get you to a power point and just plug you in!" Astrid moved to press a button on his stomach but the alien laid a hand on hers.

"Too late."

"No, but...you gotta get me that drink, remember?" Astrid tried to smile even as her voice broke.

The Doctor's arms tightened around Evy as he watched the interaction between the woman and alien, Evy shifted in his arms, relaxing from the pain as she turned to face Astrid and Bannakaffalatta as well.

"Pretty girl," Bannakaffalatta murmured before his eyes fluttered closed.

Evy squeezed the Doctor's arms in comfort as they watched Astrid move to button up his little shirt. Mr. Copper reached out and stopped her a moment, his hand lingering over the cybernetic power source, "I'm sorry," he muttered, "Forgive me."

"Leave him alone," Astrid defended, trying to button the shirt up again.

"It's the EMP transmitter," Mr. Copper explained, pulling it out, "He...he'd want us to use it. I used to sell these things. They'd always give me a bed for the night in the cyborg caravans. They're good people. But if we can recharge it, we can reuse it as a weapon against the rest of the Host. Bannakaffalatta might have saved us all."

"Do you think?" Rickston called out to them, "Try telling him that!" he pointed behind them and they turned to see the fallen robot beginning to move.

"Information: reboot," it said as it stood up.

"Use the EMP!"

"It's dead!" Mr. Copper replied.
"It's gotta have emergency…" Astrid began, trying to take the EMP from Mr. Copper as the Doctor turned around to face the robot, trying to keep Evy behind him.

"No, no, no," he held up his hands as he faced it, "Hold on. Override loophole security protocol…10! 666!"

"Doctor!" Evy shouted, trying to get around him.

"Oh," he continued, "21, 4, 5!"

"Doctor!" she tried again.

"6, 7, 8," he ignored her, "Um, I dunno, 42!"

"1!" Evy shouted moments before the robot could slash the Doctor.

It stopped mid-motion and stood passively, Evy could practically feel the Doctor droop in front of her in relief as the robot spoke, "Information: state request."

"Good…right," the Doctor nodded slowly, "You've been ordered to kill the survivors, but why?"

"Information: no witnesses."

"But this ship's gonna fall on the Earth and kill everyone. The human race have nothing to do with the Titanic so that contravenes your orders, yes?"

"Information: incorrect."

"But why do you want to destroy the Earth?" Evy peeked around his arms.

"Information: it is the plan."

"What plan?" the Doctor frowned.

"Information: protocol grants you only three questions. These three questions have been used."

"Well, you could have warned me," the Doctor grumbled.

"Information: now you will die," the robot readied to strike the Doctor once more when suddenly a lasso was thrown over its head and tightened.

"You're coming with me," Foon said, nodding at the Doctor and Evy before closing her eyes and jumping over the side of the beam, taking the robot with her.

"No!" Evy shouted, reaching for the woman, but the Doctor held her back, "Foon!"

They could only watch, helpless, as Foon fell and disappeared in the fire of the engines. Evy let out a shuddered breath as she closed her eyes, almost as though willing that event to have not transpired.

"No more," the Doctor mumbled in her ear as he hugged her tightly to him for a moment, "No more."

He reached out, taking her hand before gently pulling her away from the edge and towards the rest of the group who had begun climbing to platform where Rickston was standing.
The Doctor used the sonic to open the doors and they found themselves in another maintenance corridor, "Right," he looked around, "Get up to Reception One. Once you're there, Mr. Copper, you've got staff access to the computer. Try and find a way of transmitting an SOS," he turned to Astrid, holding out the EMP, "Astrid, you're in charge of this. Once it's powered up, it'll take out Hosts within fifty yards but then it needs sixty seconds to recharge. Got it?" he turned to Rickston, giving him the sonic, "Rickston, take this, I've preset it. Just hold down that button. It'll open doors. Do not lose it! You got that?" Rickston nodded, "Now go and open the next door. Go on! Go!"

"Alright!" Rickston turned and ran down the hall.

The Doctor reached down and picked up a First Aid kit, handing it to Evy, "I need you to look after them," he told her, "Keep them fighting fit and…"

"No," Evy said as the Doctor continued.

He spun around to face her again as she handed the kit off to Mr. Copper, "What?"

"I'm going with you Doctor," she stated firmly.

"No, you're not," he walked up to her, "I need you to stay here, stay safe…"

"While you go and run to face the danger?" she glared at him, "I've already told you Doctor, I'm going to look after you no matter what and that means I'm going with you."

"You're not coming with us?" Astrid looked between the two, a bit frightened.

The Doctor sighed, "There's something on Deck 31. I'm…"

"We're," Evy stressed.

The Doctor looked back over at her, about to say something, when he suddenly paused. The look on her face, it was a look he'd seen on many soldiers on the front lines of the Time War. She was determined like nothing else. She would go with him if she had to shackle herself to him. He sighed, "We're," he agreed, "Gonna find out what it is."

"Astrid," Evy turned to the woman, "Where's the power point?"

"Under the comms.," Astrid answered, nodding to the side.

Evy took her hand and ran over to the power point, she knelt down, pulling Astrid along and held the EMP up to it, showing her how to recharge it, "When it's ready, that blue light comes on there."

Astrid frowned, "What if you meet a Host?" she was very concerned for the lives of her two new friends.

"Well, then I'll…" the Doctor began.

"We'll," Evy corrected again.

"We'll," he amended, "Just…have some fun, eh?"

"Sounds like you do this kind of thing all the time," Astrid commented, standing.

"All the time," Evy agreed.
"Not by choice," the Doctor defended, "All we do is travel. That's what I am, just a traveler. Imagine it. No tax, no bills, no boss, just the open sky."

"I'm sort of...unemployed now and I was thinking the blue box is kinda small, but I could kinda squeeze in," Astrid began, blushing and looking down.

"Like a stowaway," Evy smiled.

"It's not always safe," the Doctor warned.

"You need someone to take care of you," she looked between them, but her gaze lingered on Evy. She'd seen something off about the girl from the first few moments she met them, there was something going on, something painful that she didn't want the Doctor to know. If she had another person around, she could help, "I've got no one back on Sto, no family, just me. So what do you think? Can I come with you?"

The Doctor paused a moment, considering it, before looking at Evy. The girl's smile just widened as she saw the Doctor giving her the chance to help him make the choice, as though there were one, "I'd like that."

The Doctor began to smile too and turned to Astrid, nodding, "Yes."

The ship lurched again, shaking the passengers.

"Mr. Frame, you still with us?" Evy called into the comm. beside her.

"It's the engines, ma'am," Frame responded, strained, "Final phase. There's nothing more I can do. We've got only eight minutes left!"

"Don't worry, I..." the Doctor began but cut off when Evy glared at him, "We'll get there."

"The bridge is sealed off!"

"Yeah, yeah, working on it. We'll get there Mr. Frame, somehow."

The EMP lit up, "All charged up?" Evy looked down at it before nodding to herself.

"Mr. Copper, look after her," the Doctor ordered gently, "Astrid, look after him. Rickston, um...look after yourself."

"We'll see you again," Evy swore, crossing her hearts, "Promise."

They turned to leave when Astrid called out to them, "Wait!"

The Doctor turned to see Astrid running towards them, "We've really got to go."

"Just wait a minute!" Astrid shouted, before lunging at them and pulling them into a tight hug, "Be careful!"

Evy pulled away after a moment, smiling gently at the girl, "You as well."

The Doctor nodded, taking Evy's hand and pulling her down the hall. They ran around a corner and down another hall, ending up in another kitchen, only to come face-to-face with four robots. The Doctor looked around quickly before picking up a large pot to use for a weapon and pushing Evy behind him.
"Wait, wait, wait, wait!" he shouted.

"Security protocol one!" Evy called at the same time.

"Do you hear that?" he looked around, "One! One!" the robots stopped advancing, standing passively. He let out a breath of relief, putting down the pan, "Ok, that gives me three questions. Three questions to save my life, am I right?"

"Information: correct."

"Doctor!" Evy shouted at the waste of a question.

"No, that wasn't one of them," he defended, "I didn't mean it. That's not fair. Can I start again?"

"Information: no."

Suddenly there was a sharp pain on the back of his head. He flinched and turned around to see Evy, standing there, looking at her hand in shock, "Did you just…smack me?"

"Upside the head," Evy nodded, distracted, "Yeah."

"Why?" he frowned, completely confused.

"You were being an idiot," she answered, as though it were obvious.

"And you decided that was a good reason to smack me?"

"Apparently!"

He looked back to see that the robots were still standing there, seeming to have known his last two questions were not directed at them. He looked at Evy, deciding to leave that discussion for another time.

"One question left, one question," he spun around, running a hand through his hair before facing the robots, "So, you've been given orders to kill the survivors but survivors must therefore be passengers or staff, but not me."

"Us," she corrected once again.

"Us," he amended, wincing, it would take a while before he could fully realize that he truly wasn't alone anymore…it just felt so strange, "We're not passengers. We're not staff. Go on, scan us. You must have bio-records. No such persons on board," the robots looked up as they finished their scans, "We don't exist therefore..."

"You can't kill us," Evy finished, "We're stowaways and stowaways should be arrested and…"

"Taken to the nearest figure of authority," he nodded, grinning a bit, it was actually quite fun to be able to bounce ideas off of someone else, someone who could actually keep up.

"And the nearest figure of authority must be on Deck 31," she grinned as well.

"Final question," he turned to the robots, "Are we right?"

"Information: correct."

"Brilliant," he laughed, "Take me to your leader," he looked over at Evy who just rolled her eyes at
him, "I've always wanted to say that."

"I know," she replied as a robot took hold of their arms and led them out of the kitchens and down to Deck 31.

~8~

Astrid, Mr. Copper, and Rickston ran into the main lobby, to reception, Astrid using the EMP to take out the robots waiting there.

"Rickston, seal the doors, make the room secure," Astrid ordered, taking command, "Mr. Copper, keep an eye on the Host," she handed him the EMP before rushing over to the computer. "I need to check the computer. We need that SOS," she fiddled with the computer but it was down for now. She slammed her fist against it in frustration before turning to see the teleport bracelets stacked there. She ran for the comm. link, "Bridge, this is Reception!"

"Who's there?" Frame responded.

"Astrid Peth. I was with the Doctor and Evy. Tell me, can you divert power to the teleport system?"

"No way. I'm using everything I got to keep the engines running."

"It's just one trip. I need to get to Deck 31."

"And I'm telling you no."

"Mr. Frame..." Astrid took a breath, trying to control herself, "This is for the Doctor, for Evy. They've gone down there on their own, and I...I can't just leave them. They've done everything they can to save us. And...and Evy..." she dropped her voice just a bit, "She's hurt...I don't know by what, but she's in a lot of pain and...I'm worried she won't be able to make it. She needs help. Please, it's time we did something to help them, to help her."

There was silence for a moment before Frame came back online, "Giving you power."

~8~

The two Time Lords were pulled into the storage facility on Deck 31, more structural damage around them than they expected for the place having been so fortified on the scans of the ship, small fires had even begun to spring up.

"Now that is what you call a fixer-upper," the Doctor commented, looking around, "Come on then, Host with the most, this ultimate authority of yours, who is it?" just then two doors slid open as he and Evy spun around, "Ooh, that's clever. That's an omnistate impact chamber. Indestructible. You can survive anything in that, eh?"

A vehicle started to wheel out as Evy continued the Doctor's line of thought, "You could sit through a supernova or a shipwreck. But only one person could have the power and the money to hide themselves onboard like this and we should know, because..."

"My name...is Max," the head of Max Capricorn said, coming in full view to show them his head attached to a life support system. He smiled, his gold tooth glinting.

"It really does that?" Evy asked, her eyes just slightly wide at how comical and ridiculous that was.

"Who the hell are they?" Max spat, seeing the two standing there.
"I'm the Doctor," the Doctor grinned, "And this is Evy. Hello."

"Information: stowaways," a robot added.

"Kill them," Max ordered.

The Doctor's eyes widened and flashed to Evy before he tried to step towards Max only to be held back by the robots, "Oh, no, no! Wait, but you can't. Not now. Come on, Max...you've given me so much good material like...how to get ahead in business!" he looked around but no one looked very impressed, Evy was just staring at him as though he'd gone insane, "See 'head?' Head in business?" he tried, looking at Evy, "No?"

"No," she shook her head, "Don't...just don't."

He pouted a bit.

"Oh, ho ho, the office joker," Max said after a moment, "I like a funny man. No one's been funny with me for years."

"I wonder why?" Evy replied a bit sarcastically.

"176 years of running the company have taken their toll."

"Yeah, but...nice wheels," the Doctor grinned.

"No, a life-support system in a society that despises cyborgs. I've had to hide away for years. Running the company by hologram. Host, situation report."

"Information: Titanic is still in orbit," the only robot not holding one of them back replied.

"Let me see," Max wheeled himself forward, the Doctor managing to pull himself from the grip of the robots to go stand next to the man by the edge, staring down at the engines, "We should have crashed by now. What's gone wrong?" Max looked down to see the engines still burning, "The engines are still running! They should have stopped!"

"When they do, the Earth will be destroyed," Evy called back, struggling a bit in the robot's grasp. The prolonged regenerative pains were taking their toll on her. She was exhausted, physically, emotionally, but she could also feel the regenerative afterglow fading within her, being burned up by her body...a severe alternative to allowing it to just disperse into the Universe but she would bear it.

"I don't understand," the Doctor shook his head, "What's the Earth got to do with it?"

"This interview is terminated," Max wheeled away.

"No, no, no, no, no!" the Doctor called, rushing in front of them, his back to Evy.

Evy let out a bit of a groan, hunching over in the robot's grip as a pain hit her. She scrunched her eyes shut, willing the pain to go away before the Doctor could see her...unbeknownst to her, another set of eyes had seen her plight.

Astrid crept around a corner and peeked through, her eyes widening as she saw the Doctor talking to a cyborg while Evy seemed in a great deal of pain.

"Hold on!" the Doctor shouted, holding out a hand to stop Max, "Hold on! Hold on! Wait! Wait! Wait! Wait! Wait! I can work it out. It's like a task. I'm your apprentice. Just watch me.
So...business is failing and you wreck the ship so that makes things even worse. Oh yes! No. Yes. The business isn't failing…"

"It's failed," Evy said, straightening up, though there was a small layer of sweat on her brow, "Past tense."

The Doctor looked back at her and nodded, just as he suspected.

"My own board voted me out," Max grumbled, "Stabbed me in the back."

"If you had a back," he commented, "So...you scupper the ship, wipe out any survivors in case anyone's rumbled you and the board find their shares halved in value. Oh, but that's not enough. No, 'cos if a Max Capricorn ship hits the Earth, it destroys an entire planet. Outrage back home. Scandal! The business is wiped out."

"And...the whole board thrown in jail for mass murder."

"While you sit there, safe inside that impact chamber," Evy finished.

"I have men waiting to retrieve me from the ruins and enough off-world accounts to retire me to the beaches of Pentaxico Two where the ladies, so I'm told, are very fond of...metal," Max leered, catching sight of Evy, "But perhaps, I should take a companion with me, it should be quite a long wait till they dig through the rubble."

Unconsciously, the Doctor's eyes narrowed and he stepped in front of Evy, blocking the cyborg's view of her, "So that's the plan," he half spat, indignant not only at his lack of respect for human life, but for his intentions with Evy, "A retirement plan. 2,000 on this ship, 6 billion underneath us, all of them slaughtered. And why? Because Max Capricorn is a loser."

"I never lose."

"You can't even sink the Titanic," the Doctor retorted, a bit smug.

"Oh, but I can, Doctor. I can cancel the engines from here."

Suddenly alarms began to sound.

"You can't do this!" Evy shouted, staring at the man in horror, 6 billion people were about to burn because of one man's inferiority complex.

The Doctor, seeming to be of the same mind, tried to lunge at the cyborg, "Host, hold him," Max ordered.

Two robots stepped forward and grabbed him by the arms, pulling him back to stand by Evy, still struggling in her robot's grip.

"Not so clever now, Doctor," Max laughed, "A shame we couldn't work together. You're rather good..." his gaze turned to Evy, "Rather smart..." the girl had the feeling he wasn't talking about her brains at all, "All that banter yet not a word wasted. Time for me to retire. The Titanic is falling. The sky will burn. Let the Christmas inferno commence. Oh! Oh, Host! Kill them."

The one robot not holding them stepped forward, removing its halo as it moved to stand in front of the Doctor, preparing to strike.

"Mr. Capricorn!" someone shouted. They all looked over to see Astrid sitting in a forklift, "I
She started the forklift and rushed at the cyborg.

"Astrid don't!" Evy shouted, seeing what the woman was planning to do.

Astrid managed to get the front of the forklift under Max's life-support unit and continued to ram him, trying to push him back but having no luck. The robot turned away from the Doctor and moved to throw its halo at Astrid, just barely missing her and hitting the frame of the forklift.

"He's cut the break line!" the Doctor shouted, his eyes wide in horror, Astrid wouldn't be able to stop now.

Astrid looked over at the Doctor and then to Evy, an understanding passing between the three of them.

"No!" he yelled as Astrid turned back and raised the lift higher, lifting Max off the ground enough where he lost traction. She stepped on the gas, driving Max back until they both fell over the edge.

"Astrid!" Evy called, breaking from her robot and running to the edge, kneeling down and looking over as the Doctor did the same.

They watched in horror as she fell towards the engines, all the while reaching up towards them.

The Doctor looked over at Evy who was staring down the ledge in shock, shaking like a leaf. He reached out, putting an arm around her. It took her a moment to associate the hug with the Doctor before she turned and buried her face in his chest as she returned the hug.

She didn't have long to take comfort in the Doctor's embrace as the ship jolted terribly, reminding them that there was still the failing engines to deal with, "You alright?" he asked, pulling away but his hands were on her cheeks, forcing her to look up at him. She nodded, standing up with him as he turned and led them back towards the containment area Max had built for himself where the robots were now waiting.

He hesitated, eyeing them warily, but the main robot put its halo back on its head and turned to face them, waiting.

"Their programming," Evy said, her voice a bit hoarse, "Highest authority gone, moves onto the second in command…" she glanced up at the Doctor, trying to smile, "I think that's you."

"Oh," the Doctor's eyes widened as he looked at the robots, "Isn't that wizard?"

He stepped forward, holding out his arms at his sides, the robots stepping forward to stand on either side of him, taking his arms in their own. He looked over at Evy and nodded. She stepped forward as well, putting her arms around his neck and hugging herself to him as he wrapped his arms around her. He lifted a hand, snapping his fingers before returning to the hold as the robots began to fly up. They gained speed and held an arm up, crashing straight through a floor and into the main control room of the bridge.

"Deadlock broken," the computer stated.

"Ah, Midshipman Frame at last!" the Doctor called as he and Evy climbed up from the hole in the floor to greet him.

"Uh, but…but the Host!" his eyes widened, seeing the robots sitting there.
"Controller dead they divert to the next highest authority and that's me," the Doctor grinned, Evy elbowed him lightly in his side.

"There's nothing we can do. There's no power. The ship's gonna fall."

"Titanic falling," the computer repeated him.

"Yes, thank you," Evy glared up at the computer before stepping past the men and going to the far control panel, checking on the power and damage.

The ship jolted as the Doctor ran to the main wheel, "What's your first name?" he looked over at Frame.

"Alonzo," he replied.

"You're joking!" Evy turned to look at the man in shock as the Doctor turned in surprise and, at the same time as Evy, said, "You're kidding me."

"What?" he looked between the two of them, confused.

"There's something else I've always wanted to say," the Doctor breathed before grinning, "Allons-y Alonzo! Wha!"

He spun the wheel as the ship lurched dramatically, falling straight towards the Earth's atmosphere. Frame screamed as the Doctor fought to control the wheel. An alarm sounded and the Doctor reached out a foot to try and check it, but Evy had beaten him to it, punching the button for the computer to show the impact zone to be London.

"Oh come on!" Evy shouted, before grabbing the comm. link and dialing out, "Hello, yes...could you get me Buckingham Palace please?" there was some sort of commotion on the other end as Evy held the phone away from her a moment before putting it back to her ear, "No, you listen to me! My name's Evy, I'm travelling with the Doctor, look you've got to institute Security Code 771! Get out of there!"

And then, to the confusion of Frame, Evy disappeared beneath the control panel as he and the Doctor stared out the window at the Earth growing larger at an alarming rate.

Moments later something happened.

"Now!" Evy shouted from beneath the panel. And suddenly the panels began to light up and there was a loud rumbling from the middle of the ship.

"Engine active," the computer announced, "Engine active."

The Doctor pulled the wheel back, sending Frame flying back against the wall while Evy grabbed onto the control panel. They watched as the ship barely managed to miss Buckingham Palace, sailing right over the top of it. The Doctor gasped, unable to believe his luck as he looked down at Evy who just smiled in relief.

Then a bell began to ring. They looked back to see Frame ringing the ship's bell, "Whoo-hoo!"

The Doctor and Evy laughed, "Whoo-hoo-hoo!" the Doctor joined in.

Evy rolled her eyes and walked over to Frame, putting a hand on his shoulder and leading him to sit against the wall, it was only too clear to her that, despite his relief, he was still injured. The Doctor
continued to get the ship heading back to the safety of space while Evy examined the man's wound.

~8~

"Nothing too bad Mr. Frame," Evy told the man, pulling his shirt back down, after wrapping the wound with some cloth torn from her dress, "The shot passed straight through, didn't hit an artery or any organs either, very lucky. It'll be a bit painful till you can get it stitched up, but you'll be just fine."

She smiled and patted Frame on the shoulder, moving to sit next to him as the Doctor joined them.

He looked straight at Evy as she looked away, but his gaze lingered until she rolled her eyes, "All I did was reconnect the steering so that you'd be able to pull up. It was disconnected during the initial hit. You could turn the ship well enough but that was about it."

He nodded, he'd been wondering why none of his attempts at pulling the ship out of its dive had been working till the last moment. He turned to Frame, "Used the heat of re-entry to fire up the secondary storm drive," the Doctor told him, "Unsinkable, that's me."

Evy laughed, it certainly was.

"We made it," Frame smiled, resting against the wall.

"Not all of us," Evy replied, her smile fading as she looked down at her hands.

"Teleport!" the Doctor said suddenly, jumping up, "She was wearing a teleport bracelet!"

He ran out of the room before Evy could even get to her feet and follow. She helped Frame up and the two ran after him, following him into the main reception room where Mr. Copper and Rickston were still waiting.

"Rickston!" the Doctor called, "Sonic!" Rickston tossed him the screwdriver as he ran by, "Mr. Copper, the teleports, have they got emergency settings?"

"I don't know," Mr. Copper said as he and Evy joined the Doctor by the teleport controllers, "They should have."

"She fell, Mr. Copper," he grinned, getting the computer working, "She fell. What's the emergency code?"

"Uh, let me see..." Mr. Copper walked around to the computer and typed in the code.

"What the hell are you doing?" Rickston frowned, watching them.

"He might be able to bring her back," Evy said quietly, watching as the Doctor began to work on the teleport.

"If a passenger has an accident on shore leave and they're still wearing their teleport, their molecules are automatically suspended and held in stasis so that we can just trigger the shift," Mr. Copper explained.

"There!" the Doctor shouted, finishing. He turned around and a glowing, but transparent, Astrid appeared a few feet away.

"I'm falling," Astrid echoed.
"Only halfway there," the Doctor commented, moving to adjust the inner workings of the teleport, "Come on."

"I keep falling…"

"Feed back the molecule grid, boost it with the restoration matrix…"

"No!" Evy shouted, just before the teleport sparked.

"No, no, no, no!" he backed away before rushing towards it again, trying to work the wires manually, "Need more phase containment."

"Doctor…" Mr. Copper stepped forward.

"No! If I can just link up the surface suspension…"

"Doctor, she's gone."

"I just need to override the safety. I can do it."

"Doctor, let her go," Mr. Copper laid a hand on his shoulder.

The Doctor turned around to face Astrid's ghost-like figure, kicking the teleport in frustration, "I can do anything!"

Evy stepped forward, putting her hands on his face, and just looking into his eyes. The group watched silently as the Doctor physically calmed at the woman's touch. He reached up, wrapping his hands around Evy's wrists, but making no move to remove her. He looked into her eyes as well, seeing her own sorrow reflected in her tear filled eyes, "You can do anything," she whispered to him, "But not alone."

And with that, she stepped past him and knelt down at the base of the teleport controls and got to work.

The men watched her silently as she pulled out various wires, held them up to examine them, frowning at some but holding onto others. She sniffled, wiping her eye a bit with the back of her hand before getting back to work.

"There's not enough left," Mr. Copper told her gently, "The system was too badly damaged. She's just atoms. An echo with the ghost of consciousness. She's stardust," but Evy continued, "It's impossible…"

"I know and it should be," Evy replied, leaning forward to tweak a few wires, "But there…clinging to the wire work, just enough power to bind the atoms and download the consciousness back to the body… I just have to… Doctor!" she called, twisting around and holding out her hand. He quickly tossed her the sonic, "Just a bit more power… and…" she flashed the screwdriver and Astrid exploded in a bright light. Everyone covered their eyes for a moment till the light faded.

They looked over to see Astrid standing there, flesh and blood, as solid as the rest of them.

"I'm back!" Astrid shouted, looking at her hands for only a second before running across the room and lunging at Evy, pulling the girl into a hug just as she stood up, nearly knocking the Time Lady off her feet, "Thank you!" Astrid pulled back only a moment before hugging her again.

The men looked on in shock at seeing Astrid whole again.
"How?" Mr. Copper gaped. It *should* have been impossible.

"She’s just brilliant," the Doctor breathed, staring at Evy with a fond, proud smile.

~8~

Frame walked over to them, all sitting around Astrid and talking about her ordeal, "The engines have stabilized," he told them, "We're holding steady till we get help and I've sent the SOS. A rescue ship should be here within twenty minutes. And they're digging out the records of Max Capricorn. It should be quite a story."

"They'll want to talk to all of us, I suppose," Mr. Copper frowned.

"I'd have thought so, yeah."

Mr. Copper sighed and stood up, wandering over to the reception desk and leaning against it. Evy and the Doctor shared a look before getting up to join him along with Astrid.

"I think, uh, one or two inconvenient truths might come to light," Mr. Copper mumbled as they approached him, "Still, it's my own fault, and then years in jail is better than dying."

"Doctor...uh, Miss Evy," Rickston said, coming over to them, "I never said...thank you," he reached out and hugged Evy and the Doctor to him tightly, "The funny thing is...I said Max Capricorn was falling apart. Just before the crash, I...sold all my shares, transferred them to his rivals. It's made me rich. What do you think of that?"

He smiled at them, staring at them as though he expected an answer.

Evy stepped up, "I think..." and then she slapped him, "That's what I think!" she glared at him.

Rickston stared at her in shock, along with Mr. Copper and the Doctor, Astrid just looked on with a proud smile.

Before Rickston could respond his vone suddenly rang, "Salvain?" he answered it quickly and walked off, still mildly stunned, "Those shares, I want them triple-bonded and locked."

"Finally!" Astrid laughed, "Someone gave him what he deserved."

"Oh no," Evy shook her head, "A swift kick in the arse is what he deserved."

Astrid laughed and linked arms with Evy.

"Of all the people to survive, he's not the one you would have chosen, is he?" Mr. Copper asked in general as they watched Rickston walk away, "But if you could choose, if you decide who lives and who dies..." he shrugged, "...that would make you a monster."

Evy nodded slowly, "No one is meant to have that power."

The Doctor looked over at Evy and smiled, that was one of the main teachings of Gallifrey. He was about to say something when the teleport bracelets caught his eye, "Mr. Copper..." he reached out and plucked four bracelets up, handing one to Evy and Astrid before giving one to Mr. Copper, "I think you deserve one of these."

Mr. Copper looked up, startled, seeing the smiling faces of Astrid, the Doctor, and Evy looking back at him. He quickly took the bracelet and slid it on, chuckling as the Doctor started the machine. Just before they disappeared Frame stepped up to them, saluting them, all of them
saluting back before they appeared in a random field in London, the TARDIS waiting there as snow fell around them.

Astrid laughed to be back on the exotic planet Earth. Evy took her arm and they ran across the land and over to the blue box, waiting impatiently for the Doctor to catch up with Mr. Copper.

"So, Great Britain is part of, uh, 'Europee' and just across the British Channel you've got Great France and Great Germany," Mr. Copper recited some odd bit of information the Doctor had been trying to tell him on the ship.

"No, no, it's just," the Doctor sighed, "It's just France and Germany."

"Only Britain is great," Evy grinned, calling over to them.

"Oh, and they're all at war with the continent of Ham-erica?" Mr. Copper frowned.

"No, well...not yet, uh...could argue that one," the Doctor frowned but his entire countenance brightened as he finally arrived at the TARDIS, "There she is," he patted her, receiving a small shock from her as an angry retort, it seemed the box was not at all happy about being sent adrift and then stuck on Earth without her pilot, "Survive anything..." he commented, a bit put out at the TARDIS's treatment of him.

"You know, between you and me, I don't even think this snow is real," Mr. Copper told them, "I think this is the ballast from the Titanic's salvage entering the atmosphere."

"One day it might snow for real," Evy commented, looking up.

"So, I...I suppose you'll be off..." Mr. Copper looked up at the three of them.

"The open sky," the Doctor nodded.

"Actually..." Astrid spoke up, stepping away from Evy and over to Mr. Copper's side, "I...I think I might like to stay with Mr. Copper, if that's alright," she looked at Mr. Copper and then the duo.

"What?" the Doctor frowned.

"Well, it's just," Astrid flushed a bit, "Don't really got any family and...well, neither does he," she smiled gently at Mr. Copper, "I just...I wouldn't feel right leaving him alone, especially on a strange new world."

The Doctor looked at a loss for words but Evy was grinning broadly. She had seen the almost familial bond that had just begun to form between Astrid and Mr. Copper, "Astrid Peth," she stepped forward and hugged the woman tightly, "You are simply brilliant."

Astrid smiled and hugged Evy back.

"What should we do?" Mr. Copper asked Astrid as Evy stepped back.

"Give me that credit card a moment," the Doctor reached out.

"Well, it's just petty cash, spending money," Mr. Copper said, handing it over, "It's all done by computer. I...I didn't really know the currency so I thought a million might cover it."

"A million?" Evy almost choked.

"Pounds?" the Doctor wanted to clarify.
"That enough for trinkets?" Mr. Copper asked.

"Mr. Copper, a million pounds is worth 50 million credits."

"How much?" Astrid's gaped as Mr. Copper's mouth dropped open.

"50 million and 56," Evy calculated quickly.

"I…I've got money!" Mr. Copper gasped.

"Yes, you have," the Doctor smiled, handing him the card back.

"Oh my word," Mr. Copper uttered, still in shock, "Oh my Vot! Oh my goodness me! I…ya-ha!" he reached out and grabbed Astrid in a hug, both of them actually jumping in joy.

"It's all yours…planet Earth," Evy smiled.

"Now that's a retirement plan," the Doctor laughed, "But just you be careful though."

"I will," he promised quickly as Astrid nodded, "I will. Oh, we will."

"No interfering," the Doctor warned just to be safe, "I don't want any trouble. Just...just have a nice life."

"But we can have a house," he looked up at Astrid, tears in his eyes, "A proper house, with a garden, and...and a door, and...oh, Doctor, Miss Evy, I will made you proud," he ran forward and hugged them both, "And...and a kitchen with chairs, and windows, and lace..." he began to skip off with Astrid, laughing the whole time.

"Um, where are you going?" the Doctor called as he turned to unlock the TARDIS.

"Why, I have no idea!" Mr. Copper called back.

"No, me neither," the Doctor agreed, holding the door open for Evy who hesitated a moment.

"Just a moment," she said, running after Astrid and Mr. Copper, "Mr. Copper!" she shouted, stopping him. He turned around with Astrid. She reached into her pocket and pulled out a card with the Torchwood contacts on it, "If anything happens, if you get in trouble, or you need help, with anything at all, just give this number a call. Tell them that Evy gave it to you and they'll be all too willing to help you get up and about, help teach you about Earth yeah?"

Mr. Copper took the card and looked at her with thanks in his eyes, both he and Astrid knowing that they wouldn't be alone, that they wouldn't be stuck trying to figure everything out by themselves.

"Merry Christmas, Mr. Copper," Evy breathed, "Astrid," she gave them a wave before rushing back to the TARDIS and walking in, the Doctor shutting the door behind her. She looked around, happy to see that the TARDIS was alright.

She turned to the Doctor to see him look away from her quickly and step past her, throwing his jacket onto a Y-beam on his way, "Well, long day, full of emotional turmoil and cyborgs," he spun to face her, smiling, but one that didn't reach his ears, "What say we head off to bed. Good night!"

And with that, he spun around and walked up to the gantry, through the door to the hallway beyond. Evy stood there, watching him go, never looking back at her for a moment. She could feel her hearts break. That was it? That was all he said?
She looked down, tears in her eyes.

He was angry. He had to be. She hadn't been able to hear him the whole time which was doing her head in. She felt like she was being crushed, physically crushed from the sheer silence in her mind. At least when he'd been human it hadn't been a conscious act of his to ignore her…and even then, it hadn't been right after she regenerated. She was exhausted. She was tired. She was sad and frustrated and hurt and…scared. Had she really upset him so badly that he wouldn't even acknowledge her in his mind? She could understand if he wanted to hide some thoughts from her, even when she'd been privy to all his thoughts through the Link she hadn't dug too deep, respecting his privacy as much as she could. But to hide all his thoughts...

She let out a shuddering breath as a tear fell from her eye. She thought she'd done enough during the entire ordeal to try and make up for keeping her secret from him. She'd figured things out, helped save the day, brought back Astrid…but still, nothing was good enough…and then she realized. She was in the TARDIS, his pride and joy…she looked around quickly, seeing dozens if not hundreds of things she could fix or tinker with and improve.

Yes, that would make what she'd done up to him. She pulled off her gloves as she ran to one of the panels and got to work.

~8~

The Doctor had been sleeping peacefully in his bed, something he didn't do very often. Not that it was bad. It was just, Time Lord biology allowed for them to remain awake and fully alert for nearly two weeks, needing only about 12-18 hours of sleep after to renew themselves. He'd been awake for a little more than a week, but all the excitement and stress of the last few adventures had tired him out more than he thought. He'd been asleep probably around 10 hours when he was suddenly flung from his bed and onto the floor.

He sat up quickly, looking around as though expecting an attack of some sort, relaxing back against the side of his bed when he saw he was just in his room.

"What was that?" he wondered aloud, already getting to his feet to go check on the TARDIS.

He headed out of the room and down the hall, straight to the control room, only to see it practically torn apart. It seemed like someone had either tried to destroy the TARDIS from the inside or had been frantically looking for something and not found it. He ran down the steps as sparks flew over head. He jumped back, stepping on a random tool with his bare feet. He looked around, seeing tools were scattered everywhere, wires were sticking out of everything, and panel doors were thrown haphazardly around the floor.

He looked around, trying to find the source of the destruction only to hear a soft mumbling from behind the console. He cautiously walked around it, his eyes widening in shock when he saw Evy kneeling at the base of the console, half leaning in an open panel working on something. He couldn't even begin to understand what she was mumbling as her words barely made any sense.

Her hands were shaking. He could see that as she tried to twist two wires together. It sparked a bit and she jumped away. She looked around the floor around her, a franticness in her actions, before she reached for a cutting tool, only succeeding in slicing her palm open. She pulled back, hissing in pain and curled up against the console, clutching her hand to her chest as she rocked back and forth.

"Evy!" the Doctor called in shock, rushing to kneel before her. He'd never seen her in such a state before. There were smudges of grease on her face, her dress was stained and torn, even burnt in a
few places, the once elegant curls of her hair now a wild mess of tangles. He reached forward, taking her head in his hands but he couldn't make eye contact with her for more than a second as her eyes flitted around the room rapidly. He reached forward, trying to pull her away from the console, only to have her twist out of his grip.

"No!" she shouted, turning to try and get back to the panel she'd been working on, "I have to fix it!" she reached out, grabbing the wires despite her hand, now smearing her blood over everything, "I have to fix it, he won't be angry anymore...if I just..."

He shook his head, reaching out and wrapping his arms around her waist, heaving as he pulled her back and half dragged her, kicking and screaming, towards the med-bay. Something was seriously wrong.

He managed to get her onto an examination table but she was far too frantic, struggling to get out of his grip as he tried to hold her down. He looked around quickly, finally seeing a sedative gun a few inches away. He reached out and grabbed it, moving to sedate her but her screams intensified.

"No!" she shrieked, "Please no! Not again! Please! Please! No!"

He hesitated only a moment at the sounds of her pleas, she was far more frightened of the sedative gun than anything else. But he caught sight of her hand, it had to be done. He pushed her down and pressed the gun to her neck, injecting her with the formula specified for Time Lords. Moments later she was completely out.

He slumped back against a chair next to the table, breathing hard from exertion, completely shocked at seeing her in such a state. What on Earth had gotten her that riled up? He reached forward, brushing a hair away from her face and tried desperately to read her mind…but it was no use. She was unconscious, her mind wasn't active, and so there was nothing to read on the surface of her mind. Had he been Linked to her, he would have a continuous connection not only to her but to her mind and her feelings as well. He'd be able to enter her mind even if she were asleep, but not now.

He sighed, getting up and moving to clean the cut on her hand, spraying it with a healing solution and wrapping it in a bandage. It was a rather clean cut, it would heal quickly with help from the TARDIS.

She would be unconscious for at least two hours, he could have gone back into the console room and tried to fix whatever Evy had done, or at least straightened up, but he just...couldn't bring himself to leave her side.

Why had this happened?

A small monitor he'd hooked up to scan her beeped and he looked over, his eyes widening at the results. She was exhausted, completely drained and apparently there were remnants of regenerative energy being filtered through her system. She'd been containing the energies within her the whole time, he realized. Containing post regeneration energy was painful, often taxing the body more than the actual regeneration.

Regeneration usually required sleep of some sort for a period of at least six hours or more...Evy hadn't had any. The regeneration would usually leave the Time Lord with the equivalent of two weeks awake, but to hold the energies in afterwards could elongate that time to almost four weeks of sleep deprivation. If Evy had done that, the exhaustion and strain would make her mind less up to par than normal, it wouldn't be functioning properly. She would be more susceptible to her emotions…and he could already tell that this version of her was more emotional than her last.
But how hadn't he noticed that?

He should have sensed it! He should have heard her...and he realized, she'd been hiding her thoughts about it. Like when her mind had gone from one topic to counting the glass shards Astrid had dropped. She'd been hiding...

He stiffened, a thought hitting him and he quickly examined his mental shields only to find that they had been up at full strength...he hadn't even noticed. He'd shot them up when he realized Evy was a Time Lady, simply for the fact that she had been able to read his thoughts all that time, he hadn't felt the need to block his thoughts from his people when he'd thought they were gone, but he could have sworn he'd lowered them when he found out she was his Link...but if Evy's reaction was anything to go on...he had not. It was easy to forget the shields were up once they were up, but that was no excuse! Having her Link block his thoughts so soon after regenerating would not help the situation.

He quickly dropped his mental shields, not wanting the same thing to happen. He never wanted her to be in this much pain because of him, he wouldn't want anyone to be so pained.

He supposed his actions towards her the entire night hadn't helped. There had been so many times he'd caught himself staring at her now that he could finally notice her, or watching her work, or just holding her to him that he'd force himself to pull away, to focus on anything else. They were in the midst of a life threatening scenario, other people could have died and he was staring at her when he should have been helping them. There had been times, when she had done something amazing, like fixing comm. with the bridge or figuring out how to save the engines where he couldn't help but be angry and disappointed with himself for not thinking of it, but amazed with her for doing so. He realized now, she had no idea what he was thinking when he did so, she probably felt he was rejecting her or angry with her instead. He should have just...he should have treated her better.

This regeneration, it seemed, was more sensitive to him. Not having him in her mind after centuries of being there must have caused a terrible shock and backlash, especially coupled with the death of her brother, the trauma of the Year-That-Never-Was, and her regeneration.

And then there was the sedative. What was that about?

He frowned in concern, turning his attention on Evy, stroking her hair as she continued to sleep.

~8~

Two hours later to the second, Evy's eyes fluttered open. He leaned over to see she seemed confused, but much calmer than she had been, "Doctor?" she frowned, seeing she was in the med-bay, "Why am I here?"

"You were a bit frantic before," he told her, helping her to sit up, "I had to get you in here to rest."

He helped her stand, conscious of the exhaustion she would be facing now that the regeneration pains were over. He tightened his grip on her waist as she stumbled, nearly falling after she stood. He slowly led her out of the med-bay and into the halls.

"Oh no!" she gasped, remembering the mess she'd made in the control room as they passed the door to it, "I'm sorry!" she pushed herself out of his arms and moved towards it but he pulled her back into his arms.

"I've already checked the TARDIS," he reassured her, pulling her on, "Nothing seriously needs to
He led her down a hall and towards her room, it was a small, light blue colored room with a small bed with a dark blue duvet. There was a small bookcase and a little desk, but the rest was sparse. He brought her over to the bed and sat her down, kneeling down to look up at her, "Evy..." he hesitated, seeing the strain still in her eyes, "Before...I had to sedate you...you didn't react very well to the sight of the sedation gun...I just was wondering..."

"Please don't ask," she cut him off, her voice shaking, "Please. I'd rather not tell you, it's...it's not something I'd even want you to know if we Linked."

He blinked. Whatever it was that happened to her, it had to have been truly bad for her to not want him to know. But he wasn't going to push, not now. Not after what had just happened. He nodded, getting up and stepping out of the room to allow her privacy to sleep.

He stepped into the control room and began to clean up, not very tired anymore.

~8~

It hadn't taken all that long to get things sorted, perhaps four or five hours at most. He was actually feeling a bit worn out now, still a bit off from being woken so abruptly and being so thrown by Evy's breakdown. Speaking of which...he wandered down the corridor, pausing by Evy's door.

He opened it slowly, careful to not let the light from the hall into the room should he wake her. He peeked in to see her lying on her side on the bed, now dressed in a pair of blue and black flannel pajama bottoms and a blue tank top. Her back was to the door, but she seemed to be having a bit of trouble in her sleep. She was shifting, he could sense she was asleep as he wasn't hearing her thoughts, but she seemed to be almost in the middle of a nightmare.

He frowned, wanting to help her...

Before he even realized what he was doing, he found himself setting himself down on the edge of her bed, and lying down beside her, his chest to her back. He reached out, wrapping his arms around her, pulling her towards him gently, just holding her to him. The reaction was almost instant as her body relaxed and her breathing evened out. He had only enough time to form a small smile before he too fell asleep to the gentle sound of Evy's soft breaths.

Chapter End Notes

Hmmm...Evy's very set on the limits of Time Lord authority isn't she? I wonder what will happen when they go to Mars? And I so wanted someone to slap Rickston for how he was so happy to be rich while so many had died, I thought Evy should have that honor. She's now got no problem smacking the Doctor so she'd definitely have no issues with slapping other people. I felt so bad writing Evy like that at the end, but I figure she's been through so much, it had to catch up with her eventually.

Just a note on Evy's power, her telekenesis, puts a serious strain on her mind whenever she uses it. I've read somewhere that sometimes a severe strain to the mind can cause nosebleeds, I think this can happen with things like brain tumors and such. For Evy she strains her mind so much that her body is strained as well and her nose starts to bleed.
because of it, like a sign/warning that she should stop. Her nose bled a bit during LOTTL because she used her powers to fling the Master's laser screwdriver away when he turned it on Martha and her family on the Valiant. In that chapter it wasn't the Doctor who did it, but Evy :)

Next chapter we finally get Donna! Yay! And...Evy gets a rather useful gift from the Doctor and the TARDIS.
Evy awoke with a soft inhale of breath, her eyes fluttering open to see the wall behind her bed. She blinked a few times, her mind catching up to her, when she realized something. She was currently lying on top of her blankets, yet she was very warm. She also realized something very important, there was a pair of arms wrapped around her and she could feel someone lying behind her.

It was the Doctor, it had to be, she could just sense it. But why? She could recall the events that had led up to her being in bed clearly, but she was certain that, when she had gotten to sleep, the Doctor had been nowhere near her.

She felt the arms around her tighten just a moment before loosening, the body against her back moving away. She turned gently in the one arm still wrapped around her waist to come face-to-face with the Doctor now lying on his back. He was holding her close in his one arm as her bed wasn't meant for two people, he didn't want her to fall off.

"Doctor?" she frowned in confusion, though she felt rather happy to wake up in his arms and immensely relieved to hear the buzz of his mind flittering in her own, he'd lowered his mental shields, she could hear him again.

He just smiled at her, glad to see that she looked far more refreshed than she had in the last 24 hours. The strain of the regeneration seemed to have passed and she was back to her good old self. She'd slept nearly 20 hours straight, he'd been awake the last five but hadn't wanted to move for fear of waking her. He'd laid there just thinking, about everything that had happened, about the shock of finding a Time Lady, and not just a Time Lady but his Link. He'd gone over everything she had told him about her reasons for not letting him Link to her and come to terms with them, she really did have his best interests at heart.

One thing was certain, she was truly a remarkable person. She was every bit the Time Lord he was, thinking to the future, seeing the consequences, being logical and reasonable about it all. And more importantly, caring.

"Feel better?" he asked.

She nodded, "Much. Thanks."

His smile widened as he slowly sat up on the bed, helping Evy sit up as well. She knelt on the bed, stretching out as he stood up, "I was thinking we could take a nice calm trip to Earth?" he asked, his eyes glancing around the room as Evy stretched, her shirt rising to reveal a bit of the skin of her stomach.

"And by 'a nice calm trip' you mean…" she trailed, eyeing him suspiciously.

"Just as it sounds. Just walk around, look at the nice buildings that weren't destroyed by a Titanic induced nuclear explosion."

"Oh, going to admire our handiwork are we?" she laughed, already feeling much better, "I'll be out in a bit."

He nodded, walking out of her room to give her time to freshen up. He went to the control room,
punching in some coordinates onto the console for London in preparation.

They were walking down a rather crowded street, Evy's arm tucked around the Doctor's, as they just watched life go on around them. Humans, they really were the most fascinating, awe-inspiring species out there.

Evy smiled gently as she watched a mother and child cross the street just at the end of their corner where a rather large building stood. She frowned when a faint beeping caught her attention. She slowed to a stop, reaching into the pocket of her coat and pulling out a Y-shaped device that was flashing red.

"Is that a Planetary Peculiarity Sensor?" the Doctor's eyes widened, seeing the small device. He reached out and began to examine it, poking it in various places as though he could inspect it that way.

Evy nodded, "I made it just after the incident with the Daleks and pig men. I thought it was better to be prepared and know something that wasn't supposed to be on Earth was here rather than find out later."

"That's amazing!" he grinned at her before excitedly spinning in a circle, the beeping growing louder as it faced the direction of a building, Adipose Industries.

"Doctor?" Evy asked. He looked down at her as she nodded at the building, despite having regenerated taller than she was she was still shorter than him. He nodded back at her before walking towards it. But, of course, when travelling with the Doctor one had to go the inconspicuous route, which was why they found themselves walking in through the back entrance, coming to a fire exit.

He looked around for a moment before pulling out the sonic screwdriver and flashing the door. Sparks shot out on the other side as the door opened.

"I really do need to get myself a sonic screwdriver," Evy remarked as they stepped into the corridor beyond.

He shot her a grin, "I've already asked the TARDIS to make one for you."

"Really?" her eyes widened in excitement.

She hadn't had a sonic device in what felt like forever, she was tempted to grab the Doctor and race back to the TARDIS, but she knew that it would take a bit longer before it was ready. It had to be custom created based on her essence as a Time Lady, tuned in to her in order to be able to maintain a psychic connection and operate efficiently. The Doctor must have collected her DNA from the blood she had left covering one of the panels before. She'd apologized profusely for that, but both the Doctor, and seemingly even the TARDIS, had waved her off.

It had led to a very interesting one-sided argument between the Doctor and the TARDIS when he realized the box seemed to have forgiven Evy for nearly destroying her and still favored her above the Doctor when, in his opinion, he hadn't done anything that bad to it to begin with.

The TARDIS was now ignoring the Doctor completely, which was why Evy had had to pilot and land the box for this trip.

Evy nudged him as a security guard strolled down the hallway towards them, "John Smith and
Evelyn Daniels, he stated, holding up the psychic paper, "Health and Safety."

The guard nodded at them and they walked on by. They entered the main part of Adipose Industries only to find out that a conference was going on in a lecture hall about exactly what Adipose Industries was trying to market, what luck.

They managed to find the lecture hall fairly quickly, opting instead to head up to the projection room where the presentation was stored just as a precaution. If they were dealing with an alien race, it was best to not alert them to the fact that there was another alien race there as well.

They didn't have to wait long after sneaking in before a woman with short blond hair and rather intimidating stature walked into the room, black square glasses on her face.

"Adipose Industries," the woman began, "The 21st century way to lose weight. No exercise, no diet, no pain. Just lifelong freedom from fat. The Holy Grail of the modern age. And here it is. You just take one capsule, one capsule once a day, for three weeks. And the fat, as they say..."

The projection began.

"The fat just walks away," the computer read as the words appeared on the screen.

"Excuse me, Ms. Foster, if I could?" a woman in the audience cut in, "I'm Penny Carter, science correspondent for The Observer. There are a thousand diet pills on the market, a thousand con men stealing people's money. How do we know the fat isn't going straight into your bank account?"

"She's got a point," Evy remarked. She'd been on Earth only five years and she couldn't begin to count how many weight loss products she'd seen on the telly in just the first year alone.

"Oh Penny, if cynicism burnt up calories, we'd all be as thin as rakes," Ms. Foster replied, trying to be humorous, but it came out rather strict, "But if you want the science, I oblige."

"Adipose Industries," the computer began, showing a diagram of a human body and other chemicals, "The Adipose capsule is composed of a synthesized mobilizing lipase, bound to a large protein molecule," Evy and the Doctor frowned, that science didn't seem quite right, "The mobilizing lipase breaks up the triglycerides stored in the adipose cells," the computer continued, "Which then enter..."

Evy nudged the Doctor once more as a man entered the room and headed towards the projector, "Health and Safety," the Doctor held up the paper again, "...film department."

"100 percent legal, 100 percent effective," Ms. Foster was finishing up.

"But, can I just ask, how many people have taken the pills to date?" Penny asked.

"We've already got one million customers within the Greater London area alone. But from next week, we start rolling out nationwide. The future starts here. And Britain will be thin."

And with that, the presentation was done and they quietly made their way out of the projection room.

"I'll never understand it," Evy muttered as they headed towards the marketing room, wanting to find out just who had taken the pills and get their point of view on this whole thing.

"Understand what?" the Doctor glanced over at her.
"Humans and their ridiculous quest to look thin."

"What's wrong with that?"

"Nothing…if it's for health reasons. I just…” she sighed, "Humans are amazing, every shape and size of them. What should it matter if someone is a bit round? Doesn't stop them from being extraordinary does it? It shouldn't matter what they look like, it really shouldn't."

He smiled gently at her, she really was something else.

~8~

They entered the call center of Adipose Industries, the phones all ringing off the hook, various employees each calling out with their introductions, "Good morning, I represent Adipose Industries," and so on.

They quickly dropped into a cubicle with a nice woman on the phone, "We deliver within three working days."

"John Smith and Evelyn Daniels," the Doctor whispered, holding up the paper, "Health and Safety."

"Don't mind us," Evy smiled, "Do you have any samples of the products you're sending out?"

"It is made of 18 carat gold," she nodded, still on the phone, answering a question someone had asked. She handed them a box with a small, golden pendent inside. Evy frowned as she lifted it out of the box, she could already see the minute details and workings of alien technology on it, "And it's yours for free. No, we don't give away pens, sorry. No, I can't make an exception, no."

She handed it to the Doctor to see, telling him in his mind all the details she had noticed. He nodded, seeing them as well.

"We'll need to keep this for testing," she whispered to the woman as she hung up with her client.

"And we'll just need a list of your customers," the Doctor added, "Could you print it off?"

"Of course," the woman smiled and brought up the information on the computer.

"That's the printer there?" he stood up, looking around.

"By the plant, yeah."

"Brilliant," he sat back down.

"We don't need the entire client list," Evy replied, seeing the million or so recorded clients on the computer, "Just those in the general area would be fine."

"Has it got paper?" the Doctor stood up again, looking out at the printer.

"Yeah, Jimbo keeps it stocked," the woman said.

"Get down will you?" Evy asked, pulling him down, "And stop doing that, you're like a Jack-in-the-Box or something."

"Excuse me, everyone, if I could have your attention," someone called.
Evy and the Doctor looked up to see Ms. Foster standing there. The employees quickly stood up, Evy and the Doctor remaining seated for fear of being caught.

"On average, you're each selling forty Adipose packs per day," Ms. Foster continued, "It's not enough. I want one hundred sales per person per day. And if not, you'll be replaced. 'Cos if anyone is good in trimming the fat, it's me. Now. Back to it."

She turned and left with two men, leaving an uneasy feeling in the Doctor and Evy's stomachs.

"Anyway, if you could print that off," the Doctor got back to point, not really wanting to stay there longer and risk exposure, "Thanks," the woman smiled, clicking print on the computer before handing the Doctor a small bit of paper, "Oh, what's that?"

"My telephone number."

Evy blinked. Was she really going to do that?

"What for?" to his benefit, the Doctor seemed very confused.

"Health and Safety," the woman raised an eyebrow suggestively, "You be health, I'll be safety."

The Doctor glanced back at Evy who was trying her very best not to glare at the woman. She could handle women making subtle advances at the Doctor, but those who just made it clear what they were after…she didn't do well with them at all. But since the Doctor wasn't exactly Linked to her, she really had no say in what he did, as much as that broke her hearts.

He frowned, sensing her thoughts and turned back to the woman, serious now, "That contravenes paragraph five, subsection C," he told her, "Conflict of interest and all. Sorry.

Evy blinked again, he didn't sound sorry at all. She hadn't been expecting that reaction from him. She'd thought he would simply stutter and make some sort of excuse before running for it.

She looked up at him curiously, question in her eyes but he just smiled and backed out of the cubicle. And she smiled to herself, he did it for her. He was being more conscious of the Link that existed on her part, the feelings she held for him, and was trying to be considerate for her. It was just like him too.

He turned around and walked over to the printer, pausing when he saw that there was nothing there. He looked around, opening it to make sure there was, in fact, paper in it, before turning around, looking conflicted towards the cubicle.

Evy laughed to herself, shaking her head before walking back over to the woman, "Hi, us again," she nodded, "Seems the order didn't go through, could you print it again?"

"Yeah, sure," the woman nodded, printing it once more.

~8~

The Doctor knocked on the door of one Mr. Roger Davey, the closest client of Adipose Industries that they could find. After the Doctor's last run in with a woman involved with Adipose he hoped to avoid another encounter that was as uncomfortable for him as it was for Evy. So he'd selected a man…

"Mr. Roger Davey," the Doctor greeted as a rather thin man opened the door, "We're calling on behalf of Adipose Industries," he flashed the psychic paper, "Just need to ask you a few questions."
The man glanced from him to Evy, smiling broadly at her and ushering them in. Evy smiled politely and stepped in. The Doctor managed to force a small smile on his face…perhaps he should have gone with that Stacey woman after all.

"Exactly how long have you used the pills?" he heard Evy ask as they entered Mr. Davey's sitting room, the man in question moving to sit on the sofa.

"I've been on the pills two weeks now, I've lost fourteen kilos," he answered, quite proud of himself.

"That's the same amount every day?" the Doctor frowned.

"One kilo exactly. You wake up, and it's disappeared overnight. Well, technically speaking, it's gone by ten past one in the morning."

"Why do you say that?" Evy tilted her head to the side. The Doctor couldn't help but smile, it was something he'd been noticing, an action she did when she got really inquisitive.

"That's when I get woken up," Mr. Davey replied, "Might as well weigh myself at the same time."

The Doctor frowned in thought, "What's woken you?"

Mr. Davey got up and led them over to his central hallway, he pointed up to a security system wired in right above his front door, "It is driving me mad. Ten minutes past one, every night, bang on the dot without fail, the burglar alarm goes off. I've had experts in, I've had it replaced, I've even phoned Watchdog. But no, ten past one in the morning, off it goes."

"But with no burglars?" Evy frowned as well.

"Nothing. I've given up looking."

"Tell me Roger, have you got a cat flap?" the Doctor asked suddenly.

"Uh, yeah actually," Mr. Davey nodded, kneeling down by the front door to show them the flap, "It was there when I bought the house. Never bothered with it. I'm not a cat person."

"No, I've met cat people," he agreed distractedly as he eyed the flap, "You are nothing like them."

"Is that what it is then? Cats getting inside the house?"

"Well, thing about cat flaps is that they don't just let things in, they let things out as well," Evy commented, examining the size of the flap. Whatever it was would have to be very small.

"Like what?" his eyes widened in shock.

"The fat just walks away," the Doctor muttered, dropping the flap shut.

He moved to get up, Evy as well. She turned to the man, extending her hand to shake his own, "Thank you for your help," she smiled politely at him.

"Tell you what, maybe you could lay off the pills for a week or so," the Doctor advised, concerned for the man. Suddenly there was a beeping noise. The Doctor reached into his pocket and pulled out the PPS which was flashing red, "Ooh, gotta go, sorry!"

He reached out, grabbing Evy's hand, and they were off, following the signal down the street. They ran down two blocks when the Doctor suddenly stopped and looked at the device whose beeping
was fading. He hit it repeatedly with his fist.

"Oi!" Evy reached out and grabbed his hand with the device in it, she twisted a small switch, increasing the power and the beeping picked up again.

He smiled widely and was off once again, his free hand in hers. They turned the corner and ran down three more blocks, the Doctor having them cut across a backyard and across another street. Evy stopped suddenly as the Doctor continued to run across the street. She had to wait only a moment before he came back, looking at her sheepishly. He'd gotten so caught up on running in that direction he'd almost missed the fact that the signal had veered to the right. He waved the device around to get the right direction, taking off with Evy the moment it dinged.

Evy's eyes widened as she saw a van heading straight for the Doctor who had stupidly run into the middle of the road in the direction the device pointed. She reached out and yanked him back by the coat, narrowly keeping him from getting hit. The device dinged just as the car pulled past and drove away. They shared a single glance before taking off after the car…but unfortunately they were unable to catch up and it disappeared around a corner.

The Doctor held up the device, both of them looking disappointed as the beeps stopped and the red lights faded.

Evy sighed, "Come on," she reached out, locking arms with the Doctor, "Best get back to the TARDIS, figure out what to do next."

He nodded, allowing her to pull him away and back down the road.

~8~

The Doctor was at the console of the TARDIS, looking at the golden Adipose Industries capsule through a magnifying glass, "Oh, fascinating!" his eyes widened, "Seems to be a bio-flip digital stitch, specifically for..."

There was a soft ping and he looked up. Slowly a new, light silver sonic screwdriver rose from a panel. He grinned, grabbing it and turning around, "Evy!" he shouted.

"What?" her voice echoed back to him from somewhere in the TARDIS.

"Come here!" he called again, "I've got something for you!"

Moments later Evy appeared at the top of the gantry, a towel in her hands as she dried her damp hair. He stared at her just a moment, taking in her new appearance. She'd seemed to have taken a liking to wearing a sleeveless, fitted dress that went to her knees, currently a light blue, along with colored leggings, presently dark red, and black motorcycle boots, a great difference from her previous incarnation who was perfectly comfortable in sneakers, jeans, and a sweater. Her hair was straight, hanging freely around her face but with the top of her hair pulled back, leaving no part, and held that way with a pin. She also had a small watch on her wrist on top of her small hourglass necklace/Perception Filter she was still wearing.

She slowly lowered the towel, seeing him staring up at her, "What?" she smiled at him, tilting her head.

He just shook his head and held up the sonic.

Her eyes widened comically as she dropped the towel and practically ran down the steps and over to him. She snatched it from his hands and fiddled it over in her fingers, checking the settings,
making sure it worked, and, just for good measure, flashing him in the face with it. It had a very pale blue light, almost like a white light with a pale blue hue.

"Do you like it?" he asked, smiling softly as he watched her practically buzzing with excitement over such a simple tool.

"I love it!" she shouted, lunging at him and hugging him before pulling away quickly and patting the console, "Thank you!" she glanced at him, "Thank you both!"

He beamed at her, happy that he'd helped make her so happy.

"Ready to test it out?" he asked, raising an eyebrow at her.

"Let's go!" she shouted, running towards the door, her partially damp hair completely forgotten in her excitement.

He laughed, grabbing his coat and another one for her off the Y-beam and coat rack and heading out after her.

She was waiting impatiently outside the TARDIS doors for him. He tossed her her coat to put on, almost like a frock coat that was made of a dark red, velvet-like fabric, with the cuffs of the slightly long sleeves rolled back. He held out an arm to her and she linked hers through before they headed off, past a bright blue car, towards the Adipose fire exit like they had the day before. He stepped back, motioning towards the door. She grinned, taking out her sonic and flashing the door. There were sparks like before and the door opened.

She nearly squealed at her first true use of the sonic. She had forgotten how easy things could be when you had a sonic device to help. Granted, she would probably do some things manually, time permitting, to keep sharp, but still, it was great to have a sonic again.

The Doctor laughed at her expression before leading her down the corridor they'd gone through the previous day. He looked around before opening a storage cupboard and getting in, pulling Evy in after him and sonicing the door shut. It was a rather small room, just large enough for the two of them with all the stuff already crammed in there. Evy had managed to pull herself up on some items, sitting on them, to give the Doctor more room as he chose to lean against the wall, resting his back against it and crossing his arms as they prepared to wait.

"Doctor?" Evy asked after a moment of silence. He looked at her to see her smiling, "1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256…"

"512," he answered, finishing her sequence and launching into one of his own with a wide grin.

~8~

One would think that after spending nearly eight and a half hours straight trapped in a small space with the Doctor, they would go certifiably insane. However that was most certainly what was not to be found in a certain storage cupboard of the Adipose Industries facility. Currently Evy and the Doctor were breaking out in hysterical laughter as she told him of the time she had once, as a child, actually talked her brother, the Master, one of the most infamous Time Lords, into eating grass. The Doctor actually had to wipe a tear from his eye as she told the story of just how she had convinced him to do such a thing as he could never imagine the Master being tricked in such a way. But it only solidified his thoughts that, despite the Master's insanity and cruelty, he did care very deeply for his sister if she was able to get to him like that.

Evy had cried a bit as well, though not as much out of laughter as the Doctor, she still missed her
brother terribly, though she bore no ill will towards the Doctor for what had happened on the *Valiant*. Terrin had gone down a road she couldn't follow and it was that path that had led to his demise, not the Doctor.

The Doctor reached out, taking her wrist in his hands and twisting it to check the time on the watch she wore. Sadly, it was a bit after six, time to head out.

They sobered up as the Doctor unsoniced the door and peeked out to make sure the coast was clear before opening the door completely and stepping out, Evy following.

Knowing that a building and company like Adipose would have a secret to hide, they didn't dare wander around inside the main facility for fear of setting off some sort of alarm, so they decided to take the roundabout way. Basically they went right for the stairwells and found themselves on the roof following the Doctor's brilliant plan to take a window cleaner's cart down the outside of the windows to peer inside.

*Brilliant...really...*  
Evy could practically feel the sarcasm in her thoughts. People often called him a madman with a box but it was things like this that made her *truly* question the Doctor's sanity.

But she followed him nonetheless, her mind already coming up with worse case scenarios and ways to get out of them. Much to the Doctor's annoyance, he didn't feel he needed to hear all the ways this could go wrong filtering to him from her mind.

They climbed aboard the cart, both standing a bit close in the small space as the Doctor sent them down. They stopped halfway at what appeared to be the main office space. Their thoughts were confirmed when Ms. Foster suddenly appeared in the doorway, two men escorting a bound Penny into the room.

Evy grabbed the Doctor's arm and pulled him down as they heard Penny shout, "You've got no right to do this! Let me go!"

The Doctor reached into his pocket and pulled out his stethoscope, "Listen?" he whispered to Evy as he put the scope in his ears.

She nodded, closing her eyes and focusing on him. She frowned after a moment of not hearing anything and peeked an eye open to see the Doctor had been staring at her for a moment, "What?"

That seemed to shock him out of whatever jumbled thoughts he was in as he quickly got to work putting the scope against the window.

He tried to focus on the conversation going on in the office and not how Evy had caught him admiring her 'concentration face' as he liked to call it.

"This is ridiculous," Penny was saying.

"Sit there," Ms. Foster ordered.

"I'm phoning my editor…"

"I said *sit*."  
There was a huff as Penny was pushed onto the chair, "You can't tie me up!" Penny cried as she was bound to it, "What sort of a country do you think this is?"
"Oh, it's a beautifully fat country. And believe me, I've travelled a long way to find obesity on this scale."

"So come on then, Ms. Foster, those pills. What are they?"

"Well, you might just as well have a scoop, since you'll never see it printed," Ms. Foster remarked, pulling open a draw and holding up a pill, "This is the spark of life."

"And what's that supposed to mean?"

"Officially, the capsule attracts all the fat cells and flushes them away. Well, it certainly attracts them, that part's true. But it binds the fat together and galvanizes it to form a body."

"Well, what d'you mean 'a body'?"

"I am surprised you never asked about my name. I chose it well. Foster, as in foster mother. And these," another drawer opened and a soft murmur resounded as something was placed on the table, "Are my children."

"You're kidding me," Penny gasped, "What the hell is that?"

Evy opened her eyes, hearing the Doctor pulling the stethoscope down and saw him looking at her seriously. She nodded and they both slowly rose to look through the window at the small Adipose baby sitting on Foster's desk.

"Adipose," Ms. Foster smiled, "It's called an Adipose. Made out of living fat. Stripped from ordinary human..."

The topic of conversation faded as the Doctor caught sight of something out of the corner of his eye. Evy, sensing his distraction, followed his gaze to see a red haired woman she recognized from his memories as Donna Noble standing across the room, visible through the window in a door. They both looked equally as stunned to see each other.

"Donna?" the Doctor mouthed.

"DOCTOR!" Donna mouthed back.

"But...what? Wha...what?"

"OH MY GOD!"

"But...how?"

"It's me!" Donna pointed to herself.

Evy laughed a bit at their mouthed conversation.

"Well, I can see that!" he mimed.

"Oh this is brilliant!" Donna shouted, but then she caught sight of Evy, "Who's that?"

"I'm Evy," Evy introduced, joining in on the little mime, "You're Donna?"

"...yeah..."

"It's great to finally meet you!"
"How do you know who I am?"

"It's a long story," Evy began, opening her mouth to go on when the Doctor nudged her.

"Oi!" he called, getting both their attention, "Can we get back to the problem here?"

"Sorry," both women mouthed.

"Thanks," he rolled his eyes, turning back to Donna, "What are you doing there?"

"I was looking for you!" Donna answered.

"What for?"

"I, came here, trouble, read about it, internet, I thought, trouble = you!" she mimed, "And this place is weird! Pills! So I hid. Back there. Crept along. Heard this lot. Looked. You! 'Cos they..." she stuck her thumb back at Ms. Foster who, they now noticed, was staring right at them. They froze.

"Are we interrupting you?" Ms. Foster asked, looking between the two groups.

"Run!" the Doctor mouthed to Donna, who turned and fled, as Evy locked the office door with her screwdriver.

"Get her!" Ms. Foster ordered.

The Doctor pointed his sonic up, using it to get them back to the roof.

"And them!" Ms. Foster added as the guards ran out of the room after them.

Chapter End Notes

We've got the start of Evy/Doctor cuteness especially now that the Doctor can really notice her :) I promise at least one sweet/cute/touching moment per episode for this series between them.

Next chapter...when Evy's hands are tied she develops a new method of 'smacking' the Doctor while the Doctor continues to develop a new little habit when he runs...I wonder what it is?
Partners in Crime (Part 2)

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

The Time Lords reached the roof much faster than they had gotten down to Ms. Foster's office. The Doctor practically scrambled out of the cart and jumped down the stairs that led to the roof. He spun around and held out his arms, half catching Evy as she jumped next to him before taking her hand and running towards the stair doors. They slammed them open and ran down, only making it a few levels before they ran into Donna who immediately pulled the Doctor into a hug.

"Oh my God!" she exclaimed, pulling back from the hug, only to hug Evy as well in her excitement, "I don't believe it!" she stepped back to look at the Doctor, "You've even got the same suit!" her eyes widened, "Don't you ever change?"

"Yeah thanks Donna, not right now," he scolded her lightly.

"Doctor!" Evy called, he looked over to see her looking down the stairwell, the guards were coming, with very large guns in their hands.

"Just like old times!" the Doctor grinned at Donna before taking Evy's hand and running up the stairs, Donna right behind them.

They found themselves back on the roof and immediately ran back to the window cleaner's cart. The Doctor and Evy immediately got to work on the controls with their sonics while Donna excitedly babbled behind them.

"'Cos I thought, how do I find the Doctor?" she exclaimed, "And then I just thought, look for trouble and then he'll turn up! So I looked everywhere, you name it, UFOs, sightings, crop circles, sea monsters. I looked, I found them all. Like that stuff about the bees disappearing, I thought, I bet he's connected. 'Cos the thing is, Doctor, I believe it all now. You opened my eyes. All those amazing things out there, I believe them all. Well, apart from that replica of the Titanic flying over Buckingham Palace on Christmas Day, I mean that's gotta be a hoax!" her eyes widened as she caught sight of Evy finishing up her work with her sonic, "She's got a sonic screwdriver! Doctor! She's got a sonic! Why's she got a sonic too? Doctor?"

"What d'you mean, the bees are disappearing?" he asked, trying to deflect the question.

"I don't know. That's what it says on the internet…but Doctor! She's got a sonic too! I thought only you aliens had those…is she an alien? She can't be! Can she? No! Is she?"

"She'll explain later Donna," Evy smiled at her as the Doctor ushered her into the cart.

"You'd better," Donna pointed at her, "And I want to know how you know who I am too!"

"Donna…" the Doctor began, getting in the cart as well.

"Oh," Donna nodded, thinking he was still on about the bees, "Well on the same site, there was all the conspiracy theories about Adipose Industries, I thought 'let's take a look…'"

"No, Donna, in you get!" he called, motioning for her to join him and Evy in the cart.

"Well in that thing?" Donna looked at it in disbelief.
"Yes in that thing!"

"But if we go down in that, they'll just call us back up again," Donna reasoned, trying to avoid having to get in.

"No, no, no, 'cos I...we've," he corrected quickly, "Locked the controls with a sonic cage. We're the only ones who can control it. Not unless she's got a sonic device of her own. Which is very unlikely."

"You really need to stop saying things like that!" Evy warned him.

Donna looked between them for a moment before sighing and getting in. They set it to go down just as the door to the roof opened and Ms. Foster walked out with her guards. They looked up to see her peering over the edge of the roof down at them.

She pointed something down at them and suddenly they weren't just lowering to the ground, they were falling. The Doctor reached up and managed to stop them with his own sonic screwdriver.

"I told you!" Evy grumbled as they picked themselves back up, Ms. Foster had to have had a sonic device or something. She turned to the window and began trying to open it with her own sonic just before there was a clicking through the entire building as it deadlocked, "I can't get it open!" Evy told them, "She's deadlocked it!"

"Well smash it then!" Donna cried, lifting a tool and trying to break the window while Evy and the Doctor continued to try to open it. Donna looked up and gasped, "Cutting the cable!"

The cable broke just as the two Time Lords looked up. The basket swung to the side, the Doctor managed to grab onto the inside of the cradle, grabbing Evy out of instinct, holding her to him till she could get her own grip, but Donna wasn't so lucky.

"Donna!" the Doctor called as Donna fell out of the cart.

"Doctor!" Donna shouted back, managing to cling to the cable with a bit of metal on the end.

"Hold on!" Evy yelled as she looked down at the woman, alarmed.

"I AM!"

They grabbed the cable and tried to pull her back up but it wasn't working.

"Doctor!" Donna shouted.

There was a sparking noise. They looked up to see Ms. Foster trying to cut the other cable with her sonic device. The Doctor pulled himself up, climbing onto the edge of the cradle and aimed his sonic.

"Aim for her sonic!" Evy said.

He squinted, sticking out his tongue as he did as she suggested, flicking it on and managing to hit her sonic. It sparked and she dropped it. Evy leaned over and managed to grab it before it fell to the ground. She turned to the window, flashing the sonic pen across it, finally opening the building as it was tuned into the pen's control.

"I'm going to fall!" Donna yelled up to them as the Doctor helped Evy through the window, "This is all your fault. I should've stayed at home!"
"I won't be a minute!" the Doctor called back, climbing into the window as well.

They wasted no time in running down a level and into Ms. Foster's office. They ran straight to the window, ignoring Penny, who was still tied to the chair, "Is anyone gonna tell me what's going on?" the woman demanded.

"What, you're a journalist?" the Doctor glanced over as Evy unlocked the window.

"Yes."

"Make it up then!" Evy shouted as she reached out the window to grab Donna's legs.

"Get off!" Donna tried kicking.

"We've got you!" the Doctor called, reaching out the window as well, "We've got you. Stop kicking!"

Somehow, not even Evy was able to guess how, they managed to pull Donna in through the window, all three of them gasping by the end of the minor ordeal.

"I was right," Donna mumbled, straightening up and looking at the Doctor, "It's always like this with you, innit?"

"Oh yes!" he grinned broadly, grabbing Evy's hand, "And off we go!"

Evy laughed as he pulled her out of the room at a run, Donna following just behind them.

"OI!" Penny shouted.

Evy stopped suddenly and ran back to the room, pulling herself out of the Doctor's grip, "Sorry!" Evy called to the reporter, flashing her sonic and releasing her from the chair. She turned to run down the hallway back to the Doctor and Donna when she noticed the Doctor rush past her, back towards the room.

"Do yourself a favor," he called to Penny, sticking his head in, "Get out," he turned, smirking at Evy, before rushing past her, grabbing her hand in the process to pull her along.

They ran down a few halls and into the call center, only to skid to a stop when they came face-to-face with Ms. Foster and her guards standing there, waiting.

"Well then," Ms. Foster remarked, pulling off her glasses, "At last."

"Hello," Donna greeted tensely.

"Nice to meet you, I'm the Doctor," the Doctor introduced.

"I'm Donna," Donna added.

"And I'm Evy," Evy finished.

"Partners in crime," Ms. Foster commented, "And evidently off-worlders, judging by your sonic technology," she looked down at the Doctor and Evy who were both holding a sonic, Evy also holding Foster's sonic pen in her hand as well.

"Oh yes, we've still got your sonic pen," the Doctor commented as Evy held it up, "Nice, I like it. Sleek, it's kinda sleek."
"Oh it's definitely sleek," Donna agreed as Evy showed it to her.

"Yeah, and if you were to sign your real name that would be..."

"Matron Cofelia of the Five-Straighten Classabindi Nursery Fleet," Ms. Foster announced, "Intergalactic Class."

"A wet nurse," Evy frowned, "Using humans as surrogates. What for?"

"I've been employed by the Adiposian First Family to foster a new generation after their breeding planet was lost."

"What do you mean lost?" the Doctor frowned as well.

"How do you lose a planet?" Evy tilted her head to the side.

"Oh, politics are none of my concern," Ms. Foster waved them off, "I'm just here to take care of the children on behalf of the parents."

"What, like an outer space super-nanny?" Donna shook her head, barely managing to keep up.

"Yes, if you like."

"So...so those little things they're...they're made out of fat yeah, but that woman, Stacey Campbell, there was nothing left of her."

"Oh, in a crisis the Adipose can convert bone and hair and internal organs. Makes them a little bit sick, poor things."

"What about poor Stacey?"

"It's against galactic law to seed a Level 5 planet," Evy said seriously, not a single trace of humor on her face.

"Are you threatening me?" Ms. Foster glared at her.

"She's trying to help you, Matron," the Doctor replied, just as serious, "This is your one chance, 'cos if you don't call this off, then we'll have to stop you."

"I hardly think you can stop bullets," Ms. Foster smirked as the guards took aim.

The Doctor's eyes widened and he immediately stepped in front of Evy and Donna, his arms out, trying to halt them a moment, "No, hold on, hold on, hold on, hold on, one more thing, before...dying. Do you know what happens if you hold two identical sonic devices against each other?"

Ms. Foster hesitated a moment, "No."

"Nor me," the Doctor grinned, glancing at Evy.

"Let's find out!" Evy shouted, holding up her screwdriver and Ms. Foster's pen and switching them on. An awful noise filled the room, Ms. Foster and the guards, and, unfortunately, Donna, began to squirm in agony as the glass all around them began to shatter. Evy glanced up at the Doctor after a moment, he nodded. She pulled the sonics apart and spun around, grabbing Donna's arm, "Come on!"
They ran off down the hall, swerving down different hallways and around corners, trying to outrun Ms. Foster and her guards. They ended up in the same corridor they had entered the building in, heading straight for the very same cupboard they'd hidden in before. The Doctor threw the door open and began throwing the supplies out as the women watched.

"Well, that's one solution," Donna commented, "Hide in a cupboard. I like it."

Evy stepped through just as there was enough room to get in and went to stand next to the Doctor by the back wall. He rested his hands against it and, with a small push, the wall fell open to reveal a green machine built into it.

"Hacking into this thing, 'cos the matron's got a computer core running through the center of the building," he explained to Donna, "Triple deadlocked…"

"But now that we've got this," Evy held up the sonic pen, "I can get into it."

The Doctor stepped to the side, allowing Evy to get to work, pulling out wires and plugs and crisscrossing them, flashing the pen every so often.

"She's wired up the whole building," the Doctor turned to Donna, explaining what Evy was doing, "We need a bit of privacy."

Evy grabbed two plugs and pressed them together, causing them to spark. Donna looked down the hall to see a few walls near the end of the hall creating lightning between them, it would surely stun any guards that had been sent after them.

"Just enough to stop them," the Doctor agreed, sensing what Donna was thinking.

"But why has she wired up the tower block?" Evy mumbled, drawing their attention, "What's that for?" she grabbed a few wires and began fiddling with them, examining them closely.

"You look older," Donna commented, staring at the Doctor.

He looked over to see her watching him, "Thanks."

"Is she one of your companions?" Donna nodded at Evy, "Or are you still mostly on your own?"

"She is right here," Evy commented, if just a bit distracted, "And…it's complicated."

The Doctor sighed, "We had this friend, Martha she was called. Martha Jones. She was brilliant..."


"And I destroyed half her life," the Doctor looked down but then suddenly jerked back, "Ow!" he rubbed his shin before looking up at Evy, stunned, "Did you just kick me?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Well, I can't exactly stop to smack you can I? You were being an idiot again. You didn't destroy Martha's life, my brother did that."

"What?" Donna looked back and forth between the two, completely confused.

"And anyway, Martha's fine. She's safe, alive, and well."
"She's gone too," he added sadly, jumping back to avoid Evy's foot as she tried to kick him with her heel again.

"What about Rose?" Donna asked, highly amused by the girl's antics but frowning when she saw Evy stiffen at the name.

"Still lost," the Doctor answered quickly, before looking over at Donna, "I thought you were going to travel the world?"

Donna recognized a change in topic, but she could also tell his previous companions were a touchy topic and let it go, "Easier said than done," she sighed, "It's like I had that one day with you and I was gonna change. I was gonna do so much. Then I woke up next morning, same old life. It's like you were never there. And I tried. I did try, I went to Egypt. I was gonna go barefoot and everything. And then it's all bus trips and guidebooks and don't drink the water and two weeks later you're back home. It's nothing like being with you. I must have been mad turning down that offer."

"What offer?"

"To come with you."

"You'd come with us?" the Doctor's eyes widened. Evy couldn't help but smile, he was starting to finally see that she wasn't going anywhere, finally getting into the habit of us and we.

"Oh yes, please!" Donna grinned.

"Right," he nodded slowly, uncertain.

"Inducer activated," the computer announced, Evy frowned.

"What's it doing now?" Donna asked as the Doctor leaned over Evy's shoulder to help examine the system.

"She started the program," Evy's eyes widened as she saw the instructions flashing across the screen.

"Inducer transmitting," the computer announced.

"So far they're just losing weight," the Doctor added, moving to stand next to Evy and help her out, "But the matron has gone up to emergency pathogenesis."

"That's when they convert..." Donna began, unable to continue.

"Everything," Evy confirmed.

"A million people are gonna die!" the Doctor exclaimed, "Gotta cancel the signal!"

He pulled out the golden Adipose capsule, pulling off one end to reveal a chip, passing it to Evy to plug into the machine.

"This should contain the primary signal," Evy mumbled as she worked to get it into the system.

"If we can just switch it off the fat goes back to being just fat," he tried to type in some commands.

"Inducer increasing," the computer announced.

"No, no, no, no, no, she's doubled it! I need..." he looked around at the machine frantically,
"Haven't got time! It's too far..."

"I can't override it!" Evy's eyes widened as she stepped back from the machine, "They're all gonna die..."

"Is there anything I can do?" Donna asked in a panic.

"Sorry, Donna, this is way beyond you!" the Doctor waved her off, "Gotta double the base pulse, I can't..."

"Doctor, tell me what do you need!"

"We need a second capsule to boost the override," Evy answered, seeing the Doctor was in far too bad a state to answer the woman civilly, "But we've only got the one."

"I can't save them!" he frowned, trying to fiddle with a switch. He was almost frantic when the sound of laughing sounded behind him. He turned around, in no mood for joking, only to see Donna holding up a second gold Adipose capsule to Evy. His eyes widened as he looked between the two before pulling Donna into a hug and taking the pendant from her. He shoved it into the machine as Evy flipped a switch and the lights powered down.

Donna shouted in joy as Evy reached out and hugged the ginger woman, "You are brilliant!" she laughed, squeezing the life out of Donna before turning and hugging the Doctor in joy.

Just then a horn blared.

"What the hell was that?" Donna looked up.

"That would be the nursery," Evy commented, rubbing her head. It never ended did it?

"Fine," Donna nodded slowly, "When you say nursery you don't mean a crèche in Notting Hill."

"Nursery ship," the Doctor clarified.

"Incoming signal," the computer announced, turning on and continuing to speak in another language.

"Hadn't we better go and stop them?" Donna asked, concerned, as Evy and the Doctor leaned closer to it, trying to listen in.

"Hang on, instructions from the Adiposian First Family," the Doctor waved her off.

"She's wired up the tower block...to convert it into a levitation post!" Evy murmured, listening to the computer.

"Oh...ooh!" his eyes widened as he pulled back, "We're not the ones in trouble now. SHE is!"

He turned, grabbing Evy's hand, and ran out of the closet, straight towards the stairs. He led them up and up and up until they were back on the roof. They could see blue lights filling the sky and thousands of Adipose being levitated up to a giant ship in the sky.

"What you gonna do then?" Donna asked, staring at the blobs, "Blow them up?"

"They're children," Evy commented softly.

"They can't help where they come from," the Doctor agreed.
"Oh, that makes a change from last time," Donna smiled, "That Martha must've done you good."

"Not just Martha," the Doctor commented, flashing a smile down at Evy.

"But yeah, she did," Evy smiled back, only too ready to give Martha her much deserved praise. The Doctor laughed, glancing over at Donna, "She fancied me," he replied with a small bit of smugness in his voice.

Evy playfully elbowed him in the ribs.

"Mad Martha, that one," Donna smiled, though a bit curious at their interaction, "Blind Martha. Charity Martha," they looked up as an Adipose baby waved at them, they could only wave back, "I'm waving at fat."

"Actually, as a diet plan, it sort of works," the Doctor commented before something caught his sight, "There she is!" they ran to the ledge to see Ms. Foster rising in the air until she was the same height as they were, "Matron Cofelia, listen to me!"

"Oh, I don't think so, Doctor," Ms. Foster replied, "And if I never see you again, it will be too soon."

"Oh, why does no one ever listen?"

"We're trying to help!" Evy shouted out at her, "Please! Can you make it to the roof? Shift the levitation beam?"

"What, so that you can arrest me?" she glared at them.

"Just listen!"

"We saw the Adiposian instructions," the Doctor added quickly, "They know it's a crime, breeding on Earth. So what's the one thing they want to get rid of? Their accomplice!"

"I'm far more than that. I'm nanny to all these children," Ms. Foster shook her head.

"That's just it!" Evy shook her head, looking up to see the Adipose were all in the ship and Ms. Foster was the only one left.

"Mum and dad have got the kids now, they don't need the nanny anymore!" the Doctor tried to reason.

Suddenly the blue light was gone. Foster looked down, bewildered, for only a moment, before she fell with a scream. Donna turned and hid her face in the Doctor's shoulder while he and Evy turned away from the edge just before a thud was heard. They looked up to see the Adipose babies waving goodbye to them as the ship took off.

Evy took a breath and looked over at the Doctor, who was looking down with a slightly defeated expression, and she knew he was blaming himself for not being able to save the woman. She reached out, taking his hand in her own. He looked up, startled, and stared at her a moment before nodding. He kept forgetting he wasn't alone anymore. If there was anyone in the Universe who could understand exactly how he felt it was Evy, and it wasn't just because she was Linked to him and had a near constant connection to his own emotions but because he could tell, she had a soul as kind as his own. This would hit her just as hard as him.
He sighed, squeezing her hand, before turning to lead them all away.

~8~

As they passed the ambulances on the ground, Evy tossing the sonic pen into a bin.

"Oi, you three!" someone shouted. They turned around to see Penny rush up to them, still tied to the chair she was carrying beneath her, "You're just mad. Do you hear me? Mad! And I'm gonna report you...for madness!"

They watched, in shock and speechlessness, as she crept away through the crowd.

"You see, some people just can't take it," Donna shook her head sadly.

"No," the Doctor agreed.

Evy grinned, seeing where Donna was going, nudging her, "But some people can."

Donna looked over to see Evy grinning widely at her and could feel a smile coming to her face as well, "So, then, TARDIS! Come on!" she grabbed the Doctor's arm and pulled him away towards the alley where her car was parked, Evy laughing behind them, "That's my car!" Donna cried as she saw the blue box set up right behind her car, "That is like destiny! And I've been ready for this," she ran to her trunk and popped it open, revealing numerous suitcases stashed away there, "I packed ages ago, just in case. 'Cos I thought, hot weather, cold weather, no weather..." Evy watched, amused, as the excited woman started to load her luggage into the Doctor's arms as he stood there, stunned, "...he goes anywhere, I've gotta be prepared," she threw a stripped hat box on top of the rest.

"You've got a...a...hatbox?" the Doctor commented, lost for what to say to that.

"Planet of the Hats, I'm ready!" Donna exclaimed, grabbing two suitcases and dragging them towards the TARDIS.

Evy just let out a little laugh, taking a few suitcases and the hat box from the Doctor and walking over to the blue box as well, setting them down. She went over to the door, opening it for Donna, just as the Doctor joined them, placing his cases down too.

Donna spun around from where she was about to enter the TARDIS to face the Doctor, "Do I need injections though, do I? Like when you go to Cambodia, is there any of that? 'Cos my friend Veena went to Bahrain, and..." she trailed off, seeing how the Doctor was just standing there stoically, not looking as happy as she felt. She glanced over at Evy, who was standing next to her, to see her gazing at the Doctor, concerned, "You're not saying much..."

"No, it's just..." he sighed, "It's a funny old life, in the TARDIS."

"You don't want me..."

"He's not saying that," Evy replied, resting a hand on the woman's shoulder.

"But you asked me," she looked from Evy to the Doctor who stared sadly, "Would you two rather be on your own?"

"No," the Doctor answered quickly, "Actually, no. But..." he sighed, unable to find the words.

"The last time, with Martha," Evy answered, looking straight into the Doctor's eyes as she spoke,
"Like he said it...it was complicated for a short while..." Donna looked over at the woman beside her. She was speaking slowly, haltingly, as though she were trying to find the words to express what was going on in the Doctor's mind, "And that..." Evy suddenly glared at him, "That was not all your fault!" she strode over to the Doctor, "It wasn't your fault at all. Things just happened, things far beyond your control, beyond my control."

She hesitated a moment before speaking silently to him, knowing what happened with Martha, the woman's feelings towards the Doctor, should be kept private for now, 'She understood,' she told him, 'Really she did, she's known ever since 1913, and yes, it was a bit uncomfortable at first...' she trailed, pushing her thoughts of how Martha had jumped ship from fancying the Doctor to fancying him with Evy out of her mind, '...but everything turned out just fine in the end.'

He nodded slowly. He knew Evy had told Martha about being a Time Lady before him, about being his Link. He could tell Martha had fancied him at first, and it had been a bit straining, but then Evy came along and suddenly it was like Martha was a different person, much more carefree, less flirtatious, more carefree. He didn't want a strain like that again, not just for the position it put him in, what with being a Time Lord and them being human, but for Evy as well. He knew the Link had resulted in romantic feelings on her side and he couldn't help but feel like he'd already hurt her enough with his feelings for Rose, not that he could be sure. She was very careful to never think of Rose around him and since he wasn't Linked to her, she could protect her deeper thoughts with less effort than if he had Linked to her. Now he couldn't be sure exactly what she thought or felt about it. But the fact remained, he just didn't want to find himself in that sort of awkward situation again, especially not with it including his Link as well.

"I just want a mate," he told her seriously, trying to convey with his words and thoughts that he didn't mean for the whole thing with Martha to start out the way it had and how much he truly wanted to avoid it happening again.

"You just want TO MATE?" Donna's voice called back to them, sounding all too horrified and a bit disgusted.

The Doctor looked up, shocked, to see Donna staring at him in horror, "I just want a mate!" he tried again, his eyes wide.

"You're not mating with me, sunshine!" she stepped back, trying to shield herself from him with the door to the TARDIS.

"A mate, I want A Mate!" the Doctor exclaimed as Evy laughed at the whole situation. She had forgotten that Donna couldn't hear their mental conversations or see the Doctor's thoughts, she had only heard the part he'd actually said out loud and jumped to a very hysterical conclusion. She had a feeling, she was going to LOVE having Donna around.

"Well just as well, because I'm not having any of that nonsense," Donna nodded, stepping back out, "I mean you're just a long streak of...nothing. You know, alien nothing."

The Doctor smiled, seeing the truth in her words. It put all his fears to rest, a companion who just wanted, well, companionship, and an adventure. The perfect combination.

"There we are, then," he nodded, "Ok."

"I can come?" Donna asked hopefully.

"Yeah!" Evy spun around, walking up to the woman and hugging her, "Of course you can!"
"We'd love it," the Doctor smiled at her.

"Oh, that's just..." Donna squeezed Evy and went to hug the Doctor but stopped suddenly, "Car keys!"

"What?" both the Doctor and Evy asked.

"I've still got my mum's car keys!" she clarified, turning to run down the alley, calling, "I won't be a minute!" as she disappeared around a corner. The Doctor and Evy couldn't help but laugh as they started to gather her luggage and move it into the TARDIS.

They'd just finished moving the last piece when Donna came running back in, "Off we go, then!"

"Here it is, the TARDIS," the Doctor introduced, "It's bigger on the inside than it is on the outside..."

"Oh, I know that bit," Donna cut him off with a wave of his hand, "Although frankly, you could turn the heat up..." then she saw the Doctor pouting, "What?"

"That's his favorite part," Evy rolled her eyes at him as she leaned against the console.

"So, whole wide Universe, where do you want to go?" the Doctor asked, trying to get the topic of conversation away from himself.

"Oh, I know exactly the place," Donna grinned.

"Which is?"

"Two and a half miles, that way," she pointed her thumb over her shoulder.

The Doctor looked at Evy, confused, she could only shrug before turning around and pressing a few buttons on the console. The Doctor watched her a moment before walking to the other side and pulling a lever and they were off. It seemed the TARDIS had calmed down enough to let him help pilot.

They were flying across the sky, just passing a hill, when Donna ran to the doors and opened them. The Doctor locked the coordinates enough where they could go see who she was waving at.

"That's Donna!" they heard someone shout, "Yeah, that's Donna."

It was an old man, standing by a telescope, "Doctor?" Evy asked quietly, leaning over, "Isn't that the newsstand man?" he looked at her, confused, "From Christmas? The Titanic?"

"Oh!" his eyes widened as he looked out the door again, "It is!"

They enthusiastically began to wave back, the man growing more excited when he saw them.

"And that's him!" the man pointed up at them, "That's him! Hey! That's him! Ha ha! Go on girl! Go on, get up there! Hey!"

He did a merry little dance as the TARDIS pulled them away from Earth, sending them zooming away through time and space.
Chapter End Notes

Anyone want to guess what habit the Doctor is developing when he starts to run? :)

Next chapter...we get a bit more about Evy's life on Gallifrey while Lucius sees something about her more clearly than the Doctor, and...how will the Doctor react to Evy in a toga?
"So...you're a Time Lady?" Donna asked as she and Evy sat at the captain's chair, watching as the Doctor worked on landing the TARDIS.

As soon as Donna had gotten settled away, setting up her own room near Evy's and the Doctor's, the Doctor had said he'd gotten a trip all planned out for Donna and to head to the control room to get ready.

Donna had immediately set on Evy about the sonic screwdriver and Evy had told her about being a Time Lady. She had told her all about the travels with Martha and finding her brother, the Master, hiding away at the end of the Universe, the whole Year-That-Never-Was, and even about the Titanic.

"Yes," Evy nodded, "I was sent out of the war just before the planet was sealed off."

Donna nodded, recalling the Doctor speaking of how his planet had been lost. She looked over at the Doctor, fiddling with a couple switches, and couldn't help but smile. She had seen how lonely and weary he seemed when she last met him, she was so happy for him, that he'd found someone like him to travel with. She was even more happy to find that his new companion had no qualms with him taking on another traveler, her.

Donna opened her mouth to ask something when the TARDIS jolted, sending them falling to the floor.

"One of these days you are going to have to let me pilot," Evy grumbled to the Doctor as she pulled herself up and went to help Donna up as well, "And not just when the TARDIS is cross with you. I actually passed my exams."

The Doctor just rolled his eyes, feigning deafness and ran to the doors. He stepped out and pushed aside a rough sort of curtain so they could see where they were. He turned, grinning, and stepped aside for them to come out and see.

"Ancient Rome," he exclaimed as Donna looked around in shock, "Well, not to them, obviously. To all intents and purposes right now...this is brand new Rome."

"Oh my God!" Donna breathed excitedly as she looked at all the people shopping around the stalls, "It's so...it's so Roman! This is fantastic!" she turned and gave the Doctor a friendly hug, "I'm here...in Rome. Donna Noble in Rome!" she walked out in a daze, not seeing the Doctor and Evy exchange a proud smile, it always felt so good to give companions this sort of thrill, "This is just weird. I mean, everyone here is dead."

"Don't tell them that," Evy grinned, looping her arm through the Doctor's as they stepped out onto the streets with Donna.

"Hold on a minute," Donna said, seeing something behind them as she turned to thank them, "That sign over there is in English. Are you having me on? Are we in Epcot?"

"No, no, no, no," the Doctor replied quickly, "That's the TARDIS translation circuits."
Donna looked at him blankly.

"It makes it look like English..." Evy explained, "Sound like English too," she grinned, "You, Donna Noble, are speaking in Latin right now."

"Seriously?" Donna's eyes widened.

"Mhm," the Doctor nodded.

"I just said 'seriously' in Latin..."

"Oh yeah," he laughed.

Donna joined in, "What if I said something in actual Latin? Like 'veni, vidi, vici'? My dad said that when he came back from football. If I said 'veni, vidi, vici' to that lot, what would it sound like?"

The Doctor hesitated, looking at Evy, "I'm not sure..." Evy admitted, that had never really come up in their studies on Gallifrey.

"You have to think of difficult questions, don't you?" the Doctor asked jokingly.

"I'm gonna try it," Donna stated, walking with purpose over to one of the vendors.

"Hello, sweetheart," he greeted, "What can I get for you, my love?"

"Veni, vidi, vici."

"Huh?" he frowned, looking confused, "Sorry? Me no speak Celtic. No can do, missy."

"Yeah..." Donna nodded to herself, walking away and over to the Doctor and Evy, who had been watching the whole thing with interest, "What does he mean 'Celtic'?"


"There we are," the Doctor hummed, agreeing, "That's something."

They started walking again aimlessly, keeping their eyes open for the main sights of Rome.

"Won't our clothes look a bit odd?" Donna asked after a moment, seeing the many people walking around in togas and robes.

"Nah," the Doctor waved off her concern, "Ancient Rome, anything goes. It's like Soho...but bigger."

"You've been here before then?"

"Mhm, ages ago," he commented, a bit distracted, "Before you ask, that fire had nothing to do with me."

Evy snorted and gave him a look.

"Well, a little bit," he admitted, "But I hadn't gotten the chance to look around properly. Coliseum...Pantheon...Circus Maximum..."

"We should have seen them by now," Evy cut in, looking around, confused, "Where is everything?"
The Doctor stopped, seeing the point of her statement, "Try this way," he led them off to the side, through an archway and down a wider street. It was fairly easy to see any major landmarks looming in the distance but they saw none. The Doctor and Evy proceeded to look around when something caught Donna's eye.

"I'm not an expert, but there are Seven Hills of Rome, aren't there?" Donna called to them, "How come they only got one?"

The Doctor and Evy turned to see Donna staring at a rather large mountain at the edge of town. But they didn't have long to think on it as the ground started shaking.

"Here we go again," a vendor called out while the rest of the vendors got to work trying to hold things steady and save their merchandise.

"Wait a minute!" Donna's eyes widened as she saw black smoke start to rise from the mountain, "One mountain...with smoke...which makes this..."

"Pompeii," Evy breathed, "We're in Pompeii…"

"And it's Volcano Day!" the Doctor finished before reaching out and grabbing Evy's hand, "We need to leave…now!" he pulled her down the streets, Donna close behind as they headed for the TARDIS. He threw open the curtain that hid the box behind it, only to see it nowhere to be found.

"You're kidding," Evy stared at the blank space.

"Don't tell me the TARDIS is gone," Donna panted, breathing heavily from the run and silently cursing Time Lords and their two hearts.

"Okay," the Doctor agreed, still a bit stunned.

"Where is it then?"

The Doctor turned to her, confused, "You told me not to tell you."

Evy spun on her heel and ran back into the street, still trying to see if she could spot the TARDIS.

"Don't get clever in Latin," Donna shot back as the Doctor followed Evy out.

"Um...excuse me!" she ran over to the same vendor Donna had spoken to, "Excuse me!"

"There was a box…big, blue box," the Doctor continued as Donna joined them, "Big, blue, wooden box...just over there. Where's it gone?"

"Sold it, didn't I?" the vendor replied smugly.

"But it wasn't yours to sell," Evy frowned at him.

"It was on my patch, wasn't it? I got 15 sesterces for it. Lovely jubbly."

"Who did you sell it to?" the Doctor asked.

"Old Caecilius," he nodded down the street, "Look...if you want to argue, why don't you take it up with him? He's on Foss Street. Big villa can't miss it."

"Thanks," the Doctor nodded, turning to run off but suddenly changing course and coming back,
"What did he buy a big, blue, wooden box for?"
"Doctor, not really the time," Evy reminded him.

"Right, right!" he nodded, grabbing her hand and taking off, Donna close behind. They ran down a few streets in the general direction the vendor had pointed until they came to a large intersection. They looked around for a moment before each taking off down one street, trying to find their way.

'Found it!' Evy heard the Doctor shout in her mind and immediately turned around and ran back to the intersection, running into Donna and the Doctor at the exact same time.

"Ha!" he grinned, "I've got it! Foss Street, this way!"

"No," Donna reached out and grabbed his arm, stopping him, "I've found this big sort of amphitheater I think...we can start there. We can get everyone together. Then maybe they've got a great, big bell or something we could ring. Have they invented bells yet?"

"What do you want a bell for?" the Doctor frowned.

"To warn everyone! To start the evacuation! What time does Vesuvius erupt? When's it due?"

"It's 79 AD, 23rd of August, which makes the eruption tomorrow," Evy replied, she'd figured out exactly when they were as quickly as she could after seeing the volcano.

"Plenty of time," Donna breathed a sigh of relief, "We can get everyone out easy."

"Except we're not going to," the Doctor told her, grabbing the arm holding him and tugging her, but she didn't move.

"But that's what you do," Donna's eyes widened as she looked at him, "You're the Doctor. You save people."

"Any other time he would, yeah," Evy replied solemnly, defending him, "But Pompeii is a fixed point in history."

"What happens happens," the Doctor agreed, "There is no stopping it."

"Says who?" Donna demanded, resisting as the Doctor tried to pull her again.

"Says me."

"What, and you're in charge?" Donna glared at him.

"TARDIS, Time Lord...yeah."

"Donna, human...no!"

"Evy, stop it...go!" Evy cut in, trying to remind them of the imminent threat on the horizon.

"I don't need your permission," Donna ignored her, "I'll tell them myself."

"Look Donna," Evy tried to reason with her, "If you stand out here and start shouting that the end of the world is coming, they'll just think you're a...mad soothsayer or something...just like it is in your time."

"Now, come on," the Doctor ordered, "TARDIS, we are getting out of here."

Donna stormed off after them, "Well, I just might have something to say about that spaceman!"
"Oh, I bet you will!" he called back before turning the corner with Evy, heading down the street towards a large villa, Caecilius's.

"Whoa!" the Doctor called, saving a bust from falling to the briefly shaking ground. He set it up right and slapped its cheeks, "There you go."

"Thank you, kind sir," Caecilius breathed, having been too slow to save the bust himself. He looked up at the trio standing in his doorway and frowned, "I'm afraid business is closed for the day. I'm expecting a visitor."

"Oh, that's me," the Doctor reached out and shook the man's hand, "I'm a visitor. Hello."

"Who are you?"

"Octavia," Evy called out the first name she could think of.

"I am...Spartacus," the Doctor introduced after a moment, a grin blooming on his face.

"And so am I," Donna added, each of them grinning at the small joke.

"Mr. and Mrs. Spartacus?" Caecilius looked between Donna and the Doctor.

"Oh no, we're not married," the Doctor replied quickly at the same times as Donna said, "Not together."

The Doctor looked over at Evy cautiously, only to see her shaking her head in humor.

"Oh, then brother and sister?" Caecilius nodded, "Yes, of course. You look very much alike."

"Really?" the Doctor and Donna asked at the same time.

"You sound very much alike too," Evy commented, smiling.

"I'm sorry, but I'm not open for trade," Caecilius said again.

"And that trade would be..." the Doctor trailed off.

"Marble. Lucius Caecilius. Mining, polishing and design thereof. If you want marble, I'm your man."

"That's good," the Doctor held up the psychic paper, "That's good, 'cos I'm the marble inspector."

"By the gods of commerce, an inspection," a woman behind Caecilius gasped, taking a cup of wine from a young man sitting on the edge of a small pool and dumping it into said pool, "I'm sorry, sir. I do apologize for my son."

"Oi!" the boy shouted, glaring at his mother for taking the drink from him.

"This is my good wife, Metella," Caecilius introduced, "I...I must confess, we're not prepared for a..."

"Nothing to worry about," the Doctor cut in, "I...I'm sure you've got nothing to hide. Although, frankly, that..." he spotted the TARDIS, "...object...rather looks like wood to me."

He, Donna, and Evy began to walk towards it, trying to do so inconspicuously.
"I told you to get rid of it!" they heard Metella hiss.

"I only bought it today," Caecilius informed them.

"Well there you go," Evy commented lightly, "Caveat emptor."

"Oh, you're Celtic!" Caecilius's eyes widened at the foreign business he might be able to drum up, "They're lovely."

"I'm sure it's fine but I might have to take it off your hands for a proper inspection," the Doctor told him.

"Although," Donna began, "While we're here, wouldn't you recommend a holiday, Spartacus?"

"I don't know what you mean, Spartacus."

"Oh, this lovely family, mother and father and son..." Donna looked at them meaningfully, "What about you Octavia? Don't you think they should get out of town?"

"Why should we do that?" Caecilius frowned.

The Doctor rubbed his eyes as Donna tried to explain, "Well, the volcano for starters."

"What?"

"Volcano."

"What-ano?"

"That great big volcano right on your doorstep."

"Oh, Spartacii, for shame," Evy cut in suddenly, linking her arms with the Doctor and Donna's, "We haven't greeted the household gods yet," she tugged them away, past the family, towards the back wall where a small shrine was set up.

"They don't know what it is," the Doctor hissed to Donna as they reached the shrine, "Vesuvius is just a mountain to them. The top hasn't blown off yet."

Evy reached into a small basin and sprinkled the frieze of the gods with water, "The Romans haven't even got a word for volcano. No one will. Not until tomorrow."

"Oh great," Donna replied sarcastically, "They can learn a new word...when they die."

"Donna, shut up," the Doctor hissed, frustrated.

"Listen, I don't know what sort of kids you've been flyin' around with in outer space, but you're not telling me to shut up. That boy..." she nodded at Caecilius's son, "How old is he, sixteen? And tomorrow he burns to death."

"And that's our fault?"

"Right now, yes!"

Just then a servant entered the room, "Announcing Lucius Petrus Dextrus, Chief Augur of the city government!" he called as an older man strode in, wearing a cloak draped over his right shoulder.
"Lucius, my pleasure as always," Caecilius greeted.

Donna, the Doctor, and Evy turned away from the shrine, stepping back into the room to see who the visitor was.

"Quintus, stand up," Metella hissed at her son as he stood with a long suffering sigh.

"A rare and great honor, sir, for you to come to my house," Caecilius continued, holding out a hand to Lucius, only for the gesture to be ignored.

"The birds are flying north..." Lucius said, "And the wind is in the west."

"Right," he nodded slowly, not understanding what was being said at all, "Absolutely. That's good, is it?"

"Only the grain of wheat knows where it will grow."

"There now, Metella, have you ever heard such wisdom?" Caecilius turned to his wife for help.

"Never," Metella breathed, "It's an honor."

"Pardon me, sir, I have guests," Caecilius motioned towards the trio standing in the doorway of the shrine, "This is Octavia, Spartacus, and, uh, Spartacus."

They waved.

"A name is but a cloud upon a summer wind," Lucius commented.

"But the wind is felt most keenly in the dark," Evy remarked.

"Ah!" Lucius grinned, "What is the dark other than an omen of the sun?"

"We concede that every sun must set..." the Doctor began as the auger let out a triumphant laugh, "...and yet the son of the father must also rise."

"Damn," Lucius turned to look at them closer, "Very clever. Evidently a man and woman of learning."

"Oh yes, but don't mind us," the Doctor grinned. Evy rolled her eyes, he did so love being called brilliant, "Don't want to disturb the status quo."

"They're Celtic," Caecilius whispered to Lucius.

"And we'll be off in a minute," Evy told them as the Doctor began to slowly lead Donna towards the TARDIS, letting the residents get back to business.

"I'm not going," Donna insisted quietly.

"It's ready, sir," Caecilius turned back to Lucius.

"You've got to," Evy replied just as quiet.

"Well I'm not," she repeated.

"The moment of revelation," Caecilius unveiled a square piece of marble with a familiar design in it, "And here it is..." the Doctor glanced back over at the marble, Evy saw it in his mind and turned
as well, "Exactly as you specified. It pleases you, sir?"

They stopped.

"As the rain pleases the soil," Lucius nodded, looking down at the marble.

"Oh now that's...different," the Doctor commented as they turned around to rejoin the residents, "Who designed that then?"

"My lord Lucius was very specific," Caecilius replied.

"Where'd you get the pattern?" Evy tilted her head to the side and looked at the marble more closely.

"On the rain and mist and wind," Lucius answered.

"Well that looks like a circuit," Donna commented.

"Made of stone," Evy nodded.

"Do you mean you just dreamt that up?" Donna asked the man.

"That is my job...as City Augur," Lucius finally answered more clearly.

"What's that then, like the mayor?" Donna shook her head in confusion.

"Oh, ah, you must excuse my friend," the Doctor said quickly so as not to offend, "She's from..."

"Barcelona," Evy finished with the first place that jumped into her mind, this Doctor was quite fond of it.

"This is an age of superstition..." the Doctor explained softly as they pulled Donna to the side, "Of official superstition."

"The augur is paid by the city to tell the future," Evy continued.

The Doctor nodded, "The wind will blow from the west.' That's the equivalent of the 10:00 news."

"They're laughing at us," another voice said. They looked over to see a young woman standing there shakily, looking very pale and drawn, not at all with it, and staring at them dazedly, "Those three, they use words like tricksters. They're mocking us."

"No, no," the Doctor said quickly, "We meant no offence."

"I'm sorry," Metella apologized, walking over to the woman, "My daughter's been consuming the vapors."

"By the gods mother!" Quintus exclaimed, "What have you been doing to her?"

"Not now, Quintus," Caecilius said quietly.

"But she's sick. Just look at her."

"I gather I have a rival in this household," Lucius commented, "Another with the gift."

"Oh, she's been promised to the Sibylline Sisterhood," Metella told them proudly, "They say she has remarkable visions."
"The prophecies of women are limited and dull," Lucius remarked, looking at Evelina with disdain, "Only the men folk have the capacity for true perception."

"I'll tell you where the wind's blowing right now, mate," Donna glared at him as did Evy. The ground shook.

"The mountain god marks your words," Lucius turned to Donna, "I'd be careful if I were you."

"Consuming the vapors, you say?" the Doctor frowned, looking at Evelina.

"They give me strength," Evelina replied.

"It doesn't look like it."

"Is that your opinion...as a doctor?"

"I beg your pardon?" his eyes widened.

"Doctor. That's your name."

"How did you know that?"

"It is written above you, in eave that protects you..." she hazily glanced at Evy before turning her sights on Donna, "And you...you call yourself noble."

"Now then Evelina," Metella took her arm, "Don't be rude."

"No, no, no," the Doctor held up his hand, "Let her talk."

"You come from so far away," Evelina gazed upon them.

"A female soothsayer in inclined to invent all sorts of vagaries," Lucius replied.

"Oh, not this time, Lucius," the Doctor told him, "I reckon you've been out-soothsaid."

"Is that so...man from Gallifrey?" he turned his sights on the Doctor.

"What?" Evy's eyes widened.

"Strangest of images," Lucius stared at the Doctor, "Your home is lost in fire, is it not? And not just your home..." he turned his gaze on Evy, "But it's hers as well. The last children of Gallifrey."

"What are they doing?" Donna breathed, looking at the shocked faces of the Doctor and Evy.

"And you, daughter of..." Lucius trailed, staring at Donna a moment, "London."

"How does he know that?"

"This is the gift of Pompeii. Every single oracle tells the truth."

"But that's impossible," Evy shook her head, snapping herself out of her shock.

"Doctor," he turned suddenly to face the Doctor, "She is returning."

"Who is?" the Doctor frowned, "Who's she?"
Lucius ignored him and turned to Donna, "And you, Daughter of London...you have something on your back."

"What's that mean?" Donna asked, suddenly very scared.

But again, Lucius ignored her and turned his gaze on Evy, a cruel smile making its way to his face, "And you...Daughter of Gallifrey, you shall be crushed in your pain," Evy stiffened, "The pain that surrounds your hearts even now."

The Doctor whipped his head over at Evy as she suddenly threw up her mental barriers. He couldn't hear her.

"Even the word 'Doctor' is false," Evelina commented, pulling his attention away from Evy for only a moment, "Your real name is hidden. It burns in the stars of the cascade of Medusa herself. You are a lord, sir, as she is a lady, a lord...of time..."

And then she fainted.

"Evelina!" Metella shouted as the Doctor and Evy rushed to her side.

But it seemed as though this was an all too familiar occurrence for the family as Quintus immediately went to his sister's side and scooped her up to carry her to her room. Evy, Donna, and Metella followed along, the Doctor trailing behind them. Once Evelina was set up on the bed, Metella quickly moved to her side and began to look after her.

Evy looked back at the Doctor, slowly lowering her mental shields as she had pushed down her rampant thoughts deep into her mind so he wouldn't see, so he couldn't see, not without being linked to her.

Sensing the return of her in his mind he looked over at her as well, 'I'm going to try and figure out what is going on around here,' he spoke to her silently, 'Could you...'

She nodded, 'I'll keep an eye out here.'

She knew he was worried about leaving Donna alone with the family, not to mention she herself was worried about the girl who had fainted and more than a little curious as to how she had known all she had.

The Doctor turned and walked off with Caecilius, back towards the front of the house. Quintus had disappeared as soon as Evelina was situated, not at all happy to see his sister in such a state.

"She didn't mean to be rude," Metella commented, concern evident in her voice, "She's ever such a good girl. But when the gods speak through her..." she began to unwrap a cloth from around Evelina's arm.

"What's wrong with her arm?" Donna frowned.

"An irritation of the skin. She never complains, bless her. We bathe it in olive oil every night."

"What is it?" Evy frowned as well, seeing a gray tone to the girl's skin as she stepped forward to join Donna at the girl's bedside.

Metella hesitated a moment before turning to look at the two women who had stayed with her, "Evelina said you'd come from far away. Please, have you ever seen anything like it?"
She held out Evelina's arm for them to see. Donna and Evy looked at each other a moment before reaching out to run their fingers along the gray.

Donna pulled away quickly, "It's stone!" she breathed in shock.

Evy felt the gray one more time before pulling away slowly, her mind already realizing what was happening, "Pyroviles," she muttered softly under her breath.

"What?" Metella looked up at her, not having quite heard her.

"Nothing," Evy replied quickly, stepping back and making it look as though she were looking around the room while Donna moved to help Metella wrap the girl's arm back up.

Evy looked down, staring at nothing in particular as she focused on the Doctor.

She could sense him with Caecilius in the main chamber of the house, gathered around the hypocaust, examining it. She hesitated from informing him of what she'd learned, not entirely certain exactly what was going on or how, but perhaps he would learn something to fit the pieces of information she had gleamed.

"...we're very advanced in Pompeii," Caecilius was saying to him, "In Rome, they're still using the old wood-burning furnaces, but we've got hot springs...leading from Vesuvius itself."

"Who thought of that?" the Doctor asked.

"The soothsayers after the great earthquake seventeen years ago. An awful lot of damage but we rebuilt."

She could sense the conflict in the Doctor's mind before he spoke again, "Didn't you think of moving away?" but then he retracted, all the years of schooling coming back to him, "Oh, no, then again, San Francisco."

"That's a new restaurant in Naples, isn't it?" Caecilius asked, confused, never having heard of San Francisco before.

Evy frowned, so something had infected the soothsayers, allowing them to see the future, and they, in turn, were spreading this infection to the others of Pompeii via the hypocausts.

There was a loud rumbling in the Doctor's ear, she listened, "What's that noise?" the Doctor asked.

"Don't know," Caecilius sighed, "Happens all the time. They say the gods of the Underworld are stirring."

If it really was the Pyroviles, then they had to be living in Vesuvius, it was the only way to spread it through the hypocausts and be able to hear them back.

"But after the earthquake..." the Doctor began, "Let me guess. Is that when the soothsayers started making sense?"

"Oh yes, very much so," Caecilius nodded, "I mean, they'd always been...shall we say 'imprecise'? But then...the soothsayers, the augurs, the haruspex...all of them, they saw the truth again and again. It's quite amazing. They can predict crops and rainfall with absolute precision."

The Doctor hesitated before asking, "Have they said anything about tomorrow?"

"No. Why should they? Why do you ask?"
Evy's frown deepened as one began to form on the Doctor's face, "No, no, no reason. Just asking. But the soothsayers...they all consume the vapors?"

"That's how they see."

"Ipso facto..." the Doctor mumbled and Evy smiled a bit, knowing he'd pulled on his brainy specs.

"Look, you..." Caecilius began when the Doctor cut him off.

"They're all consuming this," the Doctor said. Evy concentrated and could see him holding a speck of rock in his hand.

"Dust?"

"Tiny particles of rock," he explained, sprinkling them before moving to taste them, Evy winced, she hated it when he did that, it was a disgusting and crude way of evaluating something, "They're breathing in Vesuvius."

'Doctor,' Evy called in his mind, 'It's Pyroviles.'

'How can you tell?' he asked silently as he went back to putting the grille on the hypocaust.

'Evelina's turning to stone...' she breathed, 'And Pyroviles are the only species that could survive in such intense conditions, inside a volcano.'

He nodded, 'But why are they here? Why try to infect all these people?'

'I don't know,' she sighed, 'I could only guess...'

He frowned, 'Then we'll have to find out.'

Evy could sense the Doctor heading out to find Quintus and turned around to see Evelina awake and watching her mother holding up some outfits to Donna.

~8~

The Doctor had wandered around the house for quite a while before he'd actually managed to find Quintus. Caecilius had insisted on showing the Doctor the scrolls of receipts he'd had about his marble business, as he was still under the impression that the Doctor was a marble inspector. That had taken a bit longer than he anticipated in giving the man the slip so he could find Quintus. But after he found the boy, it had been surprisingly easy to get the information out of him, just flash a little gold coin and he had agreed to lead him straight to Lucius Petrus Dextrus's house.

"Going somewhere?" a voice called as they reached the front door.

They tensed and turned around to see Evy standing there. The Doctor's mouth dropped open and his eyes widened as he saw her wearing a toga. It fit her nicely, he had to admit. It was an almost floor length, sleeveless dress with golden clasps on her shoulders, bunching up the fabric. There was a gold cord wrapped around her waist, crisscrossing, from just under her bust, across her stomach, and down to her hips. It was classic white.

"Uh..." was his brilliant response.

"You were," Evy nodded, "And without me?"

"Um," he swallowed hard, shaking his head to clear his nonexistent thoughts, "I thought you'd want
to stay here with Donna."

It was a lie. They both knew it. He was going out on his own.

Evy rolled her eyes, before pulling a torch off the wall and stepping up to him, "Well, let's go then," the Doctor didn't move. Evy frowned, "What?"

"I uh," he rubbed the back of his neck, "I'd like you to stay here."

Evy blinked, "And leave you to your own devices? We both know how much trouble you seem to get into without anyone to watch you."

"I know," the Doctor replied quietly, "And that's just it…I'd feel better if you were here, if you were safe…"

"Doctor…"

"Please," he whispered, "Pyroviles, they're unpredictable and dangerous…"

"I know."

He glanced over at Quintus before leaning forward so he wouldn't hear, "If Evelina is turning into one, I need to know that Donna will be safe. Please stay, for her."

Evy stared at him a long while before sighing and holding out the torch for him to take, "You'd better come back in one piece," she threatened lightly, "Or I'll kill you."

"I promise," he nodded, glancing at her one more time before turning and walking out of the house with Quintus.

Evy shook her head and turned around to go find Donna.

~8~

'Evy?' the Doctor's voice filtered through her mind as she stood in Evelina's room, watching her and Donna talk, 'Are you seeing this?'

She closed her eyes, leaning against the wall, and focused, seeing a wall of marble circuits in Lucius's home. She frowned, 'Is that...a power converter?'

'Looks like it. The parts for it at least.'

'But what's if for?'

'No idea,' he mumbled, before grinning, 'Can't wait to find out though!'

The open communication faded as he became distracted by something and Evelina's laughter drifted over to her, distracting her as well.

"You're not supposed to laugh," Donna shouted as she showed off her new toga, "Thanks for that. What do you think?" she threw a cloth over her shoulder and struck a pose, "The goddess Venus."

"Oh, that's sacrilege," Evelina laughed.

"But a lovely one," Evy complimented, earning a playful wink from Donna. She stepped forward, off the wall, and went to join the two women by the bed.
"Nice to see you laugh, though," Donna grinned at the young woman, sitting down on the edge of the bed. "What do you do in old Pompeii, then... girls your age? You got... mates? Do you go hangin' 'round the shops? T.K. Maximus?"

Evelina shook her head sadly, "I'm promised to the sisterhood for the rest of my life."

"You had no choice in that, did you?" Evy frowned.

There were temples on Gallifrey, young men and women were promised to the temples and trained to see the Universe and time in a more clear-cut way. Every Time Lord and Lady could see the turn of the Universe, the fixed points in time, the points in flux. But the training the temples provided would allow the initiated person to see the different outcomes of the points in flux, how each and every decision would affect the ultimate outcome of the Universe.

Her family had been approached when she was very young to see if they would commit her to the temple but her father had adamantly refused. Very few children were ever asked to join, often only those who were inspired to such a high degree that their minds almost functioned on a different level than average. When standing at the Schism, not many children were inspired. Most would run away, not as extreme as in the Doctor's case where he literally ran away from the planet as soon as he could, they would just run from the Schism, overwhelmed by the sheer power of time. Some would go mad for a short while, be plagued with nightmares, claim paranoia for a bit, but they would grow out of it, learn to revere the power of time because of it. Few were ever driven as insane as her brother had been. And few of those who were inspired were on such a level as to draw attention from the temples.

It was a lonely existence, pulled away from the Academy, not learning anything about science or math, just time. Her brother had railed against her being sent there when he found out she'd been offered a place. He'd actually shouted at their father about it, not wanting his sister to suffer that sort of existence. Until their father had calmed him down, saying he would never break up their family like that. She was safe. She had been lucky her family had been given the choice. She had been very happy since then, not at all saddened by the potential that had been squandered. She loved her family too much to just leave like that. And her brother made sure she had a fantastic childhood after that, making sure she saw what she would have had to give up had their father accepted.

She paused in thought, it seemed she, her brother, and the Doctor were all connected from the beginning. Each of them represented the extremes of time.

"It's not my decision," Evelina said, confirming Evy's thoughts, "I have the gift of sight. The Sisters chose for me."

"Then... what can you see happening tomorrow?" Donna asked.
Chapter End Notes

Next chapter the Doctor and Evy grow closer over a difficult decision and Donna learns exactly what it's like for Evy to live with a partial Link.
"Donna," Evy whispered in warning, but Donna just ignored her.

"Is tomorrow special?" Evelina frowned.

"You tell me," Donna continued, "What do you see?"

"Donna don't," Evy hissed, but Donna glared at her.

"The sun will rise," Evelina said, closing her eyes for a moment, "The sun will set. Nothing special at all."

"Look...don't tell the Doctor I said anything 'cos he'll kill me...but I've got a prophecy too," Donna began.

Evelina covered her eyes with her hands as though to avoid the sight of a false prophecy.

"Donna!" Evy reached out and grabbed her arm, pulling her off the bed, "You can't!"

Donna wrenched her arm from the woman's grip and frowned at her. She looked into Evy's eyes, searching for something there before sighing, "Please," she said quietly, half begging her, "You've just got to let me try."

Evy frowned, biting her lip in thought before sighing and stepping back.

"Thank you," Donna said to her before turning to Evelina, "Evelina, I'm sorry, but you've got to hear me out...Evelina, can you hear me? Listen."

"There is only one prophecy," Evelina shook her head, trying to ignore her.

"But everything I'm about to say to you is true. I swear. Just listen to me. Tomorrow, that mountain is going to explode. Evelina, please listen. The air is going to fill with ash and rocks...tons and tons of it and...this whole town is gonna get buried."

"That's not true!"

"I'm sorry. I'm really sorry, but everyone's gonna die. Even if you don't believe me, just tell your family to get out of town...just for one day, just for tomorrow. But you've got to get out! Just leave Pompeii!"

"This is false prophecy!" Evelina shouted, tearing her hands away from her eyes, upset.

"Donna," Evy said gently, pulling Donna away from the girl, "I told you," she murmured, hugging the woman who was near tears at the girl's seeming refusal to help herself and her family, "It's human nature, no one wants to know awful things are about to happen, no one wants to believe it's possible."

"But it is," Donna whispered back brokenly.

"I know," Evy gave her an extra squeeze before pulling back, "But they've been warned at least,
that's far more than oth…"

She trailed off, her gaze shifting to something over Donna's shoulder for only a moment before her eyes widened in alarm and she ran out of the room. She ran straight into the main room as a loud set of boomings could be heard. But she gave little thought to that, the Doctor had gotten himself into some sort of trouble, she could just tell.

"What is it?" Metella shouted, "What's that noise?"

"Doesn't sound like Vesuvius," Caecilius frowned.

Evy ran straight past them and towards the door, only to run straight into the Doctor as he ran in. His arms immediately encircled her waist to keep her from falling backwards and looked up at Caecilius, "Caecilius! All of you, get out!"

"Doctor, what is it?" Donna asked, running into the room.

"I think we're being followed," he said, pushing Evy behind him as the grille over the hypocaust was blown into the air, "Just get out!"

He immediately got to work, trying to herd everyone out of the door as the ground around the hypocaust cracked and a growling filled the room. Evy made her way to Donna, trying to pull her back when everyone froze. A large creature seemingly made of stone and magma forced its way out of the ground and into the room.

"The gods are with us," Evelina gasped, seeing it.

"Water!" the Doctor shouted, "We need water! Quintus, all of you, get water! Donna! Evy!"

Donna, Evy, Quintus, and one of the servants ran around the room, grabbing vases and other objects to try and collect water from the pool.

"Don't!" Evy shouted, seeing a servant approach the creature.

"Blessed are we to see the gods," the servant breathed.

"Get back!" Evy tried again but it was too late. The creature breathed out fire, burning the servant to ash. Donna dropped the vase in her hand and pressed them to her mouth as Evy ran to her side and put an arm over her shoulders to comfort her.

"Talk to me!" the Doctor shouted, running forward, his hands out, trying to stop and distract the creature, "That's all I want! Talk to me. Tell me who you are. Don't hurt these people."

Evy forced her mind to remain calm as she felt hands grab her and a rope forced into her mouth and tied behind her. She couldn't afford to distract the Doctor now, not when faced with what was most likely an adult Pyrovile. She glanced over to see a group of Sibylline Sisters pulling a struggling Donna out of the room and allowed herself to be pulled along with them. She wasn't about to let Donna get taken alone.

"Doctor!" she could hear Donna cry out, muffled, "Doctor!"

Evy kept her mind partially aware, making sure she was conscious of where they were going, but also keeping an eye on the Doctor, making sure he didn't get himself killed...because if he got incinerated by a Pyrovile she'd take the TARDIS back in time and kill him herself, paradox be damned.
She actually sighed in relief even as she was pulled into a temple and tied to a pillar, Quintus had splashed the Pyrovile with water, killing it. Almost as soon as that had happened the Doctor became aware that both she and Donna were missing.

'Evy?' he called out into her mind.

'Doctor,' she replied.

'Where are you?'

'The Sibylline Sisters took us,' Evy answered, 'We're in their temple.'

She then proceeded to show him how to get there.

"Make sure that one remains bound," one of the sisters nodded at Evy, "She must not be allowed to call for help."

Evy scoffed silently at that, as though binding her mouth would keep her from reaching the Doctor.

"You have got to be kidding me," Donna shouted as she was tied to a sacrificial altar and the same priestess who had given the order stood beside her with a dagger.

"The false prophet will surrender both her blood and her breath," the priestess announced.

"I'll surrender you in a minute," Donna threatened, "Don't you dare!"

"You will be silent!"

"You might have eyes on the back of your hands but you'll have eyes in the back of your head by the time I finish with you! Let me...go!"

"This prattling will cease...forever!" the priestess raised the dagger above her head, ready to strike, when a new voice spoke.

"Oh, that'll be the day," the Doctor said, leaning against a pillar and watching.

"No man is allowed to enter the Temple of Sibyl," the priestess gasped, spinning to face him.

"Oh, that's alright, just us girls," he shrugged, walking forward. He headed straight to Evy, walking behind the pillar, flashing his sonic to free her as he passed.

"How did you know?" the priestess demanded, glaring at the Doctor.

Evy reached up and pulled the rope from her mouth, "That would be me," she smirked at the priestess, "You can silence my voice but you can't silence my mind. And I can shout pretty loud."

"Yeah, tell me about it," the Doctor joked, rubbing his head.

Evy shook her head at him and walked towards Donna, not at all worried about the Sisters as the Doctor was watching them carefully.

"Do you know, we met the Sibyl once," the Doctor told them, distracting them as Evy approached the altar, "Hell of a woman. Blimey, she could dance a tarantella. Truth be told, I think she had a bit of a thing for me. I said it would never last. She said, 'I know.' Well, she would."

Evy snorted, he had a bad sense of humor. She had been the one to introduce him to the Sibyl. Bit
of girl bonding over talk of what was to come and the consequences of knowing. It was her opinion that the Sibyl found the Doctor irritating if the arguing they did was any indication, not to mention the knowing glances she had sent Evy the entire trip, she knew it wouldn't have worked even if she did like the Doctor.

"You alright?" Evy asked as she stepped next to Donna.

"Oh, never better," Donna replied sarcastically.

"I like the toga," the Doctor commented as Evy pulled out her sonic from where she'd stashed it behind her back, in the cords wrapped around her waist, and flashed the ropes, freeing her.

"Thank you," Donna grinned as Evy helped her up, before nodding at the Doctor as well, "And thank you."

"What magic is this?" the priestess demanded, staring at them in shock.

Evy flipped her sonic in her hand and slipped it back into the rope belt, turning to face the Sisters seriously. The Doctor watched on, a smile on his face, he knew what was coming, could see it in her mind. If he were being honest, it was quite a sight to see Evy put people in their place, Lord knew she did it to him enough.

"Let me tell you something about the Sibyl," Evy told them, her expression hard, "The founder of your religion. She would be so ashamed of you. So heartbroken to see all her wisdom and insight turned into this travesty. Is this how you spread her word? On the blade of a knife?"

"Yes..." the priestess replied, "A knife that now welcomes you!" she raised her knife, about to strike.

The Doctor jolted forward and made it to Evy's side as a weak voice echoed through the chamber, "Show me this man," the voice demanded, "And this woman."

They all turned towards a curtain behind them where the voice was coming from, the Sisters kneeling.

"High Priestess," the priestess spoke, "The strangers would defy us!"

"Let me see," the High Priestess ordered, "These two are different. They carry starlight in their wake."

The Doctor and Evy exchanged a look before nodding and stepping towards the curtain with Donna.

"Ah, very perceptive," the Doctor commented, "Where do these words of wisdom come from?"

"The gods whisper to me," the High Priestess told them.

"They've done far more than that," Evy commented sadly.

"Ah, might I...we beg audience, look upon the High Priestess?" the Doctor asked.

The curtains parted to reveal the High Priestess, sitting on a bed, her body nearly completely converted to stone.

"Oh my God!" Donna gasped, "What's happened to you?"
"The heavens have blessed me," the High Priestess said.

"If I might..." the Doctor motioned as though he wanted to step forward. The High Priestess raised her arm, allowing him to step closer. He walked forward, kneeling down to touch her arm, "Evy," he called, nodding his head.

Evy stepped forward as well, kneeling beside him and touching the arm, it was exactly like Evelina's, "Does it hurt?" she asked the woman.

"It is necessary," was all the High Priestess would say.

"Who told you that?" the Doctor frowned.

"The voices."

"Is that what's happening to Evelina?" Donna asked them before looking back at the Sisters, "Is this what's gonna happen to all of you?"

The priestess from before approached her slowly, pulling her sleeve back to reveal her own arm turning to stone, "The blessings are manifold."

"They're stone," Donna breathed, touching her arm and looking up to see the Doctor and Evy had stood and were watching.

"Exactly," the Doctor nodded, walking back to Donna with Evy, "The people of Pompeii are turning to stone before the volcano erupts. But why?"

"This word..." the High Priestess began, staring at the Doctor and Evy, "This image in your mind, this 'volcano,' what is that?"

"Better question, why don't you know about it?" Evy tilted her head to the side as she stared back.

"Who are you?" the Doctor demanded. They needed to be certain it was Pyroviles that were infecting the people and not just something they were guarding.

"High Priestess of the Sibylline," she replied.

"No, he meant the creature inside you," Evy corrected.

"The thing that's seeding itself into a human body, in the dust in the lungs..." the Doctor continued, "Taking over the flesh and turning it into...what?"

"Your knowledge is impossible," the High Priestess gasped.

"Oh, but you can read our minds. You know it's not. I demand you tell me who you are!"

"We...are...awakening!" the High Priestess said, her voice now sounding like there were more than one person speaking.

"The voice of the gods!" the priestess exclaimed.

"Words of wisdom, words of power," the Sisters chanted, "Words of wisdom, words of power."

"Name yourself!" the Doctor demanded, "Planet of origin, galactic coordinates, species designation according to the universal ratification of the Shadow Proclamation."
"We...are...rising!" the High Priestess stated, the echo in her voice still present.

"Just tell us your name!" Evy shouted

"Pyrovile!"

"Pyrovile," the Sisters chanted, "Pyrovile."

"What's a Pyrovile?" Donna asked.

"Well, that's a Pyrovile...growing inside her," the Doctor answered, "She's at the halfway stage."

"Well, and that turns into…"

"That thing in the villa," Evy replied, her eyes trained on the High Priestess, "Was an adult Pyrovile."

"And the breath of a Pyrovile will incinerate you, Doctor, and your women," the High Priestess promised.

The Doctor's eyes hardened at the threat, "I warn you...I'm armed," he pulled out a water pistol, "Evy, Donna, get that grille open."

"What are..." Donna began but Evy had turned and pulled her towards it.

"What are the Pyrovile doing here?" the Doctor asked the High Priestess as Evy and Donna got to work at the hypocaust, Evy flashing it with her sonic.

"We fell from the heavens," she said, "We fell so far and so fast we were rendered into dust."

"Right, creatures of stone shatter on impact. When was that, seventeen years ago?"

"We have slept beneath for thousands of years."

"Okay, so seventeen years ago woke you up and now you're using human bodies to reconstitute yourself, but why the psychic powers?"

"We opened their minds and found such gifts."

"Yeah, okay, fine," he said, getting just a bit frustrated, "You force yourself inside a human brain, use the latent psychic talent to bond. I get that. I get that. Yeah, but...seeing the future, that is way beyond psychic, you can see through time. Where does the gift of prophecy come from?"

"Doctor!" Evy shouted as she and Donna threw the grille to the floor.

"Now get down!" he shouted back, moving towards them, the pistol still aimed at the quasi-Pyrovile.

"What, down there?" Donna frowned.

"Yes, down there!" he turned back to the High Priestess, "Why can't this lot predict the volcano? Why is it being hidden?"

"Sisters, I see into his mind!" the priestess shouted, "The weapon is harmless."

"Yeah, but it's got a sting!" he shot some water straight at the High Priestess who cried out in
agony, "Get down there!"

He ran to the hypocaust as Evy half pushed Donna down into it. He nodded at Evy who dropped through it, followed closely by him.

"You fought her off with a water pistol," Donna breathed as she pushed herself up, "I bloody love you."

"This way!" the Doctor called, reaching out to help Evy up and taking off down the tunnels.

"Where are we going now?"

"Into the volcano," Evy answered.

"No way," she shook her head frantically.

"Yes way," the Doctor twirled the pistol around his finger, "Appian way."

"Don't," Evy shook her head, "Don't do that."

"What?" he pouted.

Evy just rolled her eyes and took the lead, pulling him through the tunnels.

"But if it's aliens setting off the volcano, doesn't that make it alright?" Donna asked them after a moment, "For you to stop it?"

"Still part of history," the Doctor replied.

"Well, I'm history too. You saved me in 2008. You saved us all. Why is that different?"

"Some things are fixed, some are in flux," Evy answered, "Pompeii is fixed."

"How do you know which is which?"

"Because that's how we see the Universe," the Doctor stopped suddenly, turning them to face her, "Every waking second, we can see what is, what was, what could be, what must not."

"That's the curse of the Time Lords, Donna," Evy replied, and for the first time Donna could see the tears and strain in her eyes, she didn't want this to happen anymore than Donna did, "To see what must happen, even when it's a terrible thing to happen."

The Doctor turned and began to walk off, "How many people died?" Donna asked.

"Stop it!" he called back over his shoulder.

"Doctor!" Donna snapped, but he ignored her, so she turned to Evy, "How many people died?"

"20,000," she replied.

"Is that what you can see? All 20,000? And you think that's alright, do you?"

"Donna," Evy began, her voice shaking, "Think about it like this. If we stop the volcano, what happens then? 20,000 people live, Pompeii rises to defeat the Roman Empire! If the Empire falls before the barbarians invade, before they have time to integrate their culture, then the Medieval Era never happens, some of the greatest advancements in science and medicine are never made. If the
civilization that was born from those events never expands past Italy, you don't get England, you don't get America, events that will shape the entire course of human existence will never occur."

Donna frowned, she really hadn't thought of that, but still, the thought that all 20,000 had to die for that to happen…

A screech echoed through the tunnel, "They know we're here!" Evy shouted, grabbing Donna's arm and pulling her down the tunnel till they reached the Doctor crouching down by a jut of rocks.

"It's the heart of Vesuvius," he explained as they knelt beside him, all the Pyroviles walking around, "We're right inside the mountain."

"There's tons of 'em," Donna breathed.

"What's that thing?" Evy asked, pointing to something across the cavern. The Doctor reached into his pocket and pulled out a small collapsible telescope.

"Well, you'd better hurry up and think of something. Rocky IV's on its way."

"That's how they arrived..." the Doctor whispered, seeing the inside of a ship, "Or what's left of it. Escape pod? Prison ship? Gene bank?" he collapsed the telescope and put it away.

"But why do they need a volcano? Maybe...it erupts and they launch themselves back in space or something."

"No, it's worse than that," Evy sighed, seeing what the Doctor was thinking, what he was working out in his mind.

"How can it be worse?" she demanded as a Pyrovile roared, "It's getting closer."

"Heathens!" someone shouted. They looked over to see Lucius standing there, higher in the cavern, "Defilers! They would desecrate your temple, my lord gods!"

"Come on!" the Doctor shouted, grabbing Evy's hand as the three of them ran across the cavern floor.

"We can't go in!" Donna shouted as they headed towards the pod.

"We can't exactly go back can we?" Evy argued.

"Crush them!" Lucius called, "Burn them!"

A Pyrovile suddenly rose in front of them, roaring. They jumped back, the Doctor immediately pulling out his water pistol and spraying it. The Pyrovile shied away, giving them just enough space to run past.

"There is nowhere to run, Children of Gallifrey..." Lucius yelled after them, "And Daughter of London."

They ran to the front of the pod and stopped to face Lucius, "Now then, Lucius," the Doctor called, "My lord Pyrovillian...don't get yourselves in a lava," he grinned, looking back at Donna and Evy who both looked unimpressed, "In a lava...no?"

"No," Donna said simply as Evy just shook her head.

"No," he frowned, before turning to Lucius again, "But if I might beg the wisdom of the gods..."
before we perish...once this new race of creatures is complete...then what?"

The Pyrovile walked towards them, crushing boulders in its path as Lucius spoke, "My masters will follow the example of Rome itself, an almighty empire, bestriding the whole of civilization."

"But if you've crashed..." Donna began, "And you've got all this technology, why don't you just go home?"

"The heaven of Pyrovillia is gone."

"What do you mean 'gone?'" Evy frowned.

"Where's it gone?" the Doctor asked.

"It was taken," Lucius replied, "Pyrovillia is lost. But there is heat enough in this world for our new species to rise."

"Yeah, I should warn you, it's 70 percent water out there."

"Water can boil and everything will burn, Doctor!" Lucius laughed.

The Doctor put the pistol away, the grim reality of it all settling down, "Then the whole planet is at stake. Thank you, that's all I needed to know."

He turned, he and Evy pushing Donna into the pod. Evy flashed her sonic at the door, sealing it behind them.

"You have them, my lords!" they could hear Lucius shout as they turned to face the main controls.

"Could we be any more trapped?" Donna asked them when the pod suddenly started to get warm, "Little bit hot."

"See, the energy converted takes the lava, uses the power to create a fusion matrix which wields Pyrovile to human," the Doctor explained quickly, more to Evy than Donna, knowing she would be able to help him think of what to do.

"They've completed it though, they can convert millions," Evy shook her head, looking at the controls before getting to work.

It was too late.

"Well, can you change it...with these controls?" Donna asked.

"Course we can, but don't you see?" the Doctor turned to face her, "That's why the soothsayers can't see the volcano. There is no volcano. Vesuvius is never going to erupt. The Pyroviles are stealing all its power. They're gonna use it to take over the world."

"But you can change it back."

The Doctor looked at Evy as she stepped back from setting the controls for what they both knew they would have to do, "I averted the system," she sighed, "The volcano will blow them up but...that's the choice, Donna. It's Pompeii or the world."

"Oh my God," she gasped in shock.

"If Pompeii is destroyed, then it's not just history, it's me," the Doctor said, the weight of it all
falling on him, "I make it happen."

"No," Evy turned to face him, taking his hands in her own, "We make it happen Doctor," she looked up at him seriously, staring right in his eyes, "It's not just up to you. It's not just your burden to carry, not anymore," she squeezed his hands, interlocking their fingers.

"But the Pyroviles are made of rock," Donna tried to argue, seeing them preparing to decimate the city, "Maybe they can't be blown up."

"Vesuvius explodes with the force of 24 nuclear bombs," the Doctor said, still staring at Evy, touched that she was willing to share this burden with him, that she wanted to take some of the blame from him, ease his soul, "Nothing can survive it."

"Not even us," Evy told her.

"Never mind us," Donna remarked softly.

The Doctor turned, looked at the lever, and put his hand on it, though the way Evy had interlocked their hands, his hand brought hers up to rest on it as well, "Push this lever and it's all over. 20,000 people."

He stared at the lever, more unwilling to push it than ever before. Evy squeezed his hand lightly, sending him her strength. But as he looked at her, he realized it was a hard decision for her as well.

Donna frowned, seeing them struggling with the enormity of what they were going to do in the course of saving the planet. She reached out and put her hands on theirs, tears in her eyes. They all looked at each other before pressing it down.

The ground began to shake terribly, throwing them around the pod before they felt themselves ejected out with the erupting volcano. It was a very painful experience, being flung around, even worse than flying in the TARDIS, which was saying something.

And suddenly...it was over.

They were thrown to the floor with one final jolt and the pod door opened. They immediately climbed out.

"It was an escape pod," the Doctor determined as they looked behind them to see the volcano now spewing ash and lava.

He grabbed Evy's hand who grabbed Donna and they were off, running as fast as they could back to the city. They reached the center of it as ash began to fall around them. It was close, they people would begin suffocating soon.

"Don't!" Donna shouted at the people running around them in a panic. Most were heading to their houses or shops, trying to get indoors, others running towards the water with boats, "Don't go to the beach! Don't go to the beach! Listen to me! Listen to me..." she turned around to see a little boy crying and ran to him, "Come here."

But another woman ran forward and snatched the child away, "Give him to me!"

Donna looked around at the people ignoring her, crying, absolutely devastated. Evy stepped forward, taking her hand in her own, "Come on," she whispered to the woman, tugging her back towards the Doctor as they began to run towards Caecilius's villa once again.
They ran into the villa to see the family huddled together against the wall, the ceiling caving in around the house.

"Gods save us, Doctor!" Caecilius shouted.

The Doctor stared at them a moment before running towards the TARDIS, grabbing Evy's hand and pulling her with him.

"You can't!" Donna shouted, seeing them opening the TARDIS, "Evy! Doctor! You can't!"

She ran after them, following them into the TARDIS. She saw them standing at the console, just finishing up the instructions to dematerialize.

"You can't just leave them!" she shouted, in tears.

"Don't you think we've done enough?" the Doctor snapped, "History's back in place and everyone dies."

"You've got to go back!" Donna cried, her voice thick with emotion, "Doctor, I am telling you, take this thing back!"

Evy reached out and released the brake, starting the dematerialization process as the Doctor watched, emotionless.

"It's not fair..." Donna said brokenly.

"No, it's not," the Doctor agreed, pulling Evy to his side, hugging her, resting his forehead against the top of her head. Evy closed her eyes, squeezing him to her as she sensed what he was doing. He was trying to find solace in the fact that it wasn't just his mind telling him to do it, that she understood, that she agreed it was the right thing to do even if it didn't feel like it.

'There's a difference between what is right and what is easy,' she whispered to him. Easy would have been to let the Pyrovides live, let everyone live, even if it would have led to a horrible future. What was right, was to leave the fixed point as it was, as they had been taught. She did understand.

"But your own planet," Donna tried again, "It burned!"

"That's just it," the Doctor pulled away to glare at the woman, "Don't you see, Donna? Can't you understand? If we could go back and save them then we would, but we can't. We can never go back! We can't! We just...can't!" his voice grew softer, "We can't."


The Doctor looked at her.

Evy frowned and looked down, 20,000 people died, but the town had to be larger than 20,000, "It's a stretch," she mumbled quietly, though they could all hear her. The Doctor turned to face her as she looked up at him, "It would be a huge stretch...but...few survived Pompeii, meaning someone had to."

~8~

The TARDIS rematerialized inside Caecilius's villa only moments after it had disappeared. The family looked up to see the blue box return to its place, bright lights shining from the inside. The doors opened to reveal Evy and the Doctor standing there.
"Come with us," the Doctor said as he held out his hand to the family, Caecilius reached out and grasped his hand as Evy stepped out to help his wife up.

They stood on a hill just outside the city, watching as a cloud of ash and smoke flew over the town as though devouring it.

Donna stood at the edge of the hill with Caecilius, Metella, Evelina, and Quintus, watching. The Doctor stood in the background, his arm around Evy's waist, resting his head against her own as they watched silently.

"It's never forgotten Caecilius," Evy said quietly after a moment. Caecilius looked back at them, "Time passes, men move on, and the stories fade, but one day...Pompeii will be found again...in thousands of years...and everyone will remember you."

"What about you, Evelina?" Donna asked the girl, "Can you see anything?"

"The visions have gone," Evelina replied.

"The explosion was so powerful, it cracked open a rift in time," the Doctor explained, "Just for a second. That's what gave you the gift of prophecy. It echoed back into the Pyrovillian alternative. But not anymore. You're free."

"But tell me..." Metella turned to face them, "Who are you, Doctor? Evy? With your words...and your temple containing such size within?"

"Oh, we were never here," the Doctor tried to grin, but it came out as a small smile, "Don't tell anyone."

"The great go Vulcan must be enraged," Caecilius muttered, stepping forward with his wife, "It's so volcanic. It's like some sort of...volcano," his voice broke, "All those people..."

He turned and hugged his wife as Quintus took hold of his sister's hand. The Doctor and Evy turned and slipped into the TARDIS, Donna giving the family just one more look before following the Time Lords.

They were at the console again, standing there, waiting for her, "Thank you."

"Yeah," the Doctor nodded slowly, "You were right. Sometimes...I need someone."

Evy smiled warmly at Donna, "Welcome aboard."

Donna swallowed hard, "Yeah," she gave them a tense smile and turned to head off to her room, still shaking from what had just happened.

"I'll go check on her," Evy told the Doctor after a moment as he nodded and got to the controls.

She walked quietly through the halls and stopped outside the room they'd asked the TARDIS to make for Donna. She knocked softly before entering to see Donna sitting on the edge of her bed with her back to the door.

"You alright?" she asked, walking in to sit beside her.

Donna sighed, "I...I think I will be...some day."
"Good," Evy smiled understandingly, reaching out to hug the woman from the side.

"What about you?"

"Fine," she replied with a small shrug.

Donna frowned, "Not…not about what happened, but…" she hesitated.

Evy frowned, "What?"

"It's about something Lucius said," Donna admitted. Evy gave her shoulder a squeeze signaling for her to go on, "He said you were hurt…um, there was a…pain…surrounding your hearts."

Evy nodded slowly, before sighing, "Donna, there's something the Doctor and I haven't told you about us, well, about me."

"Go on," Donna said after a moment of silence.

"There's a process on Gallifrey called Linking," she explained, "It's an instant connection that is formed between a Time Lord and Lady who are...compatible to each other, that's the Doctor and me. You see Donna, when we are fatally injured or close to dying, we don't, we heal and we change, into completely different people. But there's a part of our consciousness, it's said, that transcends time and space in order to find another who fits each and every change we go through perfectly. Every incarnation the Doctor will go through will fit perfectly to me, just as each of mine fit to him.

"It's…it's like a gift, being re-gifted. It could be in a different packaging, different wrapping, different boxes or containers, but the gift is always the same. That's us. Our core beliefs, who we are deep down, that never changes. It may come about in different ways or never at all, but it's there. And only your Link can see that deep down into your soul to see who you truly are," she smiled softly to herself in thought, "And there's only one person for us as our Link. The Doctor could have a twin, who's exactly like him in appearance, personality, voice, mannerisms, everything, and I would still only be Linked with the Doctor. I'd..." she sighed, "I'd still only love him.

"Linking can go any number of ways. We can develop feelings of a platonic nature, a sibling-like nature, or romantic. More often than not, a romantic feeling develops between Time Lord and Lady," she laughed softly, "To be THAT connected to another person, especially if that person is as incredible as the Doctor..." she smiled, "It's no wonder I love him," she blinked and shook her head, trying to get back to point, "Linking gives us a deep metal connection, we can hear each other's thoughts at all times, unless we consciously and forcefully try to block them and even then it's difficult to maintain it for too long. We can feel each other's emotions, again, unless we really try to hide them. We can physically feel them, their pain, it's how we are able to sense that they are alive. We can hide almost nothing from our Link, we're completely open and connected in every way..."

"That sounds lovely," Donna smiled softly. She could see it as Evy spoke, the love and care she held for the Doctor. She really did love the man, quite a bit it seemed.

"It is," Evy agreed, her smile fading to a sad one.

"What's wrong?" Donna frowned.

"I'm Linked to the Doctor," she replied, "But he's not Linked to me. This..." she held up her hourglass necklace, "It's got a device on it that is keeping him from establishing the Link..." she
held up her hand at Donna about to start questioning her, "It's a complicated story, but it comes down to the fact that he's not ready to Link to me and I'm not going to force him to."

Donna nodded in understanding. She could understand the pain that could bring. She'd hounded Lance, her ex-husband-to-be, trying to get him to agree to marry her, pushing him before he was clearly ready. He truly hadn't wanted to marry her, giving in only as a way to keep her around for a sinister plot. It had only ended with her being hurt in the end.

"The…the pain Lucius was talking about, it comes from a partial Link," she began, trying to keep her thoughts blocked so the Doctor wouldn't hear her words in his mind, "It…it feels like…like I'm empty, like I'm missing a piece of myself that I can't find no matter how much I look, it…it's painful at times. Especially when he…when he develops feelings for other women. The Link reminds me that he's supposed to be mine, that he's meant for me and that he's not with me, he's with someone else," she looked down at her hands, trying to find the words to describe it, "It's like I'm numb and cold and…and lost. Like there's a hole in my heart that just gets larger over time, and so much time has passed…” she swallowed hard, "We have two hearts, remember?" she looked at Donna who nodded, recalling what they'd told her about Time Lords, tears in her eyes as she tried to imagine the pain her friend was living with, "One heart is for time and space, the Universe, for everything in it, for our friends, our family, all the planets and species. The other, the other one is meant to be for our Link," she smiled softly, "Can you imagine how powerfully and completely we can sometimes come to love our Link? If one heart alone can hold the Universe in it?"

"It must make the pain that much greater," Donna commented quietly.

Evy could only nod. Donna reached out and hugged her friend to her.

So lost in her thoughts was Evy that she didn't even notice the Doctor lingering in the doorway behind them.

Chapter End Notes

Naughty, naughty Doctor eavesdropping like that. Tsk, tsk, tsk. But now he knows more about Evy, this series is really about him getting to know her, notice her, and see where his feelings go (or grow) from there. It'll just get better from here :) I wonder what he'll do now?

Next chapter...the Doctor is conflicted and Donna makes an observation not even the Doctor noticed.
The Doctor waited patiently in the TARDIS till Evy went to sleep before he put up his mental shields. It was the only safe time for him to put them up, when she wasn't conscious of him doing so, when she wasn't aware of the silence. He'd been carefully guarding his thoughts until this had happened, he didn't want to risk thinking about what he was about to with her able to hear his thoughts. Because of the Link she would know if he was hiding something when she suddenly couldn't hear him in her mind. They could bury their thoughts, deep in the back of their minds, and Links typically wouldn't push too far to read such thoughts. The mental aspect of the Link itself was a more direct, powerful connection from one mind to another. It just meant that the mental shields had to be more powerful, stronger, to block a Link than would be needed for any other person on their planet. They could hide some things after a time. He knew that, for now, it would have to do. During the actual Linking process the minds of the Time Lord and Lady would be completely open, nothing hidden, with every memory, experience, emotion, thought, passing from one mind to the other. After that it was possible to keep some thoughts private which was what he needed to do now.

He'd heard her talking with Donna a while ago about exactly how she felt with the partial Link between him and her. He hadn't even thought about how it had to be for her to live that way. Whenever he looked at her the Perception Filter kept him from Linking to her, in a way, it was almost easy to forget she was his Link. It was almost easy to forget she was Linked to him. He couldn't help but think about how things were on Gallifrey. Partial Links almost never came about, most of their people remained unattached to any other person until they met their Link. It made things less complicated when the actual Link occurred to not be in another intimate relationship.

He shook his head, even then he'd been of the persuasion, like a few others he knew, that he would never find his Link. He didn't know why he felt that way but he just...did. Perhaps he'd thought he just couldn't be that lucky. He'd met Riku, a Time Lady, who didn't believe she'd find her Link either. And they had been together for a time...

He frowned, Evy had said she'd been Linked to him just before he left Gallifrey...and now he knew when, when he'd come to her house, her brother's house, in search of his best friend after he'd lost Riku and his son. He had to be grateful she hadn't Linked to him before Riku had died. The Link, especially for those in whom romantic feelings developed, could be brutal if infidelity occurred, rare though it was. The act of physically being with another, giving a part of your heart and mind to another...it was seen as a rejection of the Link, it was painful...and he was so relieved Evy hadn't been subjected to that sort of pain.

But then again, there was Rose.

Granted nothing had happened between the two, but Evy was well aware of how he felt about his first companion after the war. She probably knew the stirrings of feelings he'd felt for others who went travelling with him even before the war.

God, how that must have hurt her. How just the entire thing must have hurt. Links were all about connection and reciprocation, they were meant to be completed, to go both ways. A partial Link was hard for the Linked party to bear as they were constantly aware that the connection was incomplete. They could feel that it ended somewhere.
Just the thought that Evy had suffered with it for so long...he couldn't even begin to imagine what that was like. And he knew, she would continue to live with it until he was ready to connect to her. It wouldn't be so bad, being Linked to her. Just the few things he knew about her, about how she was, what he could sense she was truly like...she was an amazing person.

But so was Rose.

He'd been torn between getting to know Evy and pushing her away to hold onto Rose. There would be times when he would reach out to Evy and find comfort and peace in her, a similarity and understanding that Rose, as a human, could never provide. And other times, Evy would do something that reminded him of Rose and his heart would give a painful zing as he felt like he was betraying Rose...and then his other heart would zing at the thought that he was now betraying Evy.

He was walking a thin rope right now. He'd already lost Rose, one wrong move and he could lose Evy as well...and right now, he honestly wasn't sure which was worse. Evy had wormed her way into his hearts without him even realizing it, even when he'd thought she was human. She'd become so important to him. Maybe it had been when he realized she was a Time Lady, maybe during the Year-That-Never-Was, maybe it was even when he'd first met her...he didn't know. But she was there and he wasn't sure he wanted her out.

He smiled softly to himself, he couldn't see where all this was going to go or how it would end...but he couldn't wait to find out.

~8~

Evy was laughing heartily as the TARDIS rocked back and forth, sending Donna and the Doctor, who didn't have enough sense to grab onto the console, running from the walls to the console in an effort to keep balance.

It quickly stilled though as it landed, leaving them to straighten themselves up.

"Set the controls to random!" the Doctor shouted, "Mystery tour. Outside that door could be any planet, anywhere, any when in the whole wide..."

"You alright Donna?" Evy cut in, seeing Donna breathing hard and looking quite stiff.

"Terrified," she breathed, "I mean, history's one thing, but an alien planet..."

Evy smiled, after the debacle in Pompeii, she had convinced the Doctor to go to the moon landing once more. It seemed to be one of the few trips where things didn't tend to go wrong. Donna had been astounded. And after that, they had taken her to see the coronations of all the English monarchs...well, she had taken her to see Victoria and Elizabeth's, the Doctor was a bit hesitant from seeing the women who would one day come to wish him killed on sight. Evy had just grinned and proceeded to tell Donna the entire story as to why, and her own wonderings why, the women were after the Doctor's blood, he'd actually been blushing when they came back to the TARDIS, having heard the whole thing in his mind.

"We could always take you home," the Doctor shrugged, a grin on his face.

"Yeah, don't laugh at me," Donna warned him playfully.

"I know what it's like," he commented, hands in his pockets, "Everything you're feeling right now. The fear, the joy, the wonder...I get that!"
"Seriously?" Donna's eyes went wide, "After all this time?"

"Why do you think he keeps going?" Evy reasoned, stepping around the console to join them, "Even when I BEG him to give us a day off?" she nudged him jokingly.

"Oh!" she nodded, "Alright, then, you and me both! This is barmy!" she ran to the door as the Doctor tossed Evy her coat and put his own on, "I was born in Chiswick. I've only ever done package holidays. Now I'm here. This is...I mean, it's...I dunno. It's all so...I don't even know what the word is!" she pushed open the TARDIS doors and ran outside.

Evy bit back a laugh as she saw white through the door and snow falling on the howling wind.

"Oh, I've got the word," Donna called, "'Freezing.'"

Evy stepped out of the TARDIS, the Doctor right behind her, looking up with a smile on his face, "Snow! Ah! Real snow! Proper snow at last! That's more like it. Lovely. What do you think?" he grinned down at Evy.

"Brilliant," Evy smiled, "Donna?"

"Bit cold," Donna shivered.

"Look at the view!" the Doctor turned to see an icy, snow covered landscape.

"Yep. A beautiful...cold...view."

"Millions of planets, millions of galaxies, and we're on this one! Molto bene!"

"Belissimo!" Evy laughed, joining in on his Italian.

"Says Donna, born in Chiswick," he began, stepping away from the TARDIS and the girls to look around, "You've had a life of work and sleep, telly and rent, takeaway dinners, birthdays and Christmases, and two weeks holiday a year and then you end up here! Donna Noble, citizen of the Earth, standing on a different planet. How about that, Donna?" he turned around to see Donna nowhere to be found and Evy leaning against the corner of the TARDIS, "Donna?" he asked her.

"Just grabbing a coat," Evy nodded back just as the doors opened and Donna stepped out wearing a thick, warm coat with a fur-lined hood.

"Sorry," Donna looked between them, "You were saying?"

"Better?" Evy asked.

"Lovely, thanks," Donna nodded as she and Evy started walking towards the Doctor. Donna wasn't sure how Evy could bear the chill, wearing just a brown dress and green leggings with her thin coat on but she knocked if off as Time Lady biology.

"Comfy?" the Doctor called as they drew closer.

"Yep," Donna grinned.

"Can you hear anything inside that?"

"Pardon?" Donna leaned forward as though she had actually had a hard time hearing him.

Evy laughed.
"Right," the Doctor grinned, "I was saying, citizen of the Earth…"

Just then a rocket flew over them.

Evy laughed harder at the Doctor's putout expression. He did so love his dramatic monologues.

"A rocket!" Donna gasped, "Blimey, a real, proper rocket. Now that's what I call a spaceship," she slapped the Doctor on his arm, "You've got a box, he's got a Ferrari. Come on, let's see where it's going."

Donna ran off, leaving the Doctor looking surprised and even a bit upset as he glanced back at the TARDIS. He turned to see Evy grinning and shaking her head.

"What?" he asked, still sad at the slight against his beloved box.

She stepped forward and linked her arm with his own, "Just think…if that's a Ferrari…what's Jack's Vortex Manipulator?"

The Doctor paused in thought before letting out a deep laugh. Evy smiled wider, seeing him feeling better, tugging his arm to get him started after Donna.

They had just caught up with Donna, the ginger just laughing at the sheer excitement of being on an alien world, when Evy stopped suddenly, pulling the Doctor to a stop as well. He looked at her, confused, seeing her smile fading and a sorrowful look replacing it.

'What's the matter?' he asked her silently so as not to interrupt Donna's joy.

'Can't you hear it?' she replied, looking up at him.

He frowned and really listened a moment, a soft ethereal music filtering through his mind.

"Hold on…" the Doctor murmured, turning to see Donna still smiling and looking around, "Can you hear that?" he called out to her, "Donna, take your hood down."

Donna lowered her hood, "What?"

"The noise…" Evy breathed, "The song…"

Donna frowned, not too sure what they were talking about.

"Over there!" the Doctor shouted, pointing at something in the distance. He broke into a run with Evy towards a figure half buried in the snow.

"What is it?" Donna gasped as Evy and the Doctor knelt on one side of the figure and she dropped down on the other side. It was a pale alien, with a slightly large head, tentacles around its mouth, dressed in a gray suit-like outfit, holding a small orb in its hand with a wire that connected it to within the tentacles.

"An Ood," Evy replied, resting a hand on the Ood's arm, almost feeling its pain through its song, "He's called an Ood."

The Doctor pulled out his stethoscope and pressing it against the Ood.

"But its face..." Donna breathed, staring at it.

"Donna, not now," the Doctor chastised lightly, "It's a 'he,' not an 'it.' Give me a hand."
"Sorry," Donna frowned.

"I don't know where the heart is," he muttered, moving the stethoscope around, "I don't know if he's got a heart," he looked up at Donna and Evy, "Talk to him. Keep him going."

"It's alright," Donna soothed, placing a hand on the Ood's hand, "We've got you."

"What's your name?" Evy asked gently.

"Designated Ood Delta 50," he replied, the small ball in his hand lighting up.

Donna picked up the ball and held it to her mouth, "My name's Donna."

"You don't need to do that," Evy said quietly, reaching out to lower Donna's arm.

"Sorry," Donna placed the ball back down on the Ood, "Oh, God…"

"This is the Doctor," Evy introduced, laying a hand on the Doctor's arm for a moment, "I'm Evy."

"That's just what you need," Donna smiled down at the Ood, "A doctor. Couldn't be better, eh?"

"You've been shot!" the Doctor exclaimed.

"The circle…" the Ood began.

"No, don't try to talk," Donna laid a hand on his arm.

"The circle must be broken."

"The circle?" Evy tilted her head to the side, "What do you mean?"

The Ood's eyes fluttered.

"Delta 50, what circle?" the Doctor asked quickly, "Delta 50? What circle?"

Suddenly Delta 50's eyes snapped open, blood red. Evy grabbed the Doctor's arm, pulling him back as they scrambled to get Donna away as well. Delta 50 sat up, growling at them. It looked as though he was about to lunge at them when the growl faded and he collapsed into the snow, dead.

Evy let out a breath of relief before turning and resting her head against the Doctor's arm.

"He's gone," Donna gasped, walking towards the body.

"Careful," the Doctor warned gently, his arm making its way around Evy's waist, seeking comfort in her as he too heard the mournful song of the Ood resonating around them. The others were aware of Delta 50's death.

Donna placed a hand on the Ood's chest, "There you are sweetheart," she stroked his head, "We were too late. What do we do, do we bury him?" she looked up at them, tears in her eyes.

"The snow will take care of that."

"Who was he?" Donna asked, glancing down at the Ood again, "What's an Ood?"

"They're servants of humans in the 42nd century. Mildly telepathic."

"That song," Evy mumbled, "It was his mind calling out."
"I couldn't hear anything," Donna sighed, standing up, "He sang as he was dying."

"His eyes turned red," the Doctor mumbled, lost in thought, unconsciously running his fingers through Evy's hair, stroking it.

"What's that mean?" Donna asked, torn between mourning the Ood and smiling at the endearing sight before her.

"Trouble," the Doctor replied, seeming to snap out of his thoughts, stepping away from Evy, "Come on."

He reached out to take Evy's hand and suddenly Donna tensed.

"What?" Evy frowned, seeing Donna stiffen.

"Where are we running to?" she asked seriously, "Which direction?"

"What?" Evy shook her head, even more confused.

Donna sighed and straightened up, "Every time he takes your hand it's to pull you into a run," she told them, rolling her eyes, she'd noticed them do it loads of times, "I just want to be ready for it this time."

The Doctor looked at Evy who looked back equally as shocked by Donna's observation. Had they really done that? The Doctor looked down at Evy's hand, locked in his, and thought back to the last few adventures they'd shared with Donna. He looked up, surprised, he had taken Evy's hand whenever they were running somewhere. He was even more stunned by the notion that he'd often done that out of instinct, because it was his way of pulling her out of danger.

"Oh, right," the Doctor nodded, still a bit lost in thought.

"We're not running," Evy turned to Donna, "Not now at least."

"Well good," Donna nodded, "'Cos you lot run a lot. I mean, seriously."

Evy smiled at her, nudging the Doctor to get him walking, though he was still thoughtful.

"The Ood are usually harmless and completely benign," Evy turned to explain to Donna as they walked.

"Except the last time I met them," the Doctor added, "There was this...force, like a stronger mind, powerful enough to take them over."

Evy frowned as she recalled that trip.

"What sort of force?" Donna asked.

"Long story," the Doctor tried to wave her off, but Donna wouldn't have it.

"Long walk."

"It was the devil."

"If you're gonna take the mickey I'll just put my hood back up."

"Well you stopped it last time," Evy thought out loud, her mind still replaying the Doctor's last
encounter with the Ood, "It's got to be something different this time, something closer."

"Ah ha!" the Doctor shouted, seeing something over the horizon, "Civilization!"

The trio jogged over to see the base of some sort of business, Ood Operations.

~8~

The trio had just managed to weasel their way past security with the use of the Doctor's psychic paper and were now running towards a group of people standing just outside the complex.

"My name's Solana, Head of Marketing," they could hear someone introducing herself, "I'm sure we've all spoken on the vid-phone," it was an Indian woman in a black dress, "Now if you'd like to follow me…"

"Sorry, sorry!" the Doctor shouted as they ran up, "We're late! Don't mind us! Hello. The guards let us through."

"And you would be…" Solana looked at them.

"The Doctor, Donna Noble, and Evy Daniels," the Doctor introduced, holding up the psychic paper.

"Representing the Noble Corporation, PLC Limited, Intergalactic," Donna added.

"Must have fallen off my list," Solana nodded slowly, "My apologies, it won't happen again. Now then, Ms. Daniels, Dr. Noble, Mrs. Noble, if you'd like to come with me."

"Oh, no, no, no," the Doctor shook his head frantically, "We're not married."

"We're so not married," Donna agreed.

"Never," the Doctor glanced at Evy who was just rolling her eyes at the mistake.

"Never ever," Donna finished.

"Of course," Solana nodded, "Here is your information pack. Vouchers inside," she handed the Doctor a packet, "Now, if you'd like to come with me, the executive suites are nice and warm…"

Suddenly an alarm blared and they paused.

"Ooh, what's that?" the Doctor asked, " Sounds like an alarm."

"It's just a siren for the end of the work shift," Solana assured them, though the tension in her voice did not go unnoticed by Evy or the Doctor, "Now then, this way! Quick as you can!"

The Doctor and Evy shared a quick look before they headed inside with Donna, the other men and women following behind.

~8~

The Ood were on small pedestals in a display room where Solana was standing in front of a large screen covering the wall behind her. She had been going on and on about the qualities of the Ood and the services that they could perform.

"As you can see, the Ood are happy to serve and we keep them in facilities of the highest
standards," she carried on with her presentation, "Here at the Double-O, that's Ood Operations, we like to think of the Ood as our trusted friends. We keep the Ood healthy, safe, and educated. We don't just breed the Ood, we make them better. Because at heart, what is an Ood...but an extension of us? If your Ood is happy...then you'll be happy too."

The men and women around the room, Ood buyers, began to applaud.

"This is all rather unsettling, isn't it?" Evy asked the Doctor and Donna quietly, "The way she's speaking…it's like something out of an Earth concentration camp or a slave trade or something, covering up what's really happening by claiming it's for the best, hiding the horrors of it."

The Doctor couldn't help but agree with her. That was exactly how it sounded.

"I'd now like to point out a new innovation from Ood Operations," Solana stepped towards the three Ood on the pedestals, "We've introduced a variety package with the Ood translator ball. You can now have the standard setting…" she walked over to the first Ood, "How are you today, Ood?"

"I'm perfectly well, thank you," the Ood replied in what they assumed was a generic voice.

"Or perhaps after a stressful day, a little something for the gentlemen?" she moved to the second Ood, "How are you, Ood?"

"All the better for seeing you," the Ood replied in a sultry, female voice.

"Well, that's more than a bit disturbing," Evy mumbled. Donna nudged her, a smile on her face.

"And the comedy classic option," Solana moved to the last Ood, "Ood, you dropped something."

"D'oh!" he replied in an imitation of Homer Simpson.

The audience chuckled.

"All that for only five additional credits," Solana turned to the buyers, "The details are in your brochures. Now, there's plenty more food and drink, so don't hold back."

The Doctor glanced around at the buyers, making sure they were distracted, before pulling on his brainy specs and heading over to the control board. He flipped a switch, putting in a coordinate or two until a projection of their location in the galaxy came up on a large screen.

Evy moved over, making room for Donna as she arrived with a drink.

"The Ood-Sphere," the Doctor commented, looking at the screen, "I've been to this solar system before, years ago. Ages. Close to the planet Sense-Sphere. Let's widen it out..." he flipped another switch.

"4126," Evy read off the projection, "The Second Great and Bountiful Human Empire."

"4126?" Donna breathed, "It's 4126? I'm in 4126?"

"It's good, isn't it?" the Doctor glanced at her.

"What's the Earth like now?" Donna stared at the projection.

"Very full, but you look," Evy punched in an instruction, red lines appeared on the screen, circling the three galaxies, "The Empire stretches out across three galaxies."
"It's weird. I mean, it's brilliant, but...back home, the papers and the telly, they keep saying we haven't got long to live, global warming, flooding, all the bees disappearing."

"Yeah," the Doctor nodded, "That thing about the bees is odd."

"But look at us," she shook her head, staring at the screen, "We're everywhere. Is that good or bad, though? I mean, are we like explorers or more like a virus?"

"Sometimes I wonder," the Doctor mumbled.

"What are the red dots?"

"Ood distribution centers," Evy replied.

"Across three galaxies?" Donna frowned, "Don't the Ood get a say in this?" she turned and strode over to the first Ood, "Um...sorry, but..." she tapped it gently, "Hello. Tell me, are you all like this?"

"I do not understand, miss," the Ood answered politely.

"Why do you say, 'miss'? Do I look single?"

"Single and sexy," Evy replied, smirking, earning a smile from Donna.

"Back to the point," the Doctor nudged them gently.

"Yeah," Donna turned back to the Ood, "What I mean is, are there any free Ood? Are there any Ood running wild somewhere like wildebeest?"

"All Ood are born to serve," the Ood replied, "Otherwise we would die."

"You can't have started like that," Donna argued, "Before the humans..." the Ood jerked his head, making Evy and the Doctor frown, "What were you like?"

"The circle..."

"What do you mean?" Evy asked.

"What circle?" the Doctor questioned.

"The circ..." the Ood tried, "The circle...is..."

"Ladies and gentlemen," Solana called, "All Ood to hospitality stations, please."

The Ood walked away, leaving the Doctor, Donna, and Evy to their own devices. The Doctor took off his specs and pulled the map of the complex out of his pocket.

"I've had enough of the schmoozing," he told them, "Do you fancy going off the beaten track?"

"A Rough Guide to the Ood-Sphere?" Donna grinned, "Works for me."

"Oh yes," Evy nodded.

"Yeah," the Doctor grinned.

~8~
They wandered through the complex before they came to a locked gate. Evy flashed her sonic at the lock, opening it.

"Ood Shift 8 commencing," a computer system announced, "I repeat, Ood Shift 8 commencing."

They stepped through the gate and found themselves in a part of the complex obviously closed to visitors. They walked up some steps to a metal walkway where they could see an open area where the Ood were being marched around. One of the Ood fell to its knees and a guard walked over to it.

"Get up," the guard ordered, "I said, get up!" he cracked a whip.

"Servants?" Donna gasped, "They're slaves."

"Get up!" the guard ordered again, whipping the Ood who just barely managed to stand, "March!"

"Last time I met the Ood, I never thought…" the Doctor trailed in thought, "I never asked…"

"That's not like you," Donna commented.

"I was busy," he frowned, "So busy I couldn't save them. I had to let the Ood die."

"I suppose that means we owe them one," Evy replied, taking the Doctor's hand in her own and squeezing it.

He looked over at her and smiled at her support.

"That looks like the boss," Donna suddenly whispered.

They looked over to see a man in a black suit walking with purpose across the area with an Ood and a man in a lab coat behind him.

"Let's keep out of his way," the Doctor said, tugging on Evy's hand, leading her and Donna away, "Come on."

They headed down the stairs and into the open area, just wandering around, the Doctor holding out a map of the complex to look at as they walked, when a whistle resounded. The Doctor made to duck and then turned around quickly to see Evy and Donna smirking at his reaction.

"Where did you learn to whistle?" he demanded from Donna, trying to cover up his less than brave reaction as he walked over to the door where Evy was standing with Donna.

"West Ham, every Saturday," Donna laughed.

The Doctor just grumbled as he pulled out his sonic and flashed the door, sliding it open. They walked into the warehouse to see it filled with shipping containers, a large metal claw moving along a track on the ceiling, lifting and moving them.

"Ood Export," the Doctor said, pointing at the claw, "You see? Lifts up the containers, takes 'em to the rocket ships."

"Flying them out to all three galaxies," Evy finished.

"What, you mean…" Donna's eyes widened, "These containers are full of…"

"What do you think?" the Doctor replied grimly, walking towards the nearest container with Evy and opening it up. They stood there, seeing a number of Ood stationed within.
"Oh, it stinks," Donna moved to cover her nose, "How many of 'em do you think there are in each one?"

"Fifty?" Evy shrugged, "A hundred? More?"

"A great, big empire, built on slavery," Donna shook her head at the sight.

"It's not so different from your time," the Doctor commented.

"Oi, I haven't got slaves!"

"Who do you think made your clothes?"

"Is that why you travel round with a human at your side?" Donna asked, her voice shaking, "It's not so you can show them the wonders of the Universe, it's so you can take cheap shots."

"Sorry."

"Well, don't," Donna ordered him lightly, "Spaceman," the Doctor smirked and Evy smiled at the easy camaraderie between them. Donna turned back to the Ood, "I don't understand, the door was open…why didn't you just run away?"

"For what reason?" one of the Ood asked.

"So you could be free," Evy replied.

"I do not understand the concept."

"What is it with that Persil ball?" Donna asked them, "I mean, they're not born with it, are they? Why do they have to be all plugged in?"

"Ood, tell me, does 'the circle' mean anything to you?" the Doctor tried.

"The circle must be broken," all the Ood said.

"Whoa, that is creepy," Donna commented.

"But what is it?" the Doctor asked again, "What is the circle?"

"The circle must be broken," they repeated.

"Why?" Evy asked.

"So that we can sing."

And then an alarm was sounded.

Chapter End Notes

Woo! The Doctor is open to seeing where things go with Evy, awesome :) I just have to say, my all-time favorite chapters for this series are the ones with Jenny, River, Midnight and Journey's End, especially because of what I have planned involving Evy and the Doctor, milestones will be met in those chapters. I cannot wait!
Next chapter...the Doctor's mouth gets them into quite a bit of trouble. The Doctor saves Evy in a very cute way. Will Evy fit into the Ood prophecy of the Doctor-Donna?
"That's us, come on!" the Doctor shouted over the blaring alarm before grabbing Evy's hand and pulling her away, Donna running after them.

They ran this way and that through a maze of shipping containers. The Doctor kept a firm grasp of Evy's hand, both of them keeping perfect time with the other. Both were so focused on finding a way out that they didn't even notice Donna stopping or calling after them.

They had raced around two more containers before they realized Donna wasn't shouting at them or blaming them for the situation like she seemed to enjoy doing when they found themselves in situations like this.

"Where have you gone?" the Doctor shouted as they stopped and looked around for Donna.

"Stay where you are!" they heard a guard shout at them, following them.

They had no choice but to start running again as the guards found them, "Donna!" Evy continued to shout as they ran, "Where are you?"

She was about to run around a container when the Doctor pulled her back and pressed the two of them against the it, just listening.

"I think we've lost them," he whispered to her.

And then the sound of the claw starting up reached them. They looked up to see the claw coming towards them, racing along its track.

"I'm going to kill you!" Evy grumbled as she pushed herself off the container and pulled the Doctor down the rows, running as the claw followed them.

The Doctor pulled her around a container and over to the doors, trying to pull them open. But then the lock clicked into place.

Evy pulled him away and down the rows again, running from the claw that was quickly gaining on them. It smashed down behind them, narrowly missing their feet.

They kept running as long as they could, but they were both starting to tire. The claw smashed at them again, narrowly missing the Doctor's head but sending him stumbling to the floor. Evy didn't let go of his hand for a moment, instead pulling him up and steadying him as they ran.

But then the claw swung out, hitting her in the shoulder, sending her flying into some barrels, the Doctor falling down with her, onto his back. He looked up to see the claw rapidly dropping towards them. He reached out quickly, pulling Evy towards him and rolling on top of her to shield her from the metallic talons. They tensed, waiting for the claw to grab them, when suddenly, it stopped.

Evy moved her head from the Doctor's shoulder and looked up to see it hovering above them. She let out a breath of relief, feeling the Doctor laughing into her neck as he dropped his head onto her shoulder. He pulled back a bit and looked down at her, their eyes locking. Evy could feel the
breath catch in her throat, especially when the Doctor's gaze softened and he made no move to get off her. She swallowed hard, opening her mouth, about to force herself to tell him to move when the sound of guns cocking made them look over. There was a row of guards surrounding them, guns ready. Four guards stepped forward, pulling them to their feet as the claw was lifted to the ceiling again, getting a good grip on them so they couldn't escape and pushed them back towards another container where they could hear Donna yelling.

"Doctor, get me out of here!" Donna called, "Evy help!"

"If you don't do what she says," the Doctor warned, "You're really in trouble."

"Not from us," Evy added, nodding at the container, "From her."

"Unlock the container," a guard ordered. Other guards walked over and unlocked the door, pulling it open.

Donna ran out and straight over to the Doctor and Evy, pulling them into a hug, "Doctor! Evy!"

"Hey, hey, hey," Evy said, hugging her tightly, "It's alright. You're safe..."

"Never mind about me, what about them?"

They turned to see the Ood coming out of the container, their eyes red, as they immediately began to kill the guards with their translator orbs.

"Red alert!" the guard shouted, "Fire!"

As the guards opened fire, the Doctor took Evy's hand, pulling her away as they led Donna out of the room, trying not to look back as the other containers opened and more Ood began to kill.

They ran out of the warehouse, realizing only when they made it outside that Solana had joined them in their flight. They ran down an open area and hid behind the building, stopping there to catch their breath.

"If the people back on Earth knew what was going on here..." Donna began.

"Don't be stupid," Solana cut in, "Of course they know."

"They know how you treat the Ood?"

"They don't ask. Same thing."

"Solana, the Ood aren't born like this," the Doctor turned to her, "They can't be. A species born to serve could never evolve in the first place. What does the company do to make them obey?"

"That has nothing to do with me."

"What, because you don't ask?" Evy frowned, glaring at the woman. It was times like these, these few, very rare times, when a human knowingly did something so...wrong...that a tiny voice that sounded far too much like her brother would mutter doubts about the humans. She firmly believed, as much as the Doctor did, that they were an incredible species. But when they did things like this, out of greed or fear or hate, the tiny voice had trouble seeing it.

"That's Dr. Ryder's territory," Solana defended.

"Where is he?" Evy asked, taking the map from the Doctor and holding it out, "Where is he
Solana?" she nearly shoved the map in the woman's face when she continued to remain silent, "What part of the complex?"

"We could help with the red-eye," the Doctor said, seeing her make no move to help as well and knowing that this version of Evy, once she got worked up, would probably slap the woman like she'd done to Rickston on the *Titanic* with no qualms about it, "Now show us!"

Solana hesitated a moment longer before pointing at the map, "There, beyond the red section."

"Come with us," he offered, "You've seen the warehouse. You can't agree with all this. You know this place better than us, you could help."

Solana looked at them, going from the Doctor to Evy to the map before she shouted, "They're over here! Guards, they're over here!"

Evy glared at the woman before she was pulled away by the Doctor before she could really slap her and began to run with Donna as the guards caught up to them. They ran around the base, quickly changing directions when they saw guards in the distance.

"This way!" Evy shouted, stopping suddenly and leading them back to another warehouse.

The Doctor sucked in a breath, staring at the door in horror.

"Can you hear it?" Evy asked him quietly, "We didn't need the map."

"We should've listened!" he shouted before whipping out his sonic and flashing the door. As soon as they were inside Evy flashed the lock, sealing them in.

"Does that mean we're locked in?" Donna asked.

"Listen," the Doctor hushed her, taking Evy's hand in his as they began to walk down the hall, "Listen, listen, listen, listen."

They walked down some steps only to see a group of Ood huddled together in cages.

"My head..." Evy mumbled, rubbing her forehead. The Doctor's face just tensed in pain.

"What is it?" Donna looked at them.

"Can't you hear it?" he asked her, "The singing?" he switched on the lights so they could see the Ood clearer.

"They look different to the others," Donna commented as they drew nearer to the cages.

"They're natural-born Ood," Evy said.

"Unprocessed," the Doctor frowned, "Before they're adapted to slavery. Unspoiled."

They squatted down in front of a cage, the Doctor, then Evy, then Donna, "That's their song," Evy whispered, kneeling down to look into the cage.

"I can't hear it," Donna frowned.

"Do you want to?" the Doctor asked, turning to her.

"Yeah."
"It's the song of captivity," Evy warned her from her position.

"Let me hear it."

"Face me," the Doctor told her, moving so that he and Donna were looking at each other over Evy's back. He placed his fingertips to her temples, "Open your mind. That's it. Hear it, Donna...hear the music."

Donna gasped as the Ood song filled her mind. She turned to face the Ood, tears now running down her face. She could only look at them for a moment before turning back to the Doctor, "Take it away."

"You sure?" he asked.

"I can't bear it," her voice broke. Evy straightened a bit and turned to her this time, closing off the connection to the Ood that the Doctor had forged for the woman, "I'm sorry."

"Don't be," Evy smiled sadly and looked back at the Ood.

"It's okay," the Doctor told her, watching the Ood as well.

"But you can still hear it," Donna frowned, seeing the immense pain in her friends' eyes.

"All the time."

Evy reached out and took his hand in hers, squeezing it, though she could offer no comfort. He looked at her, smiling at her action before taking a breath and standing with her. He pulled out his sonic and flashed the cage door, unlocking it.

"They're breaking in," Donna whispered, hearing something above them.

"Let them," Evy waved it off as she and the Doctor pulled the cage door open and stepped inside. The Ood tried to shuffle away. Evy knelt down, reaching out a hand, speaking soothingly so as not to alarm them, "What are you holding?"

One of the Ood looked at her shyly.

The Doctor smiled at her, kneeling beside her, "Friend. Evy," he nodded at Evy, "Doctor," he patted his chest and then nodded at Donna, "Donna, friend. Look at us. Let us see."

The Ood slowly crawled closer, "That's it," Evy smiled at him, "That's it, go on. Go on."

The Ood held out his cupped hands and pulled them apart to reveal a pinkish lump.

"Is that..." Donna trailed, taking a step back.

"It's a brain," the Doctor confirmed, "A hindbrain."

"The Ood are born with a secondary brain," Evy nodded, "Like the amygdale in humans, it processes memory and emotion."

"You get rid of that, you wouldn't be Donna anymore. You'd be like an Ood. A processed Ood."

"So the company..." Donna swallowed hard, "Cuts off their brains."

"To stitch on the translator," Evy said grimly.
"Like a lobotomy," Donna breathed, heartbroken, "I spent all that time looking for you, Doctor, because I thought it would be so wonderful out here. I want to go home."

"Donna…" Evy began, standing up and taking the woman's hand in her own while the Doctor looked up, stunned. He opened his mouth to say something when they heard someone shouting above them, the guards had broken in.

The Doctor stood and slammed the cage shut, "What are you gonna do, then?" he shouted at the guards that were rushing towards them, "Arrest us? Lock us up? Well, you're too late! Hah!"

~8~

"You really need to just stop talking," Evy mumbled to the Doctor as they were being handcuffed to a pole in the executive office of the complex by the guards. She decided, when they got back to the TARDIS, she was gluing his mouth shut.

"Why don't you just come out and say it?" the head of the industry, Mr. Halpen, said, "FOTO activists."

"If that's what Friends of the Ood are trying to prove, then yes," the Doctor glared at the man.

"The Ood were nothing without us. Just animals roaming around on the ice."

"That's because you can't hear them!" Evy shouted.

"They welcomed it! It's not as if they put up a fight."

"You idiot!" Donna glared, "They're born with their brain in their hands, don't you see? That makes them peaceful! They've got to be because a creature like that would have to trust anyone it meets."

"Nice one," the Doctor commented.

"Brilliant actually," Evy complimented.

"Thank you," Donna nodded.

"The system's worked for 200 years," Halpen rolled his eyes, "All we've got is a rogue batch. But the infection is about to be sterilized," he lifted up his comm. link, "Mr. Kess, how do we stand?"

"Canisters primed, sir," a guard replied over the comm., "As soon as the core heats up, the gas is released. Give it 200 marks...and counting."

"You're going to gas them?" Evy's eyes widened in horror, completely disgusted. And there went that little voice again. It was terrible to think of a human being as cruel as her brother could be and had been, even using the same method as he had in gassing the Ministers.

"Kill the livestock," Halpen shrugged, "The classic foot-and-mouth solution. Still works."

Moments later alarms began to blare.

"What the hell?" Halpen demanded, staring up at the alarms for a moment before storming out of the room with his Ood and scientist, Dr. Ryder.

"Emergency status!" the computer announced, "Emergency status!"

Halpen stormed back in, "Change of plan."
"No reports of trouble off-world, sir," Dr. Ryder replied, checking the computers, "It's still contained to the Ood-Sphere."

"Then we've got a public duty to stop it before it spreads."

"What's happening?" the Doctor demanded.

"Everything you wanted, Doctor. No doubt there'll be a full police investigation once this place has been sterilized so I can't risk a bullet to the head. I'll leave you to the mercies of the Ood."

And with that, he headed for the door.

"But Mr. Halpen!" Evy shouted suddenly, "There's something else. Something we haven't seen."

Halpen stopped.

"What do you mean?" Donna looked at the woman.

"The Ood can't survive with a separate forebrain and hindbrain, their minds would be at war with each other," Evy explained, "There's something else...a third element."

Halpen smirked, "So clever."

"It's got to be connected to the red-eye," the Doctor reasoned, following Evy's logic, "What is it?"

"It won't exist for very much longer. Enjoy your Ood."

And so, for the second time, Halpen strode out of the room with his Ood and Dr. Ryder, but this time, taking the two guards with him. As soon as the door was shut, the three of them immediately moved to try and free themselves, twisting and turning trying to break free off the cuffs, the Time Lords cuffed too tightly to be able to move to reach their pockets for their sonics.

"Well, do something!" Donna shouted at them, "You're the ones with all the tricks! You must've met Houdini!"

"These are really good handcuffs!" the Doctor countered.

"Oh, I'm glad of that," Donna exclaimed exasperatedly, "At least we've got quality!"

Just then the door opened and they froze. There was a group of red-eyed Ood standing there, advancing on them. The three of them looked at each other before turning back to the Ood, each trying to get through to them.

"Evy, Doctor, Donna, friends!" the Doctor shouted.

"The circle must be broken!" Donna tried.

"The Ood will sing again!" Evy attempted.

They began repeating themselves over and over again as the Ood drew nearer, but it didn't seem to be working. Evy winced as the song within the Ood grew louder and louder. The Ood reached out their translator balls, just as the song hit its peak, and then froze inches away.

The translator balls switched off and the Ood held their heads in their hands before lifting their heads to reveal their eyes had gone back to normal.
"Eve," one of the Ood said, almost getting her name right, "Doctor. Donna. Friends."

"That's me!" Donna shouted, relieved, "Us!"

"Yes, that's us!" Evy nodded.

"Friends!" the Doctor grinned, "Oh, yes!"

They watched in amazement as the Ood stepped behind them and unlocked their handcuffs. As soon as they were off, not wanting to press their luck or see how long the Ood would remain docile for, they quickly thanked the Ood and ran out. They were down the stairs and across the compound in record time, dodging the guards fighting with Ood of their own.

The Doctor stopped suddenly, looking around, trying to get his bearings, "I don't know where it is! I don't know where they've gone!"

"What are we looking for?" Donna asked.

"It might be underground, like a cave or a cavern," Evy suggested, seeing what he was looking for in his mind.

They took off again, Donna following, still confused as to exactly what they were looking for. But she had little time to think on that as there was a rumbling behind them and the ground shook. Suddenly they were thrown through the air by an explosion a few feet away.

"Alright?" the Doctor asked, pushing himself up to help Evy and Donna to their feet. They nodded.

He looked down at Evy, feeling her grip on his arm tighten, and followed her gaze to see Halpen's Ood standing there, a few feet away.

They stiffened, watching as the Ood walked towards them. He said nothing, simply looked Evy and the Doctor in the eye before stepping past them and walking off.

"What's going on?" Donna whispered, "What's he doing?"

"He's going to lead us," Evy replied.

"Come on," the Doctor said, following the Ood toward a warehouse, Warehouse 15. Evy pulled out her sonic and flashed the panel beside the door, forcing it open. They quickly walked inside to see a giant brain on the level below them, surrounded in an energy field.

"The Ood brain," Evy breathed.

"Now it all makes sense," the Doctor nodded to himself, "That's the missing link. The third element, binding them together. Forebrain, hindbrain and this. The telepathic center."

"A shared mind that connects all the Ood in song."

A weapon clicked.

They looked up to see Halpen standing there, holding a gun at them, "Cargo," he began, "I can always go into cargo. I've got the rockets, I've got the sheds. Smaller business. Much more manageable without livestock."

"He's mined the area," Dr. Ryder told them.
"You're gonna kill it," Donna's eyes widened in shock.

"They found that thing centuries ago beneath the northern glacier," Halpen informed them.

"Those pylons," the Doctor turned to look back at the energy fields.

"In a circle!" Donna realized, "The circle must be broken."

"It's meant to dampen the telepathic field," Evy frowned, "To stop the Ood from connecting for...God for 200 years," she could feel for the Ood, being unable to connect, feeling it there but unable to complete it...

The Doctor glanced over at her, actually hearing her thoughts on the subject for once. It seemed she was too horrified by what had been done to the Ood to realize that thought hadn't been blocked.

"And you, Ood Sigma, you brought them here," Halpen glared at his Ood, pulling the Doctor's attention back in the process, "I expected better."

"My place is at your side, sir," Sigma replied, moving to stand beside Halpen.

Halpen chuckled, "Still subservient. Good Oo..." he choked on his words.

"If that barrier thing's in place," Donna frowned, "How come the Ood started breaking out?"

"It could have just taken centuries to adapt," Evy suggested.

"The subconscious reaching out," the Doctor agreed.

"But the process was too slow," Dr. Ryder cut in, "Had to be accelerated," he turned to Halpen, "You should never have given me access to the controls, Mr. Halpen. I lowered the barrier to its minimum. Friends of the Ood, sir. It's taken me ten years to infiltrate the company. And I succeeded."

"Yes," Halpen nodded, "Yes, you did," he then reached out and pushed him over the railing.

"No!" Evy shouted as she ran to the railing to look over. Ryder fell, landing on the brain, and was absorbed by it.

"You...murdered him," Donna gasped.

"Very observant, Ginger," Halpen sneered, turning on them, "Now then, can't say I've ever shot anyone before...can't say I'm gonna like it, but, uh, it's not exactly a normal day, is it? Still..." he lifted his gun, preparing to fire when...

"Would you like a drink, sir?" Sigma asked at random.

Halpen laughed, "I think hair loss is the least of my problems right now, thanks."

Sigma moved to stand in front of the Doctor and Evy, the former of which had tried to push the latter behind him, only for her to push her way next to him again. He held out a glass to Halpen, "Please have a drink, sir."

"If...if you're gonna stand in their way, I'll shoot you too," Halpen threatened, but seemed to have trouble speaking the last words. His speech had slowed down, almost slurred.

"Please have a drink, sir."
"Have...have you..." Halpen gasped, "Poisoned me?"

"Natural Ood must never kill, sir."

"What is that stuff?" the Doctor frowned, looking at the cup in Sigma's hand.

"Ood-graft suspended in a biological compound."

Halpen paled, looking very ill, "What the hell does that mean?"

"Oh my..." Evy muttered, her eyes widening.

"Tell me!"

"Funny thing, the subconscious," the Doctor began, "Takes all sorts of shapes. It came out in the red-eye as revenge. It came out in the rabid Ood as anger."

"And patience," Evy turned to stand next to Sigma, "Intelligence and mercy, focused on Ood Sigma."

"How's the hair loss, Mr. Halpen?" the Doctor turned back to the man.

"What have you done?" Halpen gasped.

"Oh, they've been preparing you for a very long time. And now you're standing next to the Ood brain."

"Can you hear it Mr. Halpen?" Evy asked, "Listen."

Halpen hesitated, the Ood song filtering through his mind, "What have you...I'm...not..."

Sigma stepped out of the way as Halpen dropped the gun. He gripped his head, crying out in pain as he pulled at his scalp. It pulled away, revealing an Ood head underneath. Tentacles extended out of his mouth.

"They...they turned him into an Ood?" Donna gaped, looking more than a bit ill.

"Yup," the Doctor nodded.

"He's an Ood..."

"We noticed Donna," Evy said, reaching out to put a hand on Donna's shoulder.

Halpen, now looking like an actual Ood, made a gurgling noise and coughed up his hindbrain.

"He has become Ood-kind and we will take care of him," Sigma stated.

"It's weird, being with you two," Donna commented, in shock, "I can't tell what's right and what's wrong anymore."

"Sometimes it's better that way," Evy remarked, "People who know for certain end up like Mr. Halpen."

A loud beeping sounded and the Doctor ran to the railing, "Oh!" he reached over and turned off the detonation packs, "That's better. And now..." he ran to the main controls before spinning on his heel. He glanced at Evy who smiled and nodded before he turned to Sigma, "Ood Sigma, will you
allow me the honor?"

"It is yours, Doctor," Sigma nodded.

"Oh yes!" the Doctor grinned, turning to the equipment, "Stifled for over 200 years but not anymore. The circle is broken. The Ood can sing!"

He pulled down a lever and the field around the brain shut off. The song of the Ood filled the room. This time it was different, this time it was hopeful, joyous, free.

The Doctor laughed and looked over at Evy who was smiling happily, her eyes shut, just listening to the awe-inspiring music around them. This was for her, he had to free the Ood for her. He might not be able, be ready, to connect to her on the level the Link would provide just yet, but he could help the Ood connect to each other again.

"I can hear it!" Donna shouted, happily.

Ood Sigma raised his arms, lifting the song to the Universe.

~8~

The Ood were standing in a half circle around the TARDIS with the trio, the Doctor holding Evy's hand as Donna stood beside them, smirking as she glanced at their hands. She'd understood their hand holding, at the start of this adventure, had been for mutual comfort, both hearing the sorrow of the Ood song, but now...it was something more than that.

"The message has gone out," Evy smiled at them, "That song resonated across the galaxies. Everyone heard it and everyone knows. The rockets are bringing them back. All the Ood will be home soon."

"We thank you, Eve-Doctor-Donna, friends of Ood-kind," Sigma nodded at them, "And what of you now? Will you stay? There is room in the song for you."

"Oh, I've...I've sorta got a song of my own, thanks," the Doctor nodded back at the TARDIS.

"I think your song must end soon," Sigma commented.

The Doctor tensed.

"Meaning?" Evy asked when she saw the Doctor was too startled by the words to.

"Every song must end," was all Sigma replied.

"Yeah..." the Doctor said slowly, still a bit tense. Evy just squeezed his hand in reassurance. He shook himself out of his thoughts and turned to Donna, "Um, what about you? Do you still want to go home?"

Donna just smiled, "No. Definitely not."

"Then we'll be off," he nodded.

"Take this song with you," Sigma offered.

"We will," Donna nodded.

"Always," the Doctor agreed.
"Forever," Evy smiled.

"And know this, Eve-Doctor-Donna, you will never be forgotten," Sigma told them, "Our children will sing of the Eve, of the Doctor-Donna, and our children's children, and the wind and the ice and the snow will carry your names forever."

The Doctor, Donna, and Evy smiled and nodded their goodbyes before walking to the TARDIS. Moments later the bright blue box dematerialized, leaving the Ood singing.

Chapter End Notes

You want to kill me for cutting off the Claw scene like that don't you? I do too so it's ok :) But just think, we get our first one chapter-one episode next! Woo! Even though The Doctor's Daughter wasn't considered a part of the 2-parter episode I count it to be close enough, it goes right from one episode to the next, so we get three chapters for the three episodes!

The Doctor will eventually find out about Evy's time in the Mason Institute. There will be key points/chapters where Evy will talk more about it and where the Doctor will, piece by piece, learn about what she went through. The Unicorn and the Wasp, Forests of the Dead, and Turn Left will be big points in that part of the story :)

Next chapter...the Doctor's jealous? Of who?
Evy was grinning widely as she stood beside Donna at the console. The Doctor, however, was leaning against a Y-beam, watching them nervously.

"You're doing great Donna," Evy encouraged as she watched Donna carefully try to pilot the TARDIS. She had begged them for ages to teach her how and, with a little help from Evy, the Doctor had finally relented.

"I can't believe I'm doing this!" Donna breathed as she stood stiffly, pumping a lever on the console.

"No, neither can I," the Doctor mumbled, still unsure of how Evy had managed to convince him this would be a good idea, before jolting forward, "Whoa, careful!" he banged the console with a mallet.

"Oi! Don't smack her!" Evy shouted, reaching around Donna to smack him upside the back of his head, "And you wonder why she gives you all the trouble," the Doctor rubbed his head as he lifted a lever, "And left hand down, Donna," Evy instructed gently. They had found out quite early on that Evy was a far better instructor for humans. The Doctor either tended to get off track or yell instructions which did little to relieve the nerves of a frazzled human. Evy seemed to have more patience and spoke more calmly, not to mention, all the time she'd spent trying to blend in around humans had made her better able to explain things in a way they could understand, which was just what Donna needed.

Donna did as she was told and the ship lurched.

"Getting a bit too close to the 1980s," the Doctor warned them.

"What am I gonna do, put a dent in 'em?" Donna rolled her eyes at him.

"Well, someone did," he replied, staring at the screen of the Vortex when a mobile began to ring.

Evy and the Doctor tensed.

"Hold on…that's a phone!" Donna exclaimed. The Doctor walked around them to another section of the console and pulled a mobile out of its holder, looking at it, "You've got a mobile? Since when?"

"It's not mine…” he continued to stare at it.

"Just answer!" Evy shouted, sounding excited. It had to be Martha, only she would call them on that phone.

He glanced at Evy a moment before flipping it open and leaning on the captain's chair, "Hello?"

"Doctor?" he heard Martha's voice reply on the other end, "It's Martha...and I'm bringing you two back to Earth!"
Evy had immediately taken the controls before the Doctor had finished speaking with Martha. She left scarcely any room for questioning or arguing as she ran around the console, piloting the TARDIS to the exact coordinates she traced the phone to. Donna had braced herself against the console but straightened when she realized the bumpiness she usually associated with the flying of the TARDIS was greatly reduced.

The TARDIS materialized in a small alley between two buildings easily.

"Why don't you let her fly more often?" Donna turned to the Doctor, smirking.

"Where's the fun in that?" he just grinned, tossing Evy her coat before opening the TARDIS doors. He stepped out and stood in front of the box as Evy quickly pulled on her coat.

"Martha Jones," he greeted someone they couldn't see from the doorway.

"Doctor," they heard Martha reply.

The Doctor moved slowly towards Martha, too slowly for Evy who ran out the doors and pushed past him, "Martha!" she shouted, running over her friend and half throwing herself at the woman, hugging her.

Martha laughed, hugging her back, "Evy!" she pulled away, "I still can't believe it's you!"

She really couldn't. She'd only been around Evy's new self for an hour at most before she and the Doctor were off again. Whenever she thought of her wayward friend she still imagined the woman with brown hair and green eyes. This would take some getting used to.

Evy just rolled her eyes and pulled her into one more quick hug before stepping away and allowing the Doctor to hug her as well.

"You haven't changed a bit!" the Doctor remarked, pulling away.

"Neither have you!" Martha grinned at him.

"How's the family?" he asked cautiously.

"You know," she shrugged, "Not so bad. Recovering."

"What about you?" he asked but Martha was distracted by something behind him.

Evy looked over to see Donna slowly making her way over to them.

"Right," Martha nodded, "I should have known. Didn't take you two long to replace me."

"As if anyone could," Evy rolled her eyes, walking over to Donna and half pulling her faster to meet Martha.

"Now, don't start a fight," the Doctor muttered uncomfortably.

Evy just shook her head, the two would get along just fine, "Martha, Donna. Donna, Martha."

"Please don't fight," he begged again, "I can't bear fighting."

"You wish," Donna scoffed before turning to Martha with a warm smile, "I've heard all about you," she shook her hand, "They talk about you all the time."
"I dread to think," Martha grimaced.


"Oh, my God, they've told you everything," Martha's eyes widened in horror. While she had gotten over the Doctor rather quickly in 1913, she was still very embarrassed thinking back to how she acted around him in the beginning.

Donna gave the woman the quick onceover before smirking, "Didn't take you long to get over it, though. Who's the lucky man?"

"What man?" the Doctor frowned, "Lucky what?"

"She's engaged!" Evy nearly shouted as Martha wiggled her fingers of her left hand at him, showing off her ring. Evy just hugged her once more.

"Really? Who to?"

"Tom Milligan," Evy answered.

"How did you know that?" he turned a shocked gaze at Evy.

"Unlike you," Evy rolled her eyes, "I actually like to keep in touch with my friends."

And she had. She always made sure to call Martha and Jack and Ianto every so often, to check in and see how they were doing. Martha had told her all about the work she'd done with Torchwood and her time with Tom.

"He's in pediatrics working out in Africa right now," Martha added, "And yes, I know, I've got a doctor who disappears off to distant places, tell me about it."

"Is he skinny?" Donna asked seriously.

"No, he's sort of...strong," Martha blushed.

"He is too skinny for words," Donna pointed her thumb at the Doctor, "You give him a hug, you get a paper cut!"

The three women just shared a laugh.

"I'd rather you were fighting," the Doctor mumbled.

"Oh stop," Evy elbowed him gently in the stomach.

"Dr. Jones, report to base please," a voice suddenly said on a radio.

"Speaking of which..." Martha lifted up her radio, "This is Dr. Jones. Operation Blue Sky is go, go, go," she turned around and walked off down the alley, "I repeat, this is a go."

The Doctor, Donna, and Evy shared a look before following after Martha only to see soldiers, jeeps, and a large lorry come down the road.

"Unified Intelligence Taskforce, raise that barrier now!" a soldier shouted as a group of soldiers and vehicles entered a large factory, "Leave your safeties on, lads, it's non-hostiles!"

"All workers lay down your tools and surrender!" another soldier shouted over a bullhorn.
"You work for UNIT?" Evy turned to her. The last time she spoke to Martha she had only said she was doing some work for Torchwood and would send them her love.

Martha nodded before speaking back into the radio, "Greyhound Six to Trap One. B Section, go, go, go! Search the ground floor, grid pattern Delta."

"What are you searching for?" the Doctor asked as they watched the infiltration.

"Illegal aliens."

"This is a UNIT operation!" the soldier with the bullhorn announced, "All workers lay down your tools and surrender immediately!"

The UNIT soldiers forced the workers to their knees, hands over their heads.

"B Section mobilized!" Martha shouted, rushing off, "E Section, F Section, on my command!"

"Is that what you did to her," Donna asked, looking at the Doctor and Evy, "Turned her into a soldier?"

Neither the Doctor nor Evy could really answer. Instead they waited patiently until the situation settled down and Martha returned.

"You're qualified now?" the Doctor asked, seeing Martha's name tag said 'Dr. Jones,' "You're a proper doctor."

"UNIT rushed it through," Martha replied, "Given my experience in the field. Here we go," she turned and began to lead them across the grounds, "We're establishing a field base on site. They're dying to meet you."

"Wish I could say the same," he mumbled, nervous. Evy reached over and took his hand in hers. He smiled at her, giving her hand a squeeze before following off after Martha who was talking with Donna.

~8~

The UNIT field base wasn't too far from the factory so they arrived in no time at all. They walked through the back of the lorry to see it stocked with computers and monitors and communication devices, each the top technology of the time.

"Operation Blue Sky complete, sir," Martha stated, walking over to her commanding officer, "Thanks for letting me take the lead. And this..." she grinned and turned to her guests, "This is the Doctor and Evy. Doctor, Evy, this is Colonel Mace."

"Sir," Mace saluted them, "Ma'am."

"Oh, don't salute," the Doctor shook his head while Evy tried to stifle a laugh.

"But it's an honor, sir. I've read all the files on you, and you as well ma'am."

"What?" Evy frowned, she hadn't known there were any files on her.

Mace nodded, "When it was discovered that a female Time Lord..."

"My apologies. When it was discovered that at Time Lady was present during the *Valiant* excursion, we here at UNIT took it upon ourselves to look into your history on Earth."

"I take it you contacted Torchwood as well?" she asked, rubbing her head, uneasy with the fact that they had been digging into her past. There were things, probably in that file, that she didn't want anyone to know.

"They refused to help. We compiled quite a few notes about your past five years on Earth…"

"You were here for five years?!” the Doctor turned to her, eyes wide. He knew she was on Earth before Jack had contacted him and introduced them, but he hadn't thought it was for that long. How had he never sensed her before then? He'd been on Earth dozens of times and never even knew she was there. It shouldn't be possible. Was it a Perception Filter? Something else?

"You um," Evy hesitated, "You did sense me," she told him quietly, "But you um, talked yourself into it being a phantom sensation, one last lingering reminder of the War."

He nodded, vaguely recalling the tickle in the back of his mind he'd felt quite a few times when he'd been on Earth after the war.

Mace nodded, "We have a record of your living arrangements with a Miss Marcy DeWitt in Leeds, a small collection of jobs you had taken on during your time, medical records from your time spent in the Mas…"

"Technically speaking, you're still on staff," Martha cut in, turning to the Doctor, "You never resigned."

Evy looked at Martha, sending her a thankful look for doing what she had done. Martha was the only one present who she had told about her time in the Institute, the one one, in fact, who knew about her powers as well. Martha knew how much she didn't want the Doctor to learn of either.

Good fortune must have been smiling at Evy for once as the Doctor seemed too distracted by the fact that Evy had been there all along and he never noticed to realize what Martha had done.

"What, you used to work for them?" Donna turned to the Doctor as well.

"Yeah," he mumbled, still staring at Evy, but slowly working his way out of his shock, "A long time ago, back in the 70s…or was it the 80s?"

"Early 70s," Evy answered. She always had a better recollection of time relative to the Doctor and his adventures.

"It was all a bit more homespun back then," he nodded absently.

"Times have changed, sir," Mace replied.

"That's enough of the 'sir,'" the Doctor said, shaking himself completely from his thoughts.

"Come on though," Martha looked between the Doctor and Evy, "You've seen it. You've been on board the *Valiant*. We've got massive funding from the United Nations, all in the name of Homeworld Security."

"A modern UNIT for the modern world," Mace agreed.

"What, and that means arresting ordinary workers?" Donna demanded, "In the streets? In broad
daylight? It's more like Guantanamo Bay out there. Donna, by the way. Donna Noble, since you didn't ask. I'll have a salute."

Mace looked over at the Doctor and Evy both of whom gave him a nod and so he turned to Donna and saluted her, "Ma'am."

"Thank you," Donna nodded, pleased.

"Tell me what's going on in that factory," the Doctor got back to business.

"Yesterday 52 people died in identical circumstances right across the world, in 11 different time zones," Mace turned to a screen on the wall, bringing up a map, "5am in the UK, 6am in France, 8am in Moscow, 1pm in China…"

"They died simultaneously?" Evy frowned.

"Exactly. 52 deaths at the exact same moment worldwide."

"How did they die?"

"They were all inside their cars."

"They were poisoned," Martha added, "I checked the biopsies. No toxins. Whatever it is, left the system immediately."

"What have the cars got in common?" the Doctor turned to them.

"Completely different makes but all fitted with ATMOS. And that is the ATMOS factory."

"What's ATMOS?" he frowned.

"Oh come on, even I know that," Donna turned to him, "Everyone's got ATMOS."

~8~

Martha took them to the ATMOS factory, the Doctor, Evy, and Donna all walking behind her on the catwalk above the factory floor.

"Stands for 'Atmospheric Emission System,'" Martha told them, "The ATMOS in your car reduces CO2 emissions to zero."

"Zero?" Evy's eyes widened, "No carbon? At all?"

"And you get sat-nav thrown in, plus 20 quid in shopping vouchers if you introduce a friend," Donna added, "Bargain."

"And this is where they make it, shipping worldwide," Mace said, joining them, "Seventeen factories across the globe but this is the central depot, sending ATMOS to every country on Earth."

"And you think ATMOS is alien?" the Doctor reasoned.

"It's our job to investigate that possibility. Doctor? Miss Daniels?"

"Evy's fine," Evy remarked as they followed Mace off with Donna and Martha. He led them to a small office where the ATMOS device was on display.
"And here it is, laid bare," Mace announced, leading them into the room, "ATMOS can be threaded through any and every make of car."

"You must've checked it before it went on sale," the Doctor commented as Evy walked over to the device while he went to check another piece of equipment over by the wall.

"We did," Martha agreed, "We found nothing. That's why I thought we needed experts."

"Really?" he asked, distracted by the equipment, as he slipped on his specs, "Who did you get?" there was silence and so he turned to see them all staring at him, "Oh, right! Me and Evy! Yes! Good."

Martha just shook her head at how oblivious the Doctor still was before leaving the room with Mace to check on a few things.

"Okay, so why would aliens be so keen on cleaning up our atmosphere?" Donna asked them.

"Very good question," the Doctor mumbled, moving to stand next to Evy as she flipped through some paperwork.

"Maybe they want to help, get rid of pollution and stuff?"

"Do you know how many cars there are on planet Earth? 800 million. Imagine that."

"If you had control over them," Evy sighed, "You'd have 800 million weapons."

"Oh my God!" Donna gasped.

The Doctor and Evy moved to look at the ATMOS device, poking and prodding it as Mace walked back in with Martha. Donna looked down at the paperwork Evy had placed on the table beside her before getting an idea and walking out.

"Ionizing nano-membrane carbon dioxide converter," Evy mumbled, flashing her sonic over it.

"Which means that ATMOS works," the Doctor nodded, "Filters the CO2 at a molecular level."

"We know about that," Mace stated, "What's its origin? Is it alien?"

"No," Evy replied, straightening up and fiddling absently with her sonic as the Doctor crouched down next to the ATMOS device, "It is human, but it's decades ahead of its time."

"Look, do you mind?" the Doctor glanced up at Mace, "Could you stand back a bit?"

"Sorry, have I done something wrong?" Mace stepped back.

"You're carrying a gun," Evy told him, "He doesn't like people with guns hanging around him."

Mace looked a bit put off at that but turned to leave nonetheless, "If you insist."

"Tetchy," Martha commented.

"Well, it's true," the Doctor defended.

"He's a good man."

The Doctor straightened up and leaned against the display, flashing his own sonic on the device,
"People with guns are usually the enemy in my books. You seem quite at home."

"If anyone got me used to fighting, it's you," Martha glared at him.

"Oh right, so it's my fault," he rolled his eyes.

"Well, you got me the job," she shot back, "Besides, look at me," he turned off his sonic and looked up at her, "Am I carrying a gun?"

"Suppose not."

"It's alright for you two," Martha commented, glancing at Evy before looking back at the Doctor, "You can just come and go, but some of us have got to stay behind. So I've got to work from the inside and by staying inside, maybe I stand a chance of making them better."

"Yeah?" he asked as a grin spread its way across his face.

"There's my Martha," Evy smiled, stepping forward and hugging her friend from the side.

"I learnt from the best," Martha smiled at them as well.

"Well..." the Doctor began.

"Thanks Evy," Martha added, earning an indignant 'Hey!' from the Doctor.

"Oi, you lot!" Donna called, walking back into the room with a binder in her hand, "All your storm troopers and your sonics, rubbish! Shoulda come with me."

"Where have you been?" the Doctor frowned at her as Mace entered the room.

"Personnel. That's where the weird stuff's happening, in the paperwork. 'Cos I spent years working as a temp, I can find my way around an office blindfolded, and the first thing I noticed is an empty file."

"Why, what's inside it? Or what's not inside it?"

"Sick days," she opened the file to show them that it was empty, completely blank, "There aren't any. Hundreds of people working here and no one's sick. Not one hangover, man flu, sneaky little shopping trip. Nothing. Not ever. They don't get ill."

"That can't be right," Mace took the empty file from her.

"You've been checking out the buildings, should've been checking out the workforce."

"I can see why they like you," Martha beamed at the ginger.

"Hmm," Donna nodded as she looked at the Doctor and Evy.

"You are good," Martha laughed.

"She's amazing," Evy stood and went to hug the woman.

"Super Temp," Donna shrugged.

"Remind me to make you a cape," Evy joked.

"Dr. Jones, set up a medical post, start examining the workers," Mace cut in, "I'll get them sent
"Come on Donna, give me a hand?" Martha asked as the Doctor and Evy moved to follow Mace. They walked out of the room and down an open corridor that ran parallel to the work area. "So, this...this ATMOS thing, where'd it come from?" the Doctor asked. "Luke Rattigan himself," Mace replied. "Who?" Evy shook her head, confused. "Come with me," Mace led them through the work area and back to the base, bringing up the file on Luke for them to see, "Child genius. Invented the Fountain 6 search engine when he was 12 years old. Millionaire overnight. Now runs the Rattigan Academy. A private school educating students handpicked from all over the world."

"A hothouse for geniuses," the Doctor nodded, "Wouldn't mind going there," Mace looked at him, puzzled, "I get lonely."

"OI!" Evy shouted, smacking him in the head again, hard. "Right!" he winced, "Sorry, sorry, I meant we. We get lonely..."

"You were implying I was stupid," Evy warned him, pointing an accusing finger at him. "No!" his eyes widened, "I...I didn't...I just meant...and he...and humans...human geniuses! I meant human geniuses...they're fun, right?" he looked at Mace for help, "Right? They're fun...interesting...and...fun..." he trailed, seeing Evy smirking, "What?"

She just shook her head and walked off. It was always so amusing to see if she could get a rise out of the Doctor. He'd gotten very good at keeping them a partnership, using 'we' and 'us' when he spoke but, from time to time, he did slip up. And there were odd moments here and there where he would seem to forget she was a Time Lady. She didn't hold anything against him. He'd only known about her a few months and he'd thought he was alone for quite a few years. It must still be hard to wrap his head around the fact that he isn't alone any longer.

The Doctor watched her walk off, his mouth open in shock at how easily she'd let him off the hook after he'd accidently basically said she wasn't a genius, which was completely wrong, she was just as brilliant as he was. He quickly sobered when he heard Mace chuckling. He looked over at the man. "Drives you round the bend does she?" he laughed, "My wife does the same."

He patted the Doctor on the back and walked off after the Time Lady, leaving a very stunned Time Lord standing there.

~8~

"Do you think I should call my mum?" Donna asked Martha after the Doctor and Evy left, "About the ATMOS in her car?"

"Better safe than sorry," Martha replied.

"I'll give her a call," Donna turned to leave when Martha called after her.
"Donna…" Donna stopped and turned around, "Do they know where you are? Your family, I mean, that you're travelling with the Doctor and Evy?"

"Not really," Donna stopped in thought, "Although...my granddad sorta waved us off. I didn't have time to explain."

"You just left him behind?"

"Yeah."

"I didn't tell my family. Kept it all so secret and it almost destroyed them."

"In what way?" Donna frowned.

"They ended up imprisoned," Martha sighed, "They were tortured, my mum, my dad, my sister...it wasn't the Doctor's fault, or Evy's, Evy actually was the one who saved them, but you need to be careful. 'Cos you know the Doctor, he's wonderful, he's brilliant, but he's like fire…stand to close and people get burned."

Donna looked a bit pale and glanced down at the floor.

"But then," Donna looked up to see Martha smiling reassuringly, "There's Evy. She's amazing, and fantastic, and she…balances him. She's like water, calm, patient, gentle, healing. She keeps him under control…most of the time anyway," she rolled her eyes, "And she'll take care of you, like she does everyone. As long as she's there, she'll never let you go, she'll never leave you by yourself because...she knows how that feels better than anyone."

Donna smiled. She had seen that as well. She'd seen Evy comfort and relax the Doctor, lift his burden and share it. She'd seen the woman go out of her way to make sure she was ok, like after Pompeii. Evy just seemed to make it all better. She gave one more nod at Martha and walked out.

~8~

The Doctor and Evy followed Mace through the factory, heading for docking, "You are not coming with us," the Doctor told him, "I want to talk to this Luke Rattigan, not point a gun at him."

"It's ten miles outside London," Mace argued, "How are you going to get there?"

"Lend us a jeep?" Evy suggested.

"According to the records, you travel by TARDIS."

"Yeah, but, if there is a danger of hostile aliens, I think it best to keep a super-duper time travel machine away from the front lines," he rolled his eyes as the man.

"I see. Then you do have weapons but you choose to keep them hidden. Jenkins!"

"Sir!" a young soldier ran up.

"You will accompany the Doctor and Miss Daniels…"

"Evy," she interrupted, but Mace continued on.

"…take orders from them."
"I don't do orders," the Doctor shook his head.

Evy shrugged, "I don't have much of an issue with it."

"Any sign of trouble get Jenkins to declare a Code Red," Mace told her, "And good luck, sir, ma'am."

He saluted them.

"I said no salutes," the Doctor told him.

"Now you're giving orders," Mace smirked before leaving.

"Cheeky, isn't he?" Evy commented as Donna ran up to them.

"Doctor!" she shouted, "Evy!"

"Oh, just in time," he smiled, "Come on!" he took her hand, "Come on, we're going to the country," he began to pull her towards the jeep, "Fresh air, geniuses, what more could you ask?"

"I'm not coming with you," Donna replied, pulling away, "I've been thinking. I'm sorry...I'm going home."

"Really?" Evy frowned, looking at her as the Doctor looked on, stunned.

"I've got to," she shrugged, but smiled.

Evy breathed a sigh of relief as she realized Donna was coming back afterwards. Thank God.

"Well, if that's what you want," the Doctor said slowly, obviously not getting what Evy had, "I mean, it's a bit soon. I had so many places I wanted to take you. The Fifteenth Broken Moon of the Medusa Cascade, the lightening skies of Cotter Palluni's World, the diamond coral reefs of Kaata Flo Ko..." he smiled at her softly, "Thank you. Thank you, Donna Noble. It's been brilliant. You...you've saved my life in so many ways."

Donna nodded, waiting for him to finish, a smirk on her face.

"You're..." his eyes widened as it finally hit him, "You're...you're just popping home for a visit. That's what you mean."

"Of course she is," Evy shook her head at the Doctor, sometimes he could be so oblivious.

"You dumbo," Donna stated.

"And then you're coming back," the Doctor nodded, figuring it all out.

"Do you know what you are? A great, big, outer-space dunce."

"Yeah," he rubbed his face.

"Ready when you are, sir, ma'am," Jenkins stepped up.

"What's more, you can give me a lift," Donna reached out and took his arm, pulling him to the truck, Evy following along, laughing, "Come on," then paused, "Broken moon of what?"

"I know," he mumbled, "I know."
It was a rather quiet ride back to where Donna lived, the Doctor, humbled from his slip for the time being, was silent. However that seemed to fade just as they reached the corner of Donna's road and the jeep pulled to a stop.

He stepped out first, followed by Donna and then Evy. It had been a tight fit but they managed to cram all four of them into the front of the vehicle.

"I'll walk the rest of the way," Donna assured them, "I'll see you back at the factory, yeah?"

"Yup," Evy nodded, the Doctor motioning for her to get back in the truck.

"Bye!" the Doctor called, hopping in after her.

"And you be careful!" Donna called.

"I'll take care of him!" Evy shouted back as the truck took off.

~8~

Donna was sitting at the kitchen table with her grandfather, having tea and just talking about everything that had happened.

"I said so, didn't I?" he grinned, "Aliens. I said they were real. I just didn't expect them in a little blue box."

"It's bigger on the inside," Donna told him.

"Yeah, but is it safe, then?" he frowned for a moment, "This Doctor and Evy person, are you safe with them?"

"They're amazing, Gramps," Donna smiled in thought, "He's just...dazzling. And never tell him I said that."

"No," he agreed.

"And Evy," she laughed, "Boy can that girl put him in his place. She's actually smacked him into place before. She's remarkable. And they're both always taking on these challenges, but...I'd trust them with my life."

"Hold up," he frowned in mock disappointment, "I thought that was my job."

"You still come first," Donna assured him.

"For God's sake, don't tell your mother."

"I don't know. I mean, this is massive. It's sort of not fair if she doesn't know."

And then her mother walked in, complaining, and she realized exactly why she shouldn't say anything.

~8~

The Doctor, Evy, and Jenkins, whose first name they discovered was Ross, were driving to the Rattigan Academy, only a few more minutes away, as Ross explained some things to them,

"UNIT's been watching the Rattigan Academy for ages. It's all a bit Hitler Youth. Exercise at dawn and classes and special diets."
"Turn left," the ATMOS announced.

"Ross, one question," the Doctor frowned, looking down at the ATMOS screen, "If UNIT thinks that ATMOS is dodgy…"

"How come we've got it in the jeeps?"

"Yeah."

"Ha, tell me about it. They're fitted as standard on all government vehicles. We can't get rid of them until we can prove there's something wrong."

"Turn right," the ATMOS announced.

"Drives me around the bend," he mumbled, turning around a corner and into the school drive.

"Oh, nice one," Evy laughed at how that worked out.

"Timed that perfectly," Ross grinned, winking at her.

"Ha…yeah…" the Doctor agreed, if a bit tensely, not feeling all that comfortable with what he deemed to be Ross flirting with Evy, "You did."

"This is your final destination," the ATMOS announced.

They pulled to a stop and got out of the jeep, walking up the pavement to see students in red sweat suits running around the building while a boy they recognized as Luke stood there and looked out at the grounds.

"Is it PE?" the Doctor called, "I wouldn't mind a kick-around. Got me daps on."

Luke turned around, "I suppose you're the Doctor," he glanced at him and then to Evy, "And Miss Daniels."

"Evy!" she shouted, she was getting very annoyed at everyone calling her 'Miss Daniels.'

"Hello," the Doctor just waved.


"Oh, we haven't got a commanding officer," the Doctor replied, eyeing the boy for a moment, "Have you? Oh, this is Ross. Say hello, Ross."

"Afternoon, sir," Ross nodded.

The Doctor rushed to the main doors with Evy, "Let's have a look, then! I can smell genius...in a good way."

Luke rolled his eyes and stalked towards them, pushing the doors open and leading them through the academy. He brought them to a laboratory where some of the students were working on all manner of advanced projects. The Doctor and Evy looked around for a moment before wandering around, eyeing the random things that caught their gaze.

"Oh, now...that's clever!" the Doctor called, slipping on his specs as he came to a model of a molecule, "Look! Single-molecule fabric. How thin is that?! You could pack a tent in a thimble."
"Gravity simulators," Evy called over to him, walking around as well, "Terra-forming, biospheres, nano-tech steel construction..."

"Ha ha, this is brilliant!" the Doctor turned to Luke, "But y'know with equipment like this, you could, oh, I dunno...move to another planet or something."

"If only that was possible," Luke replied.

"If only that were possible," Evy corrected, coming to stand next to the Doctor as he removed his specs, "That was a conditional clause."

Luke looked up, startled, "I think you'd better come with me."

The Doctor and Evy shared a look before heading off after Luke, Ross following along. They went up a flight of stairs and down a hall of what looked like dorm rooms before coming to a very large bedroom, obviously Luke's.

"You're smarter than the usual UNIT grunts, I'll give you that," Luke commented, storming into his room.

"He called you a grunt," the Doctor looked over at Ross.

"Don't call Ross a grunt," Evy warned the boy, "He's nice. We like Ross."

"We do?" the Doctor looked over at her.

"Yes, we do," Evy smirked, "Jealous?"

The Doctor blinked before spinning around, "Look at this place..." he changed the subject, ignoring Evy's quiet laughter from behind him. He knew she had a connection not only to his mind but to his emotions as well...she'd definitely felt the small flash of...something. It wasn't jealousy. It wasn't! At least...he didn't think it was. It couldn't be...no...maybe...


"I was just thinking, what a responsible 18 year old," the Doctor continued, ignoring the genius for now, "Inventing zero-carbon cars, saving the world..."

"It takes a man with vision."

"Mmm, blinkered vision. 'Cos ATMOS means more people driving, more cars, more petrol, end result: the oil's gonna run out faster than ever."

"The ATMOS system will just make things worse," Evy agreed.

"Yeah, well, that's a tautology," Luke said quickly, getting upset, "You can't say 'ATMOS system' 'cos it stands for Atmospheric Emission System. So you're saying 'Atmospheric Emission System System.' Do you see, Mrs. Conditional Clause?"

Evy just blinked at how he'd completely overlooked the entirety of the consequences of the ATMOS for nitpicking her use of saying system after it, "...it's been a long time since anyone's said no to you, hasn't it?"

"I'm still right, though," he smirked.

"Not easy, is it, being clever?" the Doctor cut in, "You look at the world and you connect things,
random things, and think, 'why can't anyone else see it? The rest of the world is so slow.'"

"Yeah," Luke agreed slowly, unsure of where the Doctor was going with this.

"And you're on your own."

"I know."

"But not with this," he pulled an ATMOS device out of his coat, "'Cos there's no way you invented this single handed. It might be Earth technology, but that's like finding a mobile phone in the Middle Ages," he tossed the device to Evy and walked towards a large, hollowed out cube in the corner of the room. "No, no, I'll tell you what it's like! It's like finding this in someone's front room. Albeit, a very big front room."

"Why?" Ross frowned, "What is it?"

"Yeah, just looks like a thing, doesn't it?" the Doctor grinned, "People don't question things. They just think, 'Oh, it's a thing."

"Leave it alone!" Luke shouted.

"Me, I make these connections," he walked inside it, "...and this to me looks like..." he pushed a few buttons, "...a teleport pod!"

"Don't!" Evy shouted, rushing forward. But it was too late, he'd disappeared. She cursed herself. He hadn't been thinking of doing that, but she should have known he would. She took another step towards the teleport when it started again and the Doctor reappeared, running out of it. He grabbed her arm and pulled her back with him.

Evy's eyes widened as she saw what had happened in his mind, "Ross, get out!" she shouted.

"Luke, you'd better come with us!" the Doctor called.

The teleport activated again and a Sontaran in full armor stepped out. The Doctor whipped out his sonic and aimed it at the controls, shorting them out, keeping more from following.

"Sontaran!" he shouted, pulling Evy behind him as he put away the sonic, "That's your name, isn't it? How did I know that, eh? Fascinating, isn't it? Isn't that worth keeping me alive?"

"I order you to surrender in the name of the Unified Intelligence Taskforce," Ross demanded, aiming his gun at the Sontaran.

"That won't work Ross," Evy told him, glancing at the Sontaran as she moved beside the Doctor, "Cordalaine signal," she looked back at Ross, "It creates a copper excitation that stops bullets."

"How do you know so much?" the Sontaran demanded, looking between her and the Doctor.

"Well..." the Doctor began, walking around the room.

'Doctor...' Evy spoke to him silently, noticing something, 'Luke isn't startled. They know each other."

As though to confirm her thoughts, the Sontaran turned to Luke, "Who are they?"

"He didn't give his name," Luke said, "But her name is Evelyn Daniels."
"I have not heard of such a name. She is of no importance."

"Well, that's humbling." Evy mumbled.

She knew the Doctor was far better known than she was. He'd been off gallivanting across the Universe for centuries while she had been stuck on Gallifrey. She honestly didn't know what she should have expected. She had been hiding as a human for years, only just starting to reveal she was a Time Lady. But only she, and the Doctor, knew that she was his Link...no other alien knew, save maybe the Ood, being mildly telepathic. She knew that the name she had chosen for herself, Evelyn, and the fact she held a last name due to her time on Earth as well would throw off most species, make them think she was human as well. She shouldn't have been surprised that the Sontarans didn't recognize her as a Time Lady, or even as an alien. The Filter was still in place as well, operating at a far lower power than before, but perhaps it still had an affect on some species.

It just...hurt...a bit. To realize no one knew her. No one really knew her as a Time Lady, as the Last Time Lady, as one of the inspired, as the sister of the Master, the one who had led to... She shook her head free from that line of thought. She was all that...but it still wasn't enough. No one knew her completely, she wasn't important enough to the Universe, hadn't done as much. It was times like these that made her both relieved and sad that the Doctor hadn't Linked to her yet. Relieved because...he deserved better. He deserved someone who had done as much for the Universe as he had, someone recognized, someone as well-known and well-loved, someone deserving of the amazing person he was. And sad...because he did deserved better, she wasn't good enough. She wasn't all those things, all those wonderful things that he deserved in a Link. She would never be that famous or do that much for the Universe, be as important as he was...all she knew was that she loved him more than anyone in the Universe ever could, even Rose, and could only hope that it would be enough.

She glanced at the Doctor, relieved to see he was focused on the Sontaran in the room, if glaring at it for its words, and hadn't heard the thoughts filtering through her mind. She quickly buried her thoughts deep in her mind as fast as she could before he took notice of them. She didn't want him to hear her self doubts.

"This isn't typical Sontaran behavior, is it?" the Doctor snapped at the Sontaran, "Hiding? Using teenagers? Stopping bullets? A Sontaran should face bullets with dignity! Shame on you!"

"You dishonor me!" the Sontaran shouted.

"Then show yourself."

"I will look into my enemy's eyes," the Sontaran agreed, removing his helmet to reveal a brown, dome-shaped head with no neck. Evy really had to stop herself from laughing at how much he looked like a baked potato.

"Oh my God," Ross gasped.

"And your name?" the Doctor asked.

"General Staal of the Tenth Sontaran Battle Fleet," he introduced, "Staal the Undefeated."

"That's not a very good nickname. What if you do get defeated? 'Staal-The-Not-Quite-So-Undefeated-Anymore-But-Never-Mind?'"

"Looks like a potato, a baked potato," Ross scoffed, "A talking baked potato."

"Now, Ross, don't be rude," the Doctor replied, leaning over and picking up a tennis racket and
ball, "You look like a pink weasel to him. The Sontarans are the finest soldiers in the galaxy. Dedicated to a life of warfare," he twirled the racket in his hands, "A clone race grown in batches of millions with only one weakness…"

"Sontarans have no weakness!" Staal exclaimed.

"No, it's a good weakness."

"Aren't you meant to be clever?" Luke spat, "Only an idiot would provoke him."

"Only an idiot would work for them," Evy retorted before turning back to Ross to explain, "The Sontarans are fed by a probic vent in the back of their necks. It's their weak spot, since it's behind them they always have to face their enemy in battle."

"Isn't that brilliant?" the Doctor laughed, "They can never turn their backs!"

"We stare into the face of death!" Staal extolled.

"Yeah?" the Doctor raised an eyebrow, "Well, stare at this!" he hit the ball with the racket, sending it bouncing off the teleport pod to hit Staal in the vent. The general staggered, "Out!" he shouted, pushing Ross out as he grabbed Evy's hand, "Out! Out!"

"You and your cricket balls and such," Evy laughed as they ran out of the room, out of the academy, and back to the jeep to drive off.

"Greyhound Forty to Trap One," the Doctor called into the radio, "Repeat: can you hear me? Over."

"Why is it not working?" Ross asked as he drove as fast as he could back the way they'd come.

"It's gotta be the Sontarans," Evy replied, "If they can trace that thing," she nodded at the ATMOS, "Then they can isolate the ATMOS, control it."

"Turn left," the ATMOS announced.

"Try going right," the Doctor suggested.

"It says left," Ross frowned.

"I know. So go right."

He tried, but the wheel jerked to the left, he pulled his hands off it, the car driving itself, "I've got no control. It's driving itself. It won't stop," he tried the door, "The doors are locked!"

Evy flashed her sonic across the ATMOS screen, "It's deadlocked! We won't be able to stop it!"

"Turn left," the ATMOS announced as the jeep swerved in that direction.

"The sat-nav's just a box, wired through the whole car," the Doctor exclaimed as the tires screeched, the jeep moving off the road.

"We're heading for the river!" Ross shouted.

"ATMOS, you're programmed to contradict our orders, yes?" Evy asked quickly.

"Confirmed," the ATMOS agreed.
"Whatever we say, you're to ignore it?"

"Confirmed."

"Then drive into the river!" she shouted, "I order you, drive into the river!"

The jeep's brakes squealed to a halt right at the river's edge. The Doctor tried the doors once more, finding them unlocked, and jumped out, turning around to pull Evy out with him.

Ross jumped out his side and ran around the car to them as they all began to run away from the car.

"Turn right," the ATMOS began to short circuit, "Left. Left. Right."

"Get down!" the Doctor shouted, diving to the ground with Evy and Ross, each covering their heads and waiting for the inevitable fiery explosion.

"Left," the ATMOS continued, growing more high-pitched, "Right. Left. Right. Left. Right. Left. Right."

There were sparks from the panel and a bit of smoke and...nothing.

The Doctor lifted his head and looked back, "Oh, is that it?"

Evy rolled her eyes at the surprise and disappointment in his voice before reaching out to smack him in the back of the head.

~8~

Luckily for them, they had driven far enough back to be able to walk to Donna's house with little time wasted. The Doctor rang the doorbell and Donna opened the door, "You would not believe the day I'm having."

She looked over at Evy who just shook her head, "You wouldn't happen to have an ATMOS would you?"

"Yeah..." Donna began slowly, "What happened?"

"Can we see it?"

Donna sighed and went into the house for the keys before leading them to the car. The Doctor quickly got to work examining the ATMOS on the engine while Evy tried to contact Martha.

"I'll requisition us a vehicle," Ross told them.

"Anything without ATMOS," the Doctor agreed, "And don't point your gun at people!"

Ross nodded and ran off, right past Donna's grandfather who was coming out of the house only to see two people standing with his granddaughter by the car.

"Is it them?" he asked, rushing over, excited, "Is it him? Is it the Doctor and Evy?" his eyes widened as he got a closer look at the man hovering over the engine and the woman on the phone, "Ah, it's you!"

"Who?" the Doctor asked, distracted, before looking up to see the very familiar old man.

"It's us," Evy smiled, "And it's you!" she stepped forward and gave the man a one-armed hug,
startling him.

"What, have you met before?" Donna asked as Evy stepped back to stand by the Doctor.

"Yeah, Christmas Eve," her granddad nodded, "They disappeared right in front of me."

"And you never said?"

"Well, you never said," he countered before turning to the duo, "Wilf, sir, ma'am, Wilfred Mott. You must be some of them aliens."

"Well, yeah, but don't shout it out," the Doctor grinned, shaking Wilf's hand, "Nice to meet you properly Wilf."

"Ah, an alien hand," Wilf looked down at his hand before looking up at Evy, "And an alien hug!"

The Doctor smiled and turned to Evy, "Anything?"

"She's not answering," Evy shook her head, worried.

"What's it, 'Sontiruns'?" Donna asked, frowning.

"Sontarans."

"But there's got to be more to it," the Doctor mumbled, "They can't be just remote controlling cars. That's not enough. Is anyone answering yet?"

"Hold on!" Evy exclaimed, rolling her eyes at his impatience, "Martha?"

"Don't tell me…" she heard Martha begin on the other end.

She frowned, something was off. She looked up at the Doctor meaningfully as she spoke, "Martha, I'm putting the Doctor on."

She handed the phone to the Doctor who took it slowly and put it to his ear, "Martha, tell Colonel Mace it's the Sontarans. They're in the file, Code Red Sontarans. But if they're inside the factory, tell him not to start shooting, UNIT will get massacred. We'll get back as soon as we can. You got that?"


The Doctor frowned, flipping the phone closed and handing it back to Evy who gave it to Donna. Something was definitely wrong with Martha. He turned back to the car, getting back to work on the engine, sonicing it along with Evy as Donna and Wilf looked on.

"You've tried sonicing it before," Donna said, "You didn't find anything."

"Yeah, but now we know it's Sontaran, we know what we're looking for," he reasoned.

"The thing is," Wilf began, "That Donna is my only grandchild. You gotta promise me you're gonna take care of her."

"She takes care of us."

"Oh, yeah, that's my Donna," Wilf beamed proudly, "She was always bossing us around even when she was tiny. 'The Little General' we used to call her."
"Yeah," Donna frowned, "Don't start."

Evy frowned, focusing her sonic on a specific part of side of the ATMOS grid pattern. Seeing her focus the Doctor went to help.

"And some of the boys she used to turn up with, a different one every week," Wilf laughed, "Yeah, who was that one with the nail varnish?"

"Matthew Richards," Donna answered, "He lives in Kilburn now, with a man."

"Don't you worry Wilf," Evy replied as she and the Doctor soniced the same part, almost there, "We'll look after Donna no problem."

Just then spikes shot out of the holes in the device, making the Doctor and Evy jump back.

"Whoa!" the Doctor said, shocked.

"It's a temporal pocket!" Evy's eyes widened.

"I knew there was something else in there. It's hidden just a second out of sync with real time."

"But what's it hiding?" Donna frowned.

"I dunno, men and their cars!" Donna tensed as her mother walked up to see Evy and the Doctor with their heads back by the engine, "Sometimes I think if I was a car..." and then she saw the Doctor, "Oh, it's you! Doctor...what was it?"

"Yeah, that's me," he replied, not looking up as he half waved her off.

"Have you met them as well?" Wilf asked.

"No idea who she is," Mrs. Noble shot a distasteful look at Evy, "But dad, it's the man from the wedding! When you were laid up with Spanish flu. I'm warning you, last time that man turned up, it was a disaster!"

And then gas shot out of the spikes.

"Get back!" Evy shouted, pulling them back as the Doctor flashed his sonic, stopping the gas as the car sparked.

"That'll stop it," he breathed.

"I told you!" Mrs. Noble shouted, "He's blown up the car! Who is he anyway? And who's she? What sort of doctor blows up cars?"

"Oh, not now, mum!" Donna grumbled.

"Oh, should I make an appointment?" she stalked off, ready to call the ATMOS people.

"That wasn't just exhaust fumes," Evy commented, having caught a whiff of the gas that lingered, "Some sort of gas. Artificial I know that much," she flicked on her sonic, scanning the air around them, trying to catch lingering bits of the gas.

"And it's aliens, is it?" Wilf asked, "Aliens?"

"But if it's poisonous..." Donna began, "Then they've got poisonous gas in every car on Earth."
The Doctor's eyes widened as he looked around to see every car on the street labeled with an ATMOS sticker.

"It's not safe," Wilf determined, "I'm gonna get it off the street," he walked over to get in the car, the door shutting and locking behind him.

"No, don't!" Donna shouted as the car started up and thick exhaust came out of the tailpipe, "Turn it off!" Wilf was shaking his head, "Granddad, get out of there!" she tried to get the door open but it wouldn't budge.

"I can't!" Wilf called, holding up the keys, "It's locked! It's the aliens again!" he started to bang on the window, trying to get out.

"What's he doing?" Mrs. Noble shouted from the door of the house, "What's he done?"

"I've isolated it!" the Doctor shouted.

But then all the cars around them started to emit the gas.

"There's gas inside the car!" Donna cried, "He's gonna choke! Doctor! Evy!"

They ran around the car to Donna's side, trying to open it with their sonics, but to no avail.

"It won't open!" Evy shouted.

The car alarms went off and the Doctor looked up, gas filling the street, "It's the whole world!"

"Help me!" Wilf cried.

The Doctor ran around to the front to check the engine as Evy continued to try and get the door open.

Wilf coughed as Donna watched helplessly through the window. The Doctor yanked out some wires but it didn't help. He ran to the middle of the road, looking around, but there was nothing but the gas.

"Doctor!" Donna cried out to him as he stood there looking around, helpless.

To be continued…
Poor Evy, feeling like she hasn't done anything important for the Universe...that will definitely change by the end of this series though :) And what were the rest of her thoughts about...the one who had led to...what? We'll find that out as well, but not till the End of Time, sorry, lol. Gotta say, I loved writing the little (microscopic) bit of Ross/Evy here, it was just too cute to pass up. There's absolutely nothing going on but the Doctor's reactions were needed :) And I love how she just whacks him when he's being a bit of an idiot, it's hysterical.

I hope it was believable that the Doctor DID feel Evy in his mind after the war but pushed the sensation away. It's sort of like those phantom limb cases, where it's gone but you still think it's there. He truly thought his people were gone, getting a little tickle in his mind would, to him, be just like a phantom limb. He wouldn't give any thought to it especially when he was fully convinced it was just him who survived.

Next chapter...what's this? A kiss?
Things had gone from bad to worse faster than ever. Before the Time Lords could even fix one problem, another occurred. All the cars on Donna's street had begun releasing gas, choking everyone.

"Doctor!" Evy shouted at the Doctor as he stood in the middle of the street, looking around, "I need your sonic!"

He turned and ran back to her as Donna struggled to get her grandfather out of the gaseous car.

"He's gonna choke!" Donna shouted, "Doctor!"

"It won't open!" the Doctor tugged on the door.

"Doctor!" Evy yelled, "Sonic! Now!" he tossed her his sonic, not sure what she was going to do as they had tried the sonics already and it didn't work, "Cover your ears!" she shouted, before flipping them both on and jamming them at each other.

If Donna thought the sonic pen resonating with a sonic screwdriver was bad, it was even worse with two sonic screwdrivers. The high-pitched note echoed through the streets, smashing all the car windows.

Evy pulled the sonics away before the pitch could reach the houses and shatter them as well, "Well, don't just stand there!" she shouted, seeing Donna and the Doctor staring at her...Mrs. Noble with an axe a few feet away, "Help me get him out!"

That seemed to snap them out of their stupor as they quickly moved to her side to pull Wilf through the windshield area.

"Thanks!" Wilf called as they got him steady and Evy tossed the Doctor back his sonic.

"You are brilliant," he muttered, staring at her, wide eyed, as he caught it.

Donna looked up, shocked to see her mother standing there with an axe, "You've got an axe?"

"Burglars!" was all her mother said, having been ready to help get her father out of the car.

"Get inside the house," the Doctor told them, pushing them towards the house, "Just try and close off the doors and windows."

Ross pulled up in a black cab, "Doctor! Miss Daniels…"

"Ev…oh who cares," Evy threw her hands up. The Doctor smirked at her, if this weren't such a serious situation he would have laughed at how irritated she was getting at the formal use of her name.

"This is all I could find that hasn't got ATMOS."

The Doctor grabbed Evy's hand and pulled her towards the cab, shouting back at Donna who was handing her grandfather off to her mother, "Donna, you coming?"
"Yeah!" Donna shouted, turning to go to them.

"Donna!" her mother reached out to her, "Don't go! Look what happens every time that Doctor appears! Stay with us, please."

Wilf just pulled his daughter's hand away and nudged Donna, "You go my darling!"

"Dad!"

"Don't listen to her!" Wilf told Donna as she ran back to the cab, "You go with the Doctor and Evy! That's my girl!" he grinned widely as she stepped into the cab, though Evy could see she felt guilty for leaving her family, "Bye!" he waved.

They drove as though they were part of a car chase until they made it back to the ATMOS factory, the Doctor, Donna, and Evy jumping out almost before the cab stopped.

"Ross, look after yourself, get inside the building," the Doctor ordered.

"Will do," he nodded, picking up his radio, "Greyhound Forty to Trap One, I have just returned the Doctor and Miss Daniels to base, safe and sound, over."

They ran back to the entrance of the factory, Donna half gagging on the air, "The air is disgusting!"

"It's not too bad for us," Evy turned to her, "Respitory Bypass System. Get inside the TARDIS," then she spun on her heel to face the Doctor, "You haven't given her a key yet have you?"

He patted his pocket before pulling one out and handing it to the ginger, "Keep that! Go on, that's yours! Quite a big moment really!"

"Yeah, maybe we can get sentimental after the world's finished choking to death!" Donna replied sarcastically.

"Good idea!" he nodded, taking Evy's hand and pulling her towards the side of the factory.

"Where are you going?" Donna called after them.

"Stop a war!" Evy shouted back as they ran to the UNIT base while Donna turned and ran for the TARDIS. They forced their way back to the base to see soldiers running everywhere.

"Right then, here we are, good," the Doctor announced as they ran in.

Evy went straight over to Mace, "No matter what, Colonel Mace, don't engage the Sontarans in battle, they'd be all too eager to fight one."

"Just leave this to us," the Doctor ordered.

"And what are you going to do?" Mace demanded.

"We've got the TARDIS. We're gonna get on board their ship."

"Come on!" Evy shouted, grabbing Martha's hand and pulling her out of the room followed by the Doctor.

'Oh God, that smell!' Evy moaned in his mind, having gotten a whiff of Martha.

'I know, classic clone,' he agreed, trying not to breathe through his nose.
They ran out the door, down a few alleys till they came to the one where the TARDIS had been parked, only to find it gone.

"But...where's the TARDIS?" 'Martha' asked.

'Like you don't know,' Evy grumbled in his mind.

"Taste that, in the air," the Doctor commented, "Yech. That sort of metal tang."

"Teleport exchange," Evy nodded, "It's the Sontarans, they've got the TARDIS."

"I'm stuck, on Earth like...like an ordinary person," the Doctor said in thought, Evy didn't bother to correct him that they were both stuck, of the two of them, he really would have more of a problem having not lived as a human like she had, "Like a human! How rubbish is that!" he turned to 'Martha' for a moment, "Sorry, no offence, but come on!"

"So what do we do?" 'Martha' asked.

"Well...I mean it's shielded, they could never detect it..." he began slowly, staring at her.

"What?" 'Martha' asked, growing uncomfortable with the two of them looking at her.

"I have to ask Martha," Evy murmured, "Did you phoned your family and Tom yet?"

"No, what for?" she frowned, confused.

"To tell them to stay inside because of the gas?"

'Martha's' eyes widened, "Course I will, yeah, but, what about Donna? I mean, where's she?"

"Oh, she's gone home," the Doctor lied, "She's not like you, she's not a soldier. Right. So, Avanti!"

They ran back to UNIT's base, rushing to the main control room to see people manning every computer with Mace standing in the back of the room, giving commands.

"Change of plan!" the Doctor shouted as they hurtled into the room.

"Good to have you fighting alongside us Doctor," the Mace replied, "Miss Daniels."

"We're not fighting. We're not-fighting, as in not hyphen fighting, got it?" the Doctor told him for what he hoped would be the final time, "Now, does anyone know what this gas is yet?"

"We're working on it," 'Martha' said, rushing past them to take a seat.

"It's harmful, but not lethal until it reaches 80 percent density," a blonde woman replied, standing up, "We're having the first reports of deaths from the center of Tokyo City."

"And who are you?" the Doctor frowned.

"Captain Marion Price, sir," she saluted.

"Oh, put your hand down," he waved her off, "Don't salute."

"Jodrell Bank's traced a signal, Doctor, coming from 5,000 miles above the Earth," Mace added, bringing up a map, "We're guessing that's what triggered the cars."

Evy hit in a code on a command board before the computers and a red signal went out, showing a
blip that had been hidden, "And there's the Sontaran ship."

"NATO has gone to Defcon One, we're preparing a strike."

"You can't do that," Evy spun to face him, "Nuclear missiles won't leave a scratch on that thing."

"Let me talk to the Sontarans," the Doctor said.

"You're not authorized to speak on behalf of the Earth," Mace replied.

"Yes, he is," Evy replied, flashing her screwdriver over the control panel, connecting UNIT to the Sontarans, "He earned it a long time ago..." she stuck the sonic into the panel, "Calling the Sontaran Command Ship under Jurisdiction Two of the Intergalactic Rules of Engagement."

"This is the Doctor," he introduced.

"Doctor, breathing your last?" Staal appeared on screen.

"My God, they're like trolls," Mace gasped.

"Yeah, loving the diplomacy, thanks," the Doctor commented under his breath to Mace before turning back to the Sontarans, "So, tell me, General Staal, since when did you lot become cowards?"

"How dare you!" Staal looked appalled.

"Oh, that's diplomacy?" Mace rolled his eyes.

"Wait for it," Evy remarked, fiddling with her sonic, as the Doctor went to sit down at one of the computers, putting his feet on the panel before him.

"Doctor, you impugn my honor!" Staal glared.

"Yeah, I'm really glad you didn't say 'belittle' 'cos then I'd have a field day. But poison gas? That's the weapon of a coward and you know it. Staal, you could blast this planet out of the sky, and yet you're sitting up above watching it die. Where's the fight in that? Where's the honor? Or, are you lot planning something else? 'Cos this isn't normal Sontaran warfare. What are you lot up to?"

"A general would be unwise to reveal his strategy to the opposing force."

"Oh," Evy nodded, leaning forward, "Losing the war then?"

"Such a suggestion is impossible."

"What war?" Mace looked at her.

"For the last 50,000 years the Sontarans have been at war with the Rutans," Evy explained sadly.

"50,000 years of bloodshed, and for what?" the Doctor asked.

"For victory. Sontar-ha!" Staal began as the other Sontarans around him began to chant, "Sontar-ha! Sontar-ha! Sontar-ha!"

The Doctor rolled his eyes, "Give me a break..." he pulled out his sonic and changed the channel to a cartoon, Tommy Zoom.
"Oh, I love this show," Evy commented.

"Doctor…I would seriously recommend that this dialogue is handled by official Earth representation," Mace straightened up, trying to sound authoritative.

The Doctor soniced the channel back to the ship, ignoring Mace, "Finished?"

"You will not be so quick to ridicule when you see our prize," Staal said, moving away to reveal the TARDIS behind him, "Behold! We are the first Sontarans in history to capture a TARDIS."

'Donna's on the ship then,' Evy remarked to the Doctor, seeing him nod ever so slightly, 'We need to get in contact with her.'

"As prizes go, that's...noble," the Doctor said, emphasizing the word, "As they say in Latin, donna nobis pacem. Did you never wonder about its design? It's phone box. It contains a phone. A telephonic device for communication. Sort of symbolic. Like if only we could communicate. You and I."

"All you have communicated is your distress, Doctor," Staal laughed.

"Big mistake though," the Doctor smirked, "Showing it to me," he lifted up a small device, "Cos I've got remote control."

"Cease transmission!" Staal shouted and the screen went black.

"Oh, well," he shrugged, getting up.

"That's achieved nothing," Mace glared at him.

"Oh, you'd be surprised," Evy smirked.

～8～

Donna was sitting in the TARDIS, clutching Martha's mobile before dialing home, "Mum? You alright?"

"Donna!" her mother answered, "Where are you sweetheart?"

"Is that her?" she could hear her grandfather ask.

"Oh, just finish the job," her mum called back, "Your granddad's sealing us in. He's sealing the windows. Our own house and we're sealed in! All those things they said about pollution and ozone and carbon, they're really happening aren't they?"

"There's people working on it, mum," she reassured her, "They're gonna fix it, I promise."

"Oh, like you'd know, you're so clever?"

"Oh don't start. Please, don't."

"I'm sorry. I wish you were here."

"Now, come on Sylvia, look," her grandfather said, "That doesn't help," she could hear the phone changing hands and her grandfather talking, "Donna? Where are you?"

"It's sort of hard to say," she looked around the TARDIS, "You alright?"
"Yeah, fighting fit, yeah. Are they with you, the Doctor and Evy?"

"Oh, the Doctor!" she heard her mother grumble.

"No," she frowned, "I'm all on my own."

"Look, you promised they were gonna look after you," Wilf admonished.

"They will, Gramps. There's...something they need me to do. I just don't know what."

"Well, I mean, the whole place is covered, the whole of London they're saying and the whole...the whole world. It's the scale of it, Donna. I mean, how can two people stop all that?"

"Trust me," she smiled, "They can do it. I've seen them do amazing things."

"Yeah, well if they don't, you tell them they'll have to answer to me."

"I will. Just as soon as I see them, I'll tell them."

And then she ended the call, and waited.

~8~

After their little stunt with the Sontarans, the Doctor and Evy had wandered over to where 'Martha' was standing in the back, flipping through some papers, staring at a container with the gas in it, scanning it. The Doctor walked over and plucked the clipboard from 'Martha,' holding it out for him and Evy to look through.

"There's carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides, but 10 percent unidentified," 'Martha' told them, "Some sort of artificial heavy element we can't trace. You ever seen anything like it?"

"No," Evy mumbled as the Doctor shook his head as well, "It's new, something the Sontarans invented. It's not just poison though, they clearly need this gas for something else."

"What could that be?" the Doctor wondered out loud.

"Launch grid online and active," Price announced.

"Positions ladies and gentlemen, Defcon One initiatives in progress," Mace declared.

"What?!" the Doctor spun around to see them getting ready to launch, "I told you not to launch!"

"The gas is at 60 percent density, 80 percent and people start dying, Doctor. We've got no choice."

"Launching in 60, 59, 58, 57, 56..." Price counted down, "Worldwide nuclear grid now coordinating. 54, 53..."

"You're making a mistake, Colonel!" Evy shouted, coming to stand next to the Doctor by the main controls.

"For once, I hope the Sontarans are ahead of you," the Doctor added.

"North America, online," Price announced, "United Kingdom, online. France, online. India, online. Pakistan, online. China, online. North Korea, online. All systems locked and coordinated. Launching in 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5..."
"God save us," Mace prayed.

"...4, 3, 2, 1...0."

And then, the screen shut off.

"What is it?" Mace asked, shocked, "What happened? Did we launch? Well, did we?"

"Negative, sir," Price looked down at the controls, "The launch codes have been wiped, sir. It must be the Sontarans."

"Can we override it?"

"Trying it now, sir."

"Missiles wouldn't even dent their ship," Evy frowned and tilted her head to the side in thought, "So why are the Sontarans so keen to stop you?"

"Any ideas?" the Doctor looked back at 'Martha.'

"How should I know?" she asked.

"Enemy within!" Ross's voice suddenly came over the radio, "At arms! Greyhound Forty declaring absolute emergency. Sontarans within factory grounds, east corridor grid six."

Mace ran to the radio controls, "Absolute emergency, declaring Code Red. All troops, Code Red!"

"Get them out of there!" the Doctor shouted.

"All troops, open fire!"

"The guns aren't working," Ross replied after a moment, "Inform all troops, standard weapons do not work," there was a sound of other weapons firing and people screaming, "Tell the Doctor and Evy it's that cordalaine signal. They're the only ones who can stop them."

Then there was static.


"That wasn't Greyhound Forty," Evy glared at him, "He was Ross."

"Now listen to me," the Doctor grit his teeth, nearly shaking in anger, "GET THEM OUT OF THERE!"

Mace actually had the decency to flinch, "Trap One to all stations. Retreat. Order imperative, immediate retreat!"

They listened in horror as reports came over the radio of soldiers trying to retreat and being shot down by Sontarans.

"They've taken the factory," Mace muttered.

"But why?" Evy shook her head, not understanding, "They don't need it. Why attack now?"

"What are they up to?" the Doctor agreed, in thought, "Times like this, I could do with the
Brigadier. No offence," he looked between Evy and Mace.

Evy just shrugged. She could remember the man from the Doctor's memories, he was a brilliant man. Even she could admit they could do with him as well.

"None taken," Mace replied, "Sir Alistair's a fine man, if not the best. Unfortunately he's stranded in Peru."

"Launch grid back online," Price announced as the screen turned back on…only to go black again, "They're inside the system, sir. It's coming from within UNIT itself."

"Trace it. Find out where it's coming from, and quickly. Gas levels?"

"66 percent in major population areas and rising."

"Why are they defending the factory only after we were inside?" Mace turned to the Doctor and Evy as his crew got to work.

"Because they wanted UNIT here," Evy told him, slowly figuring out what the Sontaran's plans were, "You gave them something they needed. Something now hidden inside the factory."

"Then we've got to recover it. This cordalaine signal thing, how does it work?"

"The bullets," the Doctor explained, "It causes expansion of the copper shell."

"Excellent," he stood and began to leave, "I'm on it."

"For the billionth time, you can't fight Sontarans!" he called after the Colonel, but he was ignored. He stood up, glancing at Evy who stood as well and walked into a side room, "Phone," he asked a soldier quietly, "Have you got a phone? I need your mobile, quickly, hurry up!" the man handed him a mobile and he headed back into the Colonel's office where Evy was waiting. He tossed her the phone and she quickly called Martha's cell, Donna answered on the first ring.

"What's happened?" she asked, "Where are you?"

Evy held the phone up, switching it to speaker so they both could speak and hear her.

"Still on Earth," the Doctor answered, "But don't worry, we've got our secret weapon."

"What's that?"

"You," Evy replied.

"Somehow that's not making me happy," Donna groaned, "Can't you just zap us down to Earth with that remote thing?"

"Yeah, I haven't got a remote…" the Doctor trailed.

"You really should though," Evy suggested.

"You know," he paused in thought, "I've been meaning to but for some reason…"

"Oi!" Donna shouted, "Stuck in space here!"

"Right," he shook his head, "We need you on that ship. That's why I made them move the TARDIS. I'm sorry, but you've got to go outside."
"But there's Sonterrans out there."

"Sontarans," Evy corrected, "Don't worry Donna, they'll be at their battle stations right now. It's not like they're about to sit down and take tea. We'll talk you through it."

"But what if they find me?" Donna whispered, sounding very scared.

"I know, and we wouldn't ask, but there's nothing else we can do," the Doctor frowned, not liking this plan at all. Evy took his hand, she wasn't a fan either, but if anyone could do it, Donna could, "The whole planet is choking, Donna."

"Remember," Evy added, "Super Temp? I'm making you a cape?"

Donna laughed a bit before taking a breath, "What d'you need me to do?"

"The Sontarans are inside the factory which means they've got a teleport link with the ship, but they'll have deadlocked it," the Doctor began, "We need you to reopen the link."

"But I can't even mend a fuse."

"Donna!" Evy snapped, grabbing the phone from the Doctor, "You've got to stop talking about yourself like that. You are amazing! You can do this. I promise. You're Super Temp remember?"

They could hear Donna open the TARDIS door before closing it quietly, "There's a Sonterr...Sontaran."

"Did he see you?" the Doctor asked.

"No, he's got his back to me."

"Ok, Donna listen," Evy took a breath, looking up at the Doctor, "On the back of the neck of his collar there'll be a sort of plug, a hole, the probic vent. It only takes one blow to the probic vent to knock them out."

"But he's gonna kill me," Donna breathed.

"I'm sorry," the Doctor swallowed hard, "I swear, I'm so sorry. But you've got to try."

There was silence on the line before there was a thump.

"Back of the neck!" Donna hissed triumphantly.

"Now then, you gotta find the external junction feed to the teleport," the Doctor told her, grinning at Evy.

"What...what's it look like?"

"A circular panel on the wall," Evy stepped up, "There should be a big symbol on the front, like a letter T with a line through it. Or two Fs back-to-back."

"Well, there's a door..."

"There should be a switch by the side of it."

"Yeah there is," they could hear the frown in Donna's voice, "But it's Sontaran-shaped, you need three fingers."
The Doctor gave Evy a look before turning back to the phone slowly, "You've got three fingers."

"Oh, yeah!" Donna laughed at her momentary lapse. They could hear something slide open, "I am through!"

"Oh, you are brilliant Donna!" Evy exclaimed as the Doctor kissed the phone.

"Shut up," Donna replied, but Evy could just imagine the proud smirk on her face, "Right. T with a line through it."

The Doctor looked up to see Mace returning to the room and nudged Evy who looked up again, "Got to go," he said into the phone, "Keep the line open!"

"Counter-attack!" Mace shouted as they ran in to the room.

"We said you don't stand a chance!"

"Positions," Mace called to his crew, "That means everyone!" he tossed a gasmask to the Doctor and Evy.

"You're not going without me!" 'Martha' declared, standing up.

"Wouldn't dream of it," Evy replied, watching 'Martha' closely as they headed out.

They followed the crowd to the ATMOS factory where it seemed the whole of UNIT had gathered, all wearing gasmasks. Evy sighed and pulled hers over her face, elbowing the Doctor into putting his own on.

"Latest firing stock, what do you think Doctor?" Mace asked as they walked over, he was holding up a gun for them.

"Are you my mummy?" the Doctor asked before Evy smacked him upside the head.

"If you could concentrate," Mace rolled his eyes, though filled with humor at Evy's action, "Bullets with a rad-steel coating, no copper surface. Should overcome the cordalaine signal."

"But the Sontarans have got lasers! You can't even see in this fog, the night vision doesn't work."

"Thank you Doctor, thank you for your lack of faith but this time, I'm not listening," he pulled off his gasmask and turned to face his soldiers, "Attention, all troops! Sontarans might think of us as primitive. As does every passing species with an axe to grind. They make a mockery of our weapons, our soldiers, our ideals. But no more! From this point on, it stops. From this point on, the people of Earth fight back and we show them! We show the warriors of Sontar what the human race can do! Trap One to Hawk Major! Go, go, go!"

They looked up as a loud sound came from the sky and the fog started to clear.

"It's working!" Mace shouted, "The area's clearing. Engines to maximum!"

The Doctor looked down, alarmed, when he felt someone grip his arm tightly, "The Valiant…" Evy breathed, her eyes fixed on the craft hovering above them, blowing away the gas.

He frowned, reaching out to take her hand as she had done so often for him. He knew the sight of the ship was not a welcome one, it could only bring up terrible memories of the death of her brother. He pulled her to him a bit more, wrapping an arm around her.
"UNIT Carrier Ship Valiant reporting for duty, Doctor!" Mace grinned, "With engines strong enough to clear away the fog."

Everyone began to pull off their masks. The Doctor gently pulled off Evy's, seeing her attention focused on the Valiant. He could see the tears beginning to pool in her eyes, "Hey," he whispered to her, "You alright?"

She blinked and took a deep breath before nodding and turning to look at him, forcing a small smile, "It's brilliant, though, isn't it? A brilliant plan?"

He could only nod at her trying to find the good in something she associated with such horrible times.

"Getting a taste for it, Doctor?" Mace looked over at them, still celebrating in his victory.

"No, not at all," the Doctor replied solemnly as Evy looked away, "Not us."

Seeing Evy's reaction, Mace seemed to realize what had just transpired and turned away from them, "Valiant, fire at will!"

Green beams shot out of the bottom of the Valiant and converged on the ATMOS factory while a number of UNIT soldiers began to attack on ground as well. And it seemed to work, the Sontarans seemed to be overpowered, allowing them all access to the factory.

"East and North secure," Mace said, turning around, only to see the Doctor and Evy rushing off down another corridor, "Doctor? Miss Daniels?"

"Donna, hold on," the Doctor said over the phone, ignoring Mace as they ran down the corridor with 'Martha,' "We're coming."

"Shouldn't we follow the colonel?" 'Martha' asked as the Doctor and Evy turned to run down a separate hallway than the soldiers.

"Nah, you, Evy, and me, Martha Jones," the Doctor grinned as Evy pulled out her sonic and began to lead the way, "Just like old times!"

"Alien technology, this way!" Evy shouted, rushing down the hall.

They ran down a few sets of stairs and into the basement, Evy turning to head towards a door at the end.

"No Sontarans down here," the Doctor commented, "They can't resist a battle. Here we go."

They pushed the door open to see a dimly lit laboratory with another Martha, the real one they knew, strapped to a metal basket-like object, asleep. They immediately rushed to her side.

"Martha!" Evy shouted, flashing her sonic on the cuffs around Martha's wrists.

"Ooh, Martha, I'm so sorry," the Doctor moved to check her pulse, "Still alive."

They heard someone cock a gun and Evy glanced up to see Martha's clone holding one trained on them.

"Am I supposed to be impressed?" the Doctor asked, completely unconcerned.

"Wish you carried a gun now?" Clone Martha smirked.
"Not at all."

"I've been stopping the nuclear launch all this time."

"Which is exactly what we wanted," Evy commented, looking up, "We needed to stop the missiles, as much as the Sontarans did. We're not about to let the Earth start a war."

"When did you know?"

"What, about you?" the Doctor stood up and looked at her, walking around her as though examining her, "Oh, right from the start. Reduced iris contraction, slight thinning of the hair follicles on the left temple."

"And you smell," Evy grimaced, getting the last cuff undone.

"You might as well have worn a t-shirt saying 'clone,'" the Doctor added, walking back over to Evy and the real Martha, "Although, maybe not in front of Captain Jack. You remember him, don't you? 'Cos you've got all her memories. That's why the Sontarans had to protect her, to keep you inside UNIT. Martha Jones is keeping you alive."

He reached out and pulled the device off of Martha's head. She woke up with a scream, straight into Evy's awaiting arms, at the same time that the clone fell to the ground clutching her chest in agony. The Doctor rushed over and kicked the gun away.

"It's alright," Evy whispered to Martha, rocking her back and forth as she hugged her, "It's alright, I'm here, we're here. I've got you."

"There was this thing," Martha tried to explain, "This alien, with this head..."

The mobile rang.

"Oh, blimey I'm busy," the Doctor mumbled before flipping the phone open as Evy helped Martha up, "Got it?"

"Yes!" Donna shouted so loud that even Evy could hear it, "Now hurry up!"

"Take off the covering," the Doctor continued, "All the blue switches inside, flick them up like a fuse box. And that should get the teleport working."

Martha stepped out of the basket, her eyes widening as she saw something leaning against a beam a few feet away, her clone, "Oh, my God," she gasped, "That's me."

"Yeah," the Doctor rubbed the back of his neck, tugging off his coat and handing it to Martha, "Sorry 'bout that..."

He walked over to the teleport and began to work on it while Evy helped Martha walk to her clone's side, still shaky from her ordeal. When Martha was stationed, sitting down next to the clone, Evy made her way over to the Doctor, helping him.

'Doctor,' Evy whispered to him silently, 'I have an idea but I need to get back to the Rattigan Academy.'

He looked up at her a moment before nodding and getting to work, changing the coordinates from the Sontaran ship like he'd been planning to the Academy.

"Don't touch me!" the clone shouted as Martha reached out for her.
"It's not my fault," Martha told her, "The Sontarans created you. But...you had all my memories."

"You've got a brother, sister, mother, and father."

"If you don't help me, they're gonna die."

"You love them."

"Yes. Remember that?"

"The gas!" the Doctor shouted, "Tell us about the gas," and then there was some sort of smack and the Doctor yelping in pain. Martha almost laughed as she could picture the new Evy was one to smack him when he was an idiot.

"He's the enemy!" the clone spat.

"Then tell me," Martha tried, "It's not just poison, what's it for? Martha, please!"

The clone hesitated for a moment before sighing, "Caesofine concentrate. It's one part of Bosteen, two parts Probic 5."

"Clone feed!" the Doctor shouted, stepping out of the teleport, Evy following behind, "It's clone feed!"

"What's clone feed?" Martha frowned.

"Like amniotic fluid but for Sontarans," Evy replied, "That's why they're not invading, they're converting the atmosphere. Changing the planet into a clone world."

"Earth becomes a great big hatchery," the Doctor agreed, "Cos the Sontarans are clones, that's how they reproduce. Give 'em a planet this big, they'll create billions of new soldiers. That gas isn't poison, it's food!"

He ran back into the teleport, Evy hesitating as she watched the two Marthas.

"My heart...it's getting slower," the clone murmured.

"There's nothing I can do," Martha frowned.

"In your mind, you've got so many plans. There's so much that you wanna do."

"And I will," Martha tried to smile, "Never do tomorrow what you can do today, my mum says. 'Cos..."

"Cos you never know how long you've got," the clone finished, "Martha Jones...all that life..." and with a short exhale of breath, the clone died. Martha slowly reached out and pulled her engagement ring off the clone's finger and put it on her own.

"Doctor!" they heard a small voice shout, Donna's, over the phone. Evy went over and helped Martha up, now able to stand and walk on her own a bit better as they headed back to the teleport to see the Doctor pick up the phone, "Blue switches done..." they heard a door slide open and the sound of marching, "But they've found me!"

"Now!" the Doctor shouted, jumping out of the teleport and flashing his sonic at it, activating it. Donna appeared on the pad, stiff for only a moment before running forward to hug them.
"Have I ever told you how much I hate you?" she asked them.

"We love you too Donna," Evy grinned.

"Hold on, hold on," the Doctor pulled away, "Get off me, get off me! Gotta bring the TARDIS down," he soniced the teleport once more and the TARDIS was beamed down back where it had been, in the alley. He turned back to face the women, "Right, now. Martha, you coming?"

"What about this nuclear launch thing?" Martha frowned.

"Keep pressing N," Evy tossed her the PDA the clone had been using, "It'll keep the missiles on the ground."

Donna looked over at Martha and saw the clone behind her, "But there's...two of them."

"Yeah, long story..." the Doctor motioned for them to hurry and they all ran to get inside the teleport pod, "Here we go. The old team, back together! Well, the new team."

"We're not going back on that ship!"

"No, no, no. No. I needed to get the teleport working so that we could get to..." they teleported back to the Rattigan Academy, "...here! The Rattigan Academy, owned by..." they looked over to see Luke approaching them with a gun pointed at them.

"Don't tell anyone what I did!" Luke shouted, "It wasn't my fault, the Sontarans lied to me, they..."

The Doctor stormed forward and grabbed the gun from him as Evy ran past him and towards the lab, "If I see one more gun..." he tossed it away.

"You know," Donna commented, looking at Martha in the Doctor's coat as they followed the Time Lords, "That coat, sort of works."

"Feel like a kid in my dad's clothes," Martha blushed.

"Oh, well if you're calling him dad you're definitely, completely, 100 percent over him," Donna teased, knowing full well Martha had been over the Doctor a while ago.

"What are you doing?" Luke asked as they caught up to the Doctor and Evy in the lab. Evy was rushing around grabbing various pieces of equipment while the Doctor stood at a table, watching her assemble it, curious as to where she was going with this.

"The Sontarans had to stop the missiles," Evy spoke, grabbing a device two tables over, "They had to be careful because caesofine gas is volatile, that's why they had to use you to stop the nuclear attack. Ground-to-air engagement would spark off the whole thing."

"What, like set fire to the atmosphere?" Martha frowned.

"Yeah," the Doctor nodded, watching Evy. "They need all the gas intact to breed their clone army. And all the time we had Luke here in his dream factory. Planning a little trip, were we?"


"You were building equipment, ready to terra-form anything so that humans could live there and breathe the air with this!" Evy held up the finished product, "An atmospheric converter."

"Brilliant!" the Doctor shouted as Evy picked up the converter and headed for the doors. He held
them open as they all ran outside.

"That's London," Donna gasped, seeing the gas surrounding it, "You can't even see it. My family's in there."

"Just have to find the right setting…" Evy mumbled, fiddling with the controls.

"Hold on," Martha frowned, "You said the atmosphere would ignite."

"Yeah, I did, didn't I?" he asked.

And then Evy pressed a button, shooting a flame up into the sky. The gas ignited and spread, dissipating and burning the gas, revealing clear blue sky.

"She's a genius!" Luke shouted.

"You didn't think I was the only one did you?" the Doctor grinned down at Evy.

"Just brilliant!" Martha breathed.

But then the Doctor's eyes widened, "Now we're in trouble!" he grabbed the converter and ran back into the building straight to the teleport pad, sonicing it on the way.

"Doctor…" Evy began slowly, watching him carefully as he stood there. He was hiding his thoughts, but she knew what he was thinking. After so many centuries in his mind, she knew what he was planning, what he felt he had to do.

"Right, so..." he swallowed and looked at them, "Donna, thank you. For everything. Martha, you too. Oh...so many times. Luke, do something clever with your life. Evy…" he trailed off, sadness in his eyes as Evy began shaking her head.

"You're saying goodbye," Donna gasped.

"You can't!" Evy shouted, feeling terror rise in her.

"Sontarans are never defeated," the Doctor replied, looking straight at her, knowing she understood, "They'll be getting ready for war. And, well, you know, I can recalibrate this for Sontaran air, so..."

"You're gonna ignite them," Martha blinked back tears.

"You'll kill yourself," Donna shook her head.

"Just send that thing up, on its own. I don't know...put it on a delay."

"He can't," Evy frowned, tears actually running down her cheeks even though she wasn't openly crying.

"Why not?" Donna looked over at her.

"He's got to give them a choice," Evy finished, he wouldn't be the Doctor if he didn't…but she could still...

The Doctor stared at her, his eyes widening just a fraction at her thoughts before he set the converter down and rushed towards her, pulling her to him, into a kiss.
But unfortunately, he couldn't enjoy it.

Neither could Evy.

For as soon as his lips met hers, moments later, she fell into his arms, unconscious.

"What did you do!?" Donna demanded, rushing to Evy's side as he set her down.

"I had to," he muttered quietly, staring at her prone form, "She made a promise once…"

"She'd take your place if you got trapped," Martha nodded, walking over to kneel at Evy's side with Donna as the Doctor stepped away.

"I couldn't let her do that," he stumbled back to the teleport and picked up the converter, hitting a button and disappearing.

"He needs to come back alive," Martha said, staring the pod as Donna stroked Evy's hair, "For her sake."

"What do you mean?" Donna looked up, alarmed.

Martha looked down at Evy and then up to Donna, "She told you…about the Link?" Donna nodded, "If he dies…" she swallowed hard, "So does she."

"Oh God," Donna gasped, trying to blink back tears.

"But it's worse than that," Martha's voice broke, "It's not just death, she doesn't just die…she's destroyed. From the inside out, she's just…" she couldn't even finish her thought, it was too painful.

She remembered, clearly, what Evy had told her about the Link, about how it worked if one party died. It was the end for the Link who survived. They were literally destroyed, crushed by pain, surrounded in agony, constant and all consuming misery. Nothing was worth living for anymore. Nothing could bring joy, there was just endless pain until they were able to end their life without regeneration.

Neither woman noticed Luke look from the young woman on the ground to the teleport with purpose.

They did, however, notice when he ran to the pad and began working on the controls.

"What are you doing?" Martha sniffled, holding back her tears as she held Evy's hand, anticipating that, any moment now, her friend would be hit with that terrible pain.

"Something clever," was all he said before he pushed a key and teleported to the Sontaran ship, zapping the Doctor back to the academy.

The Doctor appeared in the teleport pod, looking confused as to how he'd gotten there. He moved forward to sit on the edge of the pod in relief. Martha rushed to him, smiling and hugging him before running back to Evy's side, trying to rouse the girl.

Donna, however, marched towards him with a fierce glare on her face and smacked him on the arm as hard as she could, "That's what Evy would have done if she were awake," she told him, her voice thick with emotion as she mad her way back to Evy as well, "You deserve far worse for what you were going to do."

The Doctor could only look over at Evy, lying between the two women with wide, regretful eyes.
When Evy woke up, she didn't yell.

She didn't glare.

She didn't hit him or anything she had right to do.

Instead, she just sat up and looked over at him for a moment, before pushing herself up and walking out of the room. Martha, Donna, and the Doctor had been stunned, fully expecting the woman to at least punch him.

But the worst thing, was that she didn't speak at all, not out loud, not in her mind.

The Doctor's mouth had dropped open when she threw up her mental barriers so he couldn't hear her. The silence was back in his mind. The deafening, all consuming silence. He hadn't been able to cope with the silence in his mind after the war, the buzz of their people gone. When Evy had been revealed as a Time Lady, allowed her mind open to him...he hadn't realized how present the sensation of her in his mind had been till it had been taken away, till now.

He'd tried to talk to her, tried to apologize, but she said nothing. She barely acknowledged him when he managed to find her in the TARDIS hours later. But she just stood there, at the console, looking down at it, absently fiddling with a switch or two, ignoring him completely, shying away from every touch of the shoulder or hand that he tried to give her. He was nearing pulling his hair out. He didn't like her being mad at him. He just…

He didn't like her being hurt because of him.

"Please," he begged, "Tell me what's wrong so I can fix it."

He'd apologized for everything he could think of. For taking the converter, for knocking her out, even for kissing her, but she hadn't relented.

Evy tensed, her hands curling into fists on the console as she spun to face him, "You knew," she said, glaring at him, "You knew how I felt about you and you used it against me. It would have been one thing if you wanted to kiss me solely to kiss me goodbye…but it is quite another when you use it to knock me out! You knew I wouldn't be able to maintain my mental defenses if you did that and you took advantage of it! You took advantage of my feelings, of my emotions, of the Link! And you used it against me!"

It hurt. It hurt so badly that he was willing to manipulate her like that. It hurt even more to know he was willing to leave her. She knew he wasn't Linked to her, but for him to die...her life would be over. She would be nothing but pain and darkness, not Evy anymore. He was willing to condemn her to that fate and he was willing to use her Link against her to drive her to it!

She let out a frustrated scream before spinning on her heel and stalking off.

"You really are a great, big, outer space dunce, aren't you?" a voice said.

He looked over to see Donna and Martha walking into the TARDIS. Martha had apparently sensed Evy's mood and decided to wait outside the TARDIS for the other companion, they had come in just at the end of Evy's rant, and neither looked very happy with him at the moment. Martha was just shaking her head at him in disappointment while Donna just strode past him and went over to Evy, who was standing against the back wall, putting her hand on her shoulder and speaking quietly to her, trying to calm down the hurt Time Lady.
The Doctor looked down at the floor as Martha stepped forward, "A woman's heart, her feelings, they're **everything,**" Martha explained quietly to him, "When they're toyed with..." she held up her hand to stop him, "Even if it may be for noble reasons...it **hurts,** a lot. Imagine what it must have been like for her," she nodded at Evy who was in a quiet conversation with Donna, "She **loves** you, she's **Linked** to you, and there you are, about to go and do something ridiculously noble and you stride over to her and kiss her...and she thinks, you actually **return** her feelings, the ones she feels for you, that you accept the Link and are ready to move on...the only thing she really wants in all the Universe...only to have it be some ploy of yours to stop **her** from trying to do something ridiculously noble for **you.** That's got to hurt."

He looked up at Evy who looked near tears once more as she spoke to Donna and sighed. He understood. He hadn't thought. He hadn't thought **at all** when he'd done that. He could only think about her promise to step in if he couldn't escape something and he just **couldn't** let her do that, not for him. He'd done the only thing he could think of to get her to stay behind completely forgetting the consequences to her if he had seen his plan through to the end. He would have hurt her more than anything had he died. And the way he'd gone about it...

She was right.

He'd used the Link against her.

And that was almost worse than anything he could have ever done to her.

He pushed off the console and stepped towards Evy, fully prepared to grovel for her forgiveness, when the TARDIS gave a nasty jolt, sending them all to the floor.

"What?" he shouted, trying to grab onto the console and pull himself up, "What!?"

"Doctor, don't you dare!" Martha yelled.

"No, no, no!" he called back, "I didn't touch anything! We're in flight, it's not me!"

"Where are we going?" Donna asked as she and Evy managed to grab onto the railing.

"I don't know, it's out of control!" he shook his head, staring at the screen as they flew into the unknown.

To be continued...
Chapter End Notes

Oh the fury of a Time Lady eh? It seems the Doctor's in for it now. I know it's been really slow going with the Evy/Doctor relationship, I'm really sorry for that. But hang on just a little longer, I promise it is definitely going to start picking up next chapter. Jenny will definitely have an impact on their relationship and act as a catalyst to them.

Next chapter...will Jenny get a 'mum' or a 'stepmum'?
The TARDIS jolted violently as the Doctor and the girls clung to any available surface to try and steady themselves. Evy had managed to push Donna over to the console, each of them grabbing on as the Doctor tried to regain some control, flipping switches and pulling levers. Sparks were flying, concerning Evy, as Donna and Martha screamed.

"What the hell's it doing?" Donna yelled.

"Controls aren't working!" the Doctor shouted, though more to Evy who actually knew how to work the TARDIS than anyone else. He tried to reach a control but sparks flew up and he fell to the floor next to his hand in the jar, bubbling wildly, "I don't know where we're going but my old hand's very excited about it!"

"I thought that was just some freaky alien thing!" Donna's eyes widened as she stared at the jar, "You telling me it's yours?"

"Well…" he began, pulling himself up.

"It got cut off," Martha shouted over, "He grew a new one!"

"You are completely...impossible!" Donna turned to the Doctor as he grabbed a control that seemed stuck and tried to pull it out, using his foot on the console as leverage.

"Not impossible, just...a bit unlikely!" he shouted.

"Oh honestly!" Evy called, rushing over to help him with the lever he was trying to pull. A moment later it shifted and the TARDIS made one last rebellious explosion, throwing Evy, Donna, and Martha to the floor, the Doctor falling on the captain's chair as the box landed.

"What happened?" Donna gasped, pulling herself up.

Evy pushed herself up, glaring at the Doctor, "I think the TARDIS is as cross with you as I am."

He looked up at the TARDIS, concern and a bit of fear in his eyes. He knew how much the TARDIS had come to care for Evy and if the TARDIS had brought them there, he could only imagine what horrors would await him outside that door as punishment for hurting Evy the way he had.

He watched as Evy walked over to the door and stepped outside to see where they were before getting up and quickly running after her, "Evy!" he called, rushing over to her and pulling her to face him. He took her hand in his, "I'm sorry, I'm so, so sorry," he told her, looking in her eyes, "I mean it, I...I never should have done that, used the Link like that. I wasn't thinking and I know I've hurt you badly," she looked away, but he squeezed her hand getting her to look back up at him, "But I'm going to do anything I can to make it up to you. And I swear, I'll never do that to you again because...contrary to what you're probably thinking...I really do care about you, quite a lot."

She frowned and tried to look away but couldn't. It was times like these when she almost hated the Link. It would have been one thing for the Doctor to apologize with words, but she could feel what he was feeling. He felt sad, and hurt, and guilty, oh so guilty. He truly was repentant about what
he'd done to her, he meant everything he was saying. She could see in his mind as well, he would NEVER do that to her again, EVER.

She sighed, "Just...give me time," she told him, but gave a little smile so he would know she wouldn't stay mad at him forever.

He let out a little breath and smiled as well. She placed her other hand on top of his, squeezed it gently and then stepped away from him to look around, trying to ignore Donna and Martha who were standing just outside the TARDIS, watching them.

They seemed to be in some sort of underground tunnel, it was littered with junk, rubble, and old equipment of some sort. The Doctor moved to take Evy's hand and go to look around, but hesitated, instead shoving his hands into his pockets. He told himself it was so he wouldn't be tempted or reach out to her unconsciously, but a small voice in the back of his mind nagged him that it was to preserve the warmth her hands had given his.

"Why would the TARDIS bring us here?" the Doctor asked as though to force his lingering thoughts out of his mind.

"Oh, I love this bit," Martha grinned.

"I thought you wanted to go home," Evy glanced back at her as she stood from examining a piece of scrap.

"I know, but all the same..." Martha shrugged. Evy rolled her eyes as the Doctor licked his finger and held it up, "It's that feeling you get..."

"Like you swallowed a hamster?" Donna asked.

Suddenly a loud noise echoed down the tunnel. They looked over to see three soldiers running through the tunnel straight at them, guns ready.

"Don't move, stay where you are!" one soldier shouted, lifting his gun, "Drop your weapons."

They quickly raised their hands, the Doctor moving to step in front of Evy, who would have none of that and moved beside him, "We're not armed! Look, no weapons. Never any weapons. We're safe."

"Look at their hands," another soldier said, "They're clean."

"Alright, process them!" the first soldier ordered, "Him first."

Two soldiers moved towards the Doctor, grabbing him and dragging him towards a strange machine.

"Oi, oi!" he shouted, "What's wrong with clean hands?"

"What's going on?" Martha asked as they ran after him.

"Leave him alone!" Donna shouted.

"Get off him!" Evy tried to shove one of the soldiers but the first solder grabbed her arm and pulled her back.

The two soldiers forced his hand into the machine. He yelped as the machine powered up.
"Something tells me this isn't about to check my blood pressure," he grumbled before yelling in pain, "ARGH!"

"What're you doing to him?" Donna demanded.

"Everyone gets processed," the soldier holding Evy replied.

"It's taken a tissue sample," the Doctor told them, "Ow, ow, ow, ow, ow! And extrapolated it! Some kind of accelerator?"

"It's a cloning device," Evy muttered, her eyes wide on the machine.

The Doctor stumbled away as the machine let him go and looked at his hand, the girls running over to his side as the soldier holding Evy let her go as well. He looked up at a set of doors just behind the machine.

"Are you alright?" Martha took his hand and examined it, a Y-shaped graze on the back of it.

But the Doctor wasn't paying attention as his gaze was focused on the doors along with Evy.

"What on Earth?" he breathed, "That's just..."

They opened and a woman with blond hair and blue eyes stepped out of it, smoke billowing around her. She looked around, curious, and Evy's eyes widened as she recognized just where that curiosity came from, she glanced at the Doctor.

"Arm yourself!" the first soldier said, handing the girl a gun that she handled naturally.

"Where did she come from?" Martha asked.

"From me," the Doctor breathed.

"No," Evy shook her head slowly and began to walk towards the woman, ignoring the Doctor trying to pull her back. She came to stand in front of the young woman, unperturbed by the gun she was holding. "No...she...she's from us."

"From you?!" Donna looked between them, "How?"

"You took my hand Doctor," Evy replied quietly, glancing back at him, "Skin cells must have shaken loose..." she turned back to the woman, her head tilted as she just looked at her.

"Who is she?" Martha asked.

"Well...she's...well...she's my daughter," the Doctor stared in shock, "Mine and Evy's."

The woman smiled and looked up at him, "Hello dad!" and then nodded at Evy, "Mum."

The first soldier stepped up and took the girl's arm, pulling her off as Donna slowly pulled Evy back towards them, though she was still staring at the woman in shock.

"You primed to take orders, ready to fight?" the soldier asked her.

"Instant mental download of all strategic and military protocols, sir," she answered, "Generation 5,000 soldier primed and in peak physical health. Oh, I'm ready."

"Did you say daughter?" Donna looked at the Doctor.
"Mhmm," he nodded, distracted, "Technically."

"Technically how?" Martha frowned.

"Progenation," Evy replied, shaking her head as though to clear her thoughts, but it didn't seem to work, "It should be reproduction from a single organism, one parent is both the biological mother and father."

"You take a sample of diploid cells, split them into haploids, then recombine them in a different arrangement, and grow," the Doctor nodded, "Very quickly, apparently."

"But she's from the both of us."

"She doesn't look like you," Donna replied softly.

"Children of Time Lords, the children's first incarnations, can be conceived of any combination of our previous incarnations DNA. She's got my hair," she breathed.

"Um…she does?" Martha frowned, looking at Evy's black hair and the woman's blonde.

Evy shook her head, actually snapping out of her thoughts this time, "My third incarnation was blonde, exactly that shade," she glanced back at the Doctor, "She's got your fifth incarnation's eyes."

He started to nod as though starting to notice other similarities in appearance between him and the girl before shaking his head fiercely.

"Something's coming!" the woman shouted as purple, fish-like creatures began to run down the tunnel shooting at them.

"It's the Hath!" the first soldier shouted as they fired back.

"Get down!" the woman shouted back at them as they ducked, Evy and Donna running behind a broken down truck while the Doctor and Martha hid behind a crate.

"We have to blow the tunnel!" the first soldier ordered, "Get the detonator!"

"I'm not detonating anything!" the Doctor yelled, rushing forward to try and undo the detonator.

The woman kicked a Hath in front of her, punching it, before turning and grabbing the detonator just before the Doctor could reach it.

"Blow that thing, blow the thing!" the soldier ordered.

The Doctor's eyes widened as he saw the Hath pulling Martha away, "Martha!"

"No!" Evy ran towards the girl, "Don't!"

But she pushed the button and they were forced to run for cover as the tunnel exploded. The Doctor and Evy immediately were on their feet, running back to see the tunnel had sealed with Martha stuck on the other side…they refused to believe she was dead.

"You've sealed off the tunnel," the Doctor spun to face the soldier and the woman, "Why did you do that?!"

"They were trying to kill us!" she argued.
"But now they've got our friend!" Evy retorted.

"Collateral damage. At least you've still got her," she nodded at Donna, "He lost both his men, I'd say you came out ahead."

"Her name's Martha and she's not collateral damage, not for anyone!" Donna admonished, "Have you got that, GI Jane?!"

"I'm gonna find her," the Doctor turned to the tunnel.

"Me too," Evy agreed, going with him.

The sound of a gun being cocked made them pause, "You're going nowhere," the first soldier replied, holding his gun at them, "You don't make sense, you two," he eyed the Doctor and Evy, "No guns, no marks, no fight in you…I'm taking you to General Cobb. Now, move."

He nudged the gun in a direction and they had no option but to walk down it, the woman in the lead and then Donna before them.

"I'm Donna, what's your name?" Donna asked, trying to make conversation and learn more about the woman that was the Doctor and Evy's daughter.

"Don't know, it's not been assigned," she shrugged.

"Well, if you don't know that, what do you know?"

"How to fight."

"Anything else?" Evy frowned, she didn't like that. She'd fought enough in the Time War, she'd seen enough, and she had vowed she would never allow her children, should she ever have any, to become soldiers like her people had.

"The machine must embed military history and tactics but no name," the Doctor commented, "She's a generated anomaly."

"Generated anomaly?" Donna glanced back at them, before turning around and trying out the sounds, "Jenny-rated. Well what about that? Jenny!"

"Jenny," the woman turned around to smile, "Yeah, I like that, Jenny."

"What do you think, 'dad?'" Donna smirked at him.

"Good as anything, I suppose," he shrugged.

"Not what you'd call a natural parent, are you?"

Evy frowned, she knew what the Doctor was doing, trying to distance himself from Jenny. She understood the loss he'd suffered on Gallifrey, losing his son Eta before the boy had even taken his first breath of air. But standing there was a young woman that had come from her as well…and…she'd never gotten to be a mother before.

"They stole a tissue sample at gunpoint and processed it, it's not what I call natural parentage," the Doctor replied.

"Rubbish!" Donna exclaimed, "My friend Nerys fathered twins with a turkey baster, don't bother her."
"You can't extrapolate a relationship from a biological accident."

"Er, Child Support Agency can."

The Doctor paused and turned to look at her, "Look, just 'cos I share certain physiological traits with simian primates doesn't make me a monkey's uncle, does it?"

"I'm not a monkey!" Jenny turned to face them, "Or a child."

"To a parent," Evy replied, "You're always their child...even when you've got children of your own."

Donna smiled, warmed to see that at least Evy seemed to be taking a parental role in all this, "So what do you think of Jenny, 'mum'?"

Evy smiled as she turned to Donna, "I think next time the Doctor and I have a child, we get to name it as opposed to Auntie Donna."

"I'm an auntie!" Donna beamed, secretly thrilled that Evy considered her for such a role. She knew not all aunts or uncles were biologically related to the family, she was so touched that Evy thought of her in such terms as to have her be an aunt for her child...even if said child was a fully grown cloned soldier woman.

"Wait..." the Doctor's eyes widened, "Next time?"

Evy just laughed at his stunned and bewildered expression before tugging Donna into the room Jenny had entered. She was still very mad at the Doctor, but she couldn't help but tease him a bit...he deserved it.

The room seemed to be a human encampment of some sort, underground by the lack of light streaming in from the windows.

"So, where are we?" the Doctor shook himself and stepped in with them, "What planet's this?"

"Messaline," the first soldier replied, "Well, what's left of it."


"But this is a theater!" Donna looked around, seeing the stage and lights and all.

"Maybe they're doing 'Miss Saigon,'" the Doctor shrugged, sitting down.

"It's like a town, or a city, underground. But why?"

"General Cobb, I presume?" Evy asked as an older man approached them with the soldier who had brought them there.

"Found in the Western tunnels, I'm told, with no marks," Cobb looked at them, "There was an outbreak of pacifism in the Eastern Zone, three generations back, before we lost contact, is that where you came from?"

"Eastern Zone, that's us, yeah," the Doctor nodded, getting up, "Yeah. I'm the Doctor, this is Donna, and this is Evy."

"And I'm Jenny," Jenny introduced herself.
"Don't think you can infect us with your peacemaking," Cobb warned them, "We're committed to the fight, to the very end."

"Well, that's alright, we can't stay anyway," the Doctor told him, "We've gotta go and find our friend."

"That's not possible, all movement is regulated. We're at war."

"Yeah, we noticed that," Evy replied tensely. The notion of war still didn't sit right with her. Never did, not even on Gallifrey.

"With the Hath," the Doctor guessed, "But tell me, 'cos we got a bit out of circulation, Eastern Zone and all that, so, who exactly are the Hath?"

"Back at the dawn of this planet, these ancient halls were carved from the earth," Cobb narrated as he began to lead them through the theater, "Our ancestors dreamt of a new beginning, a colony where human and Hath could work and live together."

"What happened?" Evy tilted her head to the side.

"The dream died. Broken, along with Hath promises. They wanted it all for themselves. But those early pioneers, they fought back. They used the machines to produce soldiers instead of colonists, and began this battle for survival."

"There's nothing but earth outside, why's that?" Donna peeked out one of the windows, or tried to at least, "Why build everything underground?"

"The surface is too dangerous," the soldier answered.

"Well, then why build windows in the first place? And what does this mean?" she pointed to a number stamped on the wall.

"The rites and symbols of our ancestors," Cobb smiled fondly, looking at the numbers but then a frown came to his face, "The meanings...lost in time."

"How long has this war been fought?" Evy frowned as well.

"Longer than anyone can remember. Countless generations marked only by the dead."

"What, fighting all this time?" Donna asked.

"Because we must," this time it was Jenny who spoke, "Every child of the machine is born with this knowledge. It's our inheritance, it's all we know. How to fight. And how to die."

"What about how to live?" Evy looked at her, saddened by that.

Jenny looked down, feeling her stomach stirring at the disappointment in her mother's eyes despite having known her only minutes.

"And, where exactly are we?" the Doctor asked, trying to get off the topic of war. Cobb motioned for them to follow and led them over to a map on a holographic screen. He brought it up to reveal a series of tunnels, "Does this show the entire city, including the Hath zones?"

"Yes," Cobb nodded, "Why?"

"It'll help us find Martha," Evy replied.
"We've more important things to do," the young soldier rolled his eyes at them, "The Progenation Machines are powered down for the night shift, but soon as they're active," he glanced over at the Doctor, Donna, and Evy, "We could breed a whole platoon from you three."

"I'm not having sons and daughters by some great big flippin' machine!" Donna shouted, before looking at Jenny, "Sorry, no offense but you're not...well, I mean, you're not real."

"You're no better than him!" Jenny turned on Donna, "I have a body, I have a mind, I have independent thought, how am I not real? What makes you better than me?"

Evy could only smile at how much she sounded like the Doctor just then, using her words, her logic, her mind to win arguments.

"Well said, soldier," Cobb said proudly, "We need more like you if ever we're to find the Source."

"Ooh, the Source, what's that then, what's a Source?" the Doctor asked, now sounding interested, "I like a Source, what is it?"

"The Breath of Life."

"Which is..." Evy began.

"In the beginning the great one breathed life into the Universe," the soldier recited, "And then she looked at what she'd done, and she sighed."

"She? I like that," Jenny said at the same time as Evy.

The Doctor looked over at the two of them standing side by side, "She's definitely your daughter," he muttered.

"What was that?" Evy narrowed her eyes at him.

His eyes widened as he quickly turned back to Cobb, trying to pretend she hadn't just heard him, "Right, so it's a creation myth."

"It's not myth," Cobb glared at him, "It's real. That sigh. From the beginning of time it was caught and kept as the Source. It was lost when the war started. But it's here, somewhere. Whoever holds the Source controls the destiny of the planet."

"I thought so!" the Doctor suddenly shouted, they all looked back at him to see him staring at the map, "There's a suppressed layer of information in this map, if I can just..." he flashed his sonic across it and more tunnels appeared.

"What is it, what's it mean?" Donna looked at the screen, wide eyed.


"That must be the lost temple," Cobb pointed to a hidden area, "The source will be inside. You've shown us the way! And look, we're closer than the Hath! It's ours!" he spun around and walked back into the center of the encampment, the small group following him, "Tell them to prepare to move out. We'll progenate new soldiers on the morning shift, then we march. Once we reach the Temple, peace will be restored at long last."

"Um, call me old fashioned, but if you really wanted peace couldn't you just stop fighting?" the Doctor tried.
"Only when we have the Source. It'll give us the power to erase every stinking Hath from the face of this planet!"

"Hold on, you were just talking about peace, not genocide!" Evy's eyes widened.

"For us, that means the same thing," Cobb waved her off.

"Then you need to get yourself a better dictionary," the Doctor stepped up, "When you do, look up genocide. You'll see a little picture of me there and the caption will read 'Over my dead body!'"

"And you were the one who showed us the path to victory. But you can consider the irony from your prison cell. Cline, at arms!"

The soldier, Cline, pointed his gun at them.

"Oi, oi, oi!" Donna held up her hands, "Alright! Cool the beans Rambo!"

"Take them," Cobb ordered, "I won't have them spreading treason. And if you try anything, Doctor, I'll see that your woman dies first," he nodded at Donna.

"No, we're...we're not a couple," the Doctor replied.

"I am not his woman!" Donna shouted, appalled at being called such.

Evy just face palmed, why did everyone keep thinking it was the Doctor and Donna?

"Come on," Cline nudged them with his gun, "This way."

"We're going to stop you, Cobb, you need to know that," the Doctor warned him.

"I have an army and the breath of god on my side Doctor, what'll you have?" Cobb grinned smugly.

"Evy," he replied, taking her hand, "And we've both got these..." he pointed to his head.

"And believe me general," Evy added, "The two of us together," she squeezed his hand, "It's not something you want to cross."

"Lock them up, and guard them," Cobb ordered.

"What about the new soldier?" Cline asked as Jenny stepped forward.

Cobb pushed her away, the girl stumbling into the Doctor and Evy's arms, "Can't trust her, she's from pacifist stock. Take them all!"

The other soldiers began to pull them from the room, leading them down a hall and over to make shift cells, shoving them in.

"More numbers," Donna commented, seeing a plaque of numbers on the top of the cell, "They've gotta mean something."

"Makes as much sense as the breath of life story," the Doctor nearly snorted.

"You mean that's not true?" Jenny frowned.

"No, it's a myth," Donna agreed, sitting down beside the Doctor on the cot as Evy and Jenny
remained standing, "Isn't it?"

Evy nodded, "Yes, but there's always a bit of truth in folklore. For all we know, there could be something in the temple, a piece of technology, a weapon..."

"So the Source could be a weapon and we've just given directions to Captain Nutjob?"

"Oh, yes," the Doctor agreed.

"Not good, is it?"

"That's why we need to get out of here, find Martha, stop Cobb from slaughtering the Hath..." he looked up to see Jenny staring at him inquisitively, "What...what are you...what are you...what are you staring at?"

"You keep insisting you're not a soldier," Jenny grinned, "But look at you! Drawing up strategies like a proper general."

"No, no, I'm trying to stop the fighting."

"Isn't every soldier?" Evy asked quietly. He looked up at her, seeming to recall that they had both taken part as soldiers in the war, a war they just wanted to stop.

"Well I suppose..." he agreed just as quietly, before growing bolder, "But that's...that's...technically...I haven't got time for this! Donna, give me your phone! Time for an upgrade!"

Donna tossed him her phone and he soniced it.

"And now you've got a weapon!" Jenny exclaimed.

"It's not a weapon," Evy told her.

"But he's using it to fight back!" she laughed, "I'm gonna learn so much from you, you are such a soldier!"

Evy shook her head, Jenny was just like the Doctor, wanting to learn and use her knowledge, to help.

"Donna, will you tell her?" the Doctor looked at Donna for help, seeing that Evy was far too amused to help him either.

"Oh, you are speechless, I'm loving this!" Donna laughed, "You keep on, Jenny! Only other person who can get him like that is her!" she nodded at Evy.

"Yup, your daughter alright," the Doctor mumbled, glancing at Evy as she rolled her eyes.

"Doctor?" Martha's voice called over the phone.

"Martha!" the Doctor exclaimed, "You're alive!"

"Doctor! Oh, am I glad to hear your voice! Are you alright? Is Evy? What about Donna?"

"I'm with Donna and Evy. We're fine, what about you?"

"And...and Jenny, she's fine too!" Donna added.
"Yes alright," he muttered before getting back to his conversation with Martha, "And…and Jenny…that's the woman from the machine, the soldier, my daughter, Evy's daughter…except she isn't, she's…she's...anyway! Where are you?"

"I'm in the Hath camp," Martha answered, "I'm ok, but...something's going on. The Hath are all marching off to some place that's appeared on this map thing."

"Oh...that was me," he said guiltily.

"Doctor," Evy began, having been listening into the whole conversation, "If both armies are heading that way...it'll be a bloodbath."

"What do you want me to do?" Martha asked.

"Just stay where you are, if you're safe there then don't move, d'you hear?" he replied.

"But I can help. Doctor? Doctor!"

He pulled the phone back as a beeping noise sounded followed by static. He slowly put the phone down, handing it back to Donna.

A moment later there was cheering echoing through the hallway.

"They must be getting ready to move out," Evy remarked, glancing out of the cell, "If we could just get past that guard..."

"I can deal with him," Jenny stepped forward.

"No, no, no, no," the Doctor cut in, standing, "You're not going anywhere."

"What?" Jenny frowned.

"You belong here, with them."

"She belongs with us," Donna glared at him, "With you and Evy. She's your daughter!"

"She's a soldier!"

'And so were we,' Evy argued in his mind, knowing he didn't like to be reminded of that, not out loud.

"She came out of that machine!" he tried again, turning to Evy.

"Oh yes, I know that bit!" Donna shouted, aggravated, not having noticed the direction of his question, "Listen, have you got that stethoscope? Give it to me. Come on!"

He reached into his pocket and tossed it to her.

"What're you doing?" Jenny stepped back as Donna turned to her.

"It's alright," Evy reassured her, curious as to what Donna would learn, "Just stand still."

Jenny looked at Evy, who nodded, before doing as she was asked. Donna placed the stethoscope on Jenny's chest, first her left side then the right, before pulling back to look at Evy. Who seemed to sense what had just happened and had tears in her eyes. Donna smiled softly at her, nodding ever so slightly to confirm, before turning to the Doctor.
"Come here," she told him, "Listen. And then tell me where she belongs."

She handed him the stethoscope and waited till he put them in his ears before placing it back on Jenny's chest. Evy closed her eyes, just listening along with the Doctor as Donna moved from the heartbeat on the left side of Jenny's chest to the one on the right.

He pulled the scope from his ears and stepped back, staring at Jenny.

"Two hearts," he breathed, looking over at Evy, who smiled tearfully.

Jenny truly was their daughter.

"Exactly," Donna nodded.

"What's going on?" Jenny frowned, confused.

"Does that mean she's a..." Donna looked over at Evy, "A Time Lady too?"

"What's a Time Lady?" Jenny shook her head.

"It's what I am," Evy replied, stepping forward to go to the Doctor's side. Angry as she was, she couldn't leave him to this shock alone. "It's where I'm from. Where we're both from, who we are," she laid a hand on the Doctor's shoulder.

"And I'm from you," she looked between them.

"You're an echo, that's all," the Doctor insisted, "A Time Lady, a Time Lord, is so much more. A sum of knowledge. A code. A shared history. A shared suffering," he reached out and grabbed Evy's hand on his shoulder, holding onto it as though she were the only anchor he had, the only thing left of his home, which, in a way, she was, "Only it's gone now. All of it. Gone forever."

'It's never really gone,' Evy whispered soothingly in his mind, 'We still have each other, we can keep the memories alive.'

"What happened?" Jenny asked quietly, sensing the pain behind the topic.

"There was a war," Evy answered after a moment, seeing it had taken much for the Doctor to just get through what he had said. But she couldn't help but smile softly at Jenny, at her caution behind her question, how she clearly didn't want to hurt them by asking, so like the Doctor in his compassion.

"Like this one?" Jenny tilted her head to the side.

'Your daughter,' the Doctor commented in Evy's mind at the action.

"Bigger," Evy told her, ignoring the Doctor, "So much bigger, and so much worse."

"And you fought?" Jenny continued, "And killed?"

"Yes," the Doctor answered, a darkness in his voice.

"We both did," Evy squeezed his shoulder. She had killed, she had seen others killed, and nothing could ever allow her to forget that.

"Then how are we different?" Jenny argued.
"We're not," Evy replied before sighing, "But that's not necessarily a good thing."

'And sometimes...' the Doctor's voice whispered to her, she looked down at him, 'Sometimes, it's brilliant...she is like you, so much.'

She smiled softly at him when Jenny began to brush her hands together as though ready to get to business, "Right then, you three, over here," she walked forward, pulling the Doctor up and moving him and Evy to the side of the cell wall, Donna going to stand with them, "Now just stay there."

Evy eyed her a moment, seeing the same sparkle in the girl's eyes as in the Doctor's whenever he figured out a way out of a situation.

Jenny walked over to the door where Cline was standing guard, "Hey," she called to him.

"I'm not supposed to talk to you, I'm on duty," he told her.

"I know," she shrugged, "Guarding me," she smiled a bit, "So does that mean I'm dangerous? Or that I need protecting?"

"Protecting from what?" Cline turned to face her.

"Oh, I don't know," she batted her eyelashes, "Men like you?" she leaned forward, pulling him in for a kiss...and proceeded to grab his gun and point it at his stomach, "Keep quiet and open the door."

"I'd like to see you try that!" Donna commented to the Doctor.

"I'd rather not," Evy replied.

"Yup...your daughter," the Doctor mumbled.

"Oi!" she smacked him behind the head, "When have I ever done that?"

"Ow!" the Doctor rubbed his head.

"You lot coming?" Jenny asked. They looked up to see that, in that short time, she'd gotten Cline to open the door and then tied him up, taking his gun from him.

They quickly ran out of the cell and made their way downstairs, the Doctor pulling Jenny back when they noticed a guard around the corner.

"That's the way out," he mumbled.

Jenny cocked her gun and went to step forward, "Don't you dare missy!" Evy warned her.

"Let me distract this one," Donna said eagerly, "I have picked up a few womanly wiles over the years."

"Let's...save your wiles for later," the Doctor stopped her, looking more than a bit uncomfortable, "In case of emergency."

He reached into his pocket and pulled out a windup mouse, setting it on the ground. It scampered away and the guard stepped past their corner to look at it. Jenny quickly slid forward and chopped the man in the shoulder, knocking him out.

"I was gonna distract him, not clobber him!" the Doctor scolded lightly.
"Well, it worked, didn't it?" Jenny countered.

He spun to face Evy, pointing a finger at her, "She's all you!"

"When have I ever done that!?" Evy repeated, gesturing at the fallen guard.

"You're just...violent!" he rubbed the back of his head at the phantom remains of the pain from her smacking him before.

Evy just rolled her eyes and shook her head at him, kneeling down to the guard's side and searching his pockets, "Cobb had to have assigned a copy of the new map..." she found it and turned to walk down the hall, a highly amused Donna following after her.

The Doctor sighed, rubbing his face before noticing Jenny still standing there, confused at the loud and slightly violent interaction, "Just...don't hurt anyone."

He and Jenny ran down the hall to catch up to Evy and Donna who were looking around at the map. Evy looked up, "This is it," she walked over to the wall, "One of the hidden tunnels should be just here...must be a control panel around," she handed the map to the Doctor and walked over to the side panel and began to sonic the wall. The Doctor put the map in his pocket and went to help her.

"It's another one of those numbers," Donna commented, seeing a plaque above the wall, "They're everywhere."

"The original builders must've left them," the Doctor replied, "Some old cataloguing system."

"You got a pen?" Donna turned to them, "Bit of paper? 'Cos, d'you see, the numbers are counting down," he reached into his pocket and handed her the paper and pen, "This one ends in 1-4, the prison cell said 1-6."

"Always thinking, all of you," Jenny commented, shaking her head at them, "Who are you people?"

"I told you," the Doctor replied, "I'm the Doctor and this is Evy and that's Donna."

"The Doctor?" Jenny frowned, "That's it?"

"That's all he ever says," Donna added.

"So, you don't have a name either? Are you an anomaly too?"

"No," he replied simply.

Evy snorted.

"Oh, come off it!" Donna turned to him, "You're the most anomalous bloke I've ever met!"

"Found it!" Evy remarked, managing to get a panel off the wall.

"And Time Lords, what are they for exactly?" Jenny continued.

"For?" he laughed, "They're not...they're not 'for' anything."

"So what do you do?"
"We travel, Evy and I, through time and space."

"They save planets, rescue civilizations, defeat terrible creatures," Donna added, smiling down at them, at how humble the Doctor was trying to be for once, "And run...a lot. Seriously, there's an outrageous amount of running involved."

The door slid open.

"We are through!" Evy called.

"Squad 5, with me!" they could hear Cobb's voice in the distance.

"Now, what were you saying about running?" the Doctor grinned at them, grabbing Evy's hand and pulling her into a run.

They didn't get very far before they came to an area with red beams crossing through a tunnel, blocking the way.

"That's not mood lighting, is it?" Donna frowned. The Doctor pulled out the little toy mouse and tossed it into the lights, it burst into sparks as it touched the first beam and was destroyed. "No, I didn't think so."

"Arming device," Evy muttered as the Doctor turned to fiddle with the controls beside it.

"There's more of these!" Donna exclaimed, seeing another set of numbers, "Always eight numbers, counting down, the closer we get..."

"Here we go!" the Doctor commented.

"You better be quick!"

"The general!" Jenny shouted, hearing the soldiers approaching.

She turned to run but Evy reached out and grabbed her, "Where are you going?"

"I can hold them up."

"No, we don't need any more dead," the Doctor added from the controls, having stopped completely, now focused on them.

"But it's them or us."

"That doesn't mean you have to kill them Jenny!" Evy argued.

"I'm trying to save your lives!"

The Doctor strode up and joined Evy in trying to reason with their daughter, "Listen to me, the killing, after a while it infects you. And once it does you're never rid of it."

"We don't have a choice," Jenny swallowed.

"We always have a choice sweetheart," Evy told her quietly, cupping the side of Jenny's face.

"I'm sorry," Jenny's eyes filled with tears at the endearment and the loving action, but still she pulled away and ran off.
"Jenny!" they called after her.

"We have to get the tunnel open," Evy turned back to the Doctor, a bit of a franticness in her voice, "If we get it open in time, she can come back."

He nodded and they both ran over to the controls, trying to ignore the sounds of shots being fired.

"I told you," he muttered quietly, though both Evy and Donna could hear him, "Nothing but a soldier."

"She's trying to help," Donna countered.

"Jenny!" Evy shouted, "Come on!"

"I'm coming!" she called back.

"That's it!" Donna shouted as they managed to get the beams down.

"Jenny!" the Doctor shouted, "Leave it! Let's go!"

He took Evy's hand and the three of them ran through the corridor. They turned around to see Jenny running up.

"Jenny!" Evy shouted.

"Come on!" the Doctor added, "That's it!"

"Hurry up!" Donna called.

But just as she reached the corridor the beams appeared again.

"No, no, no, no!" the Doctor's eyes widened in horror, "The circuit's looped back!"

"Zap it back again!" Donna told them.

"The controls are back there!" Evy shouted.

"They're coming!" Jenny looked back.

"Wait!" the Doctor looked around frantically, trying to find something to help, "Just...there isn't...Jenny, I can't!"

"I'll have to manage on my own," she smirked, "Watch and learn, father!"

She stepped back and then proceeded to do a series of somersaults and flips, making it safely through the beams towards them.

"No way!" Donna's eyes widened in shock, "But that was impossible!"

"Not impossible," Evy smiled, Jenny was so like her father, managing to get herself out of tight spots, "Just a bit unlikely!"

"Doing the impossible...she's definitely your daughter then," the Doctor told Evy, though this time with a smile on his face. He could recall quite a few times she'd accomplished something that should have been impossible, healing Lazlo, saving Astrid, among others...

As soon as Jenny was over to them he and Evy pulled her into a tight hug, proud smiles on their
"Brilliant!" the Doctor praised, "You were brilliant! Brilliant!"

"I didn't kill him," she told them, "General Cobb, I could have killed him, but I didn't. You were right. I had a choice."

"That's my girl!" Evy pulled her back into a hug as the soldiers appeared on the other end of the tunnel.

Evy pulled away and passed Jenny over to Donna, pushing them ahead while she and the Doctor stayed behind. She glared at Cobb, not too fond of the man who, in her mind, tried to turn her daughter into a killer.

"At arms!" Cobb commanded.

"We warned you, Cobb," Evy told him, "We're not going to let you use the Source as a weapon!"

"One of us is gonna die today and it won't be me," was all Cobb said before the soldiers opened fire.

The Doctor grabbed her hand and pulled her off. They caught up with Jenny and Donna relatively quickly, stepping past them to lead the way, both of them hunching over the map.

"So, you travel together, but you're not...'together'?" Jenny asked Donna as she glanced at her 'parents.' She felt like they were together, but the general seemed to think it was Donna and the Doctor...and then there was the chance that the DNA mixing could have just been an accident and that none of them were together.

But...she'd been watching her parents the whole time, they had a connection and an understanding that she didn't see between the Doctor and Donna.

"What?" Donna's eyes widened in horror, "No, no! No way! No, no. We're friends. That's all. I mean, we're not even the same species, there's probably laws against it," Jenny laughed, "And besides, your mum's the one that fancies him."

"So they are together?" Jenny asked her Auntie Donna.

Donna frowned, "It's sort of complicated...they're together, but they're not together but they're together," Jenny looked confused so Donna just waved her off, "Even I don't get it sometimes."

Jenny shrugged, she'd learn about it eventually, "And what's it like, the travelling?"

"Ah, never a dull moment," the smile was back, "Can be terrifying, brilliant, and funny, sometimes all at the same time. I've seen some amazing things though. Whole new worlds."

"Oh, I'd love to see new worlds."

"You will. Won't she, Doctor? Evy?"

"Hmm?" the Doctor looked up.

"D'you think Jenny will see any new worlds?"

"I suppose so," he replied with a little smile. Evy had waited, giving him the power to decide, he was the one having the harder time with it all.
"You mean..." Jenny gasped, "You mean you'll take me with you?"

"Well we're not about to leave you here, are we?" Evy smiled widely.

"Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you!" Jenny jumped forward, hugging the Doctor fiercely, he held her tightly for a moment, a part of his mind thinking on how similar Jenny's hug was to Evy's, leaping onto someone and squeezing them for dear life. He chuckled to himself as he let her go so she could turn and hug Evy as well, "Come on! Let's get a move on!" she ran ahead.

"Careful, watch out for traps!" Evy called after her, she was definitely the Doctor's daughter, rushing off into danger.

"Kids!" Donna laughed, "They never listen!" she looked up and noticed the Doctor watching where Jenny had disappeared, looking troubled, "Oh, I know that look. See it a lot round our way. Blokes with pushchairs and frowns. You've got dad-shock."

"Dad-shock?" he turned to Donna.

"Sudden, unexpected fatherhood. Take a bit of getting used to."

"It's not that Donna," Evy told her, seeing the Doctor unwilling to really talk about it.

"Well, what is it then?" she asked. Evy seemed to have a good grip of the whole becoming a mum thing, which she expected from a woman, but the Doctor, he looked reluctant, "Having Jenny in the TARDIS is that it? What's she gonna do, cramp your style? Like you've got a sports car and she's gonna turn it into a people-carrier?"

"Donna," he sighed, "I've been a father before."

"What?" her eyes widened as she looked between her two friends, just strolling along, holding hands, "The two of you have..."

"It...it wasn't with me," Evy replied quietly, making Donna frown.

The Doctor squeezed her hand. He knew how much it hurt her to think back on his past on Gallifrey, to think of Riku and his little Eta, all the time that had been lost because of his cowardice and flight, "I lost all that a long time ago," he took a breath, "Along with everything else."

This time Evy squeezed his hand. She knew how hard it was to think of them, of the day he lost them, the time he lost Susan to a life on Earth. His 'granddaughter' in a sense, a young alien who had stumbled upon his TARDIS and who he'd taken under his wing. They'd had quite a few adventures as the girl grew older, even going so far as to call the Doctor her grandfather, even if it was just an affectionate title.

"I'm sorry," Donna breathed, "I didn't know," she looked between them, "Why didn't you tell me? You talk all the time, but you don't say anything."

"I know," he began, "I'm just...when I look at her now I can see them. The hole they left, all the pain that filled it. I just don't know if I can face that every day."

Evy looked away, tears in her eyes. She could feel his pain even now. It had lessened quite a bit from what she'd felt from him on Gallifrey, but to be reminded of it every day...to see the faces of Riku and Eta in Jenny...it would be hard for him.

"It won't stay like that," Donna assured him, "She'll help you. Evy will help you, we both will."
"But when they died, that part of me died with them," he admitted, knowing how hard it would be for Evy to hear it, but needing to say it nonetheless, "I'm not sure if it'll ever come back."

"I tell you something, Doctor, something I've never told you before," Donna turned to face him, serious, "I think you're wrong."

The sound of shots firing reached them and they all looked up, concerned, till they saw Jenny running back to them, "They've blasted through the beams, time to run again. Love the running! Yeah?"

"Love the running," the Doctor smiled softly before squeezing Evy's hand, and they were off once more.

And, yet again, they reached a dead end.

"We're trapped," Donna said.

"Can't be," the Doctor shook his head, "This must be the temple."

Evy stepped forward and touched a panel of the wall, examining it with her sonic, "This is a door."

"And again!" Donna saw more numbers, "We're down to 1-2 now..."

"I've got it!" the Doctor called, getting the panel off the wall and letting Evy get to it.

"I can hear them!" Jenny shouted.

"Almost there..." Evy remarked.

"These can't be a cataloguing system," Donna frowned.

"They're getting closer!" Jenny called.

"Then get back here!" the Doctor told her.

"They're too similar," Donna continued, "Too familiar."

"Not yet," Jenny muttered.

"Now!" Evy shouted, getting the door open, "Yes!"

They ran into the temple quickly.

"They're coming!" Jenny ran through last, "Close the door!" the Doctor pushed some keys on the wall and the door slid shut again, "Oh, that was close!"

"No fun otherwise!" the Doctor grinned.

"It's not what I'd call a temple..." Donna commented, looking around.

"It looks more like..." Jenny began.

"Fusion-drive transport," Evy finished.

"It's a spaceship!" the Doctor shouted.

"What, the original one?" Donna asked, "The one the first colonists arrived in?"
"Well, it *could* be, but the power cells would have run out by now," Evy frowned, looking around, her head tilted to the side, "This one's still powered-up and functioning."

"Come on!" the Doctor called and they ran farther into it.

They passed a wall where someone was trying to cut a path in.

"It's the Hath!" Jenny stopped to look at it, "That's not gonna last much longer. And if General Cobb gets through down there, war's gonna break out."

"Look, look, look, look, look!" the Doctor called them over to a computer, "Ship's log!"

"First wave of Human/Hath co-colonization of planet Messaline," Evy read.

"So it *is* the original ship," Jenny said.

"What happened?" Donna frowned.

"Phase one. Construction," Evy continued to read, "Robot drones built the city."

"But, does it mention the war?"

"Final entry..." she scrolled down, "Mission commander dead. Still no agreement on who should assume leadership. Hath and humans have divided into factions."

"That must be it!" the Doctor exclaimed, "A power vacuum. The crew divided into two factions and turned on each other. Start using the progenation machines and suddenly you've got two armies fighting a never-ending war!"

"Two armies who are now both outside," Jenny reminded them.

"Look at that!" Donna pointed to the screen, displaying a number like those on the wall.

"It's like the numbers in the tunnels," the Doctor agreed.

"No, no, no, no, but listen..." Donna turned to them, excited, "I spent six months working as a temp in Hounslow Library, and I mastered the Dewey Decimal System in two days flat," Evy whistled, impressed, "I'm good with numbers! It's staring us in the face!"

"What is?" Jenny frowned.

"It's the date! Assuming the first two numbers are some big old space date, then you've got year, month, day. It's the other way round, like it is in America!"


"The codes are completion dates for each section. They finish it, they stamp the date on! So the numbers aren't counting down, they're going out, from here, day by day, as the city got built."

"Yes!" the Doctor exclaimed, "Oh, good work, Donna!"

"Yeah!" Donna grew even more excited, "But you're...you're still not getting it. The first number I saw back there was 6012-07-17. Well, look at the date today!"

"07-24," Evy's eyes widened.
"No!" the Doctor breathed.

"What does it mean?" Jenny asked.

"Seven days."

"That's it!" Donna nodded, "Seven days!"

"Just seven days?!"

"What d'you mean, seven days?" Jenny asked, growing frustrated.

"Seven days since war broke out," Evy told her.

"This war started seven days ago!" Donna added, "Just a week! A week!"

"They said years!" Jenny's eyes widened.

"No," Donna shook her head, "They said _generations_. And if they're all like you, and they're products of those machines…"

"They could have 20 generations in a day!" the Doctor realized, "Each generation gets killed in the war, passes on the legend!"

"Donna, you're a _genius_!" Evy hugged the woman.

"But all the buildings, the encampments, they're in ruins," Jenny argued.

"No they're not ruined, they're just empty!" the Doctor replied, "Waiting to be populated! Oh, they've mythologized their entire history! The Source must be part of that too. Come on!"

He grabbed Evy's hand and they were running again, around a corner, and straight into Martha… Martha!

"Doctor!" Martha shouted, "Evy!"

"Martha!" Evy pulled her into a hug as the Doctor joined in.

"I should've known you wouldn't stay away from the excitement!" the Doctor grinned.

"Donna!" Martha exclaimed, running to hug the ginger as well.

"Ooh, you're filthy, what happened?!" Donna frowned.

"I, er, took the surface route."

"Oh, Martha," Evy called her over, "This is Jenny, my daughter, uh, the Doctor's daughter. Jenny, meet your Aunt Martha."

Jenny just hugged the stunned woman.

"I'm an aunt?" Martha's eyes widened.

"Surprised?" Evy laughed.

"A bit yeah," she nodded, "Usually get 9 months to prepare you know."
There was a commotion behind them, the room filling with the voices of soldiers, "That's the general!" the Doctor shouted, "We haven't got much time."

"We don't even know what we're looking for!" Donna argued.

"Is it me, or can you smell flowers?" Martha asked randomly.

"Yes!" the Doctor shouted.

"Bougainvillea!" Evy confirmed, breathing deep.

"I say we follow our nose!"

"Blocks 7 to 10, advance!" Cobb shouted from behind them, "With me!"

They turned and walked into what looked like a large greenhouse, giant plants inside of all sorts, palms and ferns and flowers and other exotic vegetation.

"Oh, yes!" the Doctor looked around, excited, "Yes! Isn't this brilliant?"

They walked over to a pedestal in the center of the room with a glass sphere on top of it with a shining, sparkling, colorful gas inside.

"Is that the Source?" Donna asked.

"It's beautiful," Jenny gasped.

"What is it?" Martha frowned.

"Terra-forming," Evy answered, leaning forward to examine it, "It's a third generation terra-forming device."

"So why are we suddenly in Kew Gardens?" Donna asked.

"Because that's what it does," Evy straightened, "All this, but on a planet-wide scale."

"It's in a transit state," the Doctor explained, "Producing all this must help keep it stable before they finally..."

The Hath and the soldiers stormed in from opposite sides of the garden, each cocking their guns as soon as they caught sight of each other.

"Stop!" the Doctor shouted, holding up his hands at them, "Hold your fire!"

"What is this?" Cobb demanded, "Some kind of trap?"

"You said you wanted this war over."

"I want this war won."

"You can't win," Evy stepped up, "Neither of you. You don't even know why you're here!"

"Your whole history," the Doctor began, "It's just Chinese whispers. Getting more distorted the more it's passed on."

Evy pointed at the sphere, "This is your Source, what you're fighting over. It's just a device to rejuvenate a planet's ecosystem. Nothing mystical about it. It's from a laboratory, not
"It's a bubble of gases," the Doctor told them, "A cocktail of stuff for accelerated evolution. Methane, hydrogen, ammonia, amino acids, proteins, nucleic acids."

Evy nodded, "It's used to make barren planets like yours habitable."

"Look around you!" the Doctor motioned to the garden, "It's not for killing, it's bringing life. If you allow it, it can lift you out of these dark tunnels and into the bright, bright sunlight! No more fighting. No more killing," Evy handed him the sphere and he lifted it above his head, "I'm the Doctor, and I declare this war is over!"

He threw it to the ground, shattering it and allowing the gasses to escape. They shined in gold and green as they spread out and into the air. The humans and the Hath, looking on in wonder, began to lower their guns.

"What's happening?" Jenny asked.

"The gases will escape and trigger the terra-forming process," the Doctor said, watching the gas.

"What does that mean?" Jenny looked at her mother, knowing she would explain it better.

"It means a new world," she smiled at Jenny. They all looked up, laughing with delight as they watched the wonders of the gas.

"No!" Jenny suddenly shouted as a shot rang out. They looked over to see Jenny step in front of the Doctor as Cobb fired at him, hitting Jenny in the chest. She fell backwards into the Doctor's arms.

"Jenny!" Evy shouted, reaching out to catch her daughter.

The soldiers tackled Cobb and pulled away his gun.

"Jenny?" the Doctor asked as he fell to the ground with Evy, their daughter cradled in their arms, "Jenny! Talk to me, Jenny!"

Martha knelt down and began to check her.

"Is she gonna be alright?" Donna asked, kneeling down as well.

Martha looked at Donna and could only shake her head.

"A new world," Jenny whispered, looking up at the gas still at work, "It's beautiful..."

"Jenny?" Evy spoke, her voice thick with emotion, breaking, as tears fell from her eyes, "Be strong. You need to hold on sweetheart."

"We've got things to do," the Doctor added, "You, Evy, and me. Hey? Hey? We can go anywhere. Everywhere. You choose."

"That sounds good," Jenny smiled, taking her eyes off the gas to look at her parents' tormented faces.

"You're my daughter and we've only just got started," he whispered.

"You're gonna be great," Evy took her hand, squeezing it.
The Doctor shook his head, "You'll be more than great. You'll be amazing, eh? Just like your mum," he tried to smile, "Jenny?"

Jenny gave them one last smile, squeezing Evy's hand before her eyes fluttered closed and she let out her last breath, her head lulling on the Doctor's arm. Evy let out a sob as the Doctor kissed his daughter's forehead in despair.

But then something dawned on him, "Two hearts. Two hearts, she's like us," he looked at Evy with hope, "If we wait...if we just wait..."

He looked over at Martha for support, but the young doctor frowned, "There's no sign, Doctor. There is no regeneration. She's like you, but...maybe not enough."

"No," he whispered brokenly, "Too much. That's the truth of it. She was too much like me."

He made sure she was safe in Evy's arms before he pushed himself up and walked towards Cobb, grabbing the man's gun on the way. He stood there, panting from anger and pain before pointing the gun at Cobb's head. Martha and Donna looked shocked at what he was doing, but Evy looked on, a small smile on her face as she knew he had no intention to fire. Even at his angriest, he couldn't kill anyone.

Just as she thought, he lowered the gun and crouched down to face the man who killed his daughter, "I never would. Have you got that? I never would!" he stood up and looked around at the two parties, "When you start this new world. This world of Human and Hath...remember that! Make the foundation of this society. A man who never would!"

He threw the gun away and walked back over to Jenny's body, taking it from Evy to cradle it to him. Evy wiped her eyes and crawled around Jenny to sit next to the Doctor, wrapping her arm around him, leaning her forehead against his shoulder.

"She was willing to step in the way of a bullet for someone," she whispered, "She's your daughter too."

The Doctor could just nod before tears collected in his eyes as well. Evy pushed herself onto her knees and enveloped him in a hug as he turned to press his face into her neck, sobbing for the loss of another child.

~8~

The soldiers had collected Jenny's body and brought it back to the theater where a table had been set up for her to be placed. The Doctor and Evy stood at the foot of the table, back against a wall, his arm around her shoulders and her arm around his waist as they stared down at their daughter. Martha and Donna stood on one side of the table while Cline and a Hath stood on the other.

A light began to shine through the window, landing on Jenny's face.

"It's happening," Martha commented, "The terra-forming."

"Build a city, nice and safe underground," Donna murmured, "Strip away the top soil. And there it is," she paused and looked down, "And what about Jenny?"

"Let us give her a proper ceremony?" Cline asked, looking over at the Doctor and Evy, "I think it'd help us. Please."

The Doctor, looking too lost in his dark thoughts, didn't respond. But Evy gave a slight nod. She
turned to the Doctor, nudging him as he shook himself free of his ghosts and looked down at her. He took a breath before walking forward, placing a gentle kiss on Jenny's forehead before stepping back. Evy smiled down at her daughter, taking her hand in her own one last time before turning and walking out with the Doctor and their friends.

~8~

They were back in the TARDIS, the Doctor leaning against the captain's chair and staring at the console as Evy slowly walked around it and put in coordinates.

"Jenny was the reason for the TARDIS bringing us here," the Doctor commented in thought, "it just got here too soon, which then created Jenny in the first place. Paradox. An endless paradox."

Donna and Martha watched him with sympathy, glancing back at Evy who had yet to say anything at all.

"Time to go home?" the Doctor asked Martha.

"Yeah," she tried to smile, "Home."

He stepped up, standing before Evy at the console and taking her hand, giving it a squeeze before flipping a lever, not able to muster his usual enthusiasm to pilot the TARDIS.

It was a smoother ride than normal, Martha and Donna chalked it up to Evy having been the one to set everything. They landed just outside the road to Martha's house in no time at all.

Martha gave the TARDIS one last look before stepping outside with Donna, Evy and the Doctor following behind.

"You sure about this?" Donna asked as they walked down the street.

"Yeah, positive," Martha nodded, "I can't do this anymore. You'll be the same one day."

"Not me," Donna shook her head, "Never! How could I ever go back to normal life after seeing all this?" she looked back at the Doctor and Evy, walking silently, hand-in-hand, "I'm gonna travel with them forever," she reached out and hugged Martha.

"Good luck," Martha whispered to her.

"And you," Donna replied.

"We're making a habit of this," the Doctor said as he and Evy stepped forward.

"Yeah," Martha nodded absently, "And you'd think it'd get easier," she looked at the Doctor, "All those things you've been ready to die for. I thought for a moment there you'd finally found something else worth living for," she glanced at Evy a moment.

"Oh...there's always something worth living for, Martha," the Doctor agreed, squeezing Evy's hand, earning just the hint of a smile from her. He reached out and hugged Martha.

"Bye, Doctor," she replied.

"Goodbye," he pulled back, "Dr. Jones."

"Evy," Martha sighed, pulling the woman into a tight hug, "You give me a call whenever you need to talk, you hear me?" she pulled back, "Any time, even if you're in the middle of the French
Revolution or something, yeah?"

"Yeah," Evy whispered, hugging her friend one more time before turning and taking the Doctor's hand once more, heading back to the TARDIS with Donna.

~8~

Evy was lying on her bed, just staring at the wall behind it, her back to her door, when she felt her bed dip on one side and a pair of arms circle her waist. She twisted around to stare into the Doctor's sorrowful eyes.

"I'm sorry," he whispered to her.

"What for?" she asked.

"I kept denying Jenny, because...I didn't want to suffer through what happened with Eta," he admitted, staring into her eyes, "I didn't want to ever experience losing a child again, but...by pushing her away from me, I pushed her to you...and because of that, you had to experience it too. I never meant for that to happen."

Evy smiled softly, reaching out to stroke his cheek, "Losing her...it will be hard, but...we have each other to help us through. That was something you didn't have on Gallifrey, you were alone and you ran away, you didn't let anyone help you. But I'm here and I'm not leaving, I'm not going to let you have to suffer through this alone."

"Nor I you," he nodded. He wouldn't run this time, he would face it, and he would deal with it. All that running had done was cause problems and make the pain last longer.

"I have something for you," she reached into her pocket and pulled out what looked like a computer chip with a button on it attached to a chain.

"What is it?" he asked as she slipped it around his neck.

"It's an Emergency Spatial Shifter," she sighed, running her fingers along the chip, "If you're ever trapped and you can't get out, and, for some reason, I am conscious and unable to keep my promise," she smiled softly, showing him she wasn't angry anymore, "You just push this button, and you'll be teleported back to the TARDIS in a time relative to you."

He looked down at the chip, fiddling with it before looking up at her, "Thank you," he breathed, reaching out to brush a piece of hair behind her ear.

She nodded, pulling out a similar chip, "I have one too, in case I can keep my promise. They can both be activated from the TARDIS as well," she slipped hers back into her pocket.

They were silent, just lying there in each other's arms, sharing their pain and their strength, until they were finally able to drift off to sleep.

~8~

Jenny had given Cline and the Hath quite a shock when she had woken up from her near death and run out of the room to steal a shuttle.

"Jenny?" Cline's voice came over the comm., "What're you doing? Come back!"

She just pushed a control to start the engines, "Sorry. Can't stop. What you gonna do, tell my
"But...where are you going?!

"Oh, I've got the whole Universe!" she grinned, "Planets to save, civilizations to rescue, creatures to defeat...and an awful lot of running to do!"

She went to push another button when she realized her other hand was clutching something. She opened her hand to see a small piece of scrap paper. She tilted her head to the side before opening it.

Jenny,

I am praying to every Gallifreyan deity I can think of that you are as resilient as your father and as impossible as I am. If you are, there's no way a little bullet would stop you. You may want to take a trip to Talmix in the galaxy of Minn. They could do with a girl like you.

All my love,

Mum

Jenny grinned widely, sticking the paper into her pocket, "And I think I'll start with Talmix!" she shouted into the comm. before taking off into the stars.

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Chapter End Notes

How cute was that last scene between the Doctor and Evy. What did I say, they are definitely getting closer and their relationship will pick up because of it. The loss of Jenny will really push them together, she was THEIR daughter, so really, only they could understand what the other is feeling. It really gets going when River makes an
I was debating making Jenny different, since she would be both the Doctor AND Evy's daughter here. But...I really loved GM's portrayal and wanted to keep that. I tried to make it so that she was both their daughter, little habits and traits from Evy appearing along with those from the Doctor.

Next chapter...Robin Hood? What? And Donna learns quite a bit about Evy's dreaded time in the Mason Institute...
It was another mystery tour through time and space, which meant that all parties were excited to see where they had landed. Donna waited by the doors of the TARDIS as she watched the Doctor help Evy into her coat. She had taken to watching them recently. At first, it was out of concern, how they would handle losing Jenny, their daughter, and at first it had been hard to see the devastation in their eyes, the sorrow...but from that she had seen them lean on each other. She knew that she couldn't even begin to understand how they must have felt, losing their child like that, so she wasn't upset when they didn't turn to her for comfort. She could only say that she felt so relieved that they seemed to be coping, moving on from it, bit by bit. She had noticed quite a few changes over the months in the two of them since then.

They were closer than she'd ever seen them.

Whenever they went on their adventures, to all the places the Doctor had wanted to take her when he thought she was leaving for good, the two Time Lords would hold hands almost nonstop. Not for running or danger or any pressing need of comfort...in fact, half the time she wasn't even sure they were aware they were doing it. It really warmed her heart to see them smiling again. Jenny's death had hit them hard, but they stuck together and they seemed to be doing just fine from what she could tell.

"We ready?" Donna asked as they turned to her.

Evy grinned and walked forward, linking her arm with Donna's and walking out, the Doctor following behind. They were standing in a garden behind an English manor house.

"Oh, smell that air," the Doctor inhaled deeply as did Evy, "Grass and lemonade and a little bit of mint. Just a hint of mint, must be the 1920s."

"You can tell what year it is just by smelling?" Donna turned to him.

"Oh yeah," Evy laughed, closing her eyes and breathing deep once more, "I'd say...early December, 1926?"

"Incredible," Donna muttered, before something caught her gaze in the distance, "Or maybe that vintage car coming up the drive gave it away."

They ducked back behind the corner of the manor, peering round it to see a butler speaking to two men, one dressed in a reverend's outfit.

"Never mind planet Zog," Donna commented as brief snippets of their conversation drifted over, especially mentions of a party, "A party in the 1920s, that's more like it."

"If only we'd been invited..." Evy muttered mock sadly, before grinning up at the Doctor as he reached into his pocket.

"Oh, I forgot..." he whipped out the psychic paper, "Yes, we have!"

"Brilliant!" Donna laughed before grabbing Evy's arm and pulling her back to the TARDIS, "We need to get ready!"
The Doctor just laughed, watching them go, before walking over to the TARDIS to wait.

~8~

The Doctor sighed for the hundredth time before knocking on the TARDIS door, "We'll be late for cocktails!" he shouted.

He had no idea what could possibly be taking the women so long.

But then the TARDIS door opened and Donna stepped out wearing a period style, sleeveless, flapper dress, "What do you think? Flapper or slapper?"

"Flapper," he smiled, "You look lovely."

"Do you like my hair?" she asked, turning so he could see the intricate bun it was pulled into, "Evy did it."

"Ah, speaking of Evy," he nodded, "Where is she?"

"I'm coming!" Evy shouted from the TARDIS. She came out, leaning against the doorframe to slip a pair of heels on, "You know I'm rubbish at running in these," she looked up to see the Doctor staring at her as he often did whenever she got into costumes, eyes wide, mouth dropped open. She stood up, deciding to tease him just a bit, "What do you think?" she twirled slowly in place so he could see her entire outfit. It was a black, long-sleeved dress with slightly bell-like sleeves and a pixy styled skirt that went to her knees with red and gold geometric shapes bordering the hem, sleeves, and neckline. Her hair was clipped back on the sides, made slightly wavy, her locks slipping around her.

"Beautiful," he muttered quietly, giving her the onceover.

She smiled softly, forcing herself not to blush at his words, knowing he'd told Donna she was lovely as well, he was just being his normal kind self. She closed her eyes for just a moment, shaking the thoughts free, not seeing the faint pink tint to the Doctor's cheeks fade by the time she opened her eyes. She stepped over to him, linking their arms, as they all turned to head back to the manor. They walked around it to the backyard where tables were set up and servants were finishing getting the food and drinks ready. A record was playing soft music for them all as the housekeeper shouted orders.

"Good afternoon!" the Doctor greeted as they walked up.

"Drink, sir?" the footman asked, stepping up to them, "Madams?"

"Sidecar, please," Donna ordered.

"And two lime and sodas, thank you," the Doctor said for him and Evy, knowing Time Lords didn't do very well with alcohol.

"May I introduce Lady Clemency Eddison," a man announced as a petite blond woman arrived, fashionably dressed in blue.

"Lady Eddison!" the Doctor greeted her warmly, shaking her hand.

"Excuse me, but who exactly might you be…and what are you doing here?" Lady Eddison asked politely.
"I'm the Doctor. And this is Miss Evelyn Daniels," he nodded at Evy before nodding at Donna, "Cousin of Miss Donna Noble…of the Chiswick Nobles."

"Good afternoon, my lady," Donna said, trying to sound posh as she curtseyed, "Topping day, what? Spiffing! Top ho!"

"No," Evy whispered to her, "Don't do that."

The Doctor held up the psychic paper, "We were thrilled to receive your invitation, my lady. We met at the ambassador's reception."

"Doctor, how could I forget you?" Lady Eddison nodded as though actually recalling where she'd seen him, "But one must be sure with the Unicorn on the loose."

"A unicorn?" his eyes widened, "Brilliant. Where?"

"THE Unicorn. The jewel thief? And nobody knows who he is. He's just struck again. Snatched Lady Babbington's pearls right from under her nose."

"Funny place to wear pearls," Donna commented as the footman brought them their drinks.

"May I announce the Colonel Hugh Curbishley, the Honorable Roger Curbishley," it was announced. A younger man arrived, pushing an older man in a wheelchair.

"My husband," Lady Eddison told them, "And my son."

"Forgive me for not rising," Hugh nodded at them as they arrived at Lady Eddison's side, "Never been the same since the flu epidemic back in '18."

"My word!" Roger turned to Donna, "You are a super lady!"

"Oh!" Donna blushed, "I like the cut of your jib. Chin-chin."

"And you," Roger turned to Evy, "Simply sublime."

"I'm the Doctor," the Doctor cut in, taking the hand Roger had extended to Evy.

Donna couldn't help but smirk into her drink as she saw that. The Doctor had also been a bit more aware of other men around Evy over the last few months as well.

"How do you do?" Roger nodded at the Doctor.

"Very well, thanks," the Doctor grinned, though the grip on Roger's hand might have been just a tad looser had that been true.

Another servant, a young man, approached them with a single drink on the tray, "Your usual, sir."

"Ah, thank you Davenport," Roger turned to the man, "Just how I like it."

"How come she's an Eddison but her husband and son are Curbishleys?" Donna asked them, seeing the small family was distracted.

"The Eddison title probably descends through her," Evy leaned over, explaining it quietly, "Which means Roger will be a lord one day."

"Miss Robina Redmond," the announcement came.
A young woman in a red dress in top fashion joined them, "She's the absolute hit of the social season, a must," Lady Eddison murmured to them before walking towards her, "Miss Redmond."

"Spiffing to meet you at last, my lady," Robina greeted.

"Reverend Arnold Golightly," another announcement came, followed by the reverend the trio had seen before.

"Ah, Reverend!" Lady Eddison stepped forward, "How are you? I heard about the church last Thursday night, those ruffians breaking in."

"You apprehended them, I hear," Hugh added.

"As the Christian fathers taught me, we must forgive them their trespasses," he replied, "Quite literally."

"Some of these young boys deserve a decent thrashing," Roger stated.

"Couldn't agree more, sir," Davenport handed him another drink, they shared a look and Roger cleared his throat.

"Typical," Donna mumbled to them, "All the decent men are on the other bus."

"Or Time Lords," Evy added, sending a smirk to the Doctor who just laughed.

"Now my lady, what about this special guest you promised us?" the reverend asked.

"Here she is!" Lady Eddison exclaimed, "A lady who needs no introduction."

Everyone turned around and applauded as a blonde woman in a light blue dress walked towards them, looking as though she wasn't very comfortable with the attention but bore it for the sake of manners.

"Oh, no," she waved the applause off, "Please don't. Thank you, Lady Eddison. Honestly, there's no need," she caught sight of the trio standing off to the side and walked over to shake Donna's hand, "Agatha Christie."

"What about her?" Donna asked.

"That's me."

"No!" Donna's eyes widened in excitement as did the Doctor's and Evy's, "You're kidding!"

"Agatha Christie!" the Doctor reached out to shake her hand enthusiastically, "I was just talking about you the other day. I said, 'I bet she's brilliant.' I'm the Doctor, this is Evy, and that is Donna. Oh, I love your stuff! What a mind! You fool me every time. Well…almost every time. Well…once or twice. Well…once. But it was a good once."

"Ignore him," Evy gently shook the woman's hand, saving it from the Doctor's arm-jerking, "He can be a bit of an idiot sometimes."

Agatha laughed and looked at Evy and then the Doctor, "You make a rather unusual couple."

"Oh, no, no, no, we're not married," the Doctor sighed at the same time that Donna shook her head and said, "We're not a coup…wait a minute…"
"You were talking about him..." Donna pointed at the Doctor, "And her?" she pointed to Evy.

Agatha nodded.

"Oh thank God someone finally thinks you two aren't a couple," Evy laughed, showing Donna and the Doctor it was in jest.

"Well of course they're not, obviously not, no wedding ring," Agatha smiled, "And he introduced you first."

"Oh...you don't miss a trick," the Doctor grinned.

Evy smiled, impressed.

Donna couldn't help but smirk at the fact that the Doctor hadn't corrected Agatha about him and Evy being a couple. She had sworn to herself, ever since Evy had told her about the partial Link, that she would try to get the Doctor and Evy together even if it killed her, any chance she could get to nudge them together she was going to take.

Agatha turned to Donna, "I'd stay that way if I were you. The thrill is in the chase, never in the capture."

"Mrs. Christie, I'm so glad you could come," Lady Eddison called, drawing Agatha away, "I'm one of your greatest followers. I've read all six of your books. Uh, is, uh, Mr. Christie not joining us?"

"Is he needed?" Agatha asked, an edge in her voice, "Can't a woman make her own way in the world?"

"Don't give my wife ideas," Hugh laughed.

"Mrs. Christie, I have a question," Roger asked, "Why a Belgian detective?"

"Excuse me, Colonel," the Doctor stepped forward, pulling the newspaper away from Hugh.

"Belgians make such lovely buns," Agatha replied, earning a laugh.

"Where on Earth's Professor Peach?" Roger asked suddenly, "He'd love to meet Mrs. Christie."

"Said he was going to the library," the reverend shrugged.

"Donna," Evy whispered, nudging her. She looked up to see the Doctor waving them both over so they moved to join him.

"Miss Chandrakala, would you go and collect the Professor?" Lady Eddison asked her housekeeper.

"At once, my lady," she replied, heading for the house.

"The date on this newspaper," the Doctor held it up for them to see.

"What about it?" Donna asked, looking at it.

"December 8th!" Evy's eyes widened, "Donna, that's the day Agatha Christie disappeared."

They all looked up to see Agatha smiling and joking with the guests, "She just discovered her husband was having an affair," the Doctor said quietly.
"You'd never think to look at her smiling away," Donna remarked.

"Well, she's British and moneyed. That's what they do, they carry on. Except for this one time. No one knows exactly what happened, she just vanished. Her car will be found tomorrow morning by the side of a lake. Ten days later she turns up at a hotel in Harrogate."

"She claimed she lost her memory," Evy added, "She never ever spoke about it. But now, whatever happened…"

"Is about to happen," Donna gasped.

"Right here, right now," the Doctor nodded.

"The Professor!" the housekeeper shouted, running from the house, "The library! Murder! Murder!"

The Doctor and Evy were rushing towards the house before Donna even realized they'd gone. She rolled her eyes, setting down her drink and taking off after them, followed by the rest of the party.

The Doctor threw open the door to the library and rushed in, followed by Evy, Donna, and Agatha. He and Evy ran over to the body while Agatha and Donna looked on, shocked at first.

"Oh, my goodness," the footman gasped.

"Definitely was whacked on the back of the head," Evy mumbled as she examined the professor's head, "Probably by a blunt instrument."

The Doctor tapped Peach's watch, "Watch broke as he fell, time of death was quarter past four," he got up and went to examine the papers on the desk while Evy looked around the body for any sort of evidence.

"Bit of pipe," Donna picked up the pipe, "Call me Hercule Poirot but I reckon that's blunt enough."

Evy looked over to see Agatha picking up a piece of paper from the fireplace and projected the sight to the Doctor who nodded his head slightly.

"Nothing worth killing for in that lot, dry as dust," he remarked, straightening.

"Hold on, the body in the library?" Donna said softly, only Evy and the Doctor hearing her, "I mean, Professor Peach, in the library, with a lead piping?"

"I know, sounds a bit more like 'Cluedo' than Christie, doesn't it?" Evy asked her, smirking.

"Let me see!" Lady Eddison's voice rang out from the hall.

"Out of my way!" Hugh said as well.

"Gerald!" Lady Eddison gasped, entering the room with the others.

"Saints preserve us," the reverend breathed.

"Oh, how awful," Robina cried.

"Someone should call the police," Agatha said.

'Doctor!' Evy called to him, they couldn't let the police get involved, 'It's alien.'
"You don't have to," the Doctor held up the psychic paper, "Chief Inspector Smith from Scotland Yard, known as the Doctor. Miss Daniels and Miss Noble are the plucky young girls who help me out."

"I say," Lady Eddison's eyes widened.

"Mrs. Christie was right. Go into the sitting room. I will question each of you in turn."

"Come along," Agatha shooed them out of the room, "Do as the Doctor says. Keep the room undisturbed."

"The plucky young girls who help me out?" Donna mimicked as soon as they were alone.

"There were no policewomen in 1926," he shrugged.

"I'll pluck you in a minute. Why don't we phone the real police?"

"That's all we'd need, P.C. Plod sticking his nose in," Evy replied, pulling something off a crack in the floor, "Especially because of this," she stood up and held it out for them to see. She looked at the Doctor, "Morphic residue."

"Morphic?" Donna frowned, "Doesn't sound very 1926."

"Gets left behind when certain species genetically re-encode," the Doctor mumbled as he looked at the speck Evy had held out to him.

"The murderer's an alien?!

"Which means that one of the so called humans is actually just an alien in human form," Evy sighed.

"Yeah, but think about it. There's a murder, a mystery, and Agatha Christie."

"So?" he asked, focused on the residue.

"Oh don't…" Evy began, but it was too late, he'd sniffed it.

"Happens to me all the time," he finished, holding it out for Evy to sniff but she just pushed it away.

"No, but isn't that a bit weird?" Donna asked, "Agatha Christie didn't walk around surrounded by murders. Not really. That's like meeting Charles Dickens and he's surrounded by ghosts. At Christmas."

"Well…" he began, recalling that one time…

"Oh come on," Donna smirked, "It's not like we could drive across country and find Enid Blyton having tea with Noddy. Could we? Noddy's not real, is he? Tell me there's no Noddy."

"There's no Noddy, Donna," Evy smiled as the Doctor headed for the door, the two of them following him.

"Next thing you'll be telling me it's like 'Murder on the Orient Express' and they all did it."

"'Murder on the Orient Express?'" Agatha appeared from an alcove next to the stairs.
"Oh, yeah," Donna smiled, "One of your best."

"Not yet though," Evy whispered quickly to Donna.

"Marvelous idea," Agatha said in thought, an idea for the story forming.

"Yeah, tell you what, copyright: Donna Noble, yeah?" Donna asked.

"Anyway," the Doctor cut in, "Agatha and I will question suspects. Donna, you and Evy search the bedrooms, look for clues."

'Any more residue,' he added in Evy's mind, 'And keep your ears open.'

"Well, then we'll need…" Evy reached into his coat pocket and pulled out a large magnifying glass.

"Is that for real?" Donna asked, seeing Evy holding it.

"Go on," Evy handed it to her.

"You're ever so plucky," the Doctor grinned as Evy took Donna's arm and led the woman up the stairs.

"You two really do make the most unusual couple," Agatha remarked, having watched their whole interaction. That Evy woman and him, they were certainly quite comfortable around each other, operating on the same wavelength so to speak. They seemed to have a shared bond...something just below the surface that united them together, something that she didn't see between him and Donna.

"Right then," he blushed, trying to get back on topic, "Solving a murder mystery with Agatha Christie. Brilliant!"

"How like a man to have fun while there's disaster all around him," Agatha said bitterly.

"Sorry," he sobered quickly, "Yeah."

"I'll work with you, gladly, but for the sake of justice, not your own amusement," she stepped past him to go to the sitting room where the guests were located.

"Oh," he nodded, following after.

'I like her;' Evy smirked in his mind.

He just rolled his eyes and got to work. He walked into the sitting room to see the reverend there.

"Now then, Reverend…" he leaned against the fireplace as Agatha took notes, "Where were you at quarter past four?"

"Let me think," he mumbled, "Why yes, I remember…I was unpacking in my room."

"No alibi then?"

"You were alone?" Agatha clarified.

"With the Lord, one is never truly alone, Doctor," the reverend replied.

~8~
"And where were you?" the Doctor asked Roger.

"Let me think," Roger began, "I was, uh…oh yes, I was taking a constitutional in the fields behind the house. Just taking a stroll, that's all."

"Alone?"

"Oh yes, all alone. Totally alone. Absolutely alone. Completely. All of the time. I wandered, lonely, as the proverbial cloud. There was no one else with me. Not at all. Not ever."

'Not very good at lying, is he?' Evy commented in his mind.

He snorted.

~8~

"And where were you?" the Doctor repeated to Robina this time.

"At a quarter past four…" she trailed in thought, "Well, I went to the toilet when I arrived, and then, um…oh yes, I remember. I was preparing myself. Positively buzzing with excitement about the party…and the super fun of meeting Lady Eddy."

"We've only got your word for it."

"That's your problem, not mine," Robina sighed, sitting back, undisturbed.

~8~

"And where were you, sir?" he asked Hugh.

"Quarter past four?" Hugh frowned, "Let me think…oh yes, I remember…I was sitting in my study reading through some military memoirs. Fascinating stuff. Took me back to me days in the army. Started reminiscing. Mafeking, you know. Terrible war."

"Colonel, snap out of it," the Doctor snapped his fingers a bit.

"I was in my study…"

"No, no, no, right out of it."

"Oh, sorry," Hugh smiled embarrassedly, "Got a bit…carried away there."

~8~

"And where were you at a quarter past four, my lady?" the Doctor asked Lady Eddison.

"Now let me see…" she smiled, "Yes, I remember…I was sitting in the blue room taking my afternoon tea. It's a ritual of mine. I needed to gather strength for the duty of hostess. I then proceeded to the lawn where I met…you, Doctor…and I said 'And who might you be and what are you doing here?' and you said 'I'm the Doctor and this is…'

'Is she really going to go through that whole thing?' Evy wondered.

"Yes, yes," he cut in, "You can stop now. I was there for that bit."

"Of course," Lady Eddison nodded, before belching slightly, "Excuse me," she covered her mouth
with the handkerchief.

'Right...tea,' Evy laughed.

~8~

The Doctor paced in front of the fireplace after the last suspect had left the room. It didn't look like there was much happening on Evy's end either. She had been sending him updates about her search with Donna, so far nothing that could point to what sort of alien they were facing and nothing out of the ordinary in any of the rooms.

"No alibis for any of them," Agatha sighed, "The secret adversary remains hidden. We must look for a motive," she slipped into a Belgian accent, "Use the little gray cells."

"Oh yes, little gray cells," he nodded, moving to sit in a chair, "Good old Poirot. Y'know, I've been to Belgium. Yeah, I remember...I was deep in the Ardennes trying to find Charlemagne...he'd been kidnapped by an insane computer..."

'I remember that,' Evy commented, reliving the memory with him. They had managed to track Charlemagne to the Ardennes, the poor fellow having been kidnapped from his own time and thrown into the 13th century. They'd nearly saved him when the computer teleported the man to England, the two of them racing after him with Martha. The Doctor had taken to carrying a longbow and arrows over his shoulder, which had led to a rather interesting discovery once they'd saved Charlemagne just outside a small village near what would one day be Nottingham, 'You ended up sparking that whole Robin Hood legend.'

'Oi!' he thought back, 'And what about you Maid Marian?'

'Just keeping the story the same,' she replied, or at least as much the same as they could. Things had, of course, been warped through the ages, the legend being stretched and changed over time, 'No reason to go changing a perfectly good name.'

"Doctor!" Agatha called, snapping him out of his thoughts, "Doctor!"

"Sorry," he looked up at her.

"Charlemagne lived centuries ago."

"I've got a good memory," he shrugged.

"For such an experienced detective, you missed a big clue."

"What, that bit of paper you nicked out of the fireplace?"

"You were looking the other way!" she exclaimed, astonished that he knew about it.

"Yeah, but I saw you reflected in the glass of the bookcase," he lied. He couldn't exactly tell her that he'd see her do it through someone else's eyes.

"You crafty man," she smiled as he smirked, "This is all that was left."

She held up the paper as he walked over to look at it, "What's that first letter? N or M?"

"It's an M," Agatha answered, "The word is 'maid'en.'"

"Maiden!" he shouted.
"Oi!" he could feel Evy wince in his mind, apparently he'd shouted mentally as well.

"What does that mean?" he whispered.

Agatha sighed, "We're still no further forward. Our nemesis remains at large. Unless Miss Noble and Miss Daniels have found something."

~8~

Upstairs Evy and Donna had searched most of the bedrooms and found nothing but clothes, jewelry, and books anywhere. They were almost ready to give up when Donna tried one last door, only to find it locked. She looked over at Evy who nodded and stepped forward, pulling her sonic out of her pocket, ready to flash the lock when…

"You won't find anything in there," the footman appeared behind them.

"Oh!" Donna jumped, startled, "How come it's locked?"

"Lady Eddison commands it so."

"And I command it otherwise. Scotland Yard, pip-pip."

"Why's it locked anyway?" Evy asked as the footman went to unlock it.

"Many years ago, when my father was butler to the family, Lady Eddison returned from India with malaria," he replied, "She locked herself in this room for six months until she recovered. Since then, this room has remained…undisturbed," Donna opened the door which creaked from disuse, "There's nothing in here."

"It's been empty how long?" Evy looked around. It was a quaint room with a bureau, some shelves, a fireplace, and a bed with a teddy bear on it. Everything was covered in dust and webs.

"Forty years."

"Why would she seal it off?" Donna mumbled to herself before turning to the footman, "Alright, we need to investigate. You just…butle off," she closed the door as he turned to walk away. When she turned around she saw Evy standing by the bed, holding the teddy bear up, "1926, they've still got bees," she mumbled, hearing a buzzing. She walked over to the window, "Oh, what a noise! Alright, busy bee, I'll let you out. Hold on," she slipped into a posh accent, "I shall find you with my amazing powers of detection," she looked through the magnifying glass as she reached out to open the drapes.

"Donna no!" Evy shouted, spinning around at the sound of the too loud buzzing.

But it was too late.

There, just outside the window, was a giant wasp. Evy ran forward, pulling Donna back just before it crashed through.

"That's impossible!" Donna shouted.

"It's a Vespiform!" Evy replied, recognizing the species.

The wasp aimed its stinger and flew straight at them, Donna closed her eyes, ready to feel the stinger stab her, when nothing happened. She looked up to see Evy standing there, her hands out at the wasp with it buzzing angrily, trying to attack them but seeming to fly straight at an invisible
What the…” Donna began but then Evy threw her arms to the left and the wasp flew straight into the wall. She looked over at Evy when she suddenly slumped against her, a trail of blood leaking from her nose, "What happened? What's wrong?"

"Move!" Evy shouted, managing to pull Donna away from the wall and over to the window as the wasp shook itself and readied itself to attack again, "Donna the magnifying glass!"

Donna held up the glass to the sunlight behind them, aiming the beam at the wasp, burning it. It screeched in pain and shook violently as Evy pulled her towards the door, seeing it distracted.

Donna slammed the door behind them as the wasp's stinger came through the bottom of it.

"Doctor!" Donna shouted, helping Evy to stand straight.

Evy pulled out a handkerchief and quickly wiped the blood away from her nose as Donna shouted for the Doctor again.

"There is a giant…wasp!" she gasped as the Doctor and Agatha came running down the hall only a moment after Evy had tossed the handkerchief away.

"What do you mean, 'giant wasp?'" the Doctor asked, looking at them.

"I mean a wasp...that's giant!"

"It's only a silly little insect," Agatha rolled her eyes.

"When I say 'giant,' I don't mean 'big'; I mean 'flippin' enormous!'" Donna told her, pointing at the door, "Look at its sting!"

"Let me see!" the Doctor pushed the door open, only to see the room empty.

"It's gone," Evy said as he walked to the window, "It's flown off."

"But that's fascinating," Agatha said, looking at the stinger from the inside of the room.

"Don't touch it."

"Yes, don't touch it," the Doctor came over, kneeling down, "Let me," he pulled out a vial with a stopper and gathered a sample using a pencil, "Giant wasp…well, there are tons of amorphous insectivorous life forms but…none in this galactic vector."

"I think I understood some of those words," Agatha frowned at him, "Enough to know that you're completely potty."

"Lost its sting, though," Donna commented, "That makes it defenseless."

"A creature that size?" Evy countered, "It can grow a new one."

"Uh, can we return to sanity?" Agatha shook her head, "There are no such things as giant wasps."

"Exactly!" the Doctor exclaimed, "So…the question is…"

"What's it doing here?" Evy finished.
"Uh, actually a better question," Donna cut in, staring at Evy, "What the hell was that?"

"What do you mean?" the Doctor looked up at Donna.

Evy shook her head frantically, something that only Donna noticed thankfully, "I…uh…" she hesitated, something was very wrong with Evy and she was torn between asking the Doctor for help or helping Evy cover it up, "She…she fought it with a pillow…"

"A pillow?" the Doctor asked slowly, glancing at Evy.

"Yeah," Donna nodded, hoping the Doctor wouldn't notice that the only pillow in the room was the still untouched one on the bed, "Smacked it right away with the pillow."

"Doctor," Evy cut in, "I'm going to take Donna downstairs, find something to settle her nerves."

He nodded, turning back to the stinger to examine it more as she and Donna walked out.

But instead of leading Donna to the kitchen, she brought her outside and over to a large tree where she was sure they would be uninterrupted.

"What the bloody hell was that?" Donna demanded, "What did you do? How did you do that?"

Evy sighed, leaning against the tree, her eyes closed.

"It that some sort of freaky Time Lord thing?" Donna asked after a moment of Evy not speaking.

Evy laughed at how similar she sounded to Martha when she had first learned about the ability, "It's complicated," she replied, opening her eyes, her mind settling, "Long story short, I was trapped somewhere for a while and, as a result, I was able to tap into a dormant part of my mind that allowed me to move things with it."

Donna blinked and crossed her arms, "There's more to the story than that. Spill."

Evy sighed, shaking her head, she should have expected that from the stubborn ginger, "Back on Earth," she began, looking down at the grass, "I was trapped in a mental hospital."

"No!" Donna gasped, her eyes wide, of all the things she thought Evy would say, that wasn't one of them.

She nodded, "They had me on all sorts of medications. I was stupid and I took some aspirin one day and nearly died, aspirin's poisonous to Time Lords. When I got to the hospital, they pumped my stomach but the aspirin already did a lot of damage. It made me weak, it demolished my mental barriers, made it impossible to keep the Doctor out."

"What do you mean? Keep him out?"

"The mind of a Time Lord, it's sort of connected to the rest of our people. Imagine a sort of net around your thoughts as the only thing separating your thoughts from another's. When I was in the hospital, there were huge holes in my mental net and the Doctor's mind began to press against my own…painfully."

"What did you do?"

"I did the only thing I could do to relieve the strain, I spoke," she rubbed her head, "Everything he said or heard, I spoke out loud, which only served to make the doctors think I had a personality disorder so they put me on more medications…which only made it worse. It kept me from
mending the net, from healing myself. I couldn't separate my thoughts from his. I couldn't separate my reality from his. I started to see things that he was seeing in front of me…eventually I got to be too much for the doctors and they shipped me to the Mason Institute. I was there for a year or so."

"A year?" Donna frowned.

"While I was there, they tried different medications, only made it worse. They tried different therapies…some unconventional, some…" she swallowed hard, "Some were even illegal."

"What do you mean 'illegal'?"

"I switched hands a few times, to a few doctors who thought they could help," Evy stared into space, "One doctor thought that electroshock might reset my mind and get me going right."

"No!" Donna's eyes widened in horror.

"Another thought sensory deprivation would be the ticket. But that only gave me the Doctor's thoughts to focus on, made it so much worse. Another decided isolation was best, give me time to sort out my thoughts. And the last…well, second to last, that doctor thought I was just making it all up," she let out a bitter laugh, "Thought I was just throwing a tantrum or trying to get attention, so it was ordered that things be taken away from me. But there was really only my food."

"He starved you?" Donna gasped.

"She," Evy corrected, "She would only give me water and meds. Lasted three weeks till one of the nurses caught wind of it and reported her. She had her license stripped and my last doctor took over. He just...went through the motions, made sure I got fed, medicated, cleaned, and left me alone for the most part. They thought I was a lost cause by then. The meds were what did it. They messed up my entire physiology for a while, altered the way my mind worked...human medication isn't meant for Time Lord biology. It allowed me to tap into a part of my mind that connected to a Time Lord's natural mental capabilities, our telepathy. Let me connect to the telekinetic aspect."

"How'd you get out?"

"I'd been screaming in my mind that whole time for someone to hear me, anyone. And finally someone did. Ianto, from Torchwood. He and their commander, Captain Jack Harkness, came to find me. They brought me back to Torchwood, stopped the meds, got me better, and then helped me contact the Doctor. And off I went, travelling with him and Martha," she laughed a bit, "He had no idea I was a Time Lady because the Filter was working at a higher level than it is now."

Donna nodded, Evy had told her about how the Doctor had found out she was a Time Lady, it was after the Sontaran incident. She'd wondered how UNIT had found out about there being a Time Lady around and that had led to a retelling of her trips with Martha and the Doctor.

"And I take it the Doctor doesn't know?" Donna asked.

Evy shook her head, "And he can't know. Please Donna you can't tell him."

"But it hurts you," Donna frowned.

Evy sighed, she should have known Donna would see that, "I know, that's why I only use it when I have to. It puts a strain on my body and my mind. Time Lords aren't meant to have that power yet, maybe once we'd evolved a bit, maybe never. But I don't want the Doctor to know because if he does, he'll just want to know how it happened and…" she took a breath, she'd managed to keep from crying so far, she wasn't going to start, "It was hard enough telling you about this Donna,
I don't want him to know."

"Why not? He's your Link, he'll find out eventually you know."

"No, I don't," Evy turned to face her, "He may never Link to me, he may never know. I don't want him to think I'm weak!" she looked away, "I don't want him to think I need saving like everyone else. I'm embarrassed that I got stuck there and couldn't get myself out. And...I'm terrified of everything that happened there. I was so scared and I just...I don't want him to think I'm some scared, weak, little girl."

"I don't think that's possible. You're the strongest woman I know, and I'd bet anything the Doctor agrees," there was silence for a moment, "But I promise, I won't tell him."

Evy smiled at her, "Thank you Donna."

"Don't thank me," she waved her off, "I'm not happy about it, but I'll do it, 'cos it's you. Ok?"

Evy nodded, stepping forward and hugging Donna who hugged her back tightly, "Come on," she smiled, "Let's head back to the Doctor. Knowing him he's bound to get in some sort of trouble by now."

As though hearing her words, a scream echoed throughout the grounds.

Chapter End Notes

Lol, had a bit of jealous Doctor here :) And awww, Donna/Evy bonding time. So far, no the Doctor hasn't overheard anything like he did during Pompeii...BUT! We've still got Part 2...who knows what he'll eavesdrop on then. And now we know a bit more
about what Evy went through at the Mason Institute, poor her. And knowing that the Doctor might one day learn about it, not wanting him to, I guess there's another reason she's holding off on letting him Link to her. I could see how she might not want him to know because of how she couldn't save herself. You have to admit, quite a few companions get themselves in trouble and need saving, I can see how Evy would want to be different, prove herself, prove she can take care not only of herself, but of the Doctor as well.

Next chapter...the Doctor certainly gets a shock but what does Donna have to do with it and why does Evy give her a light scolding for it?
Evy and Donna took off, running back to the manor, meeting up with the Doctor and Agatha as they saw the housekeeper lying in the drive, a stone gargoyle on top of her.

"The poor, little…child," she murmured before her eyes fluttered closed.

"There!" the Doctor shouted, hearing a buzzing. They looked up to see the wasp flying overhead, "Come on!" he pulled Evy up and ran back inside after it, Donna and Agatha following them.

He led them to a staircase as Donna called, "Well, this makes a change. There's a monster and we're chasing it."

"Can't be a monster," Agatha reasoned as they ran up the stairs, "It's a trick. They do it with mirrors."

Evy yanked the Doctor back, pulling him to a stop as the wasp peeked out from under an archway.

"By all that's holy…" Agatha gasped.

"Oh, but you are wonderful!" the Doctor grinned as the wasp faced him, "Now, just stop there."

"That never works!" Evy shouted as the wasp rushed towards them, stinger first. They ducted and it flew over them, saving the Doctor from the whack Evy had been preparing to deliver to the back of his head, what on Earth made him think that the hostile alien would stop just because he said to she didn't know.

"Oi!" Donna called, recalling what Evy had had her do in the room before and holding up the magnifying glass, "Flyboy!"

The wasp took one look at it and flew away.

"Don't let it get away!" Evy shouted as they got up and ran after it.

"Quick, before it reverts to human form!" the Doctor raced around a corner, coming to the bedroom hall, "Where are you? Come on! There's nowhere to run…show yourself!"

All the doors opened and everyone popped their heads out, staring at them.

"Oh you're joking," Evy slumped.

"That's just cheating," the Doctor pouted.

~8~

They were back in the sitting room, all the guests with them.

"My faithful companion!" Lady Eddison wept, "This is terrible!"

"Excuse me, my lady," Davenport spoke up, "She was on her way to tell you something."
"She never found me. She had an appointment with death instead."

"The last thing she said was 'the poor little child,'" Evy spoke, looking around at each of them, "Does that mean something? To any of you?"

"No children in this house for years," Hugh remarked, glancing at his son, "Highly unlikely there will be."

"Mrs. Christie, you must have twigged something," Lady Eddison turned to her, "You've written simply the best detective stories."

"Tell us...what would Poirot do?" the reverend asked.

"Heaven's sake!" Hugh exclaimed, "Cards on the table, woman! You should be helping us!"

"Leave her alone!" Evy stepped forward, resting a hand on the woman's shoulder.

"But...I'm merely a writer," Agatha argued.

"But surely you can crack it," Robina said, "These events, they're exactly like one of your plots."

"That's what I've been saying," Donna added, "Agatha, that's got to mean something."

"But what?" she asked, "I've no answers. None. I'm sorry, all of you, I'm truly sorry, but I've failed. If anyone can help us, it's the Doctor, not me."

Everyone turned to look at the Doctor as Agatha got up and walked out of the room, Donna getting up and going to check on her moments later.

~8~

Whatever Donna had said to the writer must have worked for not ten minutes after Agatha had left the room she was back with Donna, holding a small box in her hands. Evy had sent the rest of the guests out so she and the Doctor could speak privately, not that they couldn't silently but it was a bit odd to watch. They had only been able to examine the sting and confirm that it had, in fact, been a Vespiform as Evy had thought.

Agatha placed the box on the table and the Doctor opened it to reveal an array of lock picking tools.

"Ooh...someone came tooled up..." he remarked, "The sort of stuff a thief would use."

"The Unicorn...he's here!" Agatha gasped.

"The Unicorn and the wasp."

"Your drinks, ladies, Doctor," the butler replied, entering with drinks on a tray.

"Very good, Greeves," the Doctor nodded as they took the drinks and he left.

"What about the science stuff?" Donna asked, "What did you find?"

"Vespiform sting," Evy replied, "Vespiforms live in hives in the Silifax Galaxy."

"You talk like Edward Lear as well," Agatha shook her head. But then again, the girl seemed to be in some sort of relationship with this Doctor fellow so she suspected they would have some
"For some reason, this one's behaving like a character in one of your books," the Doctor added, sipping his drink.

"Come on, Agatha," Donna turned to her, "What would Miss Marple do? She'd've overheard something vital by now because the murderer thinks she's just a harmless old lady."

"Clever idea," Agatha smiled, "Miss Marple... who writes those?"

Evy stiffened and turned to face the Doctor, sensing... something...

"Um, copyright: Donna Noble," Donna said, "Add it to the list."

"Donna..." the Doctor began, his gaze on Evy as well.

"Ok, we could split the copyright," Donna waved him off.

"No... something's inhibiting my enzymes," he said, moments before he jerked forward, "Ah!"

"He's been poisoned!" Evy shouted, rushing forward with Donna and Agatha as he convulsed in the chair.

"What do we do?" Donna asked frantically, "What do we do?"

Evy started to pull him up from the seat with Donna helping as Agatha sniffed the glass, "Bitter almonds..." Agatha gasped, "It's cyanide. Sparkling cyanide!"

"The kitchen!" Evy shouted, pulling the Doctor out of the room, "We need the kitchen!"

"Down that way!" Agatha pointed as they ran to the room.

"Ginger beer," the Doctor ran to Davenport as he stumbled into the room and grabbed the young man by the lapels, "I need ginger beer!"

"Doctor over here!" Evy called from a shelf. He stumbled over as she ran to meet him halfway, giving him the drink.

"They've gone mad!" one of the maids shouted as the Doctor drank the beer and then poured the rest on his head.

"I'm an expert in poisons, Doctor," Agatha told him, "It's fatal! There's no cure!"

He spat out the rest of the drink and gripped the table as Evy frantically looked through the items on the shelves, "Not for me!" he told them, "I can stimulate the inhibited enzymes into reversal. Protein! I need protein!"

Donna and Agatha turned and began to search the counters.

"Walnuts!" Donna called, handing them to the Doctor.

"Brilliant!" he took them and shoved them in his mouth, trying to speak with his mouth full.

"I can't understand you!" Donna shouted as Evy just squatted down, looking for the next ingredient, far too concerned with finding it than looking back. The Doctor shook one of his hands as though pouring something, "How many words?" he held up one finger, "One. One word. Shake?
Milk? Shake? Milk? Milk! No, not milk. Uh, shake, shake, shake...cocktail shake! What do you want, a Harvey Wallbanger?"

"Harvey Wallbanger?!" he swallowed.

"Well, I don't know!"

"How is 'Harvey Wallbanger' one word?"

"What do you need, Doctor?" Agatha spoke.

"Salt!" Evy shouted, moving to the counter, "He needs salt."
He pointed to his nose and then her, "I was miming salt! I need something salty!"
Evy spun around with a brown bag, "Here!"
"What is it?"
"It's salt."
"That's too salty!" he shook his head.
"What about this?" Agatha handed him a jar.
He just grabbed it and downed the contents.
"What's that?" Donna asked as Evy began to look for one last thing, but she wasn't seeing any sort of electrical appliance anywhere. Where the hell were they going to get a shock from?

"Anchovies," Agatha replied.
The Doctor began to gesture again, his hands up and his palms flashing out, "What is it?" Donna asked, "What else? It's a song. 'Mammy.' I don't know, 'Camptown Races?'"

"'Camptown Races?!'" he asked incredulously.
"Well, alright then. 'Towering Inferno.'"
"It's a shock! Look! Shock! I need a shock!"
"Alright, then, big shock coming up," Donna reached out and grabbed Evy's arm, spinning her around and shoving her at the Doctor, straight into his arms and into a kiss.

It was indeed a shock, not just to the Doctor but also to Evy who had not been expecting the kiss to last as long as it had, at least 10 seconds longer than she thought it would.

They pulled apart as the Doctor threw his head back and black smoke came out of his mouth, he slumped against the island and groaned.

"Ah!" he breathed, "Detox," he wiped his mouth, "I must do that more often," he glanced at Evy to see her breathing hard with red stained cheeks, "I mean the...the detox."

She nodded.

"Enough of a shock for you?" Donna laughed, smirking. With all she'd learned about exactly what Links were, she figured, even not Linked, it would still be one hell of a shocking, electrical
experience for the both of them.

"Doctor you are impossible!" Agatha exclaimed, "Who are you?"

Evy was in the sitting room once again, the Doctor insisting on helping the kitchen staff clean up and slipping a secret ingredient she had suggested into the soup while Agatha went to speak to the guests, to inform them of dinner. She looked up as Donna walked in.

"Are you alright?" she asked, moving to sit next to her friend.

"I'm fine," Evy replied.

"You don't look it," Donna told her with a sigh, "What's wrong?"

"Don't ever do that again Donna," Evy turned to her, serious.

"Do what?" Donna frowned but Evy looked at her meaningfully and she realized what she was going on about, "Oh stop it!" she laughed, "You can't say you didn't enjoy that little kiss can you?"

"It's not that. I know what you were trying to do in there, Martha tried the same thing and I really, really don't need it from you too."

"And what was I trying to do?"

"You were trying to nudge me and the Doctor together weren't you?" Evy asked, though they both knew the answer, Donna looked away, "And you can't."

"But you're Linked," Donna shook her head, "Why should it matter if you kiss him or he kisses you or not?"

"Because it's only a partial Link. It's hard enough to just be connected to the Doctor, to hear him in my mind, to feel him in my hearts when he's not even there. It's almost unbearable just to be near him and not have the closeness the Link is trying to forge. Linking is about connection, and every time I get close to him I'm made all the more aware that we're not entirely connected, that the Link isn't formed on his side. It hurts Donna. It hurts to know that, to constantly be reminded of it. But I do it because I'd rather see him than never be with him again, but Donna…the physical contact…it…it just makes it that much harder to bear," she looked down at her hands, "Just holding his hand or hugging him takes so much out of me to not overstep my boundaries or to let go when the time comes…"

She was a masochist. She had to be. Why else would she force herself to be around the Doctor, knowing that it would only get harder over time. It was one thing to be halfway across the Universe, on Gallifrey, while he was off on his travels. It wasn't as tempting, she wasn't there. But now, to be right next to him, and to be forced to see that, in some way, he wasn't there, hurt even more. She was Linked, he wasn't. The more she was around him, the more and more she wanted him to Link to her. The more she wanted to just throw caution to the wind and rip off the Filter so he could Link to her. But...he wasn't ready. So she would suffer through it, quietly, protecting and careful with her thoughts so he wouldn't know. She didn't want to make him feel guilty or like he had to Link to her. She wanted him to be ready and willing, not doing it out of guilt or longing to dull his own pain, and for that reason alone she held off, she held back, she controlled herself around him as best she could.

"I'm sorry," Donna frowned, "I...I didn't know."
"It's ok," Evy reached over and took her hand in her own, squeezing it, offering a sad smile, "I know you meant well, and you just want me to be happy, but I can't rush him into Linking to me. And...I'm trying my hardest to not confuse his feelings by doing things like kissing him and whatnot."

Donna opened her mouth to speak when the Doctor popped his head into the room with an eager grin, "Dinner's about to start!"

"We're coming," Evy told him, getting up and walking out of the room with Donna.

The Doctor watched them walk off, his grin dropping to a regretful and guilty frown as he eyed Evy. He'd heard her, he'd heard everything, and he was really starting to hate himself for hurting her like he seemed prone to do. It was just...he didn't know. He was torn, conflicted...

He sighed, running a hand through his hair in frustration, he didn't have time to think on it now, not with a hostile wasp trying to attack the humans. He'd deal with that first, then think on what to do about Evy and the Link.

~8~

That night, in the dining room, they were all sitting around the table, the guests on one side, Evy, Agatha, the Doctor, and Donna on the other, with Roger sitting on the end of their side.

"A terrible day for all of us," the Doctor remarked, "The Professor struck down, Miss Chandrakala cruelly taken from us, and yet, we still take dinner."

"We are British, Doctor," Lady Eddison replied, "What else must we do?"

"And then someone tried to poison me..." he finished, looking around, "Any one of you had the chance to put cyanide in my drink."

"But it gave me a rather brilliant idea," Evy replied. She had thought of this when she'd been looking through the pantry during the Doctor's poisoning, and saw it there.

"And what would that be?" the reverend turned to her.

"Poison," she grinned as everyone stopped eating, "Cheers," she spooned her soup as the Doctor and Donna did the same, "The soup has been sprinkled with...pepper."

"Ah, I thought it was jolly spicy," Hugh laughed.

"The active ingredient of pepper is, of course, piperine, which is usually used...as an insecticide."

Thunder crackled.

"Oh, anyone got the shivers?" the Doctor beamed. It was genius! He was almost sorry he hadn't thought of it. But, he had to admit, he secretly loved it when Evy did things like that, it surprised him, kept him on his toes.

The thunder crashed again and the lights went out. One of the windows flew open and the wind snuffed the candles.

"What the deuce is that?" Hugh asked.

"Listen!" the Doctor stood, silencing them, "Listen! Listen! Listen!"
There was a loud buzzing.

"No…no, it can't be!" Lady Eddison exclaimed.

Evy looked over at the woman, squinting just enough to see her looking as though she were seeing a ghost, 'Doctor,' she whispered to him, 'Did you hear her?'

He nodded.

"Show yourself demon!" Agatha demanded, standing.

"Nobody move!" the Doctor said, "No, don't! Stay where you are!"

As commanded, the Vespiform showed itself.

Greeves immediately ushered Donna out of the room, the Doctor grabbing Evy's hand and pulling her out, grabbing Agatha as he passed her as well.

"Out!" he shouted, "Out! Out! Out!" they ran into the hallway, joining Greeves and Donna, "Not you, Agatha. You've got a long life to lead yet."

Evy ran past them, grabbing a sword off the wall display, tossing it to the Doctor as she stepped back over to him.

"Well we know the butler didn't do it," Donna remarked.

"But who did?" Evy asked as they rushed back into the room, only to see the Vespiform was gone and the lights had come back on.

"My jewelry…the Firestone…it's gone!" Lady Eddison exclaimed, "Stolen!"

"Roger," Davenport breathed sadly.

Robina screamed as Lady Eddison got up and ran around the table to her son, lying face down in his soup with a knife in his back.

"My son…my child!" Lady Eddison cried.

Evy stepped forward, putting an arm around the woman and leading her out of the room, only too familiar with the loss of a child.

~8~

Evy walked into the sitting room to see Agatha and Donna on the sofa with the Doctor standing by the fireplace.

"How's Lady Eddison?" Agatha asked as she saw Evy.

"Heartbroken," she replied, moving over to the Doctor who placed an arm around her, hugging her to him as they briefly relived the death of their daughter.

"That poor footman," Donna said, trying to keep their thoughts off Jenny, "Roger's dead and he can't even mourn him. 1926. It's more like the dark ages."

"Did you inquire about the necklace?" Agatha turned to face Evy.
"Lady Eddison brought it with her from India," Evy replied, pulling back from the Doctor just a bit, but he moved to take her hand instead, "It's apparently worth thousands."

"This thing can sting, it can fly…" the Doctor muttered to himself, "It could wipe us all out in seconds…why is it playing this game?"

"Every murder is essentially the same, they are committed because somebody wants something," Agatha said.

"What does a Vespiform want?"

"Doctor, stop it. The murderer is as human as you or I."

"You're right," he realized, turning to Evy, "We've been so caught up with giant wasps, we've forgotten," he pulled her over to sit across from Agatha, "You're the expert."

"Look, I told you," Agatha sighed, "I'm just a…purveyor of nonsense."

"Oh, no, no, no, no, 'cos plenty of people write detective stories, but yours are the best," the Doctor told her, "And why? Why are you so good, Agatha Christie?"

Evy smiled softly, reaching out to place a hand on the woman's, "Because you understand. You've lived it...you've fought...you've had your heart broken. You know about people, their passions, their hope and despair and anger..."

"Tiny huge things can turn the most ordinary person into a killer," the Doctor agreed, "Just think, Agatha. If anyone can solve this, it's you."

Agatha looked up at them, looking in their eyes, seeing the truth in them and their faith in her before nodding.

~8~

They were still in the sitting room, but this time all the guests were there as well. The Doctor stood in front of the fireplace, Evy and Donna sitting off to the side of the room.

"I've called you here on this endless night because we have a murderer in our midst," he told them, "And when it comes to detection, there's none finer...ladies and gentlemen, I give you Agatha Christie."

He walked off to the side and sat beside Evy on the bench next to Donna.

Agatha stood up, "This is a crooked house...a house of secrets. To understand the solution, we must examine them all. Starting with you...Miss Redmond."

"But I'm innocent, surely," she said.

"You've never met these people and these people never met you. I think the real Robina Redmond never left London. You're impersonating her!"

"How silly," Robina tried to wave the accusation away, "What proof do you have?"

"You said you'd been to the toilet..."

"Oh, I know this, if she was really posh, she'd say 'loo,'" Donna whispered to the two Time Lords, getting very into it.
"Earlier today, Miss Noble and I found this on the lawn…" Agatha picked up the lock picking case, "…right beneath your bathroom window. You must have heard Miss Noble and Miss Daniels were searching the bedrooms and you panicked. You ran upstairs and disposed of the evidence."

"I've never seen that thing before in my life," Robina stated.

"What's inside it?" Lady Eddison asked.

"The tools of your trade, Miss Redmond, or should I say…the Unicorn," Agatha opened the case to show the tools, "You came to this house with one sole intention, to steal the Firestone!"

"Oh, alright then," Robina answered, this time with a cockney accent, "It's a fair cop," she stood, "Yes, I'm the bleedin' Unicorn. Ever so nice to meet you, I don't think. I took my chance in the dark and nabbed it," she reached under her dress strap and pulled out the necklace, "Go on then, ya nobs, arrest me. Sling me in jail," she threw the necklace at them and the Doctor caught it one handed, passing it over to Evy to examine.

"So, is she the murderer?" Donna asked.

"Don't be so thick," 'Robina' rolled her eyes, "I might be a thief but I ain't no killer."

"Quite," Agatha agreed, "There are darker motives at work, and, in examining this household…we come to you…Colonel."

Hugh was silent for a moment before slamming a fist on the armrest of his wheelchair, "Damn it, woman! You with your perspicacity! You've rumbled me!" he stood.

"You…you can walk?" Lady Eddison gasped, "But why?"

"My darling, how else could I be certain of keeping you by my side?" he took her hands in his.

"I don't understand…"

"You're still a beautiful woman, Clemency. Sooner or later some chap will turn your head. I couldn't bear that. Staying in the chair was the only way I could be certain of keeping you. Confound it, Mrs. Christie! How did you discover the truth?"

Agatha looked just as stunned as Lady Eddison, "Um, actually, I had no idea. I was just going to say you were completely innocent."

"Ah…oh…"

"Sorry."

"Well, shall I sit down then?"

"I think you better had," Agatha nodded as he sat back down in his chair.

"So he's not the murderer?" Donna frowned.

"Indeed not," Agatha agreed, "To find the truth…let's return…" Evy passed her the Firestone, glancing at the Doctor and giving him just the briefest of nods, "…to this, far more than the Unicorn's object of desire. The Firestone has quite a history. Lady Eddison."

"I've done nothing!" she exclaimed.
"You brought it back from India, did you not? Before you met the Colonel. You came home with malaria and confined yourself to this house for six months, in a room that has been locked ever since, which I rather think means…"

"Stop, please!"

"I'm so sorry. But you had fallen pregnant in India…unmarried and ashamed, you hurried back to England with your confidante, a young maid, later to become housekeeper, Miss Chandrakala."

"Clemency!" Hugh turned to her, alarmed, "Is this true?"

"My poor baby," Lady Eddison wept, "I had to give him away. Oh, the shame of it."

"But you've never said a word!"

"I had no choice. Imagine the scandal, the family name. I'm British…I carry on."

"But it wasn't an ordinary pregnancy, was it?" Evy remarked.

Lady Eddison looked up, startled, "How can you know that?"

"Excuse me, Agatha, this is our territory," the Doctor said, offering a hand to Evy to pull her up. They moved over to the fireplace as Agatha sat down.

"When you heard the buzzing in the dining room, you said, 'It can't be,'" Evy told her, "Why would you say that?"

"You'd never believe it," she shook her head.

"The Doctor has opened my mind to believe…many things," Agatha replied as Donna nodded.

"It was forty years ago…" she began, "...in the heat of Delhi one night. I was alone and that's when I saw it, a dazzling light in the sky. The next day, he came to the house, Christopher, the most handsome man I'd ever seen. Our love blazed like a wildfire and I held nothing back. And in return, he showed me the incredible truth about himself. He made himself human to learn about us. This was his true shape. I loved him so much it didn't matter. But he was stolen from me. 1885, the year of the Great Monsoon. The River Jumna rose up and broke its banks. He was taken at the flood. But Christopher left me a parting gift, a jewel like no other. I wore it always. Part of me never forgot. I keep it close. Always."

"Just like a man," 'Robina' shook her head, "Flashes his family jewels and you end up with a bun in the oven."

"A 'poor little child,'" Agatha commented, recalling the housekeeper's words, "Forty years ago, Miss Chandrakala took that newborn babe to an orphanage. But Professor Peach worked it out. He found the birth certificate."

"Oh, that's 'maiden,' maiden name!" Donna exclaimed.

"Precisely."

"So she killed him."

"I did not!" Lady Eddison insisted.

"Miss Chandrakala feared that the Professor had unearthed your secret," Agatha turned back to
Lady Eddison, "She was coming to warn you."

"So she killed her," Donna stated.

"I did not!" Lady Eddison repeated.

"Lady Eddison is innocent," Agatha replied firmly, "Because at this point…Doctor?"

"Thank you," the Doctor nodded at her, "Because at this point when we consider the lies and secrets and the key to these events, then we have to consider…it was you, Donna Noble…" he pointed to her.

"What?" Donna's eyes widened, "Who did I kill?"

"No, but you said it all along, the vital clue, that this whole thing is being acted out like a murder mystery," he grinned before growing serious and turning, "Which means…it was you, Agatha Christie," he pointed at her.

"I beg your pardon, sir?" Agatha glared at him as Evy just rolled his eyes at his dramatics.

"So she killed them?" Donna asked.

"No, but she wrote," he continued, "She wrote those brilliant, clever books. And who's her greatest admirer? The moving finger points…at you, Lady Eddison."

"Leave me alone!" the woman buried her face in her hands.

"Will you stop that?" Evy demanded, pushing his hand down.

"So she did kill them!" Donna exclaimed.

"You too!" Evy rounded on her, Donna held her hands up in surrender.

"No, but just think…last Thursday night, what were you doing?" the Doctor asked the woman.

"Uh, I was uh…I was in the library," Lady Eddison got control of herself, "I was reading my favorite Agatha Christie, thinking about her plots, and how clever she must be. How is that relevant?"

"Just think," Evy began, turning to face the reverend, "What also happened on Thursday night?"

"I'm sorry?" the man frowned.

"You were talking about it out on the lawn just this afternoon, last Thursday boys broke into your church."

"That's correct…they did. I discovered the two of them, thieves in the night. I was most perturbed. But I apprehended them."

"Really?" the Doctor frowned, "A man of God against two strong lads? A man in his forties? Or, should I say, forty years old…exactly."

"Oh, my God!" Lady Eddison gasped.

"Lady Eddison, how old would your son be now?" Evy asked her, her eyes still on the reverend.
"Forty," she breathed, "He's...forty."

"Your child has come home," the Doctor stated.

The reverend laughed, "This is poppycock!"

"You said that you were taught by the Christian fathers, which means you were raised in an orphanage," Evy said.

"My son!" Lady Eddison turned to him, her eyes wide, "Can it be?"

"You found those thieves, Reverend, and you got angry," the Doctor began, "A proper, deep anger for the first time in your life and it broke the genetic code. You changed. You realized your inheritance. After all these years...you knew who you were. Oh, then it all kicks off 'cos this..." he picked up the Firestone, "...isn't just a jewel..."

"A Vespiform telepathic recorder," Evy stated, taking the jewel and holding it up, "Is part of you, your brain, your soul. When you activated the Firestone did too and it beamed your full identity right into your mind."

"And, at the same time, it absorbed the works of Agatha Christie directly from Lady Eddison. It all became part of you. The mechanics of those novels formed a template in your brain. You killed in this pattern because that's what you think the world is. Turns out we are in the middle of a murder mystery. One of yours, Dame Agatha."

He sat on the arm of the sofa as Evy moved to stand beside him.

"Dame?" Agatha asked.

"Not yet," Evy whispered to him as she nudged him.

"So he killed them?" Donna asked, "Yes? Definitely?"

"Yes," Evy nodded.

"Well, this has certainly been a most entertaining evening," the reverend said lightly, "Really, you can't believe any of this, surely, Lady Eddizzz..."

"Lady who?" the Doctor asked, watching him seriously.

"Lady Eddizzzon..."

"Little bit of buzzing there, Vicar?" the Doctor egged him on.

Evy placed a hand on his shoulder, squeezing it, 'Be careful,' she warned him. Vespiforms were not known to have the best tempers.

"Don't make me angry," the reverend stood.

"Why?" the Doctor continued, "What happens then?"

"Damn it! You humanzzz! Worshipping your tribal sky godzzz! I am so much more! That night, the Universe exploded in my mind! I wanted to take what wazz mine. And you, Agatha Christie, with your railway station bookstall romancezzz...what'zzz to stop me killing you?"

"Oh, my dear God!" Lady Eddison gasped, reaching for him, "My child!"
"What'zzz to stop me killing you all?" he asked, transforming into the wasp.

"Forgive me!"

"No, Clemency!" Hugh and Greeves pulled Lady Eddison out of the door, "Keep away! Keep away, my darling!"

Agatha stood, holding up the Firestone, "No! No more murder! If my imagination made you kill, then my imagination will find a way to stop you, foul creature!"

And then she ran from the room.

The Doctor took Evy's hand and they raced after her with Donna, the Vespiform following after them.

"Wait!" Donna shouted, "Now it's chasing us!"

They ran outside and closed the door behind them, trapping the wasp for just a moment as Agatha drove past them in her car, honking the horn. They ran for it, but she didn't stop.

"Come on!" the Doctor shouted as they ran towards the car, the Vespiform breaking through the door.

"Over here!" Agatha shouted, "Come and get me, Reverend!"

"Agatha, what are you doing?" Evy demanded.

"If I started this, then I must stop it!" she told them, flooring it and driving off.

"Come on!" the Doctor shouted, pulling them towards another car. The wasp hesitated, torn between the two cars before going after Agatha. Evy soniced the engine, starting it up as the Doctor drove off after her.

"You said this is the night Agatha Christie loses her memory," Donna gasped, regaining her breath.

"Time is in flux here," Evy told her.

"For all we know, this is the night Agatha Christie loses her life and history gets changed!" the Doctor added.

"But where is she going?!" Donna cried.

They drove past a sign for the Silent Pool, "The lake!" Evy shouted, spotting it, "She's heading for the lake!"

"What's she doing?" the Doctor frowned.

They pulled up just as Agatha jumped out of her car and ran towards the edge of the lake, the Firestone in her hands.

"Here I am!" she shouted as the wasp hovered before her, "The honey in the trap. Come to me, Vespiform."

"She's controlling it!" Donna shouted as they pulled to a stop.

"Its mind is based on her thought processes," Evy replied, jumping out of the car along with the
"Doctor, "They're linked."

"Quite so," Agatha nodded, "If I die, then this creature might die with me."

"Don't hurt her!" the Doctor shouted as they ran up to them, "You're not meant to be like this. You've got the wrong template in your mind."

"He's not listening." Donna replied edgily, before reaching out and grabbing the Firestone from Agatha, throwing it into the lake.

The wasp dove straight for it, right into the water, causing it to bubble and glow purple as they watched from the edge in sorrow.

"How do you kill a wasp?" Donna frowned, "Drown it. Just like its father."

"Donna, that thing couldn't help itself," the Doctor said quietly.

"Neither could I."

"Death comes as the end," Agatha replied, "And justice is served."

"Murder at the vicar's rage," the Doctor said, but Donna and Evy just rolled their eyes.

"Needs a bit of work," Evy told him.

"Just one mystery left, Doctor," Agatha said before glancing at Evy, "And you Miss Daniels, who exactly are you?"

The Doctor opened his mouth, trying to find an answer she would believe, when the woman suddenly doubled over in pain. Evy and the Doctor reached out, lowering her to the ground.

"It's the Firestone!" Evy gasped, "It's part of the Vespiform's mind! It's dying and it's connected to Agatha!"

Agatha glowed purple and they watched for one terrifying moment before it faded and she fell unconscious.

"It let her go," the Doctor breathed, "Right at the end, the Vespiform chose to save someone's life."

"Is she alright, though?" Donna frowned.

"Oh, of course!" his eyes widened, "The amnesia! Wiped her mind of everything that happened. The wasp, the murders…"

"And us," Donna nodded sadly, "She'll forget about us."

"Yeah, but we solved another riddle," he grinned, "The mystery of Agatha Christie. And tomorrow morning, her car gets found by the side of the lake. A few days later, she turns up at a hotel in Harrogate…with no idea of what just happened."

~8~

The trio stood by the TARDIS, watching as Agatha paused at the steps leading to a large, stone hotel in Harrogate.

"No one'll ever know," Evy remarked as they watched her continue to climb the steps.
"Lady Eddison, the Colonel, and all the staff, what about them?" Donna asked.

"A shameful story," the Doctor shrugged, "They'd never talk of it, too British. While the Unicorn does a bunk back to London Town, she can never say she was there."

"But what happens to Agatha?" Donna turned to look at the woman disappearing into the hotel.

"Oh, great life!" he grinned, "Met another man, married again. Saw the world. Wrote and wrote and wrote."

"She never thought her books were any good, though," Donna frowned, "And she must have spent all those years wondering."

Evy smiled, "Come with us," she said, pulling Donna back into the TARDIS.

The Doctor went over to a section of the grille by the console, lifting it up and squatting down, "I don't think she ever quite forgot," he told them, "Great mind like that, some of the details kept bleeding through. All the stuff her imagination could use."

"Like Miss Marple!" Evy smirked, nudging Donna.

"I should have made her sign a contract," Donna sighed.

"And…where is it?" he lifted out a treasure chest, "Hold on…here we go. 'C,'" he opened the chest, "That is 'C' for Cyberman…" he tossed aside a Cyberman chest plate, "'C' for Carrionites…" he set the globe with the three trapped Carrionites down but Evy picked it up and shook it violently, "Oi!"

"What?" she demanded, putting it down after a few more shakes, "They stabbed you in one of your hearts, I think I'm entitled to it."

He couldn't really argue with that, so he went back to his chest, tossing out a bust of Caesar, "And…" he pulled out a paperback, handing it to Evy.

"Christie, Agatha," Evy smiled, holding the copy of 'Death in the Clouds' up for Donna to see the giant wasp on the cover, "What do you think of that?"

"She did remember!" Donna gasped.

"Somewhere at the back of her mind, it all lingered," the Doctor nodded.

"That's not all though," Evy handed her the book, "Check the copyright."

"Facsimile edition published in the year…" her eyes widened as she read the first page, "5 billion!"

"People never stop reading them," Evy smiled, "She is the best-selling novelist of all time."

Donna sighed, "But she never knew."

"Well, no one knows how they're gonna be remembered," the Doctor told her, "We can only hope for the best. Maybe that's what kept her writing."

"The same thing that keeps us travelling," Evy agreed.

"Onwards?" he smiled, looking between the two of them.
"Onwards," Donna smiled back.

"Oh yes," Evy grinned, helping the woman to her feet as the Doctor set the TARDIS in motion, the three of them looking at the rotor rising and falling with a smile.

Chapter End Notes

Oh Doctor, eavesdropping again? Will he never learn? lol. I have to say, I am uber excited for Silence in the Library and Forest of the Dead. River always shakes things up doesn't she?

And, just to clear up some confusion with Evy's medical past. Around the time that the 9th Doctor regenerated, most likely because of it, Evy was struck with a terrible migraine, one of her Earth friends gave her aspirin, thinking nothing of it. Evy, in too much pain, took the pill...then began convulsing on the floor because it is deadly to Time Lords. She was rushed to the hospital where they pumped her stomach, but also gave her other medication that did nothing to help her already weakened mind and system. She started speaking/seeing what the Doctor was as a way to relieve the stress on her mind as she couldn't piece together her mental walls to keep him out, being weakened from the different medications not meant for Time Lord biology. She was put down as a mental case and sent to the Mason Institute, where they continued to give her medication, which just served to keep her in a perpetual 'broken' state, unable to keep the Doctor's mind separate from hers for the duration of her time there. Until she was saved by Ianto and Jack. So it wasn't that she took the aspirin in the Mason Institute and, well, went mental. It was the aspirin that would eventually lead her to end up in the Institute. Hope that cleared some things up :)

Next chapter...does the mysterious River Song know Evy? Harry Potter makes an appearance. And there's something...different...about River's sonic...
"Books!" the Doctor shouted as he helped Evy into her coat before putting his own on, she was currently sporting an orange dress with dark blue leggings, which should have been quite an odd combination, but just seemed to work for her, "People never really stop loving books," he headed for the doors, stepping out of the TARDIS with Evy and Donna to see a huge, but empty, reception area, "51st century. By now you've got holovids, direct to brain downloads, fiction mist, but you need the smell. The smell of books, Donna. Deep breath."

Evy laughed at his enthusiasm as they crossed the room to go through a door and down a staircase that gave them a view of the surface of the planet. A huge city just filled with bookshelves.

"The Library," the Doctor smiled, "So big it doesn't need a name. Just a great big 'the.'"

"Like 'the' Doctor," Evy smirked as he linked their arms together, winking at her joke.

"It's like a city," Donna gasped.

"It's a world," Evy corrected, "It's literally a world. An entire planet actually, home to the largest hard drive ever created in the core of it, the index computer. This is the one place where you could find every single book that's ever been written. Seriously, they've got whole continents of Jeffrey Archer, Bridget Jones..."

"Monty Python's Big Red Book," the Doctor cut in with a laugh, "Brand new editions, specially printed. We're near the equator, so..." he licked his finger and lifted it up to feel the wind.

"Oh don't do that," Evy shook her head at him, though with humor in her eyes.

"This must be biographies! I love biographies!"

"Yeah, very you," Donna joked, "Always a death at the end."

"You need a good death. Without death, there'd only be comedies. Dying gives us size."

Donna picked up a book but the Doctor quickly snatched it away with a cry of, "Spoilers!"

"What?" she frowned.

"These books are from your future," Evy explained, taking the book from the Doctor and setting it down on a little stack of books before her, "You can't just skip ahead, it would spoil the surprise of it. That's peeking at the end missy," she nudged Donna playfully.

"Isn't travelling with you two one big spoiler though?" Donna countered.

"We...try to keep you away from major plot developments," the Doctor reasoned, "Which, to be honest, I seem to be very bad at, 'cos you know what?"

Donna looked at him questioningly, but it was Evy who answered, "This is the biggest library in the Universe," she said, looking around, "So where is everyone?"

The Doctor moved to an information terminal and flashed it with his sonic, "It's silent," he agreed.
"What?" Donna looked around as well, "The Library?"

"The planet. The whole planet."

"Maybe it's a Sunday," Donna shrugged.

"No, I never land on Sundays. Sundays are boring."

"I thought you thought Fridays were boring?" Evy asked him.

"Well…that was before the whole Knights Templar thing."

"Right," she nodded, "Friday the 13th, your national holiday."

"Hey!" he cried jokingly.

Donna tried to hide her smile, they had been like that the last few trips, joking and more easy around each other, but...she'd noticed the Doctor sometimes keeping a distance from Evy, or at least trying to. He'd get caught up in something, a joke, a story, a puzzle, and he and Evy would be lost in their own world with it, until he seemed to realize how he was acting and would clam up suddenly, change the topic. It was starting to do her head in, one minute he was all smiles and easy and the next silent and serious. She could tell it got to Evy as well, the girl never said anything though, bless. But Donna could see it, the small flash of something in Evy's eyes when the Doctor would turn his back, as though she didn't know if it was just him or something she'd said or done that caused the sudden mood swing. But Evy seemed to shake it off quickly enough, leaving it to be just a typical Time Lord mood swing as she'd told Donna once when she'd asked about it. Donna though, she knew there was something else going on. But the Doctor wasn't much of a true talker on a good day, so she didn't know what to do to get him to answer the question of what was going on, not even for Evy's sake.

"Well...maybe everyone's really, really quiet," she supplied, shaking herself from her thoughts. She was fully prepared to tie him down to the captain's chair and try to pilot the TARDIS herself, whereever that may lead, as threat enough to get him to talk about whatever was going on with him if it came down to it.

"Well, now that the Doctor's here, that won't last long," Evy remarked.

"They'd still show up on the system," the Doctor countered, ignoring Evy's little jibe.

"Doctor, why are we here?" Donna sighed, "Really, why?"

"Oh, you know, just...passing," he shrugged.

"No, seriously," Donna turned to them, "It was all, 'let's hit the beach' then suddenly we're in a library. Why?" the Doctor didn't answer so she turned to Evy, "Evy?"

Evy opened her mouth to reply when the Doctor suddenly spoke up, "Now, that's interesting."

Donna sighed and turned to the computer, "What?"

"Scanning for life forms," he replied, "If I do a scan looking for your basic humanoids, you know, your book readers, few limbs and a face..." he pushed a few buttons and the screen flashed: Filtered Humaniod Life Form Scan: 3; complete.

Evy frowned, turning more to the computer, "There's nothing here besides us."
"Zippo, nada, see?" he agreed, "Nobody home. But if I widen the parameters to any kind of life..." he pushed a few more buttons and the numbers began to count until an ERROR sign came up: 1,000,000,000,000; Life Form Number Capped at Maximum Record.

"I trillion!" Evy breathed.

"A million million," he nodded, "Gives up after that. A million million."

"But there's nothing here," Donna stated, "There's no one."

"And not a sound. A million million life forms, and silence in the Library."

"But there's no one here. There's just books. I mean, it's not the books, is it? I mean, it can't be the books, can it? I mean, books can't be alive?"

"Ever read 'Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets?'" Evy asked her.

They all looked at each other and then down at the book Evy had put on the stack. Slowly they all reached out towards it, their fingers just barely brushing the cover when…

"Welcome!" a voice shouted.

They all jumped.

"That came from in there!" Donna turned back the way they came.

"Yeah!" the Doctor slid his hand down to Evy's and they headed back to the reception area. There was a Node there, like a modern art statue but with a living human face mounted into its head.

"I amCourtesy Node 710/aqua," it introduced, "Please enjoy the Library and respect the personal access codes of all your fellow readers regardless of species or hygiene taboo."

"That face, it looks real," Donna breathed.

"Yeah...don't worry about it," the Doctor waved her off.

"But a statue with a real face, though! It's a hologram or something, isn't it?"

"No, but really, it's...fine," he tried to assure her.

"Additional," the Node continued, "There follows a brief message from the head Librarian for your urgent attention. It has been edited for tone and content by Felman Lux Automated Decency Filter. Message follows. 'Run. For God's sake, run. No way is safe. The Library has sealed itself, we can't...oh, they're here. Arg. Slarg. Snick.' Message ends. Please switch off your mobile comm. units for the comfort of other readers."

"So that's why we're here then..." Evy mumbled, "Are there any other messages from the same date?"

"One additional message. This message carries a Felman Lux coherency warning of 5, 0, 11..."

"Yeah, yeah, fine, fine, fine, just play it," the Doctor said impatiently.

"Message follows. 'Count the shadows. For God's sake, remember...if you want to live, count the shadows.' Message ends."
Evy looked around at the shadows around them.

"Donna..." the Doctor began slowly.

"Yeah?" she asked, not at all liking his tone.

"Stay out of the shadows."

"Why, what's in the shadows?" she swallowed.

He didn't answer, just reached for Evy's hand again and led them slowly out of the room and into another where there were aisles and aisles of bookshelves several floors high reaching as far as the eye could see.

"So...we weren't just in the neighborhood," Donna reasoned as they walked down the brightly lit aisle.

"Yeah, we kind of, sort of lied a bit," the Doctor admitted.

"He got a message on the psychic paper," Evy told her as he fished in his pocket for it.

He held it up to her: The Library. Come as soon as you can. X.

"What do you think?" he asked as Donna took the paper, "Cry for help?"

"Cry for help, with a kiss?" Donna asked, holding it up to them.

"Oh, we've all done that," the Doctor shrugged.

Donna frowned and looked over at Evy who seemed to actually be ok with the situation, but Donna knew she really wasn't. When the Doctor had first gotten the message, oh yes she'd seen him looking at the paper before they changed directions, Evy had stiffened and gone very quiet. Donna could remember one of her talks with Evy about the Doctor and her not being completely Linked. Evy couldn't and wouldn't stop the Doctor from forming relationships with other women because, despite what the Link and her feelings told her, the Doctor wasn't hers yet. And Donna knew that killed her inside, what that girl must be thinking about that message, that little extra kiss at the end…

"Who's it from?" she asked.

"No idea," Evy replied.

"So why did we come here? Why did you let him…"

"Donna!" Evy shouted as she saw the lights on the far end of the corridor go out and a darkness start to move towards them.

"What's happening?"

"Run!" the Doctor yelled, grabbing Evy's hand as they ran down the aisle, the darkness following them. They came to a door, the Doctor frantically trying to force it open but it wouldn't budge, "Come on!" he grumbled as Evy moved to his side, the two of them flashing their sonics at it.

"What, is it locked?" Donna asked.

"Jammed! The wood's warped!"
"Sonic it, use the thingy!"

"We can't!" Evy told her, "It's wood!"

"What, it doesn't do wood?"

"Hang on, hang on…" he called, "If I can vibrate the molecules, fry the bindings, I can shatter line the interface…"

"Oh, get out of the way!" Donna shoved him before kicking the door open. They burst into the room, slamming the door shut behind them. Evy and Donna pressed themselves against the door as the Doctor ran to grab a book, jamming it into the handles to bolt it.

He spun around and saw a probe with a small camera in it hovering in the air before them, "Oh! Hello! Sorry to burst on you like this. Ok if we stop here for a bit?"

The probe just fell to the ground.

"What is it?" Donna looked at it as Evy and the Doctor knelt beside it.

"Security camera," Evy replied as she picked it up and began to look at it, "But it's switched itself off."

She passed it to the Doctor, who began to sonic it, glancing up at Donna, "Nice door skills, Donna," he grinned at her.

"Yeah, well, you know, boyfriends…sometimes you need the element of surprise," she shrugged, "What was that, what was after us? I mean, did we just run away from a power cut?"

"It's a possibility," Evy replied.

"Are we safe here?" Donna asked, looking around.

"Course we're safe," the Doctor grinned, nodding to the side at a sign, "There's a little shop," the cover of the camera lens popped open, "Gotcha!"

"Doctor," Evy put a hand on his arm, stopping him, as words appeared on the camera: No! Stop it! No! No!

"Ooh, I'm sorry," the Doctor's eyes widened as he realized the sphere had a consciousness, "I really am, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry," Evy took the sphere from him, gently trying to stroke it as though it might help soothe it, "It's alive."

"You said it was a security camera," Donna said.

"It is," Evy replied, cradling the probe, "But it's also alive," she held up the probe to see more words appearing: Others are coming.

"Others?" Donna frowned, "What's it mean, 'others'?” the Doctor and Evy shook their heads, just as puzzled, so she turned to another Node in the room, this one with a male face, "Excuse me, what does it mean, 'others'?"

"That's barely more than a speak your weight machine, it can't help you," the Doctor called over to her.

"So why's it got a face?" Donna shot back.
"This flesh aspect was donated by Mark Chambers on the occasion of his death," the Node replied.

"It's a real face?" Donna gasped.

"It has been actualized individually for you from the many facial aspects saved to our extensive flesh banks. Please enjoy."

"It chose me a dead face it thought I'd like? That statue's got a real dead person's face on it..."

"It's the 51st century," Evy placed the calmed probe down and walked over to Donna's side with the Doctor, "That's basically like donating a park bench."

"It's donating a face!" she cried in horror, backing away from it.

"No, wait, no!" the Doctor grabbed her and pulled her away from the shadow he'd glimpsed just in time.

"Oi!" she slapped his hands off her, "Hands!"

"The shadow, look," he told her, pointing to the triangular shadow cutting into the middle of the room.

"What about it?"

"Count the shadows," Evy repeated.

"One," Donna rolled her eyes, "There, I counted it, one shadow."

"Yeah..." Evy nodded, looking around, "But can you find what's casting it?"

They looked around, but couldn't see anything.

"Oh! I'm thick! Look at me, I'm old and thick! Head's too full of stuff," he smacked himself in the head, "I need a bigger head!"

"I think it's big enough thanks," Evy grabbed his hands to keep him from smacking himself again. But he just turned her to face a very dark corridor with a lamp flickering at the end.

"Power must be going," Donna remarked, following their gaze.

"Fission cells," Evy said slowly, seeing what the Doctor had realized in his mind, what was powering the lamp, "They could out burn the sun."

"Then why is it dark?" Donna frowned.

"It's not dark."

"That shadow!" Donna called, drawing their attention back. They turned around to see it was nowhere, "It's gone."

"We need to get back to the TARDIS," the Doctor said suddenly.

"Why?"

"Because the shadow isn't just gone," Evy told her, "It moved."

"Reminder: the Library has been breached, others are coming," the Node announced, "Reminder:
the Library has been breached, others are coming. Reminder: the Library has been breached...

A door in the back of the room burst open and six people in white spacesuits entered the room. Their leader walked straight over to the Doctor, switching the visor to transparent to reveal a female face. She smiled at him, "Hello sweetie."

Donna grabbed Evy's hand, squeezing it comfortingly, feeling the woman stiffen beside her at the endearment given to the Doctor.

"Get out!" the Doctor shouted at them.

"Doctor," Donna began…but Evy squeezed her hand back, shaking her head slightly so Donna wouldn't say anything.

"All of you, turn around, get back in your rocket and fly away!" he ordered them, "Tell your grandchildren you came to the Library and lived, they won't believe you."

"Pop your helmets, everyone," the leader turned to her team, "We've got breathers."

"How do you know they're not androids?" one of the other females with short hair asked as they all took off their helmets.

"Cos I've dated androids," the leader smirked, "They're rubbish."

"Who is this?" an older man demanded, looking at the Doctor, Evy, and Donna, "You said we were the only expedition, I paid for exclusives."

"I lied, I'm always lying. Bound to be others."

"Miss Evangelista, I want to see the contracts," the man turned to a young, pretty woman who scrambled to get the papers from her bag.

"You came through the north door, yeah?" the leader turned back to the Doctor, "How was that, much damage?"

"Please, just leave," he told them, "I'm asking you seriously and properly, just lea...hang on. Did you say expedition?"

"My expedition, I funded it," the older man replied.

"Oh, you're not, are you?" he groaned, "Tell me you're not archaeologists."

"Got a problem with archaeologists?" the leader raised an eyebrow.

"I'm a time traveler. I point and laugh at archaeologists."

"Professor River Song, archaeologist," she held out her hand to the Doctor.

"River Song, lovely name," he commented, "As you're leaving, and you're leaving now...you need to set up a quarantine beacon. Code-wall the planet, the whole planet. Nobody comes here, not ever again...not one living thing, not here, not ever," the short haired female walked towards the shadows at the edge of the lighted area they stood in and he saw her, "Stop right there! What's your name?"

"Anita," she introduced.
"Anita, stay out of the shadows," he warned, "Not a foot, not a finger in the shadows till you're safely back in your ship. Goes for all of you. Stay in the light. Find a nice, bright spot and just stand. If you understand me, look very, very scared," they all just looked at him, River even smiling, "No, bit more scared than that," Miss Evangelista looked a bit more scared now, "Ok, do for now. You, who are you?"

"Uh, Dave," one of the men replied.

"Ok, Dave..."

"Oh, well Other Dave, because that's Proper Dave the pilot, he was the first Dave, so when we..."

The Doctor just pushed Other Dave towards the door they had walked through, "Other Dave, the way you came, does it look the same as before?"

"Yeah," he shrugged, "Oh, it's a bit darker."

"How much darker?"

"Oh, like I could see where we came through just like a moment ago. I can't now."

"Seal up this door," the Doctor ordered quickly, "We'll find another way out," he walked back to the rest of the group.

"We're not looking for a way out," the older man stated, "Miss Evangelista?"

The pretty woman stepped up to the Doctor, Donna, and Evy with papers in her hand, "I'm Mr. Lux's personal...everything. You need to sign these contracts agreeing that your individual experience inside the Library are the intellectual property of the Felman Lux Corporation."

"Right, give it here," the Doctor took it.

"Yeah, lovely," Donna took hers.

"Thanks," Evy smiled at her, before they all tore them in half.

"My family built this Library!" Lux shouted, outraged, "I have rights."

"You have a mouth that won't stop," River commented, turning to the Doctor, not even noticing Donna or Evy stand behind him, "You think there's danger here?"

"Something came to this Library and killed everything in it, killed a whole world," he replied sarcastically, "Danger? Could be."

"That was 100 years ago. The Library's been silent for 100 years. Whatever came here is long dead."

"Bet your life?"

"Always," she smiled.

"What are you doing?" Lux turned to Other Dave.

"He said seal the door," Other Dave replied.

"Torch!" the Doctor snatched it from Lux's hands.
"You're taking orders from him?" Lux turned to Other Dave.

"Spooky, isn't it?" Evy smiled a bit, but the pit that had formed in her stomach had yet to diminish. River obviously knew the Doctor well...she recognized him but he didn't recognize her, meaning she was from his future. River didn't recognize her. Which had to mean one thing...she wasn't there in the Doctor's future. So what had happened? Clearly River had some sort of relationship with the Doctor...perhaps...perhaps they hadn't Linked before she wasn't there anymore? But why wasn't she there?

She took a breath, trying to calm herself down. It wouldn't do for her to jump to conclusions like this. She didn't know if she was there in his future or not, until River either said something to confirm it, she had to remain calm.

The Doctor walked over to the other side of the room and began looking around with his torch,
"Almost every species in the Universe has an irrational fear of the dark. But they're wrong. 'Cos it's not irrational. It's Vashta Nerada."

"What's Vashta Nerada?" Donna asked.

"It's what's in the dark," Evy told her quietly, "In a way, it IS the dark."

"Lights!" the Doctor turned back to the group, having heard Evy's comment, it was true the Vashta Nerada were, in a way, the dark, and the dark could be countered by light, "That's what we need, lights. You got lights?"

"What for?" River asked.

"Form a circle, safe area, big as you can, lights pointing out."

"Do as he says," River told her crew.

"You're not listening to this man?!" Lux demanded.

"Apparently, I am," River replied before turning to give out orders, "Anita, unpack the lights. Other Dave, make sure the door's secure, then help Anita. Mr. Lux, put your helmet back on, block the visor. Proper Dave, find an active terminal. I want you to access the Library database, see what you can find about what happened here a hundred years ago. Pretty Boy, you're with me. Step into my office."

She walked over to an information terminal as the Doctor put his ear to the floor for a moment, trying to hear something.

"Professor Song, why am I the only one wearing my helmet?" Lux asked.

"I don't fancy you," she replied cheekily.

The Doctor got up and walked over to Proper Dave at the computer, "Probably I can help you."

"Pretty Boy, with me I said," River called from the other side of the room by a desk.

The Doctor turned around, dumbfounded, "Oh, I'm Pretty Boy?"

"Yes," Donna said as Evy nodded, a bit amused at the nickname, "Ooh, that came out a bit quick!"

"Pretty?!!"
"Meh," Donna shrugged as Evy just smiled.

"Don't let your shadows cross!" he told the crew as he made his way over to River, "Seriously, don't even let them touch. Any of them could be infected."

"How can a shadow be infected?" Other Dave asked.

"Excuse me, can I help?" Miss Evangelista asked, seeing everyone had something to do but her.

"No, we're fine," Anita assured her.

"I could just...you know, hold things..."

"No, really, we're ok," Other Dave told her. Miss Evangelista walked off, her head down.

"Couldn't she help?" Donna asked as she and Evy walked up.

"Trust me," Other Dave said, "I just spent four days on a ship with that woman. She's..."

"Couldn't tell the difference between the escape pod and the bathroom," Anita finished, "We had to go back for her. Twice."

Donna nodded slowly before she and Evy walked off to go lean against a desk. Evy looked over at the Doctor and River.

"Hey," Donna took her hand, "It'll be ok...maybe she's just...one of his companions?"

Evy smiled and squeezed her hand in thanks, but focused in on the Doctor and River, just a bit too curious as to what they were saying.

"Thanks," River said.

"For what?" the Doctor frowned.

"The usual," she shrugged, "For coming when I call."

"Oh, that was you?"

"You're doing a very good job, acting like you don't know me," she smiled at him, "I'm assuming there's a reason."

"A fairly good one, actually."

"Ok, shall we do diaries, then?" she pulled out an old, blue book from her pack, "Where are we this time? Uh, going by your face, I'd say it's early days for you. Yes? So, um..." she flipped a few pages, "Crash of the Byzantium, have we done that yet?" he stared at her, expressionless, "Obviously ringing no bells," she turned a few more pages, "Right, um, oh. Picnic at Asgard. Have we done Asgard yet?" he continued to stare at her, "Obviously not. Blimey, very early days, then. Huh, life with a time traveler, never knew it could be such hard work," and then something dawned on her, "Look at you!" she whispered, "You're young."

"I'm really not, you know."

"Nah, but you are," she reached out to touch the side of his face.

Evy blinked.
"Your eyes," River whispered, "You're younger than I've ever seen you."

"You've seen me before, then?" he asked, shying away from her touch, something inside him just telling him it was wrong for anyone but...he shook his head slightly, not allowing the thought to form.

"Doctor...please tell me you know who I am?" she begged.

"Who are you?" he frowned.

Evy was snapped from her eavesdropping and the Doctor from his moment with River by a strange sort of alarm going off.

"Sorry, that was me" Proper Dave called from the computer, "Trying to get through into the security protocols, I seem to have set something off. What is that? Is that an alarm?"

"Doctor?" Donna called, pulling Evy over to him as he walked away from River, "Doctor, that sounds like..."

"It is," Evy said, "It's a phone."

"I'm trying to call up the data core, but it's not responding," Proper Dave continued, "Just that noise."

"But it's a phone!" Donna shouted as they walked over to the computer.

"Let me try something," the Doctor said, stepping up to the controls. He typed in a few things but they could all see he was growing frustrated by it not working.

Evy rolled her eyes, "Oh move over," she nudged him, taking his place and expertly typing in a code. The 'alarm' stopped and a symbol that was on the security camera popped up with 'Access Denied' flashing across it, "Ok, thought that wouldn't work, let me try...," she muttered, typing in a few more codes and suddenly they could see a little girl sitting at a table with colored pencils.

"Ok, there we go," Evy said, stepping to the side a bit as the Doctor stood next to her, everyone gathered behind them, but none of them noticed River looking at Evy with wide eyes.

"Hello?" the Doctor called at the girl.

"Hello," the girl turned to face them, "Are you in my television?"

"Well, no, I'm, we're...sort of in space."

"My fault," Evy said, "I was trying to call up the data core of a triple-grid security processor."

"Would you like to speak to my dad?" the girl asked.

"Dad or your mum, that'd be lovely," the Doctor nodded.

"I know you!" the girl's eyes widened as she saw the man and women from before, "You were in my Library."

"*Your* Library?" the Doctor frowned.

"The Library's never been on the television before. What have you done?"
"I just rerouted the interface..." Evy began but then the connection broke and the symbol was back, 'Access Denied.'

"What happened?" River asked, "Who was that? How did you do that?" she turned to Evy.

But the girl was too focused on the terminal to answer. She tried a few more keys before turning and running across to the terminal by River's things, "I need a different terminal."

"Keep working on those lights, we need those lights!" the Doctor shouted, going to join her.

"You heard him, people, let there be light." River said, walking over.

Evy glanced over to see a blue book lying on the desk, looking very beat up and worn, "Doctor..." she began, her eyes widening as she looked at it, "That looks just like the..."

River picked up the book and put it back in her pack.

"Sorry," River looked up at them, "You're not allowed to see inside the book, it's against the rules."

"What rules?" the Doctor frowned.

"Your rules," she told him, before turning to Evy, "How did you do that with the terminal back there? 'Cos I've only ever seen one person figure something out that he couldn't..." she nodded at the Doctor before looking at Evy seriously, "Evy?"

"How did you know my name?" Evy asked, eyeing her.

But then a giant grin broke out on River's face and she pulled the girl into a tight hug, "Oh I can't believe I didn't know it was you! I just thought you were off visiting Jack or something..."

"Beg your pardon?" Evy asked, pulling away slightly, startled at the action, at how River knew her name, at how she knew about Jack...

"You don't know me either?" River frowned before shaking her head disappointedly, "I expected it from him," she stuck her thumb at the Doctor, "He barely ever keeps in touch with anyone, but you..." then she noticed something and her eyes widened again, "You're wearing the Filter! Of course, that's why I didn't notice! What's the Doctor done this time?"

"What?" Evy frowned, very confused.

"You only wear that thing if he's done something stupid or you're angry at him...usually he does something stupid that makes you angry..." she trailed a moment before tilting her head, "Have you just come from Mars?"

"No..." Evy trailed a bit, "Why? What happens on Mars?"

"Spoilers," River smirked.

"No but really, what happens on Mars?" she asked. River just laughed and walked away. Evy turned to the Doctor, "I feel like I just missed something."

"Join the club," he replied as they both watched her join her crew.

But they didn't have long to think on it as books suddenly started flying off the shelves, "What's that?" Evy looked up, frowning.
"I didn't do that!" the Doctor immediately shouted, defending himself, he looked over at Proper Dave, "Did you do that?"

"Not me," he shook his head.

"What's CAL?" Evy breathed. The Doctor turned around to see the screen at the terminal was still displaying 'Access Denied' but this time with 'CAL' at the top.

"You're alright?" they heard Donna asked. They turned around to see the books had stopped flying off the shelves and Donna had gone to check on Miss Evangelista who looked very scared.

"What's that?" the girl asked, "What's happening?"

"I don't know," Lux replied.

Evy walked over to Donna to check on her, only to see Miss Evangelista seemed to be on the verge of having a panic attack.

"Oh, thanks for...you know...offering to help with the lights," Donna said suddenly, trying to calm the woman down.

"They don't want me," Miss Evangelista said, eyeing the crew trying to straighten out their equipment, "They think I'm stupid, 'cos I'm pretty."

"No they don't," Evy walked over, putting a hand on the woman's shoulder, "No one here thinks that."

"No, they're right though. I'm a moron, me. My dad said I have the IQ of plankton, and I was pleased."

Donna laughed a bit, thinking it was a joke, "See, that's funny."

"No...no, I...I really was pleased. Is that funny?"

"No," Donna frowned, "No."

Evy smiled, "Tell you what," she told the woman, "When this is all over, we'll take a trip to the planet Vessek...the plankton there have evolved into multi-celled organisms...and they are geniuses," she winked at Miss Evangelista, "Makes you a genius by association doesn't it?"

Miss Evangelista smiled at that but then the books started falling again.

"What's causing that?" River looked around, "Is it the little girl?"

"But who is the little girl?" the Doctor asked, "What's she got to do with this place?"

"How does the data core work?" Evy walked back over to them, "What's the principle? What's CAL?"

"Ask Mr. Lux," River nodded at him.

"CAL, what is it?" the Doctor asked, turning to face him.

"Sorry," Lux answered smugly, "You didn't sign your personal experience contracts."

"Mr. Lux, right now you're in more danger than you've ever been in your whole life. And you're
"I'm protecting my family's pride!

"Well, funny thing Mr. Lux, I don't want to see everyone in this room dead because some idiot thinks his pride is more important."

"So tell me," Evy said, drawing their attention, a smirk on her face, "Why didn't you sign his contract?" she raised an eyebrow as the Doctor sputtered for an answer.

"I didn't either," River laughed, Evy always knew how to get the Doctor, trap him, shut him up, "I'm getting worse than him."

"Ok, ok, ok," the Doctor shook his head at the two women and tried to get them back on point, "Let's start at the beginning. What happened here? On the actual day, a hundred years ago, what physically happened?"

"There was a message from the Library. Just one. 'The lights are going out.' Then the computer sealed the planet, and there was nothing for a hundred years."

"It's taken three generations of my family just to decode the seals and get back in," Lux replied.

"Three generations," Evy whistled, she would have loved to have taken a look at that seal, she did love a good puzzle.

The Doctor shook his head at her thoughts, though he had to admit, he would have loved to have seen it too.

"Um...excuse me..." Miss Evangelista called.

"Not just now," Lux waved her off.

"There was one other thing in the last message..." River began.

"That's confidential!" Lux turned on her.

"I trust them," River shot back, "With my life, with everything."

Evy and the Doctor glanced at each other. Evy's thoughts were very jumbled by now...so, River did know her? She was in the Doctor's future? But...how did she know them? Who was she to them? And why did the woman think the Filter had affected her? It was operating at such a low level, it really was only useful in keeping the Doctor from Linking to her and not much else so it couldn't have been the Filter...but then what? She recognized the Doctor easily enough...

"You've only just met them!" Lux shouted.

"No, they've only just met me," River countered.

"Um...this might be important actually..." Miss Evangelista called again.

"In a moment!" Lux shouted back.

"This is a data extract that came with the message," River held up a PDA for the Doctor and Evy to see.

"4,022 saved," Evy read, "No survivors."
"4,022, that's the exact number of people who were in the Library when the planet was sealed."

"But how can 4,022 people have been saved if there were no survivors?" the Doctor frowned.

"That's what we're here to find out."

"And so far, what we haven't found are any bodies," Lux grumbled.

A scream sounded from another room.

The Doctor and Evy shot off like a rocket, pulling their sonic's out to use as torches and running out of the room, careful of the shadows as they ran through an open panel in the wall, down a hall, and into a private study room.

"Everybody, careful!" the Doctor shouted, "Stay in the light."

"You keep saying that. I don't see the point!" Proper Dave said.

"Who screamed?" Evy asked the crew, already seeing who was missing.

"Miss Evangelista."

"Where is she?" the Doctor looked around, but there was no one in the room but them.

"Miss Evangelista, please state your current…" River began into the communicator, but she trailed off as her voice echoed from right before them, from a skeleton sitting in shredded white cloth, "Please state your current…" she stopped, her last words barely coming out as a whisper as she realized just who the skeleton was, "...position," she stepped forward, pulling on the skeleton's collar to reveal the green lights of the communicator still on, "It's her. It's Miss Evangelista."

"We heard her scream a few seconds ago," Anita gasped, "What could do that to a person in a few seconds?"

"It took less than a few seconds," Evy remarked, stepping back a bit, her face pale. Why did it have to be skeletons? She hated skeletons, always had, every incarnation it seemed. They just disturbed her. And to know that this was Miss Evangelista, someone who had been alive not ten seconds ago...it just made it worse. She could already feel her stomach turning and twisting.

As though sensing her ill ease, the Doctor reached behind him and took her hand, squeezing it in comfort.

"What did?" Anita turned to the girl whose gaze was trained on the skeleton, looking a bit green.

"Hello?" Miss Evangelista's voice came out of the communicator.

"Um, I'm sorry everyone, um, this isn't going to be pleasant," River swallowed, "She's ghosting."

"She's what?" Donna asked.

"Hello, excuse me?" Evangelista called, "I...I'm sorry, hello? Excuse me?"

"That's...that's her, that's Miss Evangelista!"

"I don't want to sound horrible, but couldn't we just...you know?" Other Dave began.

"This is her last moment...no, we can't," River glared at him, "A little respect, thank you."
"Sorry, where am I? Excuse me?"

"But that's Miss Evangelista," Donna said.

"It's a data ghost, she'll be gone in a moment," River told her before speaking into the communicator, "Miss Evangelista, you're fine, just relax. We'll be with you presently."

"What's a data ghost?"

"There's a neural relay in the communicator, lets you send thought mails," the Doctor told her, "That's it there, those green lights."

"Sometimes it can hold an impression of a living consciousness for a short while after death," Evy added quietly, "Like an after image."

"My grandfather lasted a day," Anita mumbled, "Kept talking about his shoelaces."

"She's in there!" Donna's eyes widened in horror.

"I can't see, I can't...where am I?"

"She's just brainwaves now," Proper Dave replied, "The pattern won't hold for long."

"She's conscious!" Donna shook her head, "She's thinking."

"I can't see, I can't...I don't know what I'm thinking."

"She's a footprint on the beach," the Doctor sighed, "And the tide's coming in."

"Where're those women? The nice women...are they there?"

"What women?" Lux asked.

"She means...I think, she means us," Donna looked up at Evy.

"Are they there? The nice women?"

"Yeah, they're here, hang on," River pressed the button down on the communicator and turned to Donna and Evy, "Go ahead. She can hear you."

"Hello? Are you there?"

Donna shook her head in horror, not wanting to speak. Evy stepped beside her, away from the Doctor, and took her hand, more for mutual comfort than just for Donna's sake, "We need to help her."

"She's dead," Donna swallowed.

"That doesn't matter. She can still hear us, she needs us."

"Hello? Are those the nice women?"

"Yeah," Evy replied, calling out, "Hello."

"Yeah," Donna added, swallowing hard and gripping Evy's hand, "We're...we're here. You ok?"

"Everything's so dark. What's wrong? What's going on? Hello?"
"Hey, hey, hey," Evy called, "Everything's fine. Remember? We're going to go to Vessek, to see the genius plankton?"

"What I said before, about being stupid. Don't tell the others, they'll only laugh."

"We won't," Evy promised, "We won't tell them."

"Don't tell the others, they'll only laugh..."

"We won't tell them," Donna frowned, "We said we won't."

"Don't tell the others, they'll only laugh..."

"We're not going to tell them," Donna looked at Evy, confused and scared.

"Don't tell the others, they'll only laugh..."

"She's looping now," River told them as Evy pulled Donna into a hug, "The pattern's degrading."

"I can't think, I...don't know, I...I...I...ice cream. Ice cream. Ice cream. Ice cream."

"Does anybody mind if I..." River stepped forward and turned off the relay, Evangelista was gone now.

"That was...that was horrible," Donna mumbled into Evy's shoulder as she held onto the woman for dear life, "That was the most horrible thing I've ever seen."

"No," River said solemnly, "It's just a freak of technology. But whatever did this to her, whatever killed her...I'd like a word with that."

"I'll introduce you," the Doctor said, before rushing back to the room they'd come from, the crew following after him as Evy and Donna brought up the rear, Donna calming just a bit.

"I'm gonna need a packed lunch," he said as he jumped back into the light.

"Hang on," River moved forward and crouched down at her bag, searching for food.

The Doctor crouched down as well, seeing the blue journal River had moved to get to it, "What's in that book?" he asked her.

"Spoilers," she replied, glancing up at him and then Evy over his shoulder before getting back to finding the food.

"Who are you?"

"Professor River Song, University of..."

"To me. To Evy. Who are you to us?"

He didn't say 'me' at the end. He couldn't. Whoever this River woman was, she knew the both of them. He was relieved, he'd been afraid that she hadn't known Evy in the future, terrified that something might have happened to her. But when River had recognized her, known things about her, he couldn't help but breathe easier.

Seeming to sense his thoughts River smiled, "Again...spoilers," she handed him a lunch box, "Chicken, and a bit of salad. Knock yourself out."
He gave her a long look, not too fond of not getting answers but had more pressing matters to attend to. He stood up, glancing at Evy a moment. She nodded and he walked to the edge of the light, Evy coming to join him.

"Right, you lot," the Doctor said, crouching down on the floor, "Let's all meet the Vashta Nerada!"

He pulled out his sonic and began creeping along the ring of light, flashing the shadows as Evy did the same, River and Donna looking on, the rest of the crew watching from a distance.

"You travel with them, don't you?" River asked Donna as they watched the two working, "The Doctor and Evy, you travel with them."

"What of it?" Donna demanded, she still wasn't too warm to River after her basically ignoring Evy and, in her mind, flirting with the Doctor.

"Proper Dave, could you move?" Evy asked as they came to his feet.

"Why?" he asked.

"Over there by the water cooler," the Doctor said, not giving an answer, "Thanks."

Proper Dave sighed and walked off.

"You know them, don't you?" Donna asked, "The both of them?"

"Oh, God, do I know them," River laughed, smiling warmly in thought, "We go way back, those two and me."

"Then how come you didn't recognize Evy?" Donna half glared at her.

"The Doctor tends to stick to suits and his specs are classic…but Evy," she shook her head, "That girl changes with the times, always different, always throwing me for a loop. Never know what to expect with her."

"So...you know them based on their clothes?" Donna frowned, "Well, how come they don't know you?"

"We don't go this far back," River shrugged.

"I'm sorry, what?"

"They haven't met me yet. I sent them a message but it went wrong, it arrived too early. This is the Doctor and Evy in the days before they knew me. And they look at me..." she frowned, "He looks right through me and she doesn't trust me and it shouldn't kill me, but it does."

"What are you talking about?" Donna cried, exasperated, "Are you just talking rubbish? Do you know them or don't you?"

"Donna!" the Doctor shouted, "Quiet! I'm working."

And then there was a smack.

"Ow!" the Doctor cried, "What was that for?"

"You were being rude to Donna!" Evy shot back.
The Doctor glared at her before going back to his work, mumbling about violent women.

River looked like she was at a cross between laughing at them and looking relieved that something was the same before something else dawned on her and she spun to face Donna, "Donna? You're Donna? Donna Noble?"

"Yeah," Donna nodded, "Why?"

Evy looked up from her work at hearing that River also seemed to recognize Donna.

"I do know the Doctor and Evy," River told her, "But in the future. Their personal future."

Donna's eyes widened as she too realized something of her own, "So why don't you know me? Where am I in the future?"

"Ok, we've got a live one!" the Doctor shouted, snapping Evy, River, and Donna away from their thoughts, "That's not darkness down those tunnels, this is not a shadow. It's a swarm. A man-eating swarm," he stood up, reaching out a hand to help Evy up, before picking up the lunch box. He picked a chicken leg and tossed it into the shadows. It bounced on the ground and was bone by the time it hit a second time, "The piranhas of the air, the Vashta Nerada," he commented, eyeing the bone as the rest of the crew looked shocked, finally starting to believe him about the danger they were in, "Literally 'the shadows that melt the flesh.'"

"Most planets have them, you know, but in smaller clusters," Evy mumbled, squatting down to look at the bone, "I haven't heard of an infestation to this scale, or this aggressive," she looked up at the Doctor who shook his head, neither had he.

"What d'you mean most planets?" Donna asked, "Not Earth?"

"Mhmm, Earth, and a billion other worlds," the Doctor said, "Where there's meat, there's Vashta Nerada."

"You can see them sometimes, if you know where to look," Evy told her, sanding up again, "The dust in sunbeams."

"If they were on Earth, we'd know," Donna shook her head.

"Nah, normally they live on road kill," the Doctor told her, "But sometimes people go missing."

"Not everyone comes back out of the dark," Evy remarked, staring at the shadows.

"Every shadow?" River asked.

"No," he shook his head, "But any shadow."

"So what do we do?" River turned to them.

"Daleks, aim for the eyestalk," the Doctor mumbled.

"Sontarans, back of the neck," Evy added.

"Vashta Nerada...run! Just run."

River shook her head, "Run? Run where?"

"This is an index point," Evy said slowly, looking at the Doctor meaningfully, "There must be an
exit teleport somewhere."

'We need to get Donna out,' she whispered in his mind at the same time, 'This is far too dangerous to expose her to.'

He nodded, looking around, over at Lux.

"Don't look at me, I haven't memorized the schematics!" Lux defended.

"The little shop!" Donna shouted suddenly, "They always make you go through the little shop on the way out so they can sell you stuff."

"You're right!" the Doctor shouted, "Brilliant! That's why I like the little shop!"

"Ok, let's move it!" Proper Dave began, heading towards the shop.

Evy grabbed the Doctor's arm. He looked at her, seeing her staring at something and followed her gaze, frowning.

"Actually, Proper Dave, could you stay where you are for a moment?" the Doctor called.

"Why?" he stopped and turned around.

"I'm sorry," the Doctor stepped up to him, "I am so, so sorry. But you've got two shadows."

They all looked down to see the dual shadows.

"It's how they hunt," Evy said quietly, "To keep their food fresh, they um, they latch on."

"What do I do?" Proper Dave asked, eyes wide in fear.

"You stay absolutely still," the Doctor told him, "Like there's a wasp in the room, like there's a million wasps."

"We're not leaving you, Dave," River promised.

"Course we're not leaving," the Doctor agreed, though he and Evy both knew Dave would probably be dead in mere moments.

"Where's your helmet?" Evy asked, "Don't move, just tell me where."

"On the floor, by my bag," his voice shook.

Anita moved to get the helmet when the Doctor called, "Don't cross his shadow!"

Anita nodded and made her way carefully around him, grabbing the helmet and handing it to Evy, "Thanks," she said, "Now, the rest of you, put your helmets back on, seal them up. We're going to need to pull out all the stops," she put the helmet back on Proper Dave.

"But, we haven't got any helmets," Donna turned to them.

"Yeah, but we're safe anyway," the Doctor tried to wave her off.

"How are we safe?"

"We're not, that was a clever lie to shut you up."
"River, is there anything we can do for the suits?" Evy looked at River.

"What good are the damn suits?" Lux asked, "Miss Evangelista was wearing her suit, there was nothing left."

"We can increase the mesh-density, dial it up 400 percent," River said, "Make it a tougher meal."

"Ok," the Doctor nodded, sonicing Proper Dave's suit, "800 percent! Pass it on," he held out his sonic to River but she just lifted up one of her own.

"Gotcha!" she smiled.

"What's that?" the Doctor frowned.

"It's a screwdriver."

"It's sonic."

"Yeah, I know," River rolled her eyes at the two of them staring at her, "Snap!" she turned around and began sealing all the suits with her sonic.

"Doctor…" Evy said slowly, he looked over at her, "That's my sonic."

His head snapped up and he looked over to River, eyeing the sonic to see it was indeed a lighter gray than his with a pale blue light, looking exactly like Evy's current sonic if a bit older. His eyes widened as he looked back at Evy who looked just as stunned by the revelation.

Evy shook her head fiercely, there would be plenty of time to figure that out later…but right now they had to worry about Donna.

"Donna!" she turned and grabbed Donna's hand, "Come with me," pulling her to a run towards the shop, the Doctor snapping out of his thoughts and going with them.

"What are we doing, we're shopping?" Donna asked, confused, "Is it a good time to shop?"

"No talking, just moving!" the Doctor took the lead, moving Donna onto the teleport pad, "Try it! Right, stand there in the middle. It's a teleport. Stand in the middle. Can't send the others, TARDIS won't recognize them."

"What are you doing?" Donna turned to them, but stood there.

"You don't have a suit, you're not safe!" Evy told her, flashing her sonic over the controls, setting them, keying the teleport into the TARDIS.

"You don't have a suit either! So you're in just as much danger as I am and I'm not leaving..."

"Donna!" the Doctor cut in, "Let me explain," he pushed a lever and teleported her away, "Oh, that's how you do it!" he grinned, turning to Evy to see her shaking her head at him, "What?"

"She's going to kill you when this is over," Evy told him.

He paled considerably, seeing the truth in that.

"Doctor!" River called from the other room, "Evy!"

They ran back to see Dave standing there with only one shadow, "Where did it go?" the Doctor
asked, hoping in vain that the Vashta Nerada had let him go.

"It's just gone," Proper Dave replied, "I...I looked round, one shadow. See."

Evy frowned.

"Does that mean we can leave?" River asked, "I don't want to hang around here."

"I don't know why we're still here," Lux said, "We can leave him, can't we? I mean, no offence..."

"Shut up, Mr. Lux," River said at the same time as Evy.

"Did you feel anything?" the Doctor asked him, "Like an energy transfer? Anything at all?"

"No, no, but, look, it's...it's gone," Dave turned in a circle to show that he was clear.

"Stop there, stop, stop, stop there, stop moving! They're never just gone. And they never give up," he knelt down and began to flash the shadow with his sonic, "Well, this one's benign."

"Doctor..." Evy shook her head, *There's no such thing."

"Hey, who turned out the lights?" Proper Dave suddenly asked.

The Doctor looked up, concerned, "No one, they're fine."

"No, seriously, turn them back on!"

"They are on," River said.

"I can't see a ruddy thing."

"Dave, can you turn round?" Evy stepped up to him as the Doctor stood as well.

Proper Dave began to turn back to face them, his helmet blackened, "What's going on?" he asked, "Why can't I see? Is the power gone, are we safe here?"

"Dave, I want you stay still, absolutely still," the Doctor told him as Dave stiffened, "Dave, Dave? Dave, can you hear me, are you alright? Talk to me, Dave."

"I'm fine, I'm ok, I'm...I'm fine."

"I want you to stay still, absolutely still."

"I'm fine, I'm ok, I'm...I'm fine. I can't...why can't I? I...I can't...why can't I? I...I can't...why can't I? I..."

"Look," Evy nodded at the communicator lights blinking.

"He's gone," River realized, "He's ghosting."

"Then why is he still standing?" Lux asked.

"Hey!" Proper Dave repeated, "Who turned out the lights? Hey! Who turned out the lights?"

Evy stepped closer to Dave.

"Evy, don't!" River shouted as the Doctor tensed, watching her cautiously.
"Dave, can you hear me?" she asked.

"Hey! Who turned out the lights?"

He suddenly reached out as though to choke Evy but the Doctor grabbed her and pulled her back. Evy whipped out her sonic and flashed Dave as he struggled to make his way towards them, his helmet lit up to reveal a skeleton, making her grimace.

"Who turned out the lights? Hey! Who turned out the lights?"

"Back from it, get back, right back!" the Doctor shouted, pulling Evy back with him as they all backed away from the skeleton struggling to walk towards them.

"Doesn't move very fast, does it?" River asked.

"It's a swarm in a suit," Evy said, her gaze not on the skeleton but on the shadow, "But it's learning."

They all looked down to see several shadows reaching out of the suit and moving towards them.

"What do we do?" Lux asked, "Where do we go?"

"See that wall behind you?" River shouted, "Duck!" she blasted the wall with a small blaster as Lux ducked, creating a square hole in it.

"Squareness gun!" the Doctor shouted.

"Everybody out! Go, go, go! Move it, move, move! Move it, move, move!" they all ran out of the room only to arrive in a shadowy aisle between shelves, "You said not every shadow."

"But any shadow!" the Doctor added.

"Hey," Proper Dave repeated as he appeared behind them, "Who turned out the lights?"

"Run!" River shouted.

The Doctor grabbed Evy's hand and they all ran down the shadows.

~8~

The Doctor stood on a stool in another book filled room, reaching up with his sonic to flash it at a hanging lamp while the rest of the group caught their breath from their run away from Proper Dave.

"Trying to boost the power," the Doctor mumbled down to Evy as she stood next to him, looking up at his work, "Light doesn't stop them, but it slows them down."

"So, what's the plan?" River asked, walking over to them, "Do we have a plan?"

"He never has a plan," Evy remarked. River pulled out her sonic and added it to the lamp, increasing the light, "Your screwdriver..." Evy looked over at her, "It's just like mine."

"Yeah," River nodded, "You gave it to me."

Evy shook her head, holding her own sonic in her hand, fiddling with it, "We don't give our screwdrivers to just anyone."
"I'm not anyone."

"Who are you?" the Doctor asked her yet again.

"What's the plan?" River waved him off.

"We teleported Donna back to the TARDIS," he said, getting off the stool, "If we don't get back there in under five hours, Emergency Program One will activate and..."

"Take her home, yeah," River nodded, turning back to the rest of the group, "We need to get a shift on."

"Doctor," Evy began, looking from her sonic to him, "Have you gotten the signal yet?"

He looked down at his sonic, now very concerned, "She's not there," he breathed, "I should've received a signal by now, the console signals me if there's a teleport breach."

"Well, maybe the coordinates have slipped," River suggested, "The equipment here's ancient."

Evy ran to a Node standing nearby, "Donna Noble, she might be here, somewhere in the Library, can you locate her position?"

The Node turned around to reveal Donna's face. Evy gasped, her eyes widening as she stepped back from it, straight into the Doctor's arms as he looked on in horror as well.

"Donna Noble has left the Library," the Node replied, "Donna Noble has been saved."

"Donna!" Evy called, horrified.

"Donna Noble has left the Library. Donna Noble has been saved."

"How can it be Donna?" River asked, "How's that possible?"

"Donna Noble has left the Library. Donna Noble has been saved."

"Oh, Donna!" the Doctor breathed.

"Donna Noble has left the Library."

"Hey," Proper Dave's voice echoed over to them as he appeared at the end of the aisle, but Evy and the Doctor were too devastated to notice, still staring at the Node, "Who turned out the lights?"

"Doctor!" River shouted, "Evy!"

"Donna Noble has been saved."

"Hey! Who turned out the lights?"

"Donna Noble has left the Library."

"We've got to go, now!" River ran forward and grabbed their arms, pulling them back to the rest of the group.

They were slowly backed into a corner as the Node continued to repeat "Donna Noble has left the Library. Donna Noble has been saved," and Dave stalked towards them saying, "Hey! Who turned out the lights?" over and over.
"What are we gonna do?" River gasped as the shadows approached.

But there was no reply, save for Proper Dave's, "Hey! Who turned out the lights?"

And the Node, "Donna Noble has left the Library. Donna Noble has been saved."

To be continued...

Chapter End Notes

Lol, it seems Evy is just as bad at eavesdropping as the Doctor. Shame on her. I really tried to keep the mystery about River, especially with Evy's thoughts on it, how they really don't know about her. I think adding a bit of Evy's thoughts, her questions, helped emphasize the confusion of the Time Lords.

Speaking of that, are you curious about River yet? I was debating whether or not to keep River's own thoughts/recollections to herself, but I really wanted some bits of her thoughts on the Doctor and Evy to come across, how well she knows them, things she knows about them (more to come in the next chapter). She's definitely let more slip here than she did in the episode, but there's a reason for that. She is very familiar and close to both, obviously, but more so to Evy...all will be revealed by the end of Series 6 :)

Next chapter...two secrets are revealed. The Doctor gets a push in the right direction. Someone moves out...and in...
River blasted a hole in the wall behind them, the crew fumbling through as River grabbed the Doctor and Evy's arm, pulling them through as well. It seemed to shake them out of their sorrow at seeing the Node of Donna and into action. They ran down a dimly lit corridor and into another room with a huge skylight, a large moon rising in the sunset.

"Ok, we've got a clear spot," River looked at the room, before rushing in through the shadows, "In, in, in! Right in the center, in the middle of the light, quickly! Don't let your shadows cross. Evy! Doctor..."

"I'm doing it," the Doctor said as he and Evy ran into the lit area and began to sonic the shadows looking for Vashta Nerada.

"There's no lights here," River looked around, "Sunset's coming, we can't stay long. Have you found a live one?"

"Maybe, it's getting harder to tell," he thrashed his sonic, "What's wrong with you?"

"We're gonna need a chicken leg," River looked around, "Who's got a chicken leg?" Other Dave handed her one of two, "Thanks, Dave," she threw it into the shadow the Doctor was examining, it was stripped to the bone as it hit the floor, "Ok...ok, we've got a hot one. Watch your feet."

"They're not going to attack if there's not enough of them," Evy said, "But they'll be gathering soon, they've got our scent now."

"Right," River nodded, "We're going to need to know where they're strongest," she picked up the last piece of chicken, "Evy!" she called, both Evy and the Doctor stopped to look at her, "I need your help."

"What do you need me for?" Evy frowned, eyeing her as she walked over.

"I need your powers."

"Powers?" the Doctor asked, frowning, "What powers?" he looked over at Evy to see her eyes wide and her face pale, "Evy, what powers?"

"He doesn't know yet?" River gasped, realizing she may have just let out a secret Evy wasn't prepared to share.

"No, he doesn't know yet!" Evy snapped, getting a bit angry, all her work at keeping it hidden and now this!

"No need to get snippy with me missy!" River glared at her, holding out the chicken, "We need to know if they're stronger on the ground or in the air."

"How is she supposed to help with that?" the Doctor asked, very confused. What powers were they talking about?

Evy sighed and took the chicken from River, turning to stand at the edge of the light. She held out

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*Forest of the Dead*

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.
her hand, looking at the chicken, and lowered her hand.

The Doctor's mouth dropped open as he saw the chicken hovering in the air.

"Evy…" he muttered, unable to speak more.

Evy concentrated, levitating the chicken above where the other bone was, holding it in the air. It was only a second before it was bone as well. She let it drop, stumbling back and wiping her nose frantically.

The Doctor stepped to her side, holding her face in his hands the moment he saw the blood on her coat sleeve, "What have you done?" he breathed. Evy looked down, he could already feel her mental shields rising, "No, no, no you don't."

Evy sighed, "I was stuck in a medical facility on Earth," she covered, giving him just enough of the truth for him to leave her alone, "Some medicine got in my system that altered my mind for a bit, gave me access to the dormant part of our minds that…"

"Amplifies our brainwaves so we can communicate telepathically," he nodded, figuring that out, "But Evy that's dangerous, you shouldn't use that."

"I know," she grumbled, "I really don't like using it."

He stared at her, sensing more to the story, but could also see a sort of haunted look in her eyes. He couldn't make himself force her to talk about it, it would hurt her to bring it up now, he was certain of it. Instead, he filed it away in the back of his mind and nodded, moving back to the shadows with his sonic, Evy following, thankful for his understanding. She knew he'd be bringing it up again, someday soon, but for now he was leaving her be and that was all she could ask of him.

"Who are they?" Other Dave turned to River as she walked back to the crew, "You haven't even told us. You just expect us to trust them."

"She's Evy," River introduced quickly, "He's the Doctor."

"And who are Evy and the Doctor?" Lux demanded.

"The only story you'll ever tell…if you survive them."

"You say they're your friends," Anita gasped, catching her breath, "But they don't even know who you are."

"Listen, all you need to know is this, I'd trust them to the end of the Universe. And actually, we've been."

"They don't act like they trust you."

"Yeah, there's a tiny problem. They haven't met me yet," she walked over to the Doctor and Evy, both trying to act like they hadn't been listening in, as Evy fiddled with the Doctor's sonic, "What's wrong with it?"

"There's a signal broadcasting from somewhere in the Library that's interfering with it," Evy replied.

"Then use the red settings."

"It doesn't have a red setting," the Doctor replied.
"Well, use the dampers."

"It doesn't have dampers."

"It will one day," she smiled, "So will Evy's," she held up her sonic, flicking it a bit to show them the new settings.

"So at some point in my future I just give you my sonic?" Evy asked her.

"Yeah," she smirked.

"Why?" Evy tilted her head to the side, "Why would I do that?"

River's eyes sparkled at the action, she could recall the Doctor telling her about the trait this incarnation of Evy, now that she knew it was Evy, seemed to have, "I didn't pluck it from your cold dead hands, if that's what you're worried about."

"And we know that because..." the Doctor glared at her, pushing Evy behind him just a bit.

"Listen to me," River glared right back at him, she knew just how protective he could be with Evy, she had witnessed it on more than a few occasions, but she had had enough of his suspicions, "You've lost your friend, you're angry, I understand. But you need to be less emotional, Doctor. Right now..."

"Less em...I'm not emotional!" he shouted.

"You are a bit," Evy told him, patting his arm.

"There are six people in this room still alive, focus on that," River told him, before shaking her head, looking at him, "Dear God, you're hard work young!"

"Young?" he blanched, "Who are you?!"

River just ignored him and turned to Evy, "How do you do it?"

Evy just looked, confused.

"Oh, for heaven's sake!" Lux interrupted, "Look at the pair of you! We're all gonna die right here, and you're just squabbling like an old married couple."

Evy could feel her hearts lighten at the disgusted look that briefly appeared on River's face at Lux's words. So River and the Doctor were not something of the sort in the future...she hoped.

"Doctor...Evy..." she looked between the two of them "One day I'm going to be someone that you trust completely, but I can't wait for you to find that out. So I'm going to prove it to you. And I'm sorry. I'm really very sorry," she leaned forward and whispered something in the Doctor's ear, stunning him completely, before doing the exact same thing to Evy.

Evy's mouth dropped open as she stared at River with wide eyes, "How do you know that?"

"Are we good?" she asked them, ignoring the question, "Doctor...are we good? Evy?"

"Yeah..." he nodded distractedly, his hand unconsciously taking Evy's, "Yeah, we're good."

"Good," she nodded, walking back to the rest of her crew.
'Theta…' Evy whispered in his mind, 'She knew our names…how did she know them?'

'I have no idea,' he replied.

Their names, she knew. Somehow, she knew. How? On Gallifrey, their names were common knowledge, much like on Earth, you would simply introduce yourself with a first and last name. But, unlike Earth, the Time Lords of Gallifrey did not share their names with other species. No one off world knew their names, no one but their own species were allowed. They weren't to tell...except for only one time...

He squeezed her hand, cutting off the thoughts that were going through both their minds, before tugging her back to the group, "Know what's interesting about my screwdriver?" he asked, glancing down as Evy fiddled with it, "Very hard to interfere with, practically nothing's strong enough...well, some hairdryers, but Evy's working on that. So there is a very strong signal coming from somewhere, and it wasn't there before, so what's new, what's changed?" the group just looked at each other, "Come on! What's new? What's different?"

"I dunno, nothing," Other Dave shook his head, "It's getting dark."

"It's a screwdriver, it can work in the dark," Evy replied, looking around, tilting her head as she noticed something above them, "Moonrise..." she looked at Lux, "What about the moon? What is it?"

"It's not real, it was built as part of the Library," Lux said, "It's just a doctor moon."

"A doctor moon?"

"A virus checker," he explained, "It supports and maintains the main computer at the core of the planet."

The Doctor looked back at the sonic, "Well, still active, it's signaling, look. Someone somewhere in this Library is alive and communicating with the moon, or, possibly, alive and drying their hair."

"No, the signal's definitely coming from the moon," Evy scrunched her forehead in concentration as she worked on the sonic, "I'm blocking it, but it's trying to break through..."

"Doctor!" a voice called, "Evy!"

They looked up to see a fuzzy image of Donna appear before them.

"Donna!" Evy shouted but the image faded.

"That was your friend!" River shouted, "Can you get her back? What was that?"

"Hold on, hold on, hold on," the Doctor took the sonic from Evy and began scanning the area Donna had appeared, his sonic would be the only one to pick up on anything as it was the one that had cancelled the signal allowing Donna to appear in the first place, "I'm trying to find the wavelength. Ah, I'm being blocked."

River sighed and turned around, frustrated, as the Doctor continued to scan. Evy glanced at him before walking over to the woman, "What happened to 'spoilers?'" she asked quietly, watching the Doctor absently.

River actually looked sheepish, knowing Evy was speaking of her slip on her powers, "I thought he knew, he always knew…" she frowned, watching the Doctor, before glancing at Evy. She was
hesitant to say what she wanted, but...she had let a secret slip that Evy didn't want the Doctor to know, the least she could do was make up for that, if just a bit, with an entirely different secret, one about the future, "It wasn't the Filter that was keeping me from recognizing you before, it was him."

"What do you mean?" Evy frowned.

"It's...odd, seeing the two of you like that...you're so...distant," River told her, "It was rare that I ever saw him without you unless it was for some sort of plan. You're just..." she sighed, this was it, "It's hard to describe, but you were always together, he always knew what you were thinking or how you were feeling, if you were in trouble, could feel it if you were hurt..."

Evy's eyes widened as she looked at River in shock. River just smiled lightly at her, "That's dangerous," Evy told her. She was so torn. It really was dangerous to let her know things about the future...but inside, she couldn't help but heave with relief, River knew them Linked...they were Linked in the future! They were actually Linked!

She and River were even now.

River shrugged, "A brilliant woman once told me that sometimes there's a stretch, a huge stretch that gets around the rules," she laughed, nudging Evy in the side. She was neither confirming nor denying the thoughts she knew were now racing through Evy's mind, but both of them knew exactly what River had meant to imply.

"Professor?" Anita asked, sounding very scared.

"Just a moment," River called to her before turning back to Evy.

"It's important," Anita swallowed, "I have two shadows..."

"Ok," River ordered, "Helmets on, everyone. Anita, I'll get yours."

"It didn't do Proper Dave any good..."

"Just keep it together, ok?" River walked over to her.

"Keeping it together, I'm only crying," Anita swallowed, tears streaming down her eyes but remaining very still, "I'm about to die, it's not an overreaction."

River put the helmet on her.

"Hang on," Evy stepped forward, sonicing the helmet so the visor went dark.

"Oh God, they've got inside!" River's eyes widened.

"No, no, no I tinted the visor. They might think they're already in there and leave her alone."

"Do you think they can be fooled like that?" River frowned at her.

"They might," she sighed, "I'm not sure, it's not like I can talk to a swarm in a suit."

"Can you still see in there?" Other Dave called to Anita.

"Just about," was her reply.

"Just...just...just stay back," the Doctor stepped forward, pulling Evy back with him as he turned
to look at River, "Professor, a quick word, please."

"What?" River asked.

"Down here," he led her over to the edge of the light with Evy and crouched down.

"What is it?"

"Like you said, there are six people still alive in this room," the Doctor said to her in a low voice.

"Yeah, so?" she shook her head.

"So why are there seven?" Evy asked, eyeing the extra figure in a spacesuit, standing in the background.

"Hey! Who turned out the lights?"

"Run!" the Doctor shouted, pulling Evy up. They ran out of the room with the spacesuit chasing them, repeating himself all the while. They ran through a corridor connecting two high buildings when the Doctor stopped, "Professor, go ahead, find a safe spot."

"It's a carnivorous swarm in a suit, you can't reason with it," River told him.

"Five minutes," Evy promised having already resigned herself to the fact that the Doctor was going to try this regardless of what River said.

"Other Dave, stay with them, pull them out when they're too stupid to live…" River began, "Well, pull him out," she nodded at the Doctor, "Evy's usually very apt at taking care of herself and him. Two minutes!"

River, Anita, and Lux ran off, leaving the three of them there as Proper Dave arrived at the corridor.

"Hey! Who turned out the lights?"

The Doctor moved closer to it, Evy stepping with him.

"You hear that?" the Doctor glared at the suit, "Those words? That is the very last thought of the man who wore that suit before you climbed inside it and stripped his flesh. That's a man's soul trapped inside a neural relay, going round and round forever. Now, if you don't have the decency to let him go, how about this? Use him. Talk to us. It's easy, neural relay. Just point and think. Use him, talk to us."

"Hey! Who turned out the lights?"

"Vashta Nerada can be found on any planet, but you tend to hunt in forests," Evy stated, "So what are you doing here, in a library?"

"We should go," Other Dave called, "Evy! Doctor!"

"In a minute," he called back, "You came to the Library to hunt, why? Just tell us why?"

"We...did...not," the Vashta Nerada replied.

"Oh, hello," he waved.
"We...did not."

"Take it easy, you'll get the hang of it."

"Did not what?" Evy asked.

"We...did not...come...here," it said.

"Well, of course you did, of course you came here," the Doctor shook his head.

"We come from here."

"From here?" Evy tilted her head, not understanding.

"We hatched here."

"But you hatch from trees, from spores in trees," the Doctor argued.

"These are our forests."

"You're nowhere near a forest. Look around you."

"These are our forests."

"You're not in a forest, you're in a library."

Evy looked around, her eyes widening as she realized what it was saying, "There are no trees in a library," Evy agreed, "But there's paper, and paper is from trees. Doctor, the books are the trees!"

"We should go," Other Dave said, "Evy! Doctor!"

"Books," the Doctor shook his head at the brilliance of it, "You came in the books. Microspores in a million million books."

"We should go. Evy! Doctor!"

Evy glanced back at Other Dave to see two shadows spouting out of him, but pretended as though she were looking at the books, 'They've taken Other Dave,' she warned the Doctor silently as she continued to 'look' around, but for some sort of way out.

They were surrounded now.

"The forests of the Vashta Nerada, pulped and printed and bound," the Doctor squeezed her hand, having heard her as he looked at the books, "A million million books, hatching shadows."

"We should go. Evy! Doctor!"

They couldn't ignore Other Dave any longer. They slowly turned to see the lights on his communicator blinking and a skull behind the helmet, making Evy tense.

"Oh Dave!" the Doctor sighed, "Oh, Dave, I'm so sorry."

The skeletons began to close in on them.

"Hey! Who turned out the lights?"

"We should go. Evy! Doctor!"
Evy began to pull him backwards.

'What are you doing?' he asked.

'There's a trapdoor right behind us,' she replied.

"Thing about me," the Doctor turned to the Daves, allowing Evy to pull him, trying to distract the men as they moved backwards, "I'm stupid, I talk too much, always babbling on, this gob doesn't stop for anything. Wanna know the only reason I'm still alive?" he paused, "Well, mostly Evy here, but after that, golden rule number one...always stay near the door!"

Evy flashed her sonic at the floor, opening up the trapdoor, and they fell through.

The skeletons jolted forward and looked down after them, but saw nothing. Evy put her sonic in her mouth, holding it with her teeth as she swung her other arm up to grab the metal structure under the floor that she and the Doctor were clinging to.

They waited for the skeletons to depart before making their way out, "So...I've been meaning to ask you," the Doctor began quietly, helping her out.

"'Bout what?" she asked, pulling herself up.

"Why did you pick this name?" he reached out a hand to help her, "Evelyn," he glanced at her, "You had a great name. Why not relate it to that?"

"Luna?" she asked him, "It means moon, what's so great about a moon? Evelyn was different, I thought it was lovely."

Their chosen names were the ones they were allowed to select, the ones they wished to be called by all those outside Gallifrey. It could be a title, a word, even another name, whatever they wished. The Doctor had chosen his because he loved helping others, making them feel better, every bit the doctor. She'd gone for a human name. She'd always admired the humans, and selecting a human based name just...fit.

The Doctor nodded, agreeing slightly, it was quite a lovely name, elegant, but still, her original name was every bit as fantastic in his opinion. He turned and led her off, back after the direction River had run in with the others, "Well, I think moons are brilliant. A moon makes a planet less lonely. A moon tends to have a profound effect on a planet. A moon can light up the darkest nights..." he trailed off, seeing her staring at him, "What?"

She just smiled at him and shook her head, she couldn't help but be suspicious that maybe he wasn't just talking about a planet.

~8~

In another room of the Library, River, Anita, and Lux were gathered around a small lit area, River examining the shadows with her sonic.

"You know...it's funny, I keep wishing the Doctor and Evy were here," River remarked.

"They are here, aren't they?" Anita asked, "They're coming back, right?"

"You know when you see a photograph of someone you know, but it's from years before you knew them? It's like they're not quite...finished, they're not done yet. Well...yes, the Doctor's here and Evy's here. They came when I called, just like they always do. But not my Doctor and certainly
not my Evy. Now them...I've seen whole armies just turn and run away from the Doctor. And he'd just swagger off with Evy, back to the TARDIS, and open the doors with a snap of his fingers. The Doctor and Evy...in the TARDIS...next stop: everywhere."

"Spoilers!" the Doctor shouted, rushing in with Evy, "Nobody can open a TARDIS by snapping their fingers. It doesn't work like that."

"It does for the Doctor," River smirked, "And, when the TARDIS is cross with you, Evy."

"I am the Doctor."

"Yeah," she scoffed, "Someday."

"How are you doing?" Evy ignored them both and walked over to Anita.

"Where's Other Dave?" River frowned.

"Not coming, sorry," the Doctor said.

"Well, if they've taken him, why haven't they gotten me yet?" Anita asked.

"We don't know," Evy remarked, looking down to see she still had two shadows.

"Maybe tinting your visor's making a difference," the Doctor shrugged.

"It's making a difference alright," Anita remarked, "No one's ever going to see my face again."

"Can I get you anything?" Evy asked.

"An old age would be nice," Anita laughed, "Anything you can do?"

"We're all over it," the Doctor told her.

"Doctor...Evy..." Anita began, "When we first met you, you didn't trust Professor Song. And then she whispered a word in your ears, and you did. My life so far...I could do with a word like that. What did she say?" she paused, "Give a dead girl a break. Your secrets are safe with me."

"Safe..." Evy began, her mind racing.

"What?"

"Safe," she repeated, turning to the Doctor with wide eyes, "You don't say saved."

"Nobody says saved," his eyes widened as well as he put his hands on her shoulders and shook her, "You say safe. The data fragment! What did it say?"

"'4,022 people saved!'"

"Doctor?" River asked, seeing them getting worked up, knowing what that meant, they'd just figured something out, "Evy?"

"Nobody says saved, nutters say saved, you say safe," he turned to face them.

"But you see, it didn't mean safe," Evy continued, "It actually meant saved!" she ran over to an information terminal and began typing in a command, bringing up an archival data log of the day everyone disappeared.
"See, there it is, right there!" the Doctor pointed, reading the screen.

"A hundred years ago there was a massive power surge, which was all the teleports trying to activate at the same time," Evy shook her head in excitement, "As soon as the Vashta Nerada began to attack someone must've hit the alarm. As a result the computer tried to teleport everyone out."

"It tried to teleport 4,022 people?" River breathed.

"Succeeded, pulled 'em all out, but then what?" the Doctor asked rhetorically, "Nowhere to send them, nowhere safe in the whole Library, Vashta Nerada growing in every shadow. 4,022 people all beamed up and nowhere to go. They're stuck in the system, waiting to be sent, like emails. So what's a computer to do? What does a computer always do?"

"It saved them," River blinked in wonder.

"To be able to maintain an entire world of books, like the Library does, it has to make use of the biggest hard drive ever," Evy smiled, "The core of the planet is the index to everything that's ever been written, it has backup copies of every single book here. But that doesn't remove the fact that it's a computer. It saved 4,022 people the only way a computer could, to its hard drive."

An alarm sounded.

"What is it?" Lux looked up, "What's wrong?"

"Autodestruct enabled in 20 minutes," the computer announced, "Maximum erasure."

"What's maximum erasure?" River asked, not liking the sound of that.

"20 minutes, this planet's gonna crack like an egg," the Doctor told them.

"No!" Lux cried, "No, it's alright, the doctor moon will stop it. It's programmed to protect CAL."

The screen on the terminal went blank.

"No, no, no, no, no, no!" the Doctor shouted.

"All Library systems are permanently offline," the computer announced, "Sorry for any inconvenience. Shortly..."

"We need to stop this, we've got to save CAL!" Lux called.

"What is it?" Evy turned to him, "What's CAL?"

Lux sighed, "We need to get to the main computer, I'll show you."

"It's the core of the planet."

"Well, then," River moved to the center of the room, "Let's go!" she soniced the floor and it opened up, "Gravity platform!"

"I bet we like you," the Doctor looked at her, seeing Evy smiling out of the corner of his eye.

"Oh, you do!" River winked at them.

They all stepped onto the platform and descended.
"Autodestruct in 15 minutes."

"The data core!" the Doctor shouted over the noises of the alarm, the computer, the platform, "4,000 living minds, trapped inside it."

"Yeah, well they won't be living much longer, we're running out of time," River replied.

"Help me," someone called, "Please, help me."

"What's that?" Anita tried to look around.

"Was that a child?" River asked.

"The computer's in sleep mode," Evy said, running over to a terminal as the lift set them down, "I'm trying to wake it up, but it won't budge."

"Evy, these readings!" River pointed to a reading on the side of the screen.

"You'd think it was...dreaming," the Doctor frowned as they crowded around Evy.

"It is dreaming..." Lux replied, "Of a normal life, and a lovely dad, and of every book ever written."

"Computers don't dream," Anita said.

"Help me," a little girl's voice sounded again, "Please help me."

"No," Lux replied grimly, "But little girls do."

He turned and pulled a lever to open a door to the next room where a single Node was stationed. It turned around to reveal a little girl's face, the same face from the screen.

"Please help me," she begged, "Please help me."

"Oh, my God!" River gasped.

"It's the little girl," Anita exclaimed, "The girl we saw in the computer."

"She's not in the computer," Lux told them, "In a way, she is the computer. The main command node. This is CAL."

"CAL is a child!" the Doctor's eyes widened, "A child hooked up to a mainframe? Why didn't you tell us this? We needed to know this!"

"Because she's family!" he shouted, before taking a breath to explain, "CAL...Charlotte Abigail Lux. My grandfather's youngest daughter. She was dying, so he built her a library, and put her living mind inside, with a moon to watch over her, and all of human history to pass the time, any era to live in, any book to read. She loved books more than anything. He gave her them all. He asked only that she be left in peace. A secret, not a freak show."

"You weren't protecting a patent, you were just protecting her," Evy said quietly, understanding the need to protect family. She'd tried to protect her brother, been shot in his place only to lose him anyway. She could understand.

"This is only half a life, of course. But it's forever."

"But then the shadows came," Evy nodded slowly, figuring it out.
"Shadows," the girl said, "I have to...I have to save. Have to save..."

"And she saved them," the Doctor breathed, "She saved everyone in the Library, folded them into her dreams and kept them safe."

"Then why didn't she tell us?" Anita asked.

"She must've forgotten," Evy said quietly. "You have to understand, she's got more than 4,000 living minds active inside her head, it must be like...being...well," she looked up at the Doctor, taking his hand in her own, recalling the buzz that had once been in their minds of their people, "Us..."

"So what do we do?" River swallowed, getting back to business.

"Autodestruct in ten minutes," the computer announced.

"Easy!" the Doctor shouted, "We beam all the people out of the data core, the computer will reset, and stop the countdown."

"Difficult," Evy shook her head, "Charlotte doesn't have enough memory space left to make that sort of transfer."

"Easy!" he smiled, "I'll hook myself up to the computer and she can borrow my memory space!"

"Difficult!" River looked at him, stunned, "It'll kill you stone dead!"

"Yeah, it's easy to criticize," he rolled his eyes.

"It'll burn out both your hearts and don't think you'll regenerate!" River argued as she glanced at Evy who seemed to be grabbing his hand tightly though he didn't notice.

"I'll try my hardest not to die," he shrugged, "Honestly, it's my main thing."

"Doctor!" River shouted. Evy was nearly hyperventilating.

"I'm right and this works!" he glared at her, "Shut up. Now listen, you and Luxy-boy, back up to the main Library. Prime any data cells you can find for maximum download, and before you say anything else, Professor, can I just mention, as you're passing air, shut up!"

"I hate you sometimes!" River shouted.

"I know!" the Doctor countered, not at all phased. She sounded like a teenager.

River glared at him, "Evy will hate you too."

That actually seemed to get something out of him.

He stiffened and looked down at Evy who was hiding her thoughts from him. His eyes widened as he realized what this would mean for her if he did this and failed.

"Mr. Lux, with me!" River turned and pulled Lux away, "Anita, if he dies, I'll kill him! After Evy's had her turn!"

They started to walk out, leaving Anita with them. She looked over at the Doctor who was staring at Evy, resting his head against her own as he held her. She was about to say something when Evy pulled away, wiping beneath her eye and got to work, frantically typing away at the computer.
"What about the Vashta Nerada?" Anita asked.

"These are their forests," the Doctor replied, resting a hand on Evy's shoulder, watching as she worked, "We're gonna seal Charlotte inside her little world, take everybody else away. The shadows can swarm to their hearts' content."

"So you think they're just gonna let us go?"

"It's the best offer they're gonna get," Evy replied bitterly.

She and the Doctor had been conversing silently. He'd shown her all the schematics in his mind of what he was attempting. And, though she was loathe to admit it, he actually seemed to have a chance at surviving this. But she was going to put in safety precautions on the computer download code to make sure he would be ok.

"You're gonna make 'em an offer?"

"They'd better take it, 'cos right now, I'm finding it very hard to make any kind of offer at all," the Doctor said, turning to face the suit, staring at it hard, "You know what..I really liked Anita. She was brave, even when she was crying, and she never gave in. And you ate her," he held out the sonic, flashing the visor till it became transparent to reveal the skeleton inside, "But I'm gonna let that pass," he told the Vashta Nerada, "Just as long as you let them pass."

"How long have you known?"

"I counted the shadows," Evy said from the terminal, not bothering to look over. Not only did she not want to see the skeleton within, but needing to focus on her task, she couldn't mess this up, one wrong calculation or command and the Doctor might die, she was not about to let that happen, "There's only one now."

The Doctor looked at the blinking relay, "She's nearly gone. Be kind."

"These are our forests," it said, "We are not kind."

"I'm giving you back your forests, but you are giving me them," he threatened, "You are letting them go."

He looked down at the shadows as they reached out towards him, "These are our forests. They are our meat."

"Don't play games with me!" he shouted, angry now, "You just killed someone I liked, that is not a safe place to stand."

"He's the Doctor, you're in the biggest library in the Universe," Evy spoke up, "Look him up."

There was a pause before the shadows withdrew, "You have one day."

The suit collapsed as River walked through the hall, "Anita!" she shouted.

"I'm sorry, she's been dead a while now," the Doctor told her, "I told you to go!"

"Lux can manage without me," River told him, walking over with purpose, "But you two can't."

And without warning, she punched the Doctor hard, knocking him out. She looked up at Evy who stumbled back from the controls, a hand on her head, feeling as though she had been punched as well. River took advantage of that and quickly knocked the woman out too.
The Doctor winced as he slowly became conscious once more, only to realize that he was handcuffed to a pillar a few feet away from a chair that River was sitting on, connecting wires to. He looked behind him to see Evy slumped there, handcuffed as well, but thoroughly unconscious.

"Autodestruct in three minutes," the computer announced.

"Sorry," River called, seeing him trying to examine Evy, "Hit her a bit harder than I thought…"

He looked up at her, seeing what she was doing, "Oh, no, no, no, no, come on, what are you doing? That's my job!"

"Oh, and I'm not allowed to have a career, I suppose?"

"Why are we handcuffed?" he asked her, struggling to get out of them, "Why do you even have handcuffs?"

"Spoilers!" she smirked.

"This is not a joke, stop this now, this is gonna kill you! Evy was only halfway through putting in safety precautions for Time Lord biology, I'd have a chance, you don't have any."

"You wouldn't have a chance, and neither do I," she argued, firmly believing that he would have died regardless of the precautions, "And I can't leave Evy like that," she swallowed hard, "I'm timing it for the end of the countdown. There'll be a blip in the command flow. That way it should improve our chances of a clean download."

"River! Please! No!"

"Funny thing is, this means you two have always known how I was going to die," she looked at him with tears in her eyes, "All the time we've been together, you both knew I was coming here. The last time I saw you, the real you, the future you, I mean…" she sniffled, "You turned up on my doorstep, with a new haircut and a suit and Evy was wearing a dress! You and Evy took me to Darillium to see the singing towers with..." she cut herself off, taking a breath as she recalled that night, "Oh, what a night that was! The towers sang, Evy cried, and you just held her."

"Autodestruct in two minutes," the computer announced.

"Neither of you would tell me what was wrong, but I suppose you knew it was time. My time. Time to come to the Library. Evy even gave me her screwdriver…that should've been a clue, she's had that thing forever," she looked over at the three sonics resting on top of her diary, lying on the ground between them.

The Doctor struggled to reach them, but they were too far away.

River watched him struggle before shaking her head, "You used to tell me such stories about your adventures with your companions, you know. With Rose, with Evy and Martha and Donna and…" she trailed off, catching herself once more, "But there was one point, one pivotal point that you told me once…and I get it now, it was about this, about the Library."

He looked up at her, alarmed.

"It's ok," she told him quickly, "You told me about it, told me it was ok to tell you," she swallowed, "You used to tell me about Evy, how you weren't Linked to her and all. You told me
about the chaos in your mind and your hearts here and now. How 'a remarkable woman' told you something that stuck with you," she sniffled, "And that was me, wasn't it? It was me."

"River…" the Doctor began but she shook her head.

"It's ok to move on Doctor," she told him, "It's ok to care about her," she nodded at where Evy lay prone, "You can't keep pushing her away because she will never leave, she can't and you don't want her to, not really. You can't keep pushing your feelings back either," she smiled at him, "Let her in Doctor, let yourself feel, and you will be happier than anyone has ever seen you."

The Doctor's breath caught in his throat at her words as he stared at her, her words striking far closer to home than he thought they should.

"Autodestruct in one minute," the computer announced.

He struggled violently, reminded of her eminent doom at the sound of the computer, he reached as far as he could for one of the screwdrivers.

"There's nothing you can do," she called.

"You can let me do this!"

"If you die here, it'll mean I've never met you. And Evy...she would be destroyed."

There was a look in her eye that made him think River had seen Evy like that before. But that would be impossible, she'd just said they were both alive when she'd spoken of Evy giving her the sonic, so how could she possibly know what Evy would suffer should her Link die?

"Time can be rewritten," he argued.

"Not those times," she warned him, "Not one line! Don't you dare!" she took a breath, "It's ok. It's ok, it's not over for you, for either of you. You'll see me again. You've got all of that to come. You and Evy and me, time and space. You watch us run!"

A tear fell down her cheek but she just smiled at him.

"River, you know my name!" he shouted, "You know Evy's name!"

"Autodestruct in ten..." the computer began to count down.

"You whispered my name in my ear. Same with Evy."

"...nine, eight, seven..."

"There's only one reason we would ever tell anyone our names. There's only one time we could..."

"Hush, now!" she smirked, "Spoilers..."

"...three, two, one..."

River plugged together two cables, the Doctor turning away as a blinding white light filled the room.

~8~

The Doctor sat there in the computer core, still in handcuffs, staring at the seat River had occupied,
she was gone. He looked over at Evy, so sorry that she hadn't been awake for that...to hear all that River had said and implied about the three of them. Something just told him that Evy and River would come to have a close relationship in the future.

There was movement next to him and he returned his focus to see Evy waking up, wincing at the pain in her head, "Ow..." she mumbled, before recalling what had happened, "River!" she tried to get up only to be tugged down by the handcuffs, "Doctor?" she looked up, seeing him looking so heartbroken, feeling his sorrow through the Link, "What happened?"

"She took my place," he muttered quietly.

Evy gasped, seeing the events play out in his mind. She tried to reach for him, but the handcuffs kept her from moving, she looked over at the sonics lying there, focusing and one flew through the air and into her hands. She uncuffed herself and then did the same for the Doctor, helping him up.

He looked down at her, wiping a small bit of blood that had peeked out of her nose away before just hugging her.

~8~

The Doctor and Evy stood near the door in the back of the reception room now full of people being teleported away. They were scanning the crowd for Donna as she had stopped by only to mention something about finding someone before heading out again. They just wanted to leave.

"Any luck?" Evy asked as Donna walked back to them.

"There wasn't even anyone called Lee in the Library that day," Donna sighed, "Suppose he could have had a different name out here, but let's be honest, he wasn't real, was he?"

"Maybe not," the Doctor replied.

"I made up the perfect man. Gorgeous, adores me, and hardly able to speak a word. What's that say about me?"

"Everything," he said, lost in thought.

Evy smacked him in the back of the head.

"Ow!" he cried, only to look over and see Donna glaring at him, offended, "Sorry, did I say 'everything'? I meant to say 'nothing.' I was aiming for 'nothing,' I accidentally said 'everything.'"

"What about you?" Donna asked them, "Are you alright?"

"We're always alright," Evy took a breath.

"Is 'alright' special Time Lord code for...‘really not alright at all?’"

"Why?" the Doctor looked at her.

"Cos I'm 'alright,' too," she told them, trying to smile but not quite managing it. They all looked at each other, understanding the loss and sorrow perfectly. Evy reached out and draped an arm around the ginger woman's shoulders, leading her out of the Library, the Doctor following behind.

They walked over to the balcony they had seen the whole of the planet from when they arrived. The Doctor pulled River's diary out of his pocket and put it on the balustrade.
"Your friend...Professor Song...she knew you two in the future, but she didn't know me," Donna told them, "What happens to me? Because when she heard my name, the way she looked at me..."

"Donna...this is her diary," the Doctor told her, "Our future. We could look you up. What do you think? Shall we peek at the end?"

"Spoilers, right?" Donna smiled at them.

"Right," Evy nodded.

They looked at each other and were able to resist the temptation. Evy put River's sonic on the book.

"Come on," the Doctor said, turning away, "The next chapter's this way."

"Wait!" Evy shouted, running back to the sonic. She picked it up and began to fiddle with it, "Why? Why give her my screwdriver? Why do that?"

The Doctor's eyes widened as he caught her thoughts, "Future us had years to think about it, all those years to think of a way to save her, and what we did was give her a screwdriver!"

"And to give her mine..." Evy slipped open a compartment to reveal a green neural relay, blinking, "I fiddle!"

"Oh, look at that!" he gasped, taking the sonic from her, "We are very good!"

"What have you done?" Donna asked.

"Saved her!" the Doctor shouted before running through the Library with Evy, "Stay with us! You can do it, stay with us!" he shouted at the clip, "Come on, you and Evy and me, one last run!"

"Shortcut!" Evy shouted, flashing the gravity platform with her own sonic to disable it. The Doctor looked over at her, holding out his hand for her to take and then they jumped. They managed to land on the floor easily and took off down the hallway towards the core. The Doctor jamming the older sonic into the computer as the Node of Charlotte smiled at them.

~8~

They made their way back to the TARDIS, still buzzing from the excitement of the run and managing to save River in some form. They stopped outside the doors, Evy looking over at the Doctor before nodding at the TARDIS.

He stared at it, lifting a hand before snapping his fingers, beaming as the door opened to reveal Donna waiting inside for them. They walked in, laughing, as the Doctor snapped his fingers again, shutting the door.

"You're going to do that all the time now aren't you?" Evy asked, rolling her eyes at him.

He just laughed.

Donna yawned and mumbled an excuse of having seven years of sleep to catch up on or something before heading off to her room for a rest.

"Well...that was an interesting adventure," Evy commented. It wasn't everyday they came in contact with someone from their own future. The Doctor nodded as they too made their way up the steps and towards their rooms, "Well...I suppose this is good night then," she nodded at him and
opened her door.

"Um Evy," he called. She turned around to see him rubbing the back of his neck, "I was…I was thinking…um, we…we seem to have formed something of a habit whenever we try to sleep…"

Evy's eyes widened as she knew exactly what he was trying to talk about. Ever since she'd woken up in the Doctor's arms that one time after the *Titanic*, it seemed every time she'd gone to rest, she'd woken up the same way. The Doctor always seemed to have a reason for doing so. The first time had been from his concern for her, then she'd had nightmares about the war after seeing the destruction of Pompeii, then she hadn't been able to sleep due to the Ood song playing over in her mind, then they lost Jenny…he'd seemed to make a habit of staying with her at night but it had been a few adventures after Agatha Christie when he'd come to stay with her for no reason at all that she realized he seemed to enjoy it.

"Yes, we have," she agreed, still not too sure where it was going.

"Right," he nodded, "Well, I was wondering if you would want to…stay in my room?" there was silence as Evy stood there, stunned, "It's just, I have a bigger bed, much more comfortable than trying to fit two on a small one and I…I have a lot of room, if you…if you wanted to bring a few of your things as well."

He was asking her to move in with him.

She blinked, technically they did live together, but he was inviting her into his room…to stay. He was trying to play it off as a logical move for comfort reasons, but they could both tell there was far more to it than that.

She nodded slowly, "That…that sounds good…I…" she nodded at her room, "Give me a few minutes to get some things together?"

He nodded, heading into his room to move some things around as Evy stepped into her room. She shut the door behind her and leaned against it, stunned, before shaking her head and heading to her closet to get her things together so she could move out of her room. She paused as she picked up her first bit of clothing before turning and walking to her desk. She opened the bottom shelf and pulled out something she had bought when she'd first arrived on Earth to comfort herself but never used…a pristine blue journal that looked remarkably like the TARDIS.
Things are finally starting to pick up with the Doctor and Evy! He has been feeling things for Evy, noticing her, thinking of her, all these little feelings he tries to keep buried because he's still holding on (barely) to Rose and not wanting to hurt the memory of his human companion. But now, River's pointed it out, made him realize he HAS been feeling things for Evy. He's aware now. And now that he knows he feels something, all his feelings coming together, he just has to figure out what, exactly, it is he's feeling. He's been denying it for ages so he doesn't really know what it is, but he will. Soon. Sooner than you think...mu wah ha ha ha ha!

Now here's a question...who is River Song? Hmmm...she's still the biological daughter of her parents and half human...but who is she to the Doctor and Evy? I seriously love the little twist I have for the Wedding(?) of River Song. That little bit about the one time they can tell someone their name, I do have a twist for that as well. We never really heard it in the show, exactly what time that would be, it was slightly implied in TWORS, but never 100 percent confirmed, so until they say it, I've got my own twist as a back up :)

I will say this. With how messed up River's timeline involving the Doctor is, she HAS seen Evy deal with the death of her Link. I won't say when. I won't say how. But she does know what Evy will go through and everything about just how will make sense by the end of Series 6. As for the Doctor's thoughts on how River could see Evy dealing with that while the two of them were alive in giving her the sonic, well, they don't know how often they meet River in the wrong order. To them, they think this is
just a fluke, something went wrong and they met someone who already knew them, they won't know till later that they tend to meet out of order.

But now we know, they are Linked in the future. But as for when that happens...my lips are sealed.

Though, another question could be asked, "You and Evy took me to Darillium to see the singing towers with..." with who? I'm smirking evilly right now, because we won't find out till I post First Night/Last Night at the end of Series 6.

Next chapter...Jethro bonds with someone and the Doctor seems to be coming to terms with something. But what?
"I said, no!" Donna shouted over the phone.

The Doctor winced, holding the phone away from his ear a moment before putting it back, "Sapphire waterfall, it's a waterfall made of sapphires!" he argued, "This enormous jewel, size of a glacier, reaches the Cliffs of Oblivion, and then shatters into sapphires at the edge, they fall 100,000 feet into a crystal ravine."

"I bet you say that to all the girls," Donna replied cheekily.

"Oh, come on Donna!" Evy took the phone from his hand, "They're boarding right now! It'll be no fun if we just see it on our own. That's why he brings companions. Four hours, please Donna, don't leave me alone with him for four hours!"

"Hey!" the Doctor mock whined.

Evy just laughed and shook her head jokingly, she hadn't been serious.

"No, because that's four hours there and four hours back," Donna laughed as well, "That's eight hours with him…speaking of which, he's bound to make it like a school trip. I'd rather go sunbathing."

"Be careful," Evy warned, "Xtonic sunlight is...

"Oh, I'm safe. It says in the brochure this glass is fifteen feet thick."

"Alright, I give up," the Doctor said as Evy handed him the phone back, "We'll be back for dinner, we'll try that anti-gravity restaurant. With bibs."

"It's a date," Donna agreed, "Well, not a date. Well, not for us at least, you and Evy though…"

Donna laughed again. She'd noticed the two of them sharing the Doctor's room recently, they were so a couple even if they wouldn't admit it, "Oh get off!"

"See you later," the Doctor said.

"Oi!" Donna called before he hung up, "You be careful, alright?"

"I've got him Donna," Evy leaned over to speak into the phone, "Nothing to worry about."

"Yeah," the Doctor agreed, "Taking a big space truck with a bunch of strangers across a diamond planet called Midnight, what could possibly go wrong?"

"Oi!" Evy smacked him behind the head, "I told you to stop saying things like that! You'll jinx us!"

They could both hear Donna laughing on the other end, "Have fun!" she called before the line went dead. The Doctor hung up the phone, gingerly rubbing the back of his head.

Evy just shook her head at him and linked arms, "Come on you!" she pulled him towards the shuttle. The Doctor flashed the psychic paper and they were on in no time. They took a seat near the cockpit, watching over their seats as the rest of the passengers boarded while the hostess turned
to an older blond woman across the aisle from them.

"Complimentary juice pack and complimentary..." the hostess began.

"Just the headphones, please," the woman requested.

"There you go," she handed the headphones over and moved on to the Doctor and Evy, "That's the headphones for Channels 1 to 36, modem link for 3D vidgames, complimentary earplugs, complimentary slippers, complimentary juice pack, and complimentary peanuts. I must warn you some products may contain nuts."

"I bet it's the peanuts," Evy grinned, popping one in her mouth. She found this regeneration was rather fond of nuts...though, traveling with the Doctor, it wasn't a surprise.

"Enjoy your trip," the hostess smiled, starting to move on.

"Oh, we can't wait!" the Doctor grinned as well, "Allons-y!"

"I'm sorry?" the hostess paused.

"It's French," Evy rolled her eyes at him.

He nodded, "For let's go!"

"Fascinating," the hostess nodded before walking off to the people in the row behind them, "Headphones for channels 1-36..."

"Oh no, thank you, not for us!" the older man replied.

"Earplugs, please," the young black woman beside him requested.

"There you go," the hostess handed them over.

"They call it a sapphire waterfall, but it's no such thing, sapphire's an aluminum oxide, but the glacier is just a compound silica with iron pigmentation!" the older man remarked.

The Doctor and Evy peeked around the seats to see the hostess move to the last passengers, a middle aged couple and their gothic/punk son, "...complimentary juice pack and complimentary peanuts," she began, handing the boy the products.

"Thank you," the woman took the offered objects.

"Have you got that pillow for my neck?" the older man behind them asked the woman with him.

"Yes, sir," the woman handed it to him.

"And the pills?"

"Yes, all measured out for you, there you go."

The Doctor and Evy kneeled in their seats to look over the tops at them

"Hobbes!" the older man introduced, seeing them, "Professor Winfold Hobbes!"

"I'm the Doctor, hello!" the Doctor shook his hand.

"And I'm Evy," Evy smiled, shaking his hand as well.
"It's my 14th time!" Hobbes told them.

"Oh!" the Doctor's eyes twinkled with excitement, "Our first."

"And I'm Dee Dee, Dee Dee Blasco," they shook hands with his young assistant as well.

"Now don't bother them!" Hobbes pulled her back into her seat, "Where's my water bottle?"

They looked up to the hostess, still handing out items to the couple, "... complimentary slippers, complimentary juice pack, and complimentary peanuts, I must warn you some products may contain nuts."

"Don't be silly," the woman said, calling to her son sitting away from them across the aisle, "Come and sit with us. Look! We get slippers!"

"Jethro!" the father ordered, "Do what your mother says."

"I'm sitting here," he defended.

"Oh, he's ashamed of us. But he doesn't mind us paying, does he?"

"Oh, don't you two start," the woman scolded them, "Should I save the juice pack or have it now? Look, peach and Clementine!"

They sat back in their seats as the hostess walked to the front of the shuttle to address everyone, "Ladies and gentlemen and variations thereupon, welcome on board the Crusader 50, if you would fasten your seatbelts, we'll be leaving any moment. Doors!" the doors shut, "Shields down!" the shields on the windows descended, "I'm afraid the view is shielded until we reach the Waterfall Palace. Also, a reminder, Midnight has no air, so please don't touch the exterior door seals. Fire exit at the rear, and should we need to use it...you first," she laughed, as though it were absurd that anything would happen, "Now I will hand you over to Driver Joe."

"Driver Joe at the wheel!" a voice said over the intercom, "There's been a diamond fall at the Winter Witch Canyon, so we'll be taking a slight detour, as you'll see on the map..." a map appeared on the screen, "The journey covers 500 kliks to the Multifaceted Coast, duration is estimated at four hours. Thank you for travelling with us and, as they used to say in the olden days, wagons roll!"

The engines began and the shuttle started to move.

"For your entertainment, we have the Music Channel playing retrovids of Earth Classics," the hostess pushed a key on a remote and screens appeared in front of each passenger, showing Raffaello Cara singing 'Do it Do it again,' "Also, the latest artistic installation from Ludovico Klein," she pushed another key and a hologram show appeared, "Plus, for the youngsters, a rare treat, the Animation Archives," one more button and a projector began to play old cartoons all over the walls, "Four hours of fun time! Enjoy!"

Everything was playing at once, creating a terrible cacophony that no one but the couple in the back seemed to enjoy.

Evy leaned over to the Doctor, pulling her sonic out, "You take the cartoons and the show and I take the music?"

He grinned at her and pulled out his own. They flashed their sonics and everything stopped.
"Well, that's a mercy!" Hobbes cried from behind them.

"I do apologize, ladies and gentlemen and variations thereupon," the hostess replied, stepping to the front, trying to get everything working again, "We seem to have a failure of the Entertainment System..."

"Ooh..." Evy laughed as the Doctor actually looked saddened by the hostess's words.

"But what do we do?!" the woman in the back asked.

"We've got four hours of this!" her husband agreed, "Four hours of just...sitting here?"

"Tell you what!" the Doctor popped up over his seat, Evy slowly pulling herself up as well, "We'll have to talk to each other instead!"

Evy had to laugh at all the passengers staring at him oddly while he just grinned like an idiot.

~8~

98 kliks later and everyone was laughing and telling stories, just having a great time apart from the blond woman across from Evy and the Doctor, Sky, who just sat away from them all reading a book.

Evy and the Doctor were currently standing by Val and Biff, the middle aged couple, listening to their stories as their son Jethro looked on, embarrassed.

"So Biff said, 'I'm going swimming,'" Val continued a story.

"Oh, I was all ready, trunks and everything!" Biff laughed, "Nose plug!"

"He had this little nose plug, you should've seen him."

"And I went marching up to the lifeguard, and he was a Shamboni, you know, those big foreheads?"

"Great big forehead!"

"And I said, 'where's the pool?' And he said..."

"'The pool is abstract!'" both he and Val said at the same time, Evy glanced over at Jethro to see him mouthing the words as well, clearly this was a favored story of his parents.

"It wasn't a real pool!" Val laughed.

"It was a concept!" Biff shouted.

"And you wore a nose plug!" the Doctor laughed.

"I was like this!" he pinched his nose, "Mmm...where's the pool?"

They all started laughing as Evy snuck off and plopped down next to Jethro, startling him, "I take it they tell this story a lot?" she asked, laughing.

"Every person they talk to," he deadpanned, running a hand down his face, "They're so embarrassing!"
"That's parents for you," Evy shook her head in thought, "You'd be hard pressed to find any that aren't. But the best part of having embarrassing parents..." she trailed.

"What?" he asked, actually interested.

"You know all sorts of stories about them that actually would embarrass them," she patted him on the arm, "So go on, tell me one."

He paused in thought before considering it, an evil grin broke out onto his face as he turned to her, "Ok, well there was this one time..."

Evy listened intently as the Doctor looked over at her, smiling softly as he watched her getting Jethro laughing. She glanced up a moment, seeing the soft look in the Doctor's eyes, before turning back to the story. She'd noticed there was something else in his gaze lately. Ever since they'd met River in the Library, she'd catch him looking at her with a sort of...look. It was almost like he was trying to figure something out. She didn't know what, he was very careful about his thoughts, but whatever it was she hoped it was a good thing.

~8~

150 kliks later, they had moved on to professor Hobbes and Dee Dee. Evy and Dee Dee had gone to get the boys something to drink in the galley, Dee Dee finally getting a chance to speak away from Hobbes.

"I'm just a second-year student, but I wrote a paper on the Lost Moon of Poosh, Professor Hobbes read it, liked it, took me on as a researcher," Dee Dee was telling her as they walked back to the main part of the shuttle, "Just for the holidays. Well, I say researcher, most of the time he's got me fetching and carrying. But it's all good experience!"

"And did they ever find it?" the Doctor asked, taking a tea from Evy.

"Find what?" Dee Dee asked, confused.

"The Lost Moon of Poosh!"

Evy nudged him in the stomach, 'You weren't there when she told me about it...'

It had been an increasing habit of theirs. They often found themselves hearing what the other was saying, confusing who had been speaking to who and who wasn't there.

Luckily Dee Dee didn't seem to notice as she just laughed, assuming she'd been speaking louder than she had, "Oh no! Not yet!"

"Well, maybe one day you'll be the one to do it," Evy smiled, holding up her tea in a toast, "To Poosh!"

"Poosh!" Dee Dee smiled and they all clicked their cups together.

~8~

209 kliks later and they were getting around to Sky, sitting next to her as they ate their meals.

"No, no, we're with this friend of ours, Donna" the Doctor was saying as Sky asked if they were honeymooning on Midnight. Evy had flushed red and the Doctor had actually sputtered a bit at first.
"She's still in the Leisure Palace," Evy added from her spot in their original seats, talking across the aisle to her, "You?"

"No, it's just me," Sky sighed.

"Oh, I've done plenty of that," the Doctor said, "Travelling on my own. I love it. Do what you want! Go anywhere!"

"No, I'm still getting used to it. I've...found myself single rather recently, not by choice."

"I'm so sorry," Evy reached across the way to put a hand on the woman's arm in comfort, "May I ask what happened?"

"Oh, the usual," she shrugged, "She needed her own space, as they say. A different galaxy, in fact. I reckon that's enough space, don't you?"

"Yeah...I had a friend who went to a different Universe," the Doctor told her.

Evy blinked before frowning, she couldn't hear the usual pain and strain in his voice this time as she had every other time before when he spoke of Rose. He seemed like he had just been commenting on something he could relate to. Not quite so casually as speaking of the weather, but more...stating a fact. She reached out across the Link a bit, getting a deeper look at what he was feeling right then and couldn't help but smile. It seemed he was finally coming to terms with the fact that Rose wasn't there any longer but that she was safe and with her family. She couldn't help but give a small smile, he was one step closer to moving on, that hint River had given her now seemed just that little bit more like a reality than a hope, if he kept this up.

"Oh, what's this, chicken or beef?" Sky asked, changing the topic as she looked at her food.

"It uh...it might be both," Evy replied skeptically as she eyed the piece on her fork before setting it down, not at all hungry anymore.

~8~

251 kliks later professor Hobbes had set up a projector with his research on Midnight and was showing them to everyone as sort of a lecture.

"So, this is Midnight, d'you see?" he spoke, "Bombarded by the sun! Xtonic rays, raw galvanic radiation. Dee Dee, next slide!" she switched the slide, "It's my pet project. Actually, I'm the first person to research this. Because you see...the history is fascinating, because there is no history. There's no life in this entire system, there couldn't be. Before the Leisure Palace Company moved in, no one had come here in all eternity. No living thing."

"But how d'you know?" Jethro asked, "I mean, if no one can go outside..."

"Oh, his imagination!" Val rolled her eyes, "Here we go!"

"He does have a point," Evy defended the young man who grinned smugly at his mother, happy that someone had defended him, seemed interested in his thoughts.

"Exactly!" Hobbes exclaimed, "We look upon this world through glass. Safe inside our metal box. Even the Leisure Palace was lowered down from orbit. And here we are now, crossing Midnight, but never touching it."

There was a rattling and the engines went silent.
"We've stopped," Val said, "Have we stopped?"

"Are we there?" Biff asked, it hadn't seemed like all that much time had passed.

"We can't be, it's too soon," Dee Dee shook her head.

"They don't stop, Crusader vehicles never stop," Hobbes added.

"If you could just...return to your seats, it's...just a small delay," the hostess walked forward, though the Doctor and Evy could tell she seemed just as confused as the rest of them and even a bit nervous.

"Maybe just a pit stop," Biff suggested.

Evy eyed the hostess as she walked to the intercom, "What's going on?"

"There's no pit to stop in, I've been on this expedition 14 times, they never stop," Hobbes replied.

"Well evidently, we have stopped, so there's no point in denying it," Sky snapped.

"We've broken down!" Jethro laughed.

"Thanks, Jethro," Val shook her head.

"In the middle of nowhere!"

"That's enough, now stop it!" Biff scolded his son.

"Ladies and gentlemen and variations thereupon, we're just experiencing a short...delay, the driver needs to stabilize the engine feeds," the hostess informed them, "It's perfectly routine, so if you could just stay in your seats..."

The Doctor glanced at Evy, 'I'm going to check on it, can you keep an eye here? she nodded.

He nodded at her and stepped towards the cabin.

"No, I'm sorry sir, I...could you please..." the hostess began.

"There you go, engine expert!" he flipped the psychic paper at her, "Two ticks!"

He opened the door and stepped into the cockpit as Evy sat back in her seat and closed her eyes, concentrating so she could see what he saw, not noticing Sky watching her.

"Sorry sir, if you could just sit down!" the hostess called, "You're not supposed to be in there..."

But the door shut, "Sorry, if you could return to your seat, sir..." Driver Joe said as the Doctor stepped up.

"Company insurance, let's see if we can get an early assessment," he flipped them the psychic paper as well, "So, what's the problem, Driver Joe?"

"We're stabilizing the engine feeds, won't take long."

'Engine feeds' fine,' Evy said in his mind, having glimpsed it from the corner of his eye, 'Not to mention, micropetrol engines don't need stabilizing.'

He almost laughed but cleared his throat and turned to the drivers, "Um, no, 'cos that's the engine
feed, that light there," he tapped it, "And it's fine, and it's a micropetrol engine, so stabilizing doesn't really make sense, does it? Sorry! I'm the Doctor, I'm very clever. So, what's wrong?"

"We just stopped, look, all systems fine and everything's working, but we're not moving," the second man replied.

The Doctor flashed it with the sonic, "Yeah you're right. No faults. And who are you?"

"Claude, I'm the mechanic. Trainee."

"Nice to meet you."

"I've sent a distress signal," Joe added, "They should dispatch a rescue truck, top speed."

"How long till they get here?"

"About an hour."

"Well, since we're waiting...shall we take a look outside?"

'Don't,' Evy frowned, she just had a bad feeling about that.

"Just...lift the screens a bit?" the Doctor ignored her.

"It's 100 percent Xtonic out there, we'd be vaporized," Joe gaped.

"No, those windows are Finitoglass, they'd give you a couple of minutes. Go on! Live a little!"

Joe slowly reached out and raised the shields, the three of them, and Evy through the Doctor, looked out at the landscape in awe. It was shining and sparkling and lovely.

'Wow,' Evy had to admit, it was quite a sight.

"Oh, that is beautiful..." the Doctor breathed.

"Look at all those diamonds!" Claude gasped, "Poisoned by the sun. No one can ever touch them."

"Joe, you said we took a detour?"

"Just about 40 kliks to the west," Joe nodded.

"Is that a recognized path?"

"No, it's a new one, the computer worked it out, on automatic."

'So we're the first to see it then?' Evy asked.

He grinned, nodding to himself and her, "We're the first. This piece of ground. No one's ever been here before. Not in the whole of recorded history."

'Doctor over there!' Evy shouted, catching sight of something out of the corner of his eye for just a moment before it was gone.

"Did you just..." Claude began but then shook his head, "No, sorry, it's...nothing."

"What did you see?" the Doctor asked seriously, if Claude had seen the same thing as Evy...a shadow her mind was thinking.
"Just there," Claude pointed, "That ridge. Like...like a shadow. Just...just for a second."

"What sort of shadow?" he asked, but then alarms sounded.

"Xtonic rising!" Joe shouted, lowering the shields, "Shields down."

"Look, look, there it is, there it is, look, there!" Claude pointed frantically.

"Where?!" the Doctor tried to see, but the shields closed, "What was it?"

"Like, just, something...shifting, something sort of...dark. Like it was...running."

"Running which way?"

"Towards us..."

'Doctor, get out of there,' Evy called out to him.

"Right, Doctor, back to your seat and not a word, rescue's on its way," Joe said, ushering him out, "If you could close the door, thank you."

Evy opened her eyes just as the door to the cabin opened and the Doctor stepped through.

"What did they say?" Sky asked, glancing between the Doctor and Evy, "Did they tell you? What is it, what's wrong?"

"Oh, just stabilizing, happens all the time," the Doctor shrugged, walking back over to Evy, taking her hand in his own. He began rubbing circles in it with his thumb, something she'd noticed he did when he was trying to work something out.

"I don't need this," Sky grumbled, "I'm on a schedule. This is completely unnecessary!"

"Back to your seats, thank you," the hostess said, moving to the cockpit.

"Excuse me, Doctor, but they're micropetrol engines, aren't they?" Dee Dee asked quietly, leaning forward so as not to alarm the other passengers.

If only Hobbes had that tact, "Now, don't bother the man."

"My father was a mechanic," Dee Dee told them "Micropetrol doesn't stabilize, what does 'stabilize' mean?"

"Well," the Doctor began, "Bit of flim-flam. Don't worry, they're sorting it out."

"So it's not the engines?" Hobbes asked.

"It's just a little pause, that's all."

"How much air have we got?" he gasped loudly.

"Oh my God," Evy shook her head at the man. For a professor and having taken this tour 14 times he was rather ill prepared.

"Professor, it's fine," Dee Dee tried to reassure him.

"What did he say?" Val stood up, hearing the bit about the air.
"Nothing!" Evy shouted.

"Are we running out of air?"

"I was just speculating..." Hobbes said as the hostess returned.

'Oh NOW he realizes he's being loud,' Evy said to the Doctor.

"Is that right, miss?" Biff stood as well, "Are we running out of air?"

"Is that what the Captain said?" Val's eyes widened.

'They're going to cause problems later aren't they?' Evy speculated.

'Be nice,' he scolded her lightly.

"If you could all just remain calm..." the hostess began.

"How much air have we got?" Val asked.

"Mum, just stop it," Jethro rolled his eyes.

"I assure you, everything is under control," the hostess said.

"Well, doesn't look like it to me!" Biff shouted.

"Well, he said it..." Val began.

"...it's fine, the air is on a circular filter..." Dee Dee tried to speak.

"...he started it..." Val said as everyone began to talk all at once, panicked.

"Everyone..." the Doctor tried to get their attention, but they all ignored him.

"Oi! The lot of you!" Evy shouted, "Stuff it!" they instantly quieted, staring at her in shock as the Doctor tried to stifle his smile, "Thank you. Now, if you could be so kind as to take a moment to listen to Dee Dee..."

Dee Dee looked startled for a moment before standing, "Um...it's just that...well, the air's on a circular filter so...we could stay breathing for ten years."

"There you go!" Evy crossed her arms.

"And I've spoken to the Captain, I can guarantee you, everything's fine," the Doctor said.

'Not again!' Evy groaned in his head, 'What did I tell you about saying things like that?'

Two loud knocks resounded off the wall of the shuttle.

'Told you,' Evy rubbed her head, there they went again.

"What was that?" Val jumped away from the wall.

"It must be the metal," Hobbes remarked, "We're cooling down, it's just settling..."

"Rocks," Dee Dee added, "Could be rocks falling."
"What I want to know is, how long do we have to sit here?" Biff called out.

The double knocks sounded again in another part of the shuttle.

"What is that?" Sky asked.

"Is someone out there?" Val frowned.

"Now, don't be ridiculous!" Hobbes shook his head.

"Like I said, it could be rocks," Dee Dee repeated.

"We're out in the open," the hostess countered, "Nothing could fall against the sides."

Two more knocks.

"Knock knock," the Doctor muttered.

"Who is there?" Jethro answered, far too entertained by it.

"Is there something out there?" Sky asked, "Well? Anyone?"

The knocks came again.

"What the hell is making that noise?"

"I'm sorry, but the light out there is Xtonic, that means it would destroy any living thing, in a split second," Hobbes said, "It is impossible for someone to be outside."

Two more knocks.

"Well, what the hell is that, then?!" Sky demanded.

The Doctor looked over to the wall where the last two knocks had occurred to see Evy pressing her ear against it. He walked over, handing her his stethoscope to use instead. She took it from him with a smile of thanks as she put it on and continued to listen.

"Ma'am!" the hostess shouted, seeing her there, "You really should get back to your seat."

"I don't hear anything," Evy commented.

"Hello?" the Doctor called against the wall.

The knocking came from behind them, by the fire exit at the rear of the shuttle.

"It's moving..." Jethro commented.

There was a rattling on the door as though someone were trying to open it.

"It's trying the door!" Val shouted.

"There is no 'it,' there's nothing out there," Hobbes insisted, "Can't be."

The door rattled again before whatever was out there moved around it, knocking twice, as always, from the roof then the side door.

"That's the entrance," Val gasped, "Can it get in?"
"No, that door's on two hundred weight of hydraulics," Dee Dee reassured her.

"Stop it," Hobbes rolled his eyes at her, "Don't encourage them."

"What do you think it is?" she turned to him.

Biff went to the door, "Biff, don't..." Val called.

"Mr. Cane, really don't..." Evy began.

"Nah, it's cast iron, that door..." he pounded it three times...

And then the knocks sounded back three times.

"Three times!" Val gasped, "Did you hear that, it did it three times?!!"

"It answered!" Jethro laughed.

"It did it three times!"

"Alright, alright, alright, everyone, calm down," the Doctor shouted, holding up his hands.

"No, but it answered, it...answered, don't tell me that thing's not alive, it answered him!" Sky argued.

Three knocks.

"I really must insist you get back to your seats!" the hostess called.

"No!" Sky snapped at her, "Don't just stand there telling us the rules! You're the Hostess, you're supposed to do something!"

The Doctor went to the door and knocked four times, repeated by the same amount of knocks as well.

"Stop that!" Evy pulled him back.

"What is it, what the hell's making that noise?" Sky yelled in a panic, "She said she'd get me. Stop it, make it stop, somebody make it stop! Don't just stand there looking at me, it's not my fault, he started it with his stories..."

"Calm down!" Dee Dee turned to the woman in concern.

"...and he made it worse..." Sky pointed at the Doctor.

"You're not helping!" Val shouted at her.

"...why couldn't you leave it alone? Stop staring at me! Just tell me what the hell it is!"

"Calm down!" Dee Dee repeated.

The knocking became continuous as a panicked Sky backed away towards the cockpit door.

"It's coming for me, oh it's coming for me, it's coming for me..." she cried, "It's coming for me! It's coming for me!"

She screamed.
"Watch out!" Evy shouted as she ran for the woman, but the shuttle jolted violently, throwing her into a row of seats. The lights went out and sparks flew. Everyone fell over, screaming, the Doctor pulled himself up and scrambled over to Evy, pulling her to him until the shuttle stilled.

"Alright?" Biff asked, helping his wife up, "Ok."

"Argh..." the Doctor groaned, looking over at Evy, "Arms. Legs. Neck. Head. Nose...yes..." he then patted himself down, mumbling the same, "We're fine..." he looked at the rest of the guests, "Everyone else?"

"Are you ok?" Evy asked as she and the Doctor pushed themselves up, "Everyone alright?"

"Earthquake, must be..." Hobbes tried to reason.

"But that's impossible, the ground is fixed, it's solid," Dee Dee argued.

"We've got torches, everyone, take a torch, they're in the back of the seats," the hostess instructed as they pulled out the torches and looked around.

"Oh, Jethro, sweetheart, come here..." Val called to Jethro.

"Never mind me, what about her?" Jethro asked, his eyes fixed on Sky. They looked over to see her sitting, motionless, among the ruined seats, her back to them.

"What happened to the seats?" Val looked around. It looked like a small bomb had gone off around Sky.

"Who did that?" Biff asked.

"They've been ripped up."

"It's alright," Evy stepped towards her, "Whatever that was, it's over now and we're all still alive...the wall's even still intact," she pointed her torch at the wall in front of Sky where it was dented but not broken.

The hostess stepped over to the intercom and tried to contact the divers, "Joe, Claude?"

"We're safe," Evy turned to Sky, kneeling down beside her.

"Driver Joe, can you hear me? I'm not getting any response, the intercom must be down."

"No!" Evy shouted as the hostess opened the cockpit door. Everyone was blinded, screaming as Evy jumped up and slammed the button for the door to shut.

"What happened?" Val gasped, "What was that?"

"Is it the driver?" Biff asked, "Have we lost the driver?"

"The cabin's gone," the hostess replied.

"Don't be ridiculous," Hobbes rolled his eyes, "It can't be gone, how can it be gone?"

"Well, but you saw it!" Dee Dee exclaimed.

"There was nothing there, like it was ripped away," the hostess shook her head in shock.
"What are you doing?" Biff asked, pointing his torch at the Doctor and Evy who were standing by a panel on the dented wall, flashing it with their screwdrivers.

"That's better, bit of light, thank you," the Doctor glanced over his shoulder at Biff, "Molto bene!"

"D'you know what you're doing?" Val asked them.

"The cabin's gone, you'd better leave that wall alone," Biff replied.

"The cabin can't be gone!" Hobbes insisted.

"Don't worry, perfectly safe, ruptures automatically seal..." Evy told them, taking the panel off the wall.

"But something did slice it off," the Doctor added, "You're right. The cabin's gone."

"But if it gets separated..." Biff started.

"It loses integrity," Evy finished with a frown.

"I'm sorry, they've been reduced to dust," the Doctor told them, "The driver and the mechanic. But they sent a distress signal. Help is on its way. They saved our lives!"

"We'll get you out of here," Evy turned to them, "I promise we will. We're all still alive, we'll be found in no time."

"Look at her," Jethro breathed.

They all turned to see Sky sitting in the same position with her back to them, completely unmoved.

"Right, yes, sorry..." the Doctor frowned, "Have we got a medical kit?"

"Why won't she turn around?" Jethro wondered.

"What's her whole name?" Evy asked the hostess, "Sky what?"

"Silvestry," the hostess replied, "Mrs. Sky Silvestry."


"That noise, from the outside..." Jethro began.

"What of it?" Val asked.

"It's stopped."

"Well, thank God for that."

"But what if it's not outside anymore? What if it's inside?"

"Inside? Where?"

"It was heading for her," he nodded at Sky.

"Sky...it's alright, Sky," the Doctor tried again, "We just want you to turn around, face us."
Slowly, she turned around and stared at them, wide eyed, looking like a deer in headlights, "Sky?" Evy asked.

"Sky?" she repeated.

"Are you alright?" the Doctor tried.

"Are you alright?" she repeated as Evy glanced at the Doctor, concerned.

"Are you hurt?"

"Are you hurt?"

"You don't have to talk."

"You don't have to talk."

"We're trying to help," Evy pulled out her sonic and flashed Sky lightly with it.

"We're trying to help."

"My name's the Doctor and this is Evy," the Doctor looked at Evy who shook her head, she wasn't getting a reading.

"My name's the Doctor and this is Evy."

"Ok, can you stop?"

"Ok, can you stop?"

"I'd like you to stop."

"I'd like you to stop."

"Why's she doing that?" Hobbes asked.

"Why's she doing that?" Sky turned towards him.

"She's gone mad," Biff frowned.

"She's gone mad," Sky stared at him.

"Stop it," Val ordered.

"Stop it," Sky stared at her now.

"I said stop it!"

"I said stop it!"

"I don't think she can," Dee Dee said softly.

"I don't think she can."

"Alright, now stop it, this isn't funny," Hobbes glared at her.

"Alright, now stop it, this isn't funny."
"Shh, shh, shh, all of you," the Doctor whispered.

"Shh, shh, shh, all of you."

"My name's Jethro!" Jethro said, amused just to get her to say it.

"My name's Jethro!"

"Jethro," Evy shook her head at him, "Leave it."

"Jethro, leave it."

"Why are you repeating?" the Doctor frowned.

"Why are you repeating?"

"What is that, learning?"

"What is that, learning?"

"Copying?"

"Copying?"

"Absorbing?"

"Absorbing?"

"How long can she go for?" Evy wondered.

"How long can she go for?"

"The square root of pi is 1.77245 38509 05516 02729 816748..." the Doctor began and Sky followed a moment later.

"The square root of pi is 1.77245 38509 05516 02729 816748..."

"...3341. Wow!" he breathed as she kept up with him.

"...3341. Wow!"

"But that's impossible," Hobbes shook his head.

"But that's impossible."

"She couldn't repeat all that," Dee Dee remarked.

"She couldn't repeat all that."

"Well she did," Evy frowned as Sky.

"Well she did."

"Tell her to stop!" Val shouted.

"Tell her to stop!"
"She's driving me mad."
"She's driving me mad."
"Just make her stop!"
"Just make her stop!"

They all began to talk at once as the Doctor and Evy looked on in silence, frowning as Sky repeated every clear word she heard.

"...stop her staring at me, shut her up..." Val said.
"...stop her staring at me, shut her up..."

"...a trick..." from the hostess.
"...a trick..."

"...that's impossible..." and Dee Dee.
"...that's impossible..."

"...I'm telling you, whatever your name is..." there went Biff.
"...I'm telling you, whatever your name is..."

It was too much, the Doctor stepped up, "Now, just stop it, all of..."
"Now, just stop it, all of..."

But they ignored him.

"...her eyes, what's wrong with her eyes?" Hobbes continued.
"...her eyes, what's wrong with her eyes?"

"...copy anything..." Jethro remarked.
"...copy anything..."

"...Biff don't just stand her, do something, make her stop..." Val cried.
"...Biff don't just stand her, do something, make her stop..."

"...you're scaring my wife..." Biff said.
"...you're scaring my wife..."

"...Mrs. Silvestry..." the hostess tried.
"...Mrs. Silvestry..."

"Six, six, six," and Jethro.
"Six, six, six."
"...make her stop..." Val wept.

"...make her stop..."

A high pitched whine resounded as the lights kicked back on, cutting them all off.

"Well then, that's the backup system," the hostess sighed.

"Well!" Hobbes straightened up, "That's a bit better."

'Doctor,' Evy called, he turned to her, 'She's stopped. Why?'

He looked over at Sky.

"What about the rescue, how long's it gonna take?" Val asked.

"About 60 minutes, that's all," the hostess assured them.

"Then I suggest we all calm down," Hobbes began, "This panic isn't helping. That poor woman is evidently in a state of..."

"...self-induced hysteria, we should leave her alone," Sky said, at the same time as Hobbes.

'Doctor...' Evy breathed, seeing it happen.

'I know,' he nodded.

"Doctor, now step back, I think you should leave her..." Hobbes began, not noticing Sky syncing with him till just then, "Alone. What's she doing?"

"How can she do that?" Val/Sky asked, "She's talking with you...and with me! Oh, my God! Biff, what's she doing?"

"She's repeating...at exactly the same time," Biff/Sky replied.

"That's impossible," Dee Dee/Sky breathed.

"There's not even a delay," Hobbes/Sky remarked.

"Oh man, that is weird," Jethro/Sky laughed.

"I think you should all be very, very quiet," the Doctor/Sky said, "Have you got that?"

"How's she doing it?" Val/Sky asked.

"Mrs. Cane, please, be quiet," Evy/Sky tried to calm her.

"But how can she do that? She's got my voice, she's got my words!"

"Sweetheart, be quiet, just...hush now," Biff/Sky began till he realized Sky was copying him as well, "She's doing it to me!"

handsome. Yes I am, thank you."

'Don't make me smack you,' Evy muttered to him.


"First is repetition," Evy/Sky said as the Doctor stood, "Then syncing. So...what's next? The next stage?"

"Next stage of what?" Dee Dee/Sky asked.

"But that's not her, is it?" Jethro/Sky asked, "That's not Mrs. Silvestry anymore."

"I don't think so," Evy/Sky agreed, "No."

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter...Evy goes to extremes to protect the Doctor from the humans. The Doctor comes to an EPIC realization.
"I think..." the Doctor/Sky began, eyeing Sky, "The more we talk, the more she learns. Now, I'm all for education, but in this case...maybe not. Let's just...move back. Come on," he took Evy's hand and stepped back, "Come with me. Everyone, get back, all of you, as far as you can."

They all walked back to the galley.

"Doctor, make her stop," Val/Sky begged.

"Val, it's alright, just come here," Evy/Sky said as she helped move them back to the galley, "Don't look back, Jethro come on."

"Everyone, come on...50 minutes," the Doctor/Sky began, "That's all we need. 50 minutes till the rescue arrives. And she's not exactly strong, look at her, all she's got is our voices."

"I can't look at her," Val/Sky looked away, "It's those eyes."

"'We must not look at goblin men. '" Dee Dee/Sky recited.

Everyone looked at her, confused.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Biff/Sky asked.

"It's a poem by Christina Rossetti," Evy/Sky said.

"'We must not look at goblin men. '" Dee Dee/Sky continued, "'We must not buy their fruits, Who knows upon what soil they fed, Their hungry, thirsty roots? '"

"Actually, I don't think that's helping," the Doctor/Sky muttered.

"She's not a goblin, or a monster, she's just a very sick woman," Hobbes/Sky defended.

"Maybe that's why it went for her," Jethro/Sky suggested.

"There is no 'it!'"

"Think about it though. That knocking, it went all the way round the bus until it found her. And she was the most scared, out of all of us. Maybe that's what it needed. That's how it got in."

"For the last time! Nothing can live on the surface of Midnight."

Evy had had just about enough of the man, "Professor, we are just tickled that you have such an absolute definition of life as it exists in the Universe, but you know what? Maybe, just maybe, the Universe has ideas of its own!"

"Now trust us, we've got previous experience!" the Doctor/Sky agreed as he glanced at Evy, "We think there might well be some...consciousness inside Mrs. Silvestry, but maybe she's still in there. And it's our job to help her."

"Well, you can help her, I'm not going near," Biff/Sky crossed his arms.
"No," the Doctor/Sky shook his head, taking Evy's hand, "We've got to stay back. If she's copying us, maybe the final stage is becoming us. I don't want her becoming me or Evy or things could get a lot worse."

"Oh, like you're so special," Val/Sky scoffed.

"As it happens, yes we are."

"Doctor," Evy/Sky began, that wouldn't help them any.

"So that's decided," the Doctor/Sky ignored her, "We stay back and we wait. When the rescue ship comes, we can get her to hospital."

"We should throw her out," the hostess/Sky said.

"I beg your pardon?" Hobbes/Sky gasped.

"Can we do that?" Val/Sky thought on it.

"Don't be ridiculous," the Doctor/Sky shook his head.

"That thing, whatever it is, killed the driver, and the mechanic, and I don't think she's finished yet," the hostess/Sky argued.

"She can't even move!" Evy/Sky defended, not liking the idea of killing the woman if there was still a chance to help her.

"Look at her, look at her eyes!" the hostess/Sky pointed at her, "She killed Joe, and she killed Claude, and we're next."

"She's still doing it," Biff/Sky stalked towards Sky, "Just stop it! Stop talking! Stop it!"

"Biff, don't, sweetheart!" Val/Sky called.

"But she won't stop!" Biff/Sky walked back to them, "We can't throw her out though, we can't even open the doors."

"No one is getting thrown out!" the Doctor/Sky shouted.

"Yes, we can," Dee Dee/Sky said, "'Cos there's an air pressure seal," she turned to the hostess, "Like when you opened the cabin door, you weren't pulled out, you had a couple of seconds, 'cos it takes the pressure-wall about six seconds to collapse. Well, six seconds exactly. That's enough time to throw someone out."

"That's really not helping Dee Dee," Evy/Sky grumbled.

"Would it kill her, outside?" Val/Sky asked.

"I don't know, but she's got a body now, it would certainly kill the physical form," Dee Dee/Sky shrugged.

"No one is killing anyone!" the Doctor/Sky shouted again.

"I wouldn't risk the cabin door twice, but we've got that one," the hostess/Sky pointed to the fire exit, "All we need to do is grab hold of her and throw her out."
"Now, listen, all of you," the Doctor/Sky stepped forward, "For all we know that's a brand new life form over there. And if it's come inside to discover us, then what's it found? This little bunch of humans, what d'you amount to? A murder? 'Cos this is where you decide. You decide who you are. Could you actually murder her? Any of you? Really? Or are you better than that?"

For a few seconds the passengers looked at each other silently, contemplating. The Doctor and Evy held their breath, it seemed like his words had gotten through to them when…

"I'd do it," the hostess/Sky admitted.

"So would I," Biff/Sky agreed.

"And me," Val/Sky nodded.

"I think we should," Dee Dee/Sky bit her lip.

"What?" Evy/Sky demanded, staring at them in horror. These were the humans she had helped keep her brother from destroying? This was what she'd almost lost everything for?

"I want her out."

"You can't say that!" the Doctor/Sky glared.

"I'm sorry, but you said it yourself, Doctor, she is growing in strength."


"I want to go home," Dee Dee/Sky cried, "I'm sorry. I want to be safe."

"You'll be safe, any minute now, the rescue truck is on its way," the Doctor/Sky told them.

"But what happens then, Doctor?" the hostess/Sky asked, "If it takes that thing back to the Leisure Palace, if that thing reaches civilization, what if it spreads?"

"No, when we get back to the base, we'll be there to contain it," Evy/Sky stepped up, squeezing the Doctor's hand.

"You two haven't done much so far!" Val/Sky shouted.

"You're just standing in the back with the rest of us!" Biff/Sky agreed.

"She's dangerous," the hostess/Sky argued, "It's my job to see this vessel is safe, and we should get rid of her."

"Now hang on, I think, perhaps we're all going a little bit too far," Hobbes/Sky cut in.

"At last!" the Doctor/Sly breathed, "Thank you."

"Two people are dead!" the hostess/Sky exclaimed.

"So don't make it three!" Evy/Sky glared at her, before turning to Jethro, he was her last chance. Of all the people there besides the Doctor she'd thought Jethro and Dee Dee would be on their side against the others, but Dee Dee had already proved she wasn't entirely correct in that sentiment, "Jethro, what do you think?"

"I'm not killing anyone," Jethro/Sky shook his head.
"Thank you," Evy/Sky smiled.

"He's just a boy!" Val/Sky tried to wave him off.

"What, so I don't get a vote?" Jethro/Sky demanded.

"There isn't a vote, it's not happening!" the Doctor/Sky said, "Ever. If you try to throw her out that door, you'll have to get past us first."

They stared at him a moment.

"Ok," the hostess/Sky said simply.

"Fine by me," Biff/Sky crossed his arms.

"You just try it," Evy/Sky tried to step forward but the Doctor pulled her back.

She was on the verge of using her powers on them to keep them back and that wouldn't be good. He'd run some tests on her when he'd first learned about them, done some scans…if she used too much of her powers for too long or in too great a force, it could kill her.

He wasn't about to let that happen. Ever.

"Now you're being stupid," the Doctor/Sky rolled his eyes, "Just think about it! Could you actually take hold of someone and throw them out of that door?"

"Calling me a coward?" Biff/Sky demanded.

"Who put you in charge anyway?" Val/Sky sneered.

"I'm sorry, but...you're a doctor of what, exactly?" Hobbes/Sky asked.

"They weren't even booked in," the hostess/Sky said, "Rest of you, tickets in advance. They just turned up out of the blue."

"Where from?" Val/Sky asked.

"We're just...travelling," the Doctor/Sky fished for an answer, "We're travelers, that's all."

"Like an immigrant?"

"Who were you talking to?" the hostess/Sky demanded, "Before you got on board, you were talking to someone, who was that?"

"That was just Donna," Evy/Sky answered, "Our friend Donna."

"And what were you saying to her?" Biff/Sky asked.

"He hasn't even told us his name," Val/Sky remarked.

"Thing is, Doctor, you've been loving this..." Jethro/Sky said slowly.

"Oh, Jethro, not you too," Evy/Sky frowned at him.

"No, but ever since all the trouble started, he's been loving it."

"It has to be said, you do seem to have a certain...glee," Hobbes/Sky stated.
"Alright, I'm interested, yes, I can't help it, 'cos whatever's inside her, it's brand new, and that's fascinating!" the Doctor/Sky defended.

"What, you wanted this to happen?" Val/Sky's eyes widened in horror.

"No!" Evy, the Doctor, and Sky shouted.

"And you were talking to her, all on your own, before all the trouble, right at the front, you were talking to that Sky woman, the three of you together, I saw you," Biff/Sky said.

"We all did!" Val/Sky shouted.

"And you went into the cabin!" the hostess/Sky added.

"What were you saying to her?" Biff/Sky demanded.

"We were just talking to her!" Evy/Sky defended.

"Saying what?"

"You called us humans like you're not one of us!" Jethro/Sky realized.

"He did!" Val/Sky gasped, "That's what he said!"

"And the wiring, he went into that panel and opened up the wiring, they both did," Dee Dee/Sky added.

"That was after!" Evy/Sky shouted, stepping in front of the Doctor as they heaped on incriminating evidence more towards him than her.

"But how did you know what to do?" Biff/Sky asked.

"Because I'm clever!" the Doctor/Sky shouted.

Everyone was silent.

'Not the best thing you could have said,' Evy told him.

'Yeah, I'm getting that,' he tensed.

"I see," Hobbes/Sky nodded, "Well. That makes things clear."

"And what are we, then?" Biff/Sky asked, "Idiots?"

"At this point, yes," Evy/Sky glared at him.


"If you're clever then what are we?" Dee Dee/Sky frowned, offended.

"You've been looking down on us from the moment we walked in," Val/Sky frowned.

"Even if he goes, he's practically volunteered," the hostess/Sky remarked.

"Oh come on, just listen to yourselves, please!" the Doctor/Sky shouted.

"What d'you mean, we throw him out as well?" Biff/Sky turned to the hostess.
"If we have to," the hostess/Sky replied grimly.

"Look, just..." the Doctor/Sky began, starting to actually feel panic rise in him, not just at the thought that they seemed ready and willing to kill him, but for the thought in the back of his mind of what that would mean for Evy if they did, "Right, sorry, yes, hold on, just...I know, you're scared, and so am I, look at me, I am...'cos Evy's here and I'm terrified she'll get hurt 'cos I've gone and done something stupid..." Evy looked up at him, startled and a bit stunned by his revelation, but he didn't look at her, "But we have all got to calm down and cool off and think."

"Perhaps you could tell us your name," Hobbes/Sky tried reasonably.

"What does it matter?"

"Then tells us," the hostess/Sky demanded.


"His real name," Hobbes/Sky said.

"She's lying," Biff/Sky said, "Look at her face."

"His eyes are the same as hers," Val/Sky commented.

"Why won't you tell us?" Jethro/Sky asked.

"He's been lying to us, right from the start!"

"No one's called John Smith!" Biff/Sky scoffed, "Come off it!"

"Now listen to me," the Doctor/Sky tried to get through to them again as they all talked over each other, "Listen to me right now! Because you need me, all of you, if we're gonna get out of this, then you need me."

"So you keep saying!" Hobbes rolled his eyes, "You've been repeating yourself more than her."

'Doctor...' Evy's eyes widened, 'She's stopped again."

"If anyone's in charge, it should be the Professor, he's the expert!" Val commented.

"Mum, stop, just look..." Jethro began, noticing what Evy had.

"You keep out of this, Jethro," Biff waved him off.

"Look at her!"

"She's stopped..." Dee Dee breathed.

The all turned to see the Doctor and Evy already staring at Sky who was still sitting motionless.

"When did she..." the Doctor began, but Sky spoke as well, "No, she hasn't, she's still doing it."

"She looks the same to me..." Val said, her eyes widening as she saw Sky was silent, "No, she's stopped! Look, I'm talking, and she's not!"

"Doctor," Evy tried out loud, Sky was silent. She turned to the Doctor in alarm, 'She's only copying you!'
'Oh, this is NOT good...' he groaned. He could only imagine the conclusions the humans would jump to.

"What about me, is she..." Biff began, Sky was silent, "Look! Look at that! She's not doing me, she's let me go!"

"Mrs. Silvestry?" Hobbes asked, "...nor me! Nothing!"

"Sky?" the Doctor/Sky asked, "What are you doing?"

"She's still doing him!" Dee Dee shouted.

"Doctor, it's you," Hobbes gasped, "She's only copying you."

"No, really?" Evy rolled her eyes at them, "We would have never figured that one out."

"Why me?" the Doctor/Sky asked, "Why are you doing this?"

"She won't leave him alone!" Dee Dee frowned.

"D'you see?!" Val shouted, "I said so, she's with him."

"They're together!" Biff agreed.

"Oi!" Evy shouted, "I take offense to that!"

"How d'you explain it, Doctor?" Hobbes asked, "If you're so clever."

"Easily," Evy glared at them, "I even said it before, mimicry, syncing, absorption, she's focusing on one of use so she can absorb it more efficiently."

"Sky, stop it," the Doctor/Sky said, moving closer to the still woman, "I said stop it. Just stop it!"

"Look at the two of them!" Val shouted.

"Mrs. Silvestry," he crouched before her, "I'm trying to understand. You've captured my speech, what for? What d'you need? You need my voice in particular. The cleverest voice in the room. Why? 'Cos I'm the only one who can help? That's not true, there's Evy, she could help, she's always helping me, always taking care of me."

"Doctor," Evy frowned, she could feel something at the edge of the Link, something creeping forward, pressing on it, "Doctor…you need to stop."

"See what I mean?" he smiled at her, a soft look in his eyes, but he seemed unwilling to stop trying to help, turning back to Sky, "Helping…oh, I'd love that to be true, that you need help. But your eyes. They're saying something else. Listen to me. Whatever you want, if it's life, or form, or consciousness, or voice, you don't have to steal it. You can find it without hurting anyone. And I'll help you. That's a promise. So. What d'you think?"

"Do we have a..." he/Sky began.

And then something happened that shocked everyone.

Sky finished first.

"Deal?" Sky asked as the Doctor repeated her.
Evy stumbled back, shocked, her eyes wide in horror.

"Hold on, did she..." Dee Dee began.

"She spoke first," Jethro gasped.

"She can't have," Val shook her head.

"She did!" Hobbes shouted.

"She spoke first!" Jethro repeated.

"Oh, look at that, I'm ahead of you," Sky said.

"Oh, look at that, I'm ahead of you," the Doctor repeated.

"Doctor," Evy breathed, running to his side, trying to turn his head away from Sky but it was frozen, he couldn't move.

"Did you see?" Hobbes pointed, "She spoke before he did! Definitely!"

"He's copying her," Jethro said.

"Doctor, what's happening?" Hobbes turned back to see Evy shaking as she knelt by the Doctor's side, trying to shake him.

"I think it's moved," Sky began.

"I think it's moved."

"I think it's letting me go."

"I think it's letting me go."

"What do you mean?" Dee Dee shook her head, "Letting you go from what?"

"But he's repeating now, he's the one doing it!" Biff said, "It's him!"

"It's not him!" Evy glared at them, tears in her eyes, "It's that...thing. It's not him!"

"They're separating," Jethro said.

"Mrs. Silvestry?" Hobbes took a step forward, "Is that you?"

"Yes, yes, it's me," she answered.

"Yes, yes, it's me."

"I'm coming back, listen..."

"I'm coming back..."

"It's me!" she shouted, slowly moving her head and hands.

"...listen. It's me!"

The Doctor sat crouched there motionless.
"Like it's passed into the Doctor," Jethro shook his head, "It's transferred. Whatever it is, it's gone inside him."

"Doctor?" Evy whispered, nearly pleading, "Doctor, can you hear me?"

"No, that's not what happened," Dee Dee shook her head.

"But look at her!" Val shouted, pointing at Sky.

"Look at me, I can move..." Sky looked down at her hands.

"Look at me..."

"I can feel again..."

"I can move...I can feel again..."

Evy frowned, the Doctor's reactions and repetitions were out of sync. He was fighting it!

"I'm coming back to life..." Sky breathed.

"I'm coming back to life..."

"And look at him, he can't move," Sky glanced at the Doctor, smirking at the glare Evy was giving her, knowing the other humans couldn't see it as her back was to them.

"And look at him, he can't move."

"Help me," Sky turned to the group.

"Help me."

"Professor?"

"Professor?"

"Get me away from him," she reached out to the professor for help.

"Get me away from him."

"Please."

"Please."

Hobbes stepped cautiously forward, avoiding touching the Doctor as he took Sky's hand and pulled her up gently, leading her back to the others.

As soon as Sky was up, Evy quickly knelt in front of the Doctor, placing her hands on his cheeks and closed her eyes, placing her forehead against his, reaching out for him through the Link.

She almost cried, hearing him screaming in his mind, trapped not just in his thoughts but in his body as well. The Link was throbbing at the intrusion trying to suppress it, an aftereffect of the creature infecting him.

"Oh thank you," Sky breathed.

"Oh thank you."
"They've completely separated," Jethro remarked.

"It's in him, d'you see?" Biff said, looking over at the two crouched by the cabin door, "Said it was him all the time."

"She's free!" Val shouted, "She's been saved!"

"Oh, it was so cold," Sky began.

"Oh, it was so cold."

"I couldn't breathe," she looked over at Evy, an evil glint in her eyes. She was going to tell the woman who was so obviously taken with this Doctor just what he was suffering now.

"I couldn't breathe."

"I'm sorry," Sky turned back to the others.

"I'm sorry."

"I must've scared you so much."

"I must've scared you so much."

"No, no, it's alright," Val hugged her, "I've got you, oh, there you are my love, it's gone, everything's alright now.

"I wouldn't touch her," Dee Dee began, glancing over at Evy who had her face scrunched in pain, tears streaming gently down her face. For some reason she trusted the girl, if she was sticking to the Doctor, if she was that worried, it couldn't be in him...so it had to be in Sky.

"But it's gone, she's clean, it passed into him," Biff nodded over at the Doctor.

"That's not what happened."

"Thank you for your opinion, Dee, but clearly, Mrs. Silvestry has been released," Hobbes waved her off.

"No..."

"Just leave her alone!" Val pulled Sky back, "She's safe, isn't she? Jethro? It's let her go, hasn't it?"

"Think so, yeah," Jethro nodded, but he kept glancing back at Evy as well, "Looks like it. Professor?"

"I'd say, from observation..." Hobbes nodded as well, "The Doctor can't move, and when she was possessed, she couldn't move, so..."

"Well, there we are then!" Biff grinned, "Now the only problem we've got is this Doctor."

"It's inside his head," Sky said suddenly.

"It's inside his head."

"It killed the driver."

"It killed the driver."
"And the mechanic."

"And the mechanic."

"And now it wants us."

"And now it wants us."

"I said so!" Val cried.

"He's waited so long," Sky looked over at Evy.

"He's waited so long."

"In the dark," she smirked, "And the cold."

"In the dark. And the cold."

"And the diamonds."

"And the diamonds."

"Until you came," she turned to the passengers.

"Until you came."

"Bodies so hot."

"Bodies so hot."

"With blood."

"With blood."

"And pain," she glanced at Evy once more to see the girl's eyes had snapped open and were glaring at her, but what could she do? Nothing.

"And pain."

"Stop, oh, my God, make him stop, someone make him stop!" Val cried, trying to cover her ears.

"But she's saying it!" Dee Dee pointed at Sky.

"And you can shut up!"

"But it's not him, it's her, he's just repeating!"

"But that's what the thing does, it repeats!" Biff said.

"Just let her talk!" the hostess cut in, realizing Dee Dee was right.

"What do you know? Fat lot of good you've been!"

"Just let her explain!"

"I think...I mean, from what I've seen...it repeats, then it synchronizes, then it goes on to the next stage and that's exactly what the Doctor and Evy said would happen!" Dee Dee exclaimed.
"What, and you're on his side?" Biff turned on her.

"No!"

"The voice is the thing!" Jethro added.

"And she's the voice," Evy said quietly. They looked over to see her staring back at the Doctor, stroking his face gently, "She stole it. Look at her. He's not possessed, he's being drained."

"She's got his voice..." the hostess gasped, looking at Sky with wide eyes.

"But that's not true, 'cos it can't, because I saw it pass into him, I saw it with my own eyes!" Val defended.

"So did I!" Biff agreed.

"Oh did you?" Evy glared at them with such disgust that they actually took a step back, "You humans..." she shook her head, "You want to be clever and you have the minds to be but you don't use them!"

"It went from her, to him," Val shouted at Evy, turning to her son, "You saw it, didn't you?"

"I don't know," Jethro shook his head.

"Oh, don't be stupid, Jethro, of course you did!"

"I suppose...he was right next to her."

"Everyone saw it, everyone!" Biff shouted.

"You didn't, you're just making it up!" Dee Dee argued, "I know what I saw, and I saw her stealing his voice."

"She's as bad as him, someone shut her up!" Val glared at her.

"I think you should be quiet, Dee," Hobbes began.

"Well, I'm only saying..." Dee Dee backed off.

"And that's an order! You're making a fool of yourself! Pretending you're an expert in mechanics and hydraulics, when I can tell you, you are nothing more than average, at best! Now shut up!"

"Oh you think you know what's going on?" Evy shouted at them all, "You don't know! You can't know, 'cos you can't hear him!"

"Oh and you can?" Val sneered at her.

"Yes! He's screaming for me! He's trapped in his head because of her!" she pointed at Sky.

"That's how he does it," Sky began.

"That's how he does it."

"He makes you fight," Sky turned to them.

"He makes you fight."
"Creeps into your head."
"Creeps into your head."

"And whispers."
"And whispers."

"Listen."
"Listen."

"Just listen."

"That's him."
"That's him."

"Inside."

"Throw him out!" Biff shouted.

"Get him out of my head!" Val cried.

"Yeah, we should throw him out!"

"Well, don't just talk about it!" Val turned on her husband, "Just...you're useless! Do something!"

"I will! You watch me! I'm gonna throw him out!"

Evy turned back to the Doctor, seeing the fear in his eyes, the tears, seeing him fight against what was possessing him.

"Yes!" Sky agreed.

"Yes!"

"Throw him out!"

"Throw him out!"

"Get rid of him!"

"Get rid of him!"

"Now!"

"Now!"

"Don't you dare!" Evy shouted.

Biff moved to grab the Doctor, only to run into an invisible wall. He stumbled back in shock, the group falling silent. Jethro reached out and pressed his hand against the air to feel the wall still
there.

"I said don't!" Evy repeated. They looked down at her to see her now kneeling next to the Doctor, her right hand held out, palm towards them, "I won't let you!"

Their eyes widened as they realized she was the one creating the wall.

"It'll be you next!" Val shouted at her, getting over her shock first.

"Professor, help me!" Biff shouted, reaching out to bang on the invisible wall.

"I can't..." Hobbes stuttered, still shocked, never in all his life had he seen such a feat, "I...I'm not..."

"What sort of a man are you?" Biff turned to glare at him, "Come on!"

"Get him!" Val shouted, "Throw him out!"

"Come on!" Biff shouted at all of them. Hobbes stumbled over and began hitting the wall with Biff.

Jethro stepped back, his gaze locked on Evy, watching in horror as a trail of blood started to fall from her nose.

"Just do it, throw him out!" Val called again, rushing forward to help her husband.

Evy flinched from the increased force against her wall. Her head was throbbing, she was shaking, and she was starting to get very worried about the black dots that were appearing at the edge of her vision. But she wouldn't stop, she would hold on as long as possible to save the Doctor.

"Get him out!" Val shouted.

"Cast him out!" Sky egged on.

"Cast him out!" the Doctor repeated.

"I want him out!" Val shouted.

"Well, you won't get him," Evy gasped, before coughing violently and gasping, her whole body shaking now. She could hardly breathe. The strain was too much but she held on.

"Do it!"

"No!" Evy shouted, before using the last of her strength to push herself onto her knees, moving her right hand to maintain the wall, throwing her left hand out and flinging it towards the door. Sky went flying through the capsule, landing against the door, struggling to get out of the hold that Evy somehow had on her. The group stopped their bombardment but Evy refused to drop the wall, despite the fact the room was spinning and she could barely see.

"Oh my God!" Dee Dee exclaimed, seeing the blood now running down Evy's nose like a faucet. The girl was now unnaturally pale and half spasming.

"I won't let you!" Evy managed to get out before pushing her left hand out once more. The door behind Sky opened, sucking her out and then the emergency programs slammed it shut.

Evy collapsed to the ground, the wall disappearing as she began convulsing.
The Doctor shot up with a gasp, "It's gone, it's gone..." and he realized just who could have figured it out and began to look for Evy, "Evy!" he scrambled to her side as the humans looked on in shock and horror at her violent reaction.

"Evy!" he reached out, trying to calm her convulsions but nothing worked, "Evy...Evy. Evy!" his eyes frantically looked her over, "You stupid, stupid girl...why did you do that?" he pulled her to him, holding her twitching form until the convulsions began to diminish. He wasn't sure what worried him more, her convulsions or her now lack of movement. He laid her down on the floor of the compartment, gently brushing hair away from her face, "Evy," he whispered, glad that she was still breathing but fearful as she was breathing quite shallowly and erratically, "Evy, open your eyes for me," he whispered again, stroking her face, she was technically unconscious, her mind inactive which worried him even more, she had to be awake for him to read her mind, "Come on, you've got to open your eyes..."

She didn't move.

"We're not Linked yet, I...I can't tell what's wrong..."

Still nothing.

"Please," he leaned forward, resting his forehead against her, "Please, open your eyes...I need to know you're alright...please..."

He felt a tickle on his cheek and pulled away to see Evy's eyes fluttering, she seemed to be struggling just to open them. But eventually she did it. Her eyes darted around frantically, not really seeing until they landed on the Doctor for only a second before rolling back into her head and closing.

But it was enough.

The Doctor breathed a sigh of relief before pulling her into his lap and holding her to him, ignoring all the passengers looking on in shock.

~8~

Twenty minutes later would find the Doctor sitting on the floor, Evy's head resting in his lap as he stroked her hair with one hand and held her hand resting on her stomach with the other. He was staring down at her as he had the entire time, barely paying any attention to the passengers spread out around them, staring down in self disgust at what they had almost done and what had happened because of them.

"Repeat, Crusader 50, rescue vehicle coming alongside in three minutes, door-seals set to automatic," a voice came on the intercom, "Prepare for boarding, repeat, prepare for boarding."

"Hear that Eves?" the Doctor whispered to her, a small crack in his voice, "Three minutes...just three...then we'll be off and I can take care of you..." he swallowed hard, the fear that had settled in his bones when he first saw Evy in that state still very much present, "I'll protect you. It'll be ok...just three minutes..."

The passengers looked away in shame.

~8~

Donna was waiting outside the docking point for the tour, there had been an announcement that something had gone wrong and she was terribly worried...not for the Doctor, it seemed he could
take care of himself, but for Evy who seemed intent to be the one to take care of him.

Her suspicions were found correct when she saw the Doctor walk out of the shuttle, cradling an Evy that looked worse for the wear. She ran forward with a gasp to check on her friend. Her eyes widened in horror when she saw the blood all over the front of her, mostly coming from her nose, and she knew what that meant. She'd used the powers that she'd warned Donna about, probably too much of them. She was pale, sweating, shaking, and breathing very quickly. Her face was scrunched up in pain and she looked so frail that it worried the ginger. Evy was one of the strongest women she knew, to see her like that...it was so wrong.

The Doctor barely stopped to tell her if Evy would be alright as he just kept walking towards where they'd put the TARDIS. She followed him straight to the TARDIS’s med-bay where the Doctor laid Evy down on a table, flipped on a healing lamp, and began to run scans silently. That was when Donna knew whatever happened must have been bad, he'd never been so silent and focused before.

Donna could only sit next to the woman, holding her hand as the Doctor proceeded with his examination. He gave her a brief summary of what went down, he'd been fully conscious of what was happening around him, even as the alien kept him unmoving. Donna could feel tears beginning to pool in her eyes when he got to the part about what Evy had done.

"What d'you think it was?" she asked quietly, afraid of waking up Evy who seemed to need the rest.

"No idea," he admitted grimly, going over some scans.

"D'you think it's still out there?" she continued, but the Doctor said nothing. "Well, you'd better tell 'em."

"Yeah," he replied sarcastically, a slightly cold edge to his voice, "They can build a Leisure Palace somewhere else. Let this planet keep on turning, round an Xtonic star. In silence."

"Can't imagine you, without a voice," she tried to smile and lighten the mood, "Evy must have been pleased to get a moment of quiet."

"Molto bene," he smiled weakly.

"Molto bene!" she teased.

"No, don't do that," he said seriously, "Don't. Don't..."

Donna nodded, looking back down at Evy before getting a cloth to wipe what was left of the blood away from the girl's nose, Evy had been fairly cleaned up, but...she needed something to do, she needed to help in some way, "So what's the report?"

He sighed, looking at a scan he'd done of her brain, "She used too much of her powers, it strained her body to a degree it couldn't handle."

"And that means..." Donna trailed, worried.

"It's like she suffered a stroke as well as a seizure at the same time," he sighed.

"Oh my God!" Donna gasped.

"If she wasn't a Time Lady and we didn't have the TARDIS's med-bay she..." he couldn't bring himself to say it, but Donna seemed to understand. She reached out and took the Doctor's hand. She
tugged him as she stood up and sat him down.

"Mum always said that tea cured everything," she said shakily. "I'll go put some on, you stay here?"

She didn't have to ask, she knew he would. As soon as he was sat beside Evy, he'd turned to her and taken her hand, staring down at her. His attention was so focused on her that Donna doubted he'd heard a word she said, but he nodded anyway as she left.

The Doctor stared at the girl on the med-table. He'd realized it was quite easy to stare at her, he found himself doing it more and more the longer he was around her. She was quite beautiful, this regeneration, not that she wasn't before but this one...this one he could notice. He always knew she was beautiful, he'd complimented her on it countless times, but this was the first time he'd admitted it to himself that he found her beautiful, that he was attracted to her and not just for her looks, she was a beautiful soul, a beautiful mind...

He sighed, running a hand through his hair. There was a lot he was admitting to himself now, things he wanted to admit to Evy as well.

He'd been so scared to see her hurt. More scared than he'd ever been before, even when the star was possessing him, even...even facing the Daleks during the war. When he'd turned and saw her on the ground, convulsing, with blood everywhere, his hearts stopped and his brain shut down. He didn't even think to sonic her to check how she was. He couldn't think when she was like that. He hated that he didn't know what was wrong or what she was feeling. But more than that...

He'd been terrified he'd lose her.

In such a short time she'd found a way under his skin. She'd integrated herself into every facet of his life that to imagine it without her...he stopped thinking. He didn't want to think about that.

He never wanted her to leave.

He silently cursed himself. She was the one who wanted to go on the tour of the sapphire waterfall. He'd been content to just peruse the other more interesting tours...but when she looked at him with that sparkle in her eye, when he saw how excited she was about the offered tour, how much she'd love to go on it...he couldn't deny her. He just wanted her to be happy and seeing her smile when they'd first been accepted onto the shuttle thanks to the psychic paper...his hearts melted. He wanted to see that expression on her face every time.

He would do anything to see her that happy.

It seemed like just the little things he did made her happy. Even when he was being rude she was just happy to be around him. When he came back mostly unscathed from a dangerous endeavor she was so relieved to see him, he didn't even mind when she smacked him upside the head because he knew it meant she cared. When he took her hand when they would walk or just sit together, she would get a soft smile on her face, just content with where she was. She found him funny. She found him intelligent. She had faith in him like no one else.

He felt the same for her.

He could always feel himself smile when she came around or even when his thoughts drifted over to her, like they so often did. He found her to be challenging. She was strong, brave, clever, determined, compassionate, so kind... and impossible all at once. She was on the same level as him, she could relate, she could understand. She had lived though experiences similar and more horrible
than his. She knew everything he'd been through, everything he'd done and still she stayed. He hated being away from her. It felt wrong to be separated from her for too long. And when he saw her again, he…he couldn't describe how light his hearts felt.

He loved her.

He smiled softly to himself as he realized this last fact. It was true. He couldn't pinpoint when he'd started to feel that way…but it felt so…right.

He reached out and stroked her hair. He hated the fact that it took her nearly killing herself for him to realize it, but he finally had. His eyes trailed down her face to the Perception Filter she wore around her neck, that tiny hourglass, the only thing that was preventing him from Linking to her right then and there.

He stared down at the necklace and his smile widened.

Evy had been afraid he would Link to her before he was ready to let go of the past and let himself feel something for her, hopefully love her. He did love her, so much. And now, when he thought back on Rose, he didn't feel the same pain he usually felt. Instead he felt content, satisfied, happy that she was still alive and that she was safe. It was what he'd tried to tell himself in the past, to reason with himself, but he never believed it…till now. He thought back on her as a fond memory, he would always care about her, he cared for all his companions, perhaps a bit more, she had done much for him, but looking at Evy…he knew in his hearts and his mind, he was truly ready to let go of the past and move forward into his future, with Evy. He had no doubt that the Link would lead to romantic feelings on his part, he already had them. The Link, really, would only make them more connected than they were.

He took a breath before slowly reaching out to the Filter, imagining the joy, the light, that would be in Evy's beautiful blue eyes when she woke to find them Linked. He knew she might, at first, believe it was just heightened emotions from the situation they'd just survived, but it wasn't. His emotions weren't heightened, just clear, for the first time. He could remember feeling them for ages now, never having a name for them, but now he knew, it was love.

He went slowly for the clasp, almost reaching it, when Evy moaned and he jolted back, not wanting to be leering over her, watching as her eyes slowly fluttered open.

"Ow," was all she said, wincing and shutting her eyes, though he could tell it was from pain and not that she was about to fall asleep again.

"Yeah," he smiled a bit, "That's what happens when you strain yourself."

"Ow."

He laughed before growing serious, "You shouldn't have done that."

She opened her eyes to look at him, "You shouldn't have gotten possessed by a demonic bug," she countered.

"Touché," he grinned, "You're going to have quite the headache for a few days…"

"Check," she tried to move to rub her head but found her arms felt like lead.

"And you'll probably be exhausted for a while," he added, seeing her struggle. He stood and helped her sit up.
"Check," she smiled at him in thanks.

"And it'll take some time for you to get back to your usual self. You won't feel right for a bit, it's your physiology trying to repair itself."

"And check," she nodded. They were silent for a while before she looked up at him, "Are you alright?"

"You nearly die and you ask if I'm alright?" he shook his head, it was so her, "I'm fine, it's you I'm worried about."

She grinned, "You shouldn't worry too much...I'm your Link...I seem to be just as resilient as you are."

He laughed at that.

"Evy awake?" Donna asked, stepping through the door with a tray of tea. Seeing the girl sitting up, she smiled, "Oh thank God," she put the tray down and went to hug her, "Don't you do that to me ever again!"

"Yes, mum," Evy joked.

The Doctor looked at them, smiling, "I'm going to send the TARDIS into the Vortex till you're up and about, be back in a moment."

He walked out of the room, a frown making its way onto his face. He'd been so close to Linking to her...he'd been just about to talk to her about it when Donna came in.

He wasn't too upset though, he'd managed to get that necklace off eventually, and now that he thought about it...he wanted it to be a surprise and unexpected anyway, she deserved it.
Squeal! Are you squealing yet? I am. Though you probably want to kill me too for getting them SO close and not going there completely with the Link.

I hope the Doctor's decision and feelings don't seem too sudden. It's been building for a while. The Doctor has felt something, been made aware of it, and now has realized exactly what it was. Love. My reasoning is that, he's never really been in love before. He admitted he started a relationship with Riku because he didn't think he'd find his Link, but he didn't exactly say he loved her. He felt something for Rose, but we're not entirely 100 percent sure what here, just that he did care deeply for her. He has never truly, completely, been in love before, so he might not know/recognize it when he was. Now he does. And now he wants to prove it. He knows Evy is worried about him Linking before he's ready or not wanting to, sort of like in Time Crash where it was a reaction to all his losses. But now he's trying to Link to her, he's had time to cope and come to terms with losing Rose, and now he's ready.

I was debating making Turn Left two chapters, but it really does continue from the end of it into the start of The Stolen Earth, so...we only have 3 chapters left of Alone No Longer now :)

Next chapter...what will become of Evy in the parallel world, especially when the Doctor, her Link, dies stopping the Racnoss?
Chapter Notes

Since this is a Doctor-lite episode for the most part, I shortened the scenes with Donna, any scene that involves her will, at some point, have a reference/hint/spotting of Evy in it somehow. Plus, there's an original scene. Just a head's up :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Doctor, Evy, and Donna were all walking through an oriental alien marketplace, the streets crowded with vendors each selling strange foods and objects. Donna had to fight to keep the stupid grin off her face as she watched the Doctor and Evy examine something at one of the stalls. The Doctor had his arm around Evy's waist, just to keep her steady, or so he claimed. It had been nearly a month since they'd gone to Midnight and Evy had long ago recovered.

Something had changed after that incident, Donna had noticed. The Doctor hadn't left Evy's side after sending the TARDIS into the Vortex, he hadn't even tried to fix anything around the ship as Evy was confined to the med-bay for the first few days. He hadn't even mentioned their lack of adventures those first few weeks. Not that Donna was complaining. She'd spent a great deal of time with them, either in the med-bay or in Evy's...well, the Doctor and Evy's...room, she'd smirked quite a bit about that particular detail. Unfortunately she would always have to leave to sleep while the Doctor just stayed awake with Evy. They were always talking to each other, laughing or joking. And, when Evy could finally walk, the Doctor had been at her side helping. When she'd recovered a bit more, the first trip they went on was up to Evy. She'd picked a beautiful meadow world with thick grass and scores of wildflowers and they just had a nice, calm, non-running picnic.

But that wasn't what struck Donna the most. It was the Doctor. He acted so differently around Evy. He smiled more, wider, truer smiles, as though he wasn't trying to hold back anymore, as though he wasn't afraid or guilty of being happy. He seemed freer, like a weight had been lifted. He seemed to have figured something out that was making both him and Evy very happy, even if she knew Evy had no idea what it was. But Donna knew. She could see it in the way the Doctor looked at Evy when she wasn't looking, the softness in his eyes, the happiness…

He loved her.

Donna knew he always had, from the first moments she'd started traveling with them, she could see it forming, growing. But now he seemed aware of it. He seemed to realize it. He seemed to accept it. And for that reason alone, Donna hadn't stopped smiling for the last month.

Evy laughed, pulling away from the stall as the Doctor sniffed his fingers, holding them up at her. Evy swatted them away, keeping his stained fingers away from her pale yellow dress and white leggings, before taking his hand and heading over to where Donna was standing. They walked off, looking at some of the foods and drinks that were being offered until they came to one that looked almost like hot chocolate with whipped toppings.

"You are going to love this," the Doctor said, getting them each a cup, "One, two, three…"

They each took a swig and ended up with foamy moustaches.
"Ah!" he sighed appreciatively.

"It's lovely!" Donna sipped again as Evy just laughed into a napkin as she tried to wipe away the foam from her face.

They walked a bit more once they'd finished, the Doctor leading Evy to a stall with odd fruits, some seeming to have long spikes on them, while Donna continued to wander.

"You want to buy Shukina?" a stall vendor asked her as she passed, "Or Peshwami? Most beautiful Peshwami in all of Shan Shen."

Donna glanced over at the soon-to-be couple, or at least she hoped it would be soon, as the Doctor chatted enthusiastically with a vendor and Evy just shook her head fondly behind his back.

"No thanks," she turned to the vendor and walked on.

"Tell your fortune, lady?" a woman in an elegant robe asked, sitting outside a shop, "Your future predicted, your life foretold."

"Ah, no thanks," Donna shook her head, "Spoilers and all."

"Don't you want to know, if you're going to be happy?"

"I'm happy right now, thanks," Donna smiled, just content to let what would happen happen.

"You've got red hair," the fortune teller called again as she walked off, "Reading's free for red hair."

"Alright, then," she laughed.

The fortune teller beamed and stood, holding a curtain of beads aside for Donna to pass into. The fortune teller glanced around to ensure no one was watching before following, not noticing Evy glance up a moment later from a booth a small ways away from the Doctor with beaded jewelry.

The fortune teller led Donna to a table, sitting opposite from her and took Donna's hands in her own, caressing her palms with nail polished fingers, "You're fascinating," the woman read, "Oh no, but you're good. I can see...a woman, a brilliant woman," Donna shook her head, that would be Evy, "And a man, the most remarkable man," Donna half laughed, and the Doctor, "How did you meet them?"

"You're supposed to tell me," Donna told her.

"I see the future," the fortune teller waved her off, "Tell me the past. When did your lives cross?"

"It's sort of complicated," she sighed, "I ended up in his spaceship on my wedding day," she didn't notice the fortune teller narrow her eyes slightly and glance at a large spider on the other side of the room, clicking away.

"But what led you to that meeting?"

"All sorts of things," she shrugged, "But my job, I suppose. It was on Earth...this planet called Earth, miles away. But I had this job as a temp. I was a secretary at this place called H.C. Clements."

She lurched in thought, almost able to picture exactly the job she had at the company as though she were back there, sitting at a desk.
"Sorry," she gave a shaky breath, coming back to reality.

"It's the incense," the teller said, still tracing her palm absently, "Just er, breathe deep. This job of yours, what choices led you there?"

Donna's eyes widened, "There was a choice...six months before. The agency offered me this contract with H.C. Clements..." and then she was back on the street, walking to her car with her mother, arguing about the job she was going for or one her mum had gotten her, "But there was this...other job. My mum knew this man..."

"Your life could have gone one way or the other. What made you decide?"

"I just did," Donna shook her head.

"But when was the moment? When did you choose?"

And then she was in the car, arguing with her mother again about turning left to the job she wanted or going right like her mother wanted.

"You turned left," the teller saw, "But what if you turned right? What then?"

Donna snapped back to the shop, "Let go of my hands," she told the woman, shaken, trying to pull her hands away but the teller held on.

"What if it changes? What if you go right? What if you could still go right?"

"Stop it," Donna shook her head, scared. And then she felt something jump on her back and froze, "What's that?" she whispered, she could hear clicking, "What's on my back?" the teller just stared at her intensely, "What is it? What...what's on my back?"

"Make the choice again, Donna Noble, and change your mind," the teller ordered her viciously, "Turn right!"

Donna blinked blearily, dazed, "I'm turning..."

"Turn right," the teller ordered, "Turn right," she glanced over at the spider-like creature on Donna's shoulder, "Turn right."

And she was back in the car, she could feel herself giving in to her mother's words.

"Turn right and never meet that man," the teller's voice echoed in her mind, "Turn right and change the world!"

And Donna turned right.

~8~

It was Christmas, a party in the local pub, all decorated with lights and streamers. Donna elbowed her way through a crowd and over to a table full of her friends with a tray of drinks in hand.

"Get out of the way," she shouted, "Get out of the way!" she put the tray down on the table, "There we are! Feed at the trough."

"Mooky says let's go to the Boardwalk," her friend Veena called, "It's two for the price of one."

"Christmas Eve?" Donna asked incredulously, "It'll be heaving."
"Exactly!" Mooky exclaimed, "Get in and grab 'em."

They all laughed.

"Hey, that's the second round of drinks you've bought," Veena said to Donna as she passed out the drinks, "It was my turn!"

"I can afford it," she smirked, sitting down, "Promotion. You are talking to Jival Chowdry's personal assistant, I'll have you know. Capital P, capital A, 23,000 pounds per annum, merci beaucoup!"

"Here's to Mr. Chowdry!" Veena raised her glass in toast.

"Mr. Chowdry!" they toasted.

"She gets all the luck," Mooky mumbled.

Donna laughed but noticed her friend Alice had not joined in the toast, "What's wrong? What is it?"

"Sorry?" Alice looked up, bewildered.

"Has someone spilled a drink on me?" Donna asked, trying to look over her shoulder where Alice had been looking, "Why do you keep looking at my shoulder? What's wrong?"

"I don't know," Alice whispered, wide eyed, nervous.

"It's like...it's like there's something I can't see!"

Donna stared at her, a bit unsettled.

"Shut up, all of you!" a man shouted, sticking his head into the pub, "Come and see! Just look at the sky!" everyone stopped to look at him, "It's a star! A Christmas star!"

"Come on then!" Veena called, getting up to run out.

Everyone fled out of the pub and into the streets, all looking up.

"What the hell is that?" Mooky gasped.

"Ken Livingston, that's what, spending our money on decorations," Veena replied, annoyed, as a large star glided over them, floating towards the rooftops with a low hum, "I mean, how much did that cost?"

"Don't be so stupid, it's flying! It's really flying!"

They hurried around a corner to keep it in sight.

"That's not a star," Donna frowned, "That's a web. It's heading east...the middle of the City."

The web came to a standstill above the center of town, above a busy street, and suddenly, out of all possible points, it shot beams of electricity at the unsuspecting people walking around.

Everyone screamed and ran away as Donna looked around, noticing Alice still standing there...
"Alice," she said fearfully, "There's a great big web-star thing shooting at people, and you're looking at me?"

"There's something on your back," she gasped in terror before running away from her.

Donna looked back at the star but then noticed something below it.

There, standing at the end of the street, was a woman with messy brown hair in a short hospital gown, staring at the star with her back to her. Donna watched in horror as the woman let out a hair splitting, terribly heart wrenching scream and fell to her knees.

Donna ran for her.

"Donna!" Veena shouted after her, but she ignored her, "Where are you going? You're going to get yourself killed! Donna!"

Donna ignored her, running forward, trying to check on the woman, but when she got to the space where the woman had fallen, she was nowhere to be found.

"What?" she breathed, but then she heard more screaming coming from the City.

She ran off towards the star, coming to a street where tanks rolled in and began to fire at it. She watched, wide eyed, as the web burst into flames and crashed to the street below.

"Everyone stay back," one of the soldiers in a red cap told them, "The Thames has been closed. Return to your homes. Keep away from the river, and that's an order."

Donna slid around the crowd and behind some cars, seeing an ambulance stationed a few feet away. She walked over wondering if the ambulance had been for the woman, if they'd found her. But all she saw was a UNIT soldier standing before it, holding a radio as his captain spoke, "Trap One to Greyhound Fifteen: what is your report? Over."

"From the evidence, I'd say he managed to stop the creature," the soldier replied, "Some sort of red spider. Blew up the base underneath the barrier, flooded the whole thing. Over."

"And where is he now? Over."

"We found a body, sir. Over."

A body on a stretcher was pulled over, covered in a red blanket, and carried into the ambulance.

"Is it him?" the captain asked, "Over."

"I think so," the soldier sighed, "He just...didn't make it out in time."

An arm clothed in a brown, pinstriped suit fell uselessly over the side of the stretcher, the hand dropping a sort of metallic pen with a light on the end onto the road.

"The Doctor is dead," the soldier continued as the body was loaded onto the ambulance, "Must have happened too fast for him to regenerate."

"Escort the ambulance back to UNIT base," the captain ordered.

The doors were shut and Donna turned around, slightly stunned and confused by what she'd heard.
As she walked away, a blonde girl ran straight towards the scene, frantic and panting.

"What happened?" she turned to Donna, "What did they find? Sorry, did they find someone?"

"I don't know," Donna shook her head, "Um, bloke called the Doctor or something."

"Well, where is he?" she looked around.

"They took him away," Donna nodded over to the ambulance, "He's dead," the woman stopped and stared at her, "I'm sorry. Did you know him?" the woman looked away in despair, Donna frowned, "What about the woman?"

"What woman?"

"I…don't know," Donna shook her head, "She was standing in the streets and then just…gone…actually never mind that, probably just my eyes playing tricks on me or something," the woman looked down, "Hey, they didn't say his name…it could be any doctor."

"I came so far..." she breathed.

"It could be anyone," Donna reached out to touch her arm, trying to comfort her.

"What's your name?" the woman asked suddenly, staring at her as though just seeing her.

"Donna. And you?"

"Oh, I was just…passing by," the woman replied, distracted, staring at Donna's shoulder, "I shouldn't even be here, this is…wrong. It's wrong. This is so wrong. Sorry, what was it? Donna what?"

"Why do you keep looking at my back?"

"I'm not," she looked away.

"Yes, you are," she retorted angrily, "You keep looking behind me. You're doing it now," she tried to look behind her, "What is it? What's there? Has someone put something on my back?" she looked up but the woman was gone. She spun around, trying to find where the woman had disappeared to, but just shook her head, frustrated, and walked away.

~8~

She'd been fired. All that promise of a job and a contract and a bonus and nothing. Apparently, since the Thames had been closed since Christmas, the business was doing poorly, and, instead of sacking someone else, she'd been fired! The nerve! And then the staff just kept going on about that blasted hospital disappearing...

Donna was on the sofa in her sitting room next to her granddad that evening, her mum sorting through the box she'd packed at the office, just watching the news about the return of the hospital.

"To confirm, the Royal Hope Hospital was returned to its original position, but with only one survivor," the reporter announced, "The only person left alive is medical student Oliver Morgenstern."

"There were these creatures..." Morgenstern said, wrapped in a blanket, he swallowed hard, "Like...rhinos, talking rhinos, in...in...in black leather."
"Rhinos?" Donna asked incredulously.

"Rhinos could be aliens," Wilf answered, his brow furrowed.

"Shh..." Donna hushed him.

"There were hundreds of them," Morgenstern reported, "We couldn't breathe. We were running out of air. A colleague of mine gave me the last oxygen tank. Martha. Martha Jones. And she...she died...but..." Morgenstern shook his head, "There was a girl...I looked up and there was a girl kneeling by Martha, crying. She...she disappeared though, right in front of me, there one second and then gone."

"What did this woman look like?" the reporter asked.

"Uh..." he frowned, "Hospital dress, green eyes I think, br-brown hair, she...she looked a mess. Must have come from the psych ward though, had these bandages around her wrists."

"At least you got a hole-punch," Sylvia, her mum, remarked, pulling items out of the box, "And a raffle ticket."

"Yeah, well they can keep the raffle," Donna scoffed, "I wouldn't take a penny off that man."

"Honestly, you two...there's aliens on the news," Wilf reprimanded, "They took that hospital all the way to the moon and you're banging on about raffle tickets."

"Don't be daft, gramps," Donna rolled her eyes, "It wasn't the moon! It couldn't be."

"Yes, well, I'm telling you, it's getting worse. These past few years, it's like, all of a sudden, they suddenly know all about us and...there's keen eyes up there and they're not friendly."

"This stapler says 'Bea,'" Sylvia inspected the stapler.

"Can't believe how well you're taking it, me getting sacked," Donna glanced at her, "Thought you'd hit the roof."

"I'm just tired, Donna, what with your father and everything," Sylvia sighed, "To be honest, I've given up on you."

Donna looked away guiltily.

"...this further report just in, from Oliver Morgenstern," the reporter cut in.

"There was this other woman who took control who said she...she knew what to do, said she could stop the MRI or something...Sarah Jane, her name was," Morgenstern said, "Sarah Jane Smith."

"Sarah Jane Smith was a freelance investigative journalist formally of Metropolitan Magazine," the reporter said as photos of Sarah Jane Smith were displayed on the screen, "Her body was recovered from the hospital late this afternoon. Miss Smith had a son called..."

"What's for tea?" Donna asked.

"I've got nothing in," Sylvia shrugged.

"I'll get chips," Donna tried to be cheerful, "Last of my wages. Fish and chips, yeah?"

Her smile faltered as neither her mum nor granddad responded. Sylvia just adjusted a vase of
flowers while Wilf watched the TV miserably.

"...along with his teenage friends Maria Jackson and Clyde Langer," the reporter continued, "It is feared that they also perished."

Donna couldn't stand it any longer and got up, walking out of the house and down the road. She'd gotten a few streets away when she caught something in the corner of her eye. She slowed and came to a stop, looking across the street and up a little ways. There, sitting under a streetlamp, was a woman with her knees pulled to her chest, arms around them, head down, brown hair covering her, the faint hints of a hospital gown on. Donna took a step towards her when a flash of light burst in front of her and a blonde woman ran out of the alley ahead of her.

"Blimey!" Donna ran over, looking back to see the woman by the light post was gone, "Are you alright? What was that, fireworks or..."

"I dunno!" the woman replied, "I was just walking along and...that's weird."

Donna's eyes widened as she recognized her as the blonde woman from Christmas, "You're the one. Christmas Eve, I met you in town."

"Donna, isn't it?"

"What was your name?"

"How are you doing? You're looking good..." she gazed distractedly over at Donna's shoulder, "How've you been doing? What have you been up to?"

"You're doing it again."

"What?" she looked up.

"Looking behind me," Donna said, getting upset, "People keep on doing that, looking at my back."

"What sort of people?"

"People in the street. Strangers. I just catch them, sometimes, staring at me...like they're looking at something," her gaze dipped to Donna's shoulder again, "And then I get home and look and there's nothing there," Donna swiped her back, "See, look, now I'm doing it!"

"What are you doing for Christmas?" she asked suddenly.

"What am I what?" Donna half shouted.

"Next Christmas. Any plans?"

"I don't know, that's ages away!" Donna exclaimed, not seeing the point, "Nothing much I suppose. Why?"

"Just...I think you should get out," she said causally, "You and your family, don't stay in London, just...leave the City."

"What for?" Donna eyed her suspiciously.

"A nice hotel...Christmas break?"

"Can't afford it," Donna shrugged.
"Well, no, you've got that raffle ticket," the woman said eagerly.

"How do you know about that?" Donna gasped.

"First prize...luxury weekend break," she replied, empathetically, "Use it, Donna Noble."

"Why won't you tell me your name?" Donna demanded coldly. The woman didn't answer so Donna stormed off past her, "I think you should leave me alone."

She could hear a hum behind her and the faint flash of light reflected off the buildings, but she ignored them and continued on.

~8~

As it turned out, she'd won the raffle for a luxury Christmas escape and, needing a bit of cheer after a year of dead end jobs, she'd convinced her family to take her up on it. Some Christmas that had been. They'd just settled in when some Spanish maid had pointed to something on her back like many others and then they got reports of a replica of the Titanic crashing into Buckingham Palace. They'd gone outside to see a mushroom cloud and the town entirely destroyed, all their friends gone in an instant.

They'd been reassigned to Leeds and forced to live in a communal home with three other families. It was cramped and crowded, and they'd been forced to live in the kitchen and eat out of tins. The help they had been expecting from America never came as America found themselves in crisis as well, the fat of the people coming to life and killing 60 million citizens until other aliens came and shipped the little blobs away.

It had been difficult living with so many families, but they managed to bond a bit. They were actually gathered around in the sitting room, singing Queen's 'Bohemian Rhapsody' when the sound of shots being fired filled their air.

"Stay here, everyone, stay!" Rocco, the head of the entire collective families, said, getting up.

He opened the door to see a soldier shooting at the back of an army van on the street, the exhaust, the whole area clouding with smoke. The rest of their household crowded outside.

"Hey-ey-ey!" Rocco shouted at the soldier, "Firing at the car is not so good! You...you crazy or what?"

"It's this ATMOS thing, it won't stop!" the soldier replied, "It's like gas, it's toxic."

"Well, switch it off!" Wilf told him.

"I have, it's still going. It's every car. Every single ATMOS car, they've gone mad," he glanced at them, his eyes widening as he pointed the gun straight at Donna who had run out after her grandfather, "You, lady, turn around!"

Wilf and Rocco moved in front of Donna as the soldier aimed.

"Are you crazy, boy?" Rocco demanded.

"Turn around!" he ordered.

"Put the gun down!" Wilf called.

"Turn around! Turn around!"
"Do what he says!" Sylvia called, distressed, from the doorway, "Turn around, now!"

"Turn around, now! Show me your back!"

Donna turned around, her hands in the air to reveal nothing on her back.

The soldier lowered his gun, eyes wide in terrified confusion, "Sorry..." he breathed shakily, "I thought I saw..."

"Call yourself a soldier?" Wilf strode up to him angrily, "Pointing guns at innocent women?"

Donna didn't seem angry at all, she'd guessed at what he might have seen. She looked over to see a flash of blue light in the distance and the familiar buzz of electricity.

"You're a disgrace," Wilf continued, "In my day, we would've had you court marshaled!"

Donna just walked silently off in the direction of the light, ignoring her grandfather shouting at the soldier and her mother calling after her. She rounded the corner and came face-to-face with the blonde woman, standing there, waiting for her, "Hello.

"Hi," she replied. She turned and walked off, leading Donna to a nearby park, sitting down on the bench with her. She stared up at the sky, clouded with a thin layer of gas, "It's the ATMOS devices. We're lucky it's not so bad here, Britain hasn't got that much petrol. But all over Europe...China, South Africa...they're getting choked by gas."

"Can't anyone stop it?" Donna asked.

"Yeah, they're trying right now, this little band of fighters...on board the Sontaran ship...any second now..."

The sky turned to fire briefly as the sound of an explosion reached them. And then it was calm again. Donna's mouth fell open.

"And that was..." Donna trailed.

"That was the Torchwood team," she smiled, "Gwen Cooper, Ianto Jones, they gave their lives. And Captain Jack Harkness has transported to the Sontaran home world. There's no one left."

She sounded so tired and numb Donna almost felt sorry for her, but it was quickly replaced by anger, "You're always wearing the same clothes. Why won't you tell me your name?"

"None of this was meant to happen," she sighed, "There was a man. This...wonderful man and he stopped it. The Titanic, the Adipose, the ATMOS, he stopped them all from happening."

"That...Doctor?" Donna asked, recalling the man who had stopped the web.

"You knew him," she turned to her.

"Did I? When?"

"I think you dream about him, sometimes. It's a man in a suit? A tall, thin man, great hair..." she stared off into space, "Some...really great hair."

"Who are you?" Donna demanded.

"I was like you. I used to be you. You've travelled with him, Donna. You've travelled with the
"Doctor in a different world."

"I never met him, and he's dead," Donna shook her head.

"He died underneath the Thames on Christmas Eve, but you were meant to be there. He needed someone to stop him, and that was you. You made him leave. You saved his life."

Donna stared at her and for a split second she felt like she could almost remember, something from a dream…standing in a tunnel, in a wedding dress, as it flooded with water and fire.

"Stop it," Donna stood and stepped away, "I don't know what you're talking about, leave me alone!"

"Something's coming, Donna," she stood as well, "Something worse."

"The whole world is stinking," Donna replied angrily, "How can anything be worse than this?"

"Trust me, we need the Doctor more than ever…" she swallowed hard and put her hand to her heart, "I've…I've been pulled across from a different Universe, because every single Universe is in danger. It's coming, Donna. It's coming from across the stars and nothing can stop it."

"What is?" Donna cried, tears of frustration in her eyes.

"The darkness."

"Well, what do you keep telling ME for? What am I supposed to do? I'm nothing special. I mean, I'm…I'm not…I'm nothing special, I'm a temp. I'm not even that, I'm NOTHING."

She seemed to be holding back an absurd laugh, "Donna Noble, you're the most important woman in the whole of creation."

"Oh, don't," she let out a mirthless laugh, "Just…" she shook her head, her smile gone, "Don't. I'm tired. I'm so...tired," she turned to leave.

"I need you to come with me," the woman called.

"Yeah," Donna glanced over her shoulder, derision in her voice, "Well. Blonde hair might work on the men, but you ain't shifting me, lady."

She just smiled, "That's more like it."

"I've got plenty more."

"I know you'll come with me. Only when you want to."

"You'll have a long wait, then," she turned and walked away.

"Not really, just three weeks," she called, "Tell me, does your grandfather still own that telescope?"

Donna turned back, stunned, "He never lets go of it."

"Three weeks time. But you've got to be certain. Because, when you come with me, Donna...sorry...so sorry, but...you're going to die."

Donna could only stare as, before her very eyes, the woman faded away into nothing.
Donna let out a shaky breath as she stumbled back to the bench and plopped down. She shook her head, trying to convince herself that it was all a lie, all a dream, but it was real. She hesitated before pulling a slip of paper out of her pocket. It was a little bit of paper that she had jotted down notes on whenever she woke up.

She had dreamed of the man in the suit, as the woman predicted, but that wasn't just it. There was a woman as well, with black hair and blue aged eyes, and she was never far from this Doctor person. They were always together, smiling at her warmly. She could remember the black haired woman laughing, calling her Super Temp, and just...making her feel important. But…

There was another dream she had. A girl, with brown hair and green eyes, crying out in pain, locked away in a room with no windows. She looked down at the paper, flipping it over from notes about a box and silly little fantasies about volcanoes and wasps, to see two words in small scrawl circled.

Mason Institute.

~8~

The blonde woman was right, things just got much, much worse. Rocco was gone, along with his family to go to 'labor camps.' She'd never seen her grandfather so broken before, she had cried for hours when she realized what exactly that meant, the truth behind it. Her mother had gone into a depression, barely responsive to anything other than to tell Donna what a disappointment she was and apparently had always been.

Donna had just walked out of the little empty house in misery. Her hand came to clasp the bit of paper in her pocket before she decided to head off to the Mason Institute. She'd found out, after asking a few soldiers, that it was only a mile or two away, she could walk it.

She'd gotten there to find it in working order, if a bit more chaotic as it was as short on supplies and other necessities as other areas.

She walked up to the main desk to see a frazzled looking woman sitting there, sorting through papers.

"Um, hello," she said, stepping up, "I'm um…I'm here to see someone."

"Oh, hello, sorry," the woman looked up, "Who are you here for?"

Donna frowned, "I…I don't really…Mary Doe."

She blinked, she had no idea where the name had come from.

The woman's eyes widened as she looked a bit concerned, "Just a moment," she reached over to a phone and called a doctor.

Donna was starting to get nervous when the doctor finally arrived, looking weary. He was an older man, with glasses and a beard, Dr. Griffen his ID said, "Hello," he shook her hand, "I hear you're here to see Mary?"

"Um, yes," Donna nodded, "I'm um…I might know her."

Griffen nodded slowly before turning and leading her towards the stairs. Any chance they got to identify their mystery patients they took, "I feel I should warn you Miss…"
"Noble," Donna answered, "Donna Noble."

"Right, Miss Noble," he sighed, rubbing his head. "Mary…she had a rare case of MPS, Multiple Personality Syndrome. She would speak as though she were this man, the Doctor…" Donna stiffened, "She used to hold the most remarkable conversations with herself, slipping into one or two other personalities and then a variation of others."

"Used to?" Donna frowned.

They stepped through a door on the third floor and headed down a dimmer hallway, the cells stationed further away from each other, what looked like very heavy doors leading into them.

"A little more than a year ago," Griffen began, "The Christmas before last to be exact, out of nowhere she just screamed bloody murder. We found her seizing on the floor of her room, screaming in such pain…" he trailed, as though just the memory of the incident was too much for him to bear, "It took four orderlies and half our supply of medication to subdue her," he sighed, "Ever since then all she does is cry and scream unless we sedate her. We've had to restrain her from harming herself."

"H-harming herself?" Donna swallowed.

He nodded, "Soon after the initial collapse she…she tried to slit her wrists…we got to her just in time. There were two more times after that that we are aware of," they came to a door, Griffen hesitated before turning to Donna, "I must warn you Miss Noble, this can be…hard to see."

Donna nodded, "Just show me."

He nodded, taking out a ring of keys and opening the door. Donna gasped, her hand flying to her mouth as she saw what lay beyond it. Lying on the floor in the corner of a padded room barely big enough to lie curled in a ball, was the woman she'd seen under the web and on the street. She was on her side pressed against the wall, bound in a straightjacket as she curled in on herself. Her face was pale, her brown hair was a dirty mess, her green eyes nearly red from tears. Her cheeks were stained with permanent tear tracks that just streamed down her cheeks. But that wasn't the worst.

It was her eyes.

There was so much pain in her eyes, so much agony. It looked like she was lost to the world, devastated…dead. Donna could imagine this woman smiling and laughing and so full of life…but not now. She seemed utterly destroyed, consumed by nothing but misery and pain, such a deep rooted pain that Donna just knew she would never be rid of, a pain Donna was certain would haunt her own dreams till the day she died.

The woman closed her eyes, shaking her head as though she could wake up and find it wasn't real, "Doctor…" she mumbled to herself, her voice hoarse. Donna expected that, if all she did was scream and cry, her voice must be permanently damaged, "Please…you can't…" she sobbed, "You can't leave me…"

"She calls out for this Doctor," Griffen commented as Donna felt tears pool in her eyes, "Begging him to stay, to come back…" he shook his head, "We haven't been able to get through to her in over a year. We can barely get her to eat."

"The stars are going out," she whispered, "You couldn't save them…"

Donna turned away from the woman, she couldn't bear to look anymore.
"I don't know her," she told Griffen before half running out of the institute.

~8~

Donna sat on a small little hill with her grandfather, bundled up against the winter cold, still lost in her thoughts from her visit to the Mason Institute a week ago. She hadn't slept a full night since.

"You know, we'd get a bit of cash if we sold this thing," Wilf commented, looking at the telescope set up before them.

"Don't you dare!" Donna exclaimed, before sighing, "I always imagined, your old age...I'd have put a bit of money by, make you comfy," she shook her head, disappointed in herself, "Never did. I'm just useless..." she looked over to see her granddad looking through the telescope, "You're supposed to say 'no, you're not!'"

"Ah, it must be the alignment," he commented distractedly.

She frowned, "What's wrong?"

"Well, I don't know, I mean, it can't be the lens. I was looking at Orion, the constellation of Orion, you take a look," he shifted a bit for her to look through the lens, "And tell me, what can you see?"

"Where?" she frowned.

"Well, up there in the sky!"

"Well, I can't see anything, it's just...black," Donna pulled back.

"Well, I mean it's working!" he grumbled, confused, "The telescope is working."

"Well...maybe it's the clouds," Donna shrugged.

"There's no clouds!"

"Well, there must be!"

"There's not!" he countered, pointing up, "It was there. An entire constellation," he looked up to see something blinking out, "Look...look there..." they watched as the stars started disappearing, one constellation at a time, "They're going out!" he cried, horrified, "Oh, my God, Donna! The stars are going out."

Donna's eyes widened in horror as the woman in the institute's words came back to haunt her.

_The stars are going out._

She quickly stood up and walked away, seeing the blonde woman standing there, waiting for her, "I'm ready."

~8~

The blonde woman took her to UNIT headquarters, what was left of it anyway. She seemed at home there, striding purposefully around the base, which was really just a large warehouse, as Donna followed her. She walked over to a curtain, pushing it aside for Donna to enter it. There was a semicircle of mirrors set up with lights at intervals between them and a large blue phone box a short distance away, linked to a bunch of wires, but looking otherwise dark.
"Loadstone testing now at 15.4," the announcement came over the speakers, "Repeat: 15.4."

"Ma'am," a soldier saluted them as they walked over.

"I've told you, don't salute," the woman told her irritably, before turning to the computer and typing on it.

"Well, if you're not going to tell us your name..."

"What, you don't know either?" Donna asked.

"There's too many different realities," the woman answered, "Trust me, the wrong word in the wrong place can change an entire causal nexus."

"She talks like that," the soldier told Donna, "A lot. And you must be Miss Noble."

"Donna," she greeted, shaking her hand.

"Captain Erisa Magambo," she grinned, "Thank you for this."

"I don't even know what I'm doing."

"Is it awake?" the woman turned to Magambo.

"It seems to be quiet today," she said, "Ticking over. Like it's waiting."

She turned to stare at the blue box, her arms folded, "Do you want to see it?" she looked at Donna.

"What, a police box?" Donna frowned.

"They salvaged it from underneath the Thames. Just go inside."

"What for?" she eyed her suspiciously.

"Just go in!"

Donna pursed her lips but did as she was told, not really understanding. She gave the woman a strange look before stepping into the box...

"No way!" she shouted, seeing the inside was bigger than the outside. She laughed, stepping back out of it, walking around it to see if it was a trick, but it really was as small as it seemed. She walked back in.

It was completely dark, eerily silent, just a faint glow coming from the rotor as wires hung out of the console. It looked like it was barely hanging on, like it had just one thin line of life left.

Donna frowned, unable to not feel sad just standing there looking at it, before stepping out.

"What do you think?" the blonde woman grinned.

"...can I have a coffee?" she asked.

The woman nodded, sending a soldier to fetch it, before leading Donna back into the box. Moments later the soldier handed a steaming cup to Donna.

"Time and Relative Dimension in Space," the woman commented in thought, "This room used to shine with light," she looked up at the rotor, "I think it's dying," she reached out and rubbed the
console, "We haven't been able to figure out how it's lasted so long...it should have died with him. Had two or three close calls over the year but I think it's still trying to help."

"And...and it belonged to the Doctor?" Donna frowned.

"He was a Time Lord. Last of his kind."

Donna frowned, that sounded wrong to her, but she couldn't understand why. She shook her head out of her thoughts, "But if he's so special, what's he doing with me?"

"He thought you were brilliant," she smiled.

"Don't be stupid," Donna waved her off.

"Well, you are! It just took the Doctor to show you that, simply by being with him," she looked away, sad, "He did the same to me. To everyone he touches."

Donna watched her a moment, sensing something, something that troubled her, creating a pit in her stomach, "Were you and him..."

The woman looked at her, unable to answer before she reached out and smoothed her hand over Donna's shoulder, "Do you want to see it?"

"No," Donna shook her head, but the woman peered at her back, "Go on, then."

They stepped out into the warehouse, the woman leading her to the center of the circle of mirrors.

"We don't know how the TARDIS works, but we've managed to scrape off the surface technology, enough to show you the creature," she told her.

"It's a creature?" Donna's eyes widened in alarm.

"Just stand here," she told her, straightening Donna up.

"Out of the circle, please," Magambo called.

"Yes, ma'am," she smirked, stepping out.

"Can't you stay with me?" Donna called after her, but the woman didn't answer.

"Ready?" Magambo called again, "And...activate."

The machinery whirled and the lights around the circle snapped on one by one. Donna shut her eyes.

"Open your eyes, Donna," the woman called.

"Is it there?" Donna asked.

"Yeah, open your eyes. Look at it."

Donna shook her head, "I can't."

"It's part of you, Donna. Look."

Slowly Donna opened her eyes and she could see it. In the mirrors there was a massive black beetle perched on her shoulder, clinging to her back. She gasped in horror, spinning frantically, trying to
get it off her.

"It's ok, it's ok, it's ok, calm down," the woman tried to call reassuringly, "Donna? Donna? Donna!" Donna stopped, "Ok."

Donna gasped for breath, breathing heavily as she stared at the beetle with trepidation. It was almost the size of her back, its pincers nuzzling her hair. It didn't look like it was hurting her, but the way it was clinging to her...it was like a parasite.

"What is it?" Donna swallowed, trying to stay calm.

"We don't know," the woman replied apologetically.

"Oh," Donna nodded, managing to sound both terrified and sarcastic at the same time, "Thanks.

"It feeds off time. By...by changing time, by making someone's life take a different turn, like er...meetings never made...children never born...a life never loved. But with you, it's..." she shook her head.

"But I never did...anything important."

"Yeah, you did. One day, that thing made you turn right instead of left."

"When was that?"

"Oh, you wouldn't remember. It was the most ordinary day in the world, but by turning right, you never met the Doctor and the whole world just changed around you."

"Can you get rid of it?"

"I can't even touch it," she sighed helplessly, looking at it, "It seems to be in a state of flux."

"What...does that...mean?" Donna demanded, tired of not understanding all that time talk.

"I don't know," the woman admitted, "It's the sort of thing the Doctor would say!" she laughed.

"You liar!" Donna gasped, furious, her eyes filling with tears as she slowly became more hysterical, "You told me I was special! But it's not me! It's this thing! I'm just a host!"

"No, there's more than that," the woman remained calm, "The readings are strange it's...it's like reality's just bending round you."

"Because of this thing!"

"No, no! We're getting separate readings from you. And they've always been there, since the day you were born."

"Why? What can I do?!" she tried to look at the beetle but could only muster the ability to glance at it, "Turn it off," she whimpered, "Please."

"Captain," the woman turned to the captain.

"Power down," Magambo nodded.

As soon as the lights were off, the woman walked back over to Donna who was shaking uncontrollably. She reached out and touched her arm, trying to offer comfort.
"It's...it's still there, though," Donna breathed shakily, "What can I do...to get rid of it?"

"You're going to travel in time," the woman replied. She motioned to the captain and other soldiers came forward, fitting Donna with a green jacket and a score of wires, working as she continued to explain what would happen, "The TARDIS has tracked down the moment of intervention, Monday the 25th, one minute past ten in the morning. Your car was on Little Sutton Street Ealing Road, but you turn right heading for Griffin's Parade. You need to turn left. That's the most important thing. You've got to go back and turn left. Have you got that, Donna? One minute past ten. Make yourself turn left, heading for the Chiswick Highroad."

"Keep the jacket on at all times," Magambo instructed, "It's insulation against temporal feedback," she strapped a digital watch to her wrist, "This will correspond to local time wherever you land," and then gave her a glass of water, "This is to combat dehydration."

The woman took her arm and led her to the edge of the circle of lights where several UNIT soldiers were stationed. She placed her in a spot and took a step back, "This is where we leave you," she told her.

"I don't want to see that thing on my back," Donna said quickly.

"No! The mirrors are just incidental. They bounce chronon energy back into the center which we control and decide the destination."

"It's a time machine!"

"It's a time machine," she confirmed, nodding with a smile.

"If you could?" Magambo called.

The woman smiled and tried to step back but Donna took her arm, "If I do this...the Doctor lives?" the woman nodded, "And...what about the woman?"

She frowned, "What woman?"

"The one from the Institute," Donna said quickly, for some reason it was very important to her that the woman be ok as well, "Will she be ok then?"

"I'm sorry," she shook her head, "I don't know who you're talking about," she stepped back, confused, joining the soldiers in line.

"Powering up," Magambo said as the machinery sprang to life again, the lights turning on.

"How do you know it's going to work?" Donna asked.

"Hmm?" the woman tried to smile, "Oh...yeah...we...we don't. We're just...we're just guessing."

"Yeah," she laughed tensely, "Oh, brilliant!"

"Just remember, when you get to the junction, change the car's direction by one minute past ten."

"How do I do that?"

"It's up to you."

"Well, I just have to...run up to myself and...have a good argument."
She laughed, "I'd like to see that!"

"Activate loadstone," Magambo ordered.

A switch was flicked and the lights began to blink, the light on top of the TARDIS flashing in the background.

"Good luck!" she called.

"I'm ready!" Donna said enthusiastically.

"One minute past ten."

"Because I understand, now," Donna nodded, smiling though tears were collecting in her eyes, "You said I was going to die, but you mean this whole world is going to blink out of existence. But that's not dying. Because a better world takes its place. The Doctor's world. And I'm still alive!" she smiled more, "That's right, isn't it? I don't die? If I change things, I don't die? That's...that's right, isn't it?" she looked at the woman expectantly, needing the reassurance.

But the woman's smile faded, "I'm sorry."

"But I can't die!" Donna swallowed, all her courage fading fast, "I've got a future! With the Doctor...you told me!"

"Activate!" Magambo called.

The lights reached full intensity, nearly blinding everyone, as a strong wind bellowed around Donna. Sparks flew from the TARDIS, the mirrors, and the wires...and then...she disappeared.

She reappeared, falling to her knees on a pavement, still covered in wires and her green coat. Everything seemed normal, it was a normal day, people strolling by. She pushed herself up, almost unable to believe what she was seeing, before throwing her hands in the air, laughing.

And then she noticed where she was, "Hold on...but this is...I'm not...this is Sutton Court!" her eyes widened in horror, "I'm half a mile away!" then yelled up at the sky, "I'm half a mile away!" she looked down at her watch, three minutes to ten, "Four minutes? Oh, my God..."

And she ran for it.

She ran as fast as she could down the road, panting but not daring to stop. She paused only once at a lamp post to check her watch before carrying on. She ran faster and faster, glancing at her watch with a gasp, two minutes left.

"I'm not going to get there," she gasped, coming to a stop, almost ready to give up when she remembered the woman's words.

You're going to die.

She didn't want to die...and then her mind drifted to the woman in the Mason Institute...the look in her eyes. If she could make it so that look never appeared there, so that one woman didn't have to live with that pain...her death would be worth it.

She saw a blue lorry driving up the road.

"Please," she prayed, before stepping in front of it. The driver slammed on the brakes but it was too late...someone screamed...
She was barely aware of what happened after that…the driver jumped out of the car and waved to
the traffic behind them to stop. There was shouting.

She opened her eyes for a moment, dazed, in pain, and saw the blonde woman start to lean over
her, kneeling beside her.

"Tell him this: two words," she said quietly before leaning down and whispering in her ear just as
her eyes closed and her head fell to the side…

~8~

Donna awoke with a scream inside the oriental shop. The beetle she could feel on her back flailed
and fell off to the floor onto its back as all the events that had just occurred flashed backwards in
her mind.

The teller fell to the floor as well and cowered by a corner, staring at Donna in fear as she stood
and looked down at the beetle that could only twitch and click feebly on the floor.

"What the hell is that?" Donna demanded, looking over at the teller.

"You were so strong," the teller gasped, frightened, "What are you? What will you be?" she
scrambled for the exit, whimpering, "What will you be?"

The beetle gave one last click and grew still.

"Donna!"

Donna's head snapped up as Evy pushed the curtain of beads away and stepped into the room with
the Doctor.

"Everything alright?" the Doctor asked.

Donna just stared a moment before lunging at them, "Oh, God!" she hugged them tightly.

"What was that for?" the Doctor laughed.

But Donna was not smiling. She pulled back and grabbed Evy, pulling her into a fierce hug, tears
streaming down her face. It had been Evy, that woman in the institute, it was Evy. It was the
Link…the Doctor had died and Evy had been Linked to him...oh God...

"Donna, what's wrong?" Evy frowned, looking up at the Doctor, concerned, as Donna clung to her,
but he looked just as lost and concerned, "What is it?"

"You…and it…and…" Donna tried to explain before a sob hit her, "It was horrible."

"Hey, hey, hey," Evy soothed, pulling back a bit, "Everything's fine. See," she held Donna at arm's
length, "I'm fine. You're fine. The Doctor's fine…"

And Donna broke down.

Evy and the Doctor exchanged a glance before Evy reached out and helped Donna over to a seat
where the teller had just been sitting, "What's wrong?" she asked seriously, "What happened?"

She'd had a bad feeling when Donna had gone into the small shop, it was the same feeling she
always got whenever a companion wandered off alone. But she hadn't been able to convince the
Doctor to leave the stalls to go check till she let him buy her a small beaded bracelet she had been
examining before she saw Donna walk off. He thought she was just trying to keep him from buying her something. So she'd given in and allowed him to purchase it before nearly dragging him to find Donna.

Donna took a large breath and began to explain everything she had seen. How she'd turned right and then the Doctor had died and then Martha had died and the Titanic destroying London and Adipose in America and the ATMOS and the labor camps. How, somehow, the TARDIS had helped get her back. But the longer she spoke, the more it all started to fade. She couldn't even remember how she got back now...in fact, she was barely remembering the events she'd just spoken of but luckily she had managed to get the important parts out to the Time Lords.

"Doctor," Evy said, picking up something off the floor, it was the beetle. The Doctor pulled out his specs, as Evy placed it on the table, and began poking it with an incense stick.

"I can't remember," Donna breathed, "It's slipping away. You know like when you try and think of a dream and it just sort of...goes. But..." she swallowed, there was one thing that was sticking out in her mind...such a horrible thing. So horrible that she knew she'd never ever forget it.

"What?" Evy tilted her head to the side, sitting next to Donna and taking her hand.

Donna squeezed it, "There was you," she looked at Evy, the tears back, "You were stuck in that horrible place in that tiny room and the Doctor died Evy," Evy's eyes widened, "You were Linked to him and...it was horrible, Dr. Griffen even said you'd tried to..."

"Who?" the Doctor looked up, confused.

"The doctor in the Institute," Donna said, too lost in thought to see Evy stiffen next to her, "The Mason Institute."

The Doctor frowned, "But that's a mental institute," he shook his head, "Evy wasn't in one of those..." but then he saw Evy's face, "Evy, what's wrong?"

Evy was staring at Donna in shock, "I never told you the last doctor was Griffen..." she breathed. She'd been trying to convince herself that Donna's experience had just been her imagination, seeing what might have happened if she'd never met the Doctor, but she knew things, real things...it could only mean one thing, parallel worlds.

"Evy," the Doctor breathed, looking at her with wide eyes, "You...you were in the Mason Institute?"

Evy swallowed, trying to smile, "Remember that medical facility I mentioned in the Library?"

His mouth dropped open.

"It was awful," Donna said, replaying that moment in her mind, "The pain...your eyes...oh God, your eyes..."

And then Evy fell to the floor with a muffled cry, grabbing her head, hunched over.

"Evy!" the Doctor shouted as he fell to his knees beside her.

"What's wrong?" Donna gasped, moving to her other side, "What happened?"

The Doctor looked down at Evy, pulling her up and taking her head in his hands, holding his own over hers, "Evy," he said, she squinted through the pain and the Doctor let out a shuddering breath,
realizing what had happened, "Psychic reintegration…"

"What's that?" Donna shook her head, not understanding.

"The other her was calling out, and you heard her," the Doctor glanced at Donna, pulling Evy into a hug as she continued to tense in his arms, "In order for you to hear her, she had to alter her brainwave pattern just enough to project it to a human…the connection left a faint imprint on your mind. When you remembered seeing her…like that…the imprint activated and reintegrated back to her. She's absorbed it…"

"Meaning?" Donna frowned, it didn't sound good.

"She's basically reliving everything the other her experienced from the moment things in the timelines changed," he swallowed, tightening his grip on Evy as she began to breathe heavily, "Everything the other her thought or felt, she's feeling now."

"Oh my God!" Donna gasped, horrified, "I'm sorry…I'm so sorry! I didn't mean…"

"It's ok," Evy cut in, her voice thick with emotion, "It's an automatic reaction after projection," their minds would reach out to the species it needed to contact, leave the message, and retract back, but the other her hadn't had enough control at the time, it had remained connected even as Donna returned to them, so now it was being retracted, bringing with it all that the other her had in her mind at the time. "It couldn't be stopped."

She took a breath and pulled away from the Doctor slowly. He took her head in his hands once more and stared deep into her eyes. She was too overwhelmed to keep him out, he could see her in his mind's eye, how she'd fallen apart, what the Link had done to her on his death. She could see the pain in his eyes. He'd fully been willing to die that day, she knew, she'd been in his mind. And only now was he realizing what that would have meant for her. She gave him a small, reassuring smile, she didn't blame him.

"The TARDIS was connected to Evy," the Doctor said, getting back on task as he knew Evy didn't want to dwell on this any longer not only for her sake, not wanting to talk about it, but for Donna's who already felt guilty that it happened. He helped Evy up, though put her in the seat next to him instead, "It was clinging to her as the last Time Lady until you could use it to get back."

Donna winced, thinking of the two or three times the TARDIS had nearly faded that had been mentioned, knowing now it must have meant the other times Evy had tried to end her life in the parallel world. She reached across the table and took Evy's hand, squeezing it in apology…she hadn't ever wanted Evy to experience that. Evy smiled and squeezed her hand back before looking down at the beetle.

"It's one of the Trickster's Brigade," Evy cleared her throat, wanting the topic and all thoughts of it closed for now, "A creature that can change lives in small ways."

"Most times, the Universe just compensates around it, but with you..." the Doctor looked at Donna, sounding almost proud, "Great big parallel world!"

Donna began to smile, so relieved that they weren't angry with her, when his words reached her, "Hold on, you said parallel worlds are sealed off."

"They are. But you had one created around you. Funny thing is, it seems to be happening a lot. To you."

"How do you mean?"
"Well, there was that world in the Library," Evy began, "Now this..."

"Just...goes with the job I suppose."

The Doctor was silent a moment, just observing Donna, "Sometimes I think there's way too much coincidence around you, Donna. I met you once. Then we met your grandfather. Then I met you again. In the whole wide Universe, I met you for a second time."

Evy smiled, "I think it's the Universe's way of binding us all together."

"Don't be so daft," Donna said skeptically, "I'm nothing special."

"Yes, you are," Evy insisted, squeezing her hand again, "You are Super Temp, cape and all..." Donna laughed, Evy really had made her a cape, "You are brilliant!"

Donna smiled modestly, though very pleased to hear it, but then remembered...

_He thought you were brilliant..._

"She said that," Donna whispered.

"Who did?" Evy asked.

"That woman..." Donna strained to remember but then gave up, "I can't remember."

"Well, she never existed now," the Doctor waved it off.

"She didn't know you," Donna commented, looking at Evy, "Kept telling me about him, but not you."

"Well, I was locked away at the time," Evy tried to laugh it off.

'We are going to have a talk about that;' the Doctor's voice called in her mind, 'How could you not tell me about that?'

He was hurt, she could tell, 'Later;' she promised.

"No," Donna shook her head frantically, "She told me the darkness was coming, but...I didn't believe her and then you Evy..." she looked at the woman, "The other you said the stars were going out. And they were."

"Yeah, but that world's gone," the Doctor argued.

"No, but then that woman said it was all worlds," Donna countered, "She said it was in every world. She said the darkness is coming, even here."

"Who was she?" the Doctor asked slowly, now very interested.

"I don't know."

"Well, what did she look like?" Evy asked as well, faint suspicion in her mind.

"She was..." Donna trailed, thinking, "Blonde."

The Doctor swallowed, "What was her name?"

"I don't know!"
"Donna, what was her name?" the Doctor demanded. It was important. It *she* was able to break through from a parallel Universe then the integrity of the walls separating them had to be compromised…the darkness could *actually* be coming!

"But she told me...to warn you," Donna tried to think, "She said...two words."

"What two words?" Evy breathed.

"What were they?" the Doctor asked urgently, "What did she say?"

"Bad Wolf," Donna breathed after a moment. The Doctor's eyes widened as did Evy's when they realized what that meant, it was Rose. He was shaking. Evy reached out, grabbing his arm in alarm, "Well, what does it mean?"

"It means we need to go, now!" Evy said quickly as the Doctor jumped to his feet. He grabbed Evy's hand and pulled her out, Donna running after them.

"Oh God," Donna breathed as they stepped outside to see posters, banners, flags, everywhere and everything saying 'Bad Wolf,' painted over and over again. They ran to the TARDIS, the door even reading 'Bad Wolf.' The Doctor stopped dead, staring at them, till Evy pulled him forward and into the TARDIS only to see the inside flooded with red light.

Donna slammed the door shut behind them, "What is it? What's Bad Wolf?"

"It's the end of the Universe," the Doctor replied, breathing heavily.

To be continued…
Hmmm...Rose doesn't know Evy. She's in for a rather rude awakening isn't she? I see it as, she's been mostly following DONNA's timeline, because she knows that her's is the important one, or so it seems. So even if she was aware there was another person travelling with Donna and the Doctor, she wouldn't have cared to look too much into it. To her, the Doctor had two companions, if she even noticed. We all sort of get that she'd be keeping tabs on the Doctor, especially on Donna, so here Evy fell a bit to the side, and if she focused so much on Donna she would only have possibly been familiar with the current incarnation of Evy and not the one who appears in Donna's parallel world, which is why she didn't know of her.

Slight rant to follow:

Just a question, and I really don't mean this in an 'Anti-Rose' way for any Rose fans, but was anyone else completely annoyed and slightly...for lack of a better word...disgusted by Rose in this episode? She spent, what? Two years, maybe, with the Doctor (really only paying attention to him and time travel in his 10th self) and suddenly she's waltzing in, shooting herself across dimensions, and acting like she knows what she's talking about? It bothered me that she was messing with time so much in this episode of DW even if it was an already messed up timeline/parallel world. She admitted she had no idea what she was talking about, just that it was 'something the Doctor would say' which I felt was really careless of her considering she could have messed things up even more than they were, especially if she didn't have a team of UNIT scientists helping her. And then, this part really got to me, when she sent Donna back, knowing she would die, not giving her any other choice but to think she had to die to get the world in working order. We all saw how devastated the Doctor was after he manipulated Adelaide into doing what she did in Waters of Mars, and here was ROSE, his 'beloved' Rose, willingly and knowingly manipulating his companion into dying. I will be the first to admit that Rose is my least favorite companion, for a number of reasons mostly stemming from Series 1 with how she treated Mickey and some other things she did, but I try not to base how I feel about her character solely on that, it's just here really...just...urg. I think it was here, in this episode, that I started to see whatever 'great' person the Doctor believed Rose was, was gone. Here she was just a cocky, manipulative, little girl with delusions of grandeur, playing with fire and time and things far too complicated for her to understand, who was willing to let someone die to get what she wanted (it's one thing if it's a fixed point, but even then, like in Pompeii, it's a hard thing to deal with and shouldn't be done lightly, which, I felt like Rose did, not even offering Donna words of comfort when she realized she really was going to die, like the Doctor would do). And then in the future, actually laughing and pleased and impressed with the idea of blowing up the Earth to save the Universe...it disgusted me (if, like Pompeii, it was a torturous decision that was the ONLY way to save the Universe and she was broken hearted about having it happen, I could understand, but to laugh and smile at the threat of it? Urg). If she really wanted to be worthy of the Doctor she would have done everything she could think of to save Donna, to make it so she didn't have to die, we all saw, all Donna needed was a traffic jam or something to get her past self to turn left, not dying! If UNIT could find the resources to develop time travel with the help of the TARDIS, they could have come up with something, given her something from the base that would have just as easily caused a jam or given her a mobile phone to call herself with and fake some sort of promotion from H.C. Clements, just something and had her take it with her back in time.
SO sorry for the rant just then. And I really mean no offense to anyone who is a Rose fan, it's just my opinion of her during this episode. I know it's just a show, but...urg. I'm not going to make Rose the 'bad guy' like in the Academic Series, but she will have to deal with the idea of Linking. And the Doctor will have a wake up call about Rose too. All planned for the next two chapters, stemming from this episode.

Just some lighter notes...no the Doctor hasn't managed to get the Filter off just yet, there will be more about why in the next chapter. Rose was on the TV in Midnight, just like in the episode, but since neither the Doctor nor Evy noticed I didn't include a mention of it :)

Next chapter...Evy is REALLY good at backup plans :)}
Evy and the Doctor had immediately gotten to work at the controls of the TARDIS, setting it back for Earth. They didn't really care where they landed as long as it touched down somewhere so they could check for damage.

As soon as the TARDIS materialized, they were running out the doors, only to stop short at a perfectly normal suburban street. The Doctor looked around, still panicked, but Evy breathed a sigh of relief. Donna looked, confused.

"It's fine..." the Doctor breathed, looking around, "Everything's fine," a milk cart trundled along down the road, stopping a short ways away, "Nothing's wrong, it's all fine!"

"Excuse me, sir?" Evy called to the milk man, "Could you tell me what day is it?"

She could figure it out for herself, but with how fast her mind was racing she probably couldn't get a clear reading faster than the man could answer.

"Saturday," the man called.

"Saturday!" the Doctor sighed in relief, "Good!" he nodded turning to Donna, "Good, I like Saturdays."

"So...I just met Rose Tyler?" Donna asked. They had managed to get across to her that Bad Wolf was associated with Rose as the TARDIS jolted them around on the way there.

"Yeah," Evy replied as the Doctor still looked around uncertainly.

"But she's locked away in a parallel world."

"Exactly," the Doctor turned to her, speaking quickly, "If she can cross from her parallel world to your parallel world, then that means the walls of the Universe are breaking down, which puts everything in danger. Everything."

"But how?" Evy shook her head, the walls should be sealed, impenetrable, "How could she possibly be here?"

The Doctor looked just as confused and on edge as he hurried them back into the TARDIS. He and Evy got to work on the console, trying to see if the box had picked up any strange readings. Evy glanced down at the hand in the jar as it trembled.

"The thing is," Donna began, careful of her words as she looked between the Doctor and Evy, "No matter what's happening, and I'm sure it's bad, I get that. But...if Rose is coming back. Is that good?"

The Doctor didn't react, which worried Evy quite a bit. He should have been jumping for joy. She couldn't even tell what he was thinking, he was...not blocking his thoughts...but they were guarded.

"Yeah," Evy said to Donna, her eyes still on the Doctor as he remained silent.
Donna reached out to place a hand on Evy's shoulder, she hadn't meant to ask the unsettling question, but...she knew how sad the Doctor had been about losing Rose the first time she'd met him, and he didn't seem as...happy...as she thought he'd be to have her return. She hadn't wanted to bring up the girl who had seemingly gotten a piece of the Doctor's hearts to Evy either, but...the question had to be asked. Because...she had seen it. She'd seen the pain absent in the Doctor's eyes if Rose was even mentioned, she wanted Evy to see it as well, to see that the Doctor had clearly gotten over the events of the past, but Evy, bless her, was just as stubborn as a mule. Donna was suspicious that she was actively trying not to see that the Doctor was in love with her. Why, she had no idea. She could understand though, the girl had spent so long alone, watching from afar as the Doctor took on companion after companion, had relationships of some kind with other women. Evy had spent so much time thinking that it would never happen, that the Doctor would never be ready to Link to her, that he would never fall in love with her, that she couldn't see that he actually had.

She'd just opened her mouth to point out just what the Doctor's silence meant to the clearly confused Evy when the TARDIS gave a crash and a shudder, sending them all to the floor.

"What the hell was that?" Donna cried, alarmed.

"It came from outside!" the Doctor shouted, rushing for the doors. He threw them open to see nothing but space with lumps of rock floating around lazily. He and Evy just looked on in shock.

"We're in space...how did that happen?" Donna asked, a bit bemused, before she saw the looks on their faces, "What did you do?" she turned to the Doctor for that one. In all the adventures they'd taken, Evy usually got them there properly and with minimal jolting, the Doctor overshot, undershot, or ended up somewhere totally different while also making her feel like she was in the middle of an earthquake.

Evy shook her head and ran back to the console, pulling up the monitor, "We haven't moved," she called, looking up at them, "We're fixed," the Doctor ran over to her, looking at the projection of empty space, puzzled.

"It can't have..." he frowned, "No!"

"What?" Donna asked, growing concerned.

"The TARDIS is in the same spot we landed in," Evy told her, "It's...it's the Earth that's moved."

"The entire planet..." the Doctor muttered to himself, "It's gone!"

Evy pushed away from the console and ran around it, picking up Martha's mobile. She tried a few different numbers, growing more and more frustrated as she got no signal, "I can't contact Martha," she looked up, concerned, "Or Torchwood...something's blocking the signal."

"But...if the Earth's been moved...they've lost the sun," Donna gasped, "What about my mum? And granddad? They're dead? Aren't they? Are they dead?"

"I don't know, Donna," the Doctor replied helplessly, "I just don't know. I'm sorry. I don't know."

"That's my family," she cried, horrified, "My whole world."

"They're alive," Evy stepped forward and hugged her, "They have to be. To transport a planet you need to contain it, the entire thing, wrap it in some sort of shell or force field. I'm betting whatever it was, it's kept in the oxygen and the heat. They're fine. I promise."

Donna stared at her, nodding her head, still slightly stunned.
"There's no readings, nothing," the Doctor looked up from the computer, Evy moved back to his side, "Not a trace. Not even a whisper. Oh, that is..." he straightened, rubbing the back of his neck, "Fearsome technology."

"So, what do we do?" Donna asked, her voice trembling.

"We need to find some help," Evy looked over at the Doctor.

"From where?"

The Doctor sighed and turned to Donna, "Donna...I'm taking you to the Shadow Proclamation."

"Oh not them!" Evy grumbled, "I didn't mean them!"

"They're not that bad," he waved off her concerns.

"They almost let you die...on the moon...with hospital full of patients!"

"They're the only ones who might know what's going on."

Evy stared him down for a moment before sighing and rolling her eyes, she turned to Donna, "Hold tight," and then she flipped a lever, sending them into space. The TARDIS shook violently as they flew, all of them holding onto the console for support as the Doctor and Evy tried to operate the controls...they were flying faster than they should be.

"So, go on then, what is the Shadow Proclamation, anyway?" Donna asked.

"Posh name for 'police,'" the Doctor said, "Outer space police."


"Here we go!" he shouted as the TARDIS gave a lurch. Donna fell to her side, onto the floor, as the Doctor was thrown across the controls and onto the captain's chair, Evy landing on top of him.

Even in such dire straits, they couldn't help but laugh before the TARDIS shook again and they fell to the floor with the landing, materializing inside the headquarters of the Shadow Proclamation.

Evy pushed herself up and went to help Donna as the Doctor waited for them by the door. They took a breath before opening it and cautiously stepping out, only to be greeted by a small group of armed Judoon who immediately pointed their guns at them.

They held up their hands in surrender.

"Sco po tro no flow jo ko fo to to," a Judoon said.

"No bo ho so ko ro toe so," the Doctor began as Donna glanced at him with what Evy could only describe as a 'what the hell?' expression.


Donna couldn't care less what they had just said as the guns lowered.

"Ma ho," the Doctor thanked.

The Judoon motioned for them to follow and they were led to a room with a small computer and an albino woman standing there, the Shadow Architect they told Donna.
"Time Lords are the stuff of legend," she told them, glaring at the three of them. Apparently the Judoon had informed her of their arrival, "They belong in the myths and whispers of the Higher Species. You," she sneered, looking at the Doctor and Evy, "Cannot possibly exist."

"Yeah...more to the point," the Doctor began, "We've got a missing planet."

"Then you're not as wise as the stories would say. The picture is far bigger than you imagine. The whole Universe is in outrage, 24 worlds have been taken from the sky."

"How many?" Evy gaped, startled, how had they not noticed that? No, better question, how had SHE not noticed that? The Doctor, she knew, could be quite oblivious at times.

"Which ones?" the Doctor frowned, "Show me!" he ran to a computer at the side of the room, slipping on his specs as he came to it. Evy and the Architect walked over as well to look on.

"The locations range far and wide," the Architect replied as Evy leaned down to eye the screen, "They all disappeared at the exact same moment, leaving no trace."

"Callufrax Minor, Jahoo, Shallacatop, Woman Wept," the Doctor read, before blinking, "Clom…"

"Clom?" Evy scoffed, "Seriously?"

He nodded, "I know, who'd want Clom?"

"All different sizes," the Architect continued, "Some populated, some not, but all unconnected."

"What about Pyrovilia?" Donna asked suddenly.

They looked up at her.

"Who is the female?" the Architect eyed her as though she were a bug.

"Donna," she glared at the woman for her tone, "I'm a Human Being. Maybe not the stuff of legend, but every bit as important as Time Lords, thank you."

Evy beamed, "Possibly more so," she winked at Donna as the Doctor smiled.

"Way back when we were in Pompeii," Donna turned back to the two of them, "Lucius said Pyrovillia had gone missing."

"Pyrovillia is cold case," a Judoon replied, "Not relevant."

"How do you mean, 'cold case'?"

"The planet Pyrovilia cannot be part of this, it disappeared over 2,000 years ago," the Architect said.

"Yes, yes," Donna nodded, that was when Pompeii occurred, "Hang on. But there's the Adipose breeding planet too. Miss Foster said that was lost. But...that must've been a long time ago."

"That's it!" the Doctor shouted as Evy ran over and hugged her.

"Donna you are just brilliant!" Evy cheered before running back to the computer.

"The planets have been taken out of time as well as space," the Doctor realized. He looked over to Evy as she tampered with the computer.
"Let's put this into 3D," she muttered as holograms of the missing planets filled the room, "Now, if we add Pyrovilia..." Pyrovilia appeared.

"And Adipose 3..." the Doctor reached forward and pushed a button, it appeared as well.

"The Lost Moon of Poosh..."

"The Lost Moon of Poosh?" the Doctor questioned, looking at her.

"Remember?" Evy straightened, adding the moon, "Dee Dee did research on it."

"Oh yeah..." he mumbled, recalling that.

Evy laughed at him and then walked towards the planets, standing in the middle of them, looking around as they rearranged themselves.

"What did you do?" the Architect asked.

"Nothing," the Doctor answered for her, walking to join her and look around, "The planets rearranged themselves into the optimum pattern. Oh...look at that. 27 planets in perfect balance. Come on, that is gorgeous!"

"Oi!" Donna shouted, "Don't get all spaceman, what does it mean?"

"All those worlds fit together like pieces of an engine. It's like a power house. But what for?"

"Who could design such a thing?" the Architect asked.

"Someone tried to move the Earth once before. A long time ago...can't be..."

He shook his head and stumbled over to the steps, sitting down, lost in his thoughts. Evy glanced over at him, knowing what he was thinking of. She sighed and turned back to the computer, trying to see how the planets could fit and into what sort of engine.

Donna watched her go before moving to sit on the steps next to the Doctor. She looked around, watching as the planets orbited each other with a sigh. She glanced over at the Doctor to see he'd come out of his thoughts and was staring at something with a fond smile on his face. She followed his gaze to see Evy leaning over the computer, typing quickly, a small frown of concentration on her face as she tried to work out the puzzle, her head tilted to the side.

Donna laughed as she looked at the Doctor just watching her appreciatively. His eyes were soft, "Love's wonderful isn't it?"

He just nodded to himself before snapping out of it, realizing what Donna had said. He looked over at her to see her looking at him, amused but with a knowing smile. And he realized, she knew, "How?"

Donna smiled, "You were looking at her," she nodded towards Evy, "With the same look I always hoped a man would look at me like," he smiled a bit, "Does she know? Have you told her?"

"No," he shook his head, "I'm...careful...with my thoughts about it...it's not the right time to tell her. Bit busy and all..." he sighed.

He'd tried like crazy to get the blasted Perception Filter off her during their wander through Shan Shen, but it was rather difficult to get to the clasp of the necklace with her hair down. He'd tried more than a dozen times at least, trying to distract her. He'd offered to get her a new piece of
jewelry, a necklace, so he could put it on her with every intention of taking the Filter off at the same time, but she'd gone for a bracelet instead. He'd even tried to sonic the thing unlocked but been caught out with the screwdriver out and had to make up a daft excuse that he was scanning the fruit.

He shook his head, perhaps that had been a sign, to just wait, a moment or two longer, "Save the Universe and then I'll tell her."

Donna smiled softly at him.

"Doctor!" Evy called, nodding him over.

"And that's my cue," he winked at her, getting up to join Evy and the Architect over by the computer. She seemed frustrated and wanted his opinion.

Donna's smile fell as she caught sight of the Earth in the hologram. She quickly wiped away a tear and just looked around in thought, an odd rhythm beating in her head when a bowl was stuck in front of her.

"You need sustenance," one of the albino servants held out the bowl of water, "Take the water, it purifies."

"Thanks," she said dully but made no move to take it.

"There was something on your back."

"How did you know that?" she looked up, alarmed.

"You are something new."

Donna shook her head and looked away, "Not me. I'm just a temp…"

"Super Temp!" Evy shouted from across the room.

Donna smiled a bit, "Shorthand, filing, a hundred words per minute. Fat lot of good that is now. I'm no use to anyone."

"I'm so sorry for your loss," the servant frowned.

"Yeah," she replied, numb, "My whole planet's gone."

"I mean the loss that is yet to come," the servant whispered as Donna looked up at her, "God save you," and she walked away.

"Donna, come on, think," the Doctor moved forward, leaning on the rail of the stairs, "Earth. There must've been some sort of warning. Was there anything happening back in your day, like...electrical storms, freak weather, patterns in the sky?"

"Well, how should I know?" she rolled her eyes, before rubbing her head and sighing, "Um...no. I don't think so, no."

He sighed, "Oh, okay. Never mind," and turned to walk away.

"Although...there were the bees disappearing."

"The bees disappearing?" he asked sarcastically, Donna looking away hurt.
"Doctor!" Evy admonished.

"The BEES disappearing?"

"Doctor…" Evy's eyes were a bit wide as though realization was on the horizon.

"The bees disappearing!" he shouted, spinning to Evy, taking her shoulders, and shaking her.

"The bees disappearing!" she shouted as well, grabbing his arms, smiling.

"The bees disappearing!" they shouted at once, running over to the computer.

"How is that significant?" the Architect frowned.

"On Earth, we have these insects," Donna rushed over to them, seeing that they'd figured something out, "Some people said it was pollution or mobile phone signals…"

"Or…they were going back home," the Doctor said as Evy typed instructions into the computer.

"Back home where?"

"Melissa Majoria," Evy answered.

"Are you saying bees are aliens?"

"Don't be so daft," the Doctor told her, "Not all of them. But, if the migrant bees felt something, some sort of danger, and escaped..."

"Tandocca!" Evy shouted.

"The Tandocca Scale," the Architect's eyes widened.

"It's a series of wavelengths that migrant bees use as a carrier signal," Evy explained to Donna.

"Infinitely small, no wonder we didn't see it," the Doctor shook his head, excitement growing, "It's like looking for a speck of cinnamon in the Sahara. It's almost impossible to..."

"There it is!" Evy shouted, pointing at the screen where a trail of blue light appeared, making the Doctor beam at her success in locating it, "The Tandocca trail."

"The transmat that moved the planets was using the same wavelength!"

"We can follow the path!"

They looked up to see Donna already halfway to the TARDIS as she shouted over her shoulder, "And find the Earth! Well, stop talking and do it!"

"Oh we are!" the Doctor shouted, taking Evy's hand and pulling her to the TARDIS.

They ran in, straight to the console, "We're just a bit late," Evy mumbled as she hit a few controls and brought up a map with the trail on it, "The signal's already started to fade, but we should be able to follow it still!"

The Doctor ran to the doors and poked his head out to see the Architect and the Judoon standing there, "We've got a blip! It's just a blip, but it's definitely a blip."

"Then according to the strictures of the Shadow Proclamation, I will have to seize your transport"
and your technology," the Architect replied.

Evy looked up at the Doctor, having heard that as well. She quickly brought up a new screen on the monitor, typing in a short code before sending it off into space and getting back to the controls for the Tandocca trail.

"Oh, really?" he asked, taken aback, "What for?"

"The planets were stolen with hostile intent. We are declaring war, Doctor! Right across the Universe! And you will lead us into battle!"

"Right…" he said slowly, not too fond of the idea, "Yes. Course I will. Just go and…get you a key."

He slowly moved back into the TARDIS and ran to the console where Evy was grinning, already prepared. He flung his coat over a Y-beam and ran over to them. He grinned down at Evy who pulled a lever and they were off.

~8~

Torchwood was in chaos. Partially destroyed, hearing SOS reports from all over the planet after it had been moved from the solar system to wherever they were now, and worse yet, Martha might be dead.

"Incoming message," Gwen called from a computer.

"Ignore it," Jack called, "We can't help."

"Jack…" she breathed, stunned.

Jack looked up to see Ianto staring at the computer with his mouth open behind Gwen. He frowned and got up, rushing over.

There on the screen was a single message.

EDD: We're on our way, don't worry!

"Who's EDD?" he frowned.

"I dunno," Ianto said.

"Dunno?" Gwen frowned, something about that striking her, "Dunno…dun-no…Donna!" she spun to face them, "It's Evy!"

"What?" Jack shook his head.

"Evy, remember her last phone call? She's traveling with the Doctor and a woman called Donna. Evy, Doctor, Donna, E-D-D. It's got to be."

"Can you trace the signal?"

Gwen typed in a few codes and frowned, "It…it was some sort of virus, disappeared."

"Virus?" Ianto frowned.

"Evy must have hacked our system when she was here last, left a sort of mini-virus around, gave the TARDIS direct access to our computers for only one message," Gwen shook her head, "But it's
gone, closed up."

Jack stared at the computer, "That girl…" he shook his head. At least they knew, for now, she was alright, so was the Doctor, and they'd be here soon.

~8~

Wilf walked back into his kitchen with his phone. It had been quite a night. The Earth had been pulled across the stars, these Dalek creatures had appeared, and then, just when he and his daughter were about to be blown to bits, a blonde woman appeared with a massive gun and saved them. And he couldn't contact Donna to boot.

"I tried calling her, but I can't get through," Wilf muttered, walking over to his daughter and Rose, "She's still with the Doctor and Evy, I know that much, and the…and the last time she phoned, it…

it was about the girl being hurt or something…from a planet called Midnight, made of diamonds."

"What the hell are you two on about?" Sylvia demanded, holding a pot of tea.

"Look, she's out there, sweetheart!" Wilf shouted, going up to his daughter, "Your daughter! She's travelling the stars with the Doctor and that Evy girl. She always has been."

"Don't be ridiculous."

"Oh, come on, open your eyes," he said angrily, he didn't raise her to be so close minded, "Look at the sky. Look at the…look at the Daleks! You can't start denying things now!"

"You're my last hope," Rose spoke up dejectedly, "If we can't find Donna...we can't find the Doctor," then she whispered to herself, "Where is he?"

~8~

They were holding onto the TARDIS console for dear life, when it suddenly stopped dead.

"It's stopped…" Evy breathed.

"What do you mean?" Donna asked, "Is that good or bad? Where are we?"

The Doctor brought up the monitor, stunned, "The Medusa Cascade."

Evy stared wide eyed at the monitor, "I always wanted to come here…" she remarked. The Doctor looked at her and she glanced at Donna before silently telling him, 'Terrin talked about it all the time…'.

The Doctor frowned and laid a hand on her shoulder. She blinked and looked up at him, smiling.

"I came here when I was just a kid," he told Donna, staring at the monitor as well, "Ninety years old. It was the center of a rift in time and space."

"So...where are the 27 planets?" Donna asked.

"Nowhere," he sighed, "The Tandocca trail stops dead. End of the line."

Donna swallowed nervously, "So, what do we do? Doctor? Evy? What do we do?"

The Doctor said nothing, just stared at the screen, defeated.
"Don't do this to me," Donna pleaded, "No, don't. Don't do this to me. Not now. Tell me what we're going to do!" she frowned, seeing the Doctor so uncharacteristically hopeless, it was scaring her, "You never give up! Please!"

"The rift…" Evy mumbled. They looked at her, and she turned to the Doctor, "You sealed the rift…so they've got to be on the other side of it!"

The Doctor blinked, a bit of life coming back to him, "But we can't get through that."

"We'll have to find away then," she looked at him, determined, she took his hand, "You and me and these…" she pointed to her head.

He grinned, his determination back and better than ever.

He ran to the console with Evy, the two of them rushing around, flicking controls as Donna breathed a sigh of relief, with the two of them working on it, they would do it. She knew they would.

~8~

Everyone on Earth was sitting around hopelessly, the Earth had just surrendered to the Daleks. There was nothing else they could do.

Wilf sat with his arm around Sylvia, sitting huddled on a small sofa as she cried into his shoulder.

"You will obey Dalek instruction without question," a Dalek was saying from outside, "You will obey your Dalek ma…"

The Dalek's voice was cut off by a loud beeping sound. Wilf and Rose looked around to see that the source of the noise had been a laptop springing to life, displaying white noise with a familiar voice straining to get through.

"Can anyone hear me?" the voice called, "The subwave network is open, you should be able to hear my voice..." Rose walked to the laptop, surprised, "Is there anyone there?"

"I know that voice..." Rose gasped, kneeling in front of the laptop.

~8~

Sarah Jane Smith sat in her attic, holding her son Luke to her side as the very same voice called out.

"Who's that?" Luke asked.

"Some poor soul calling for help," Sarah Jane replied helplessly, "There's nothing we can do."

"But look at Mr. Smith!"

"Processing incoming subwave," Mr. Smith, the computer announced as a vague outline of a woman appeared in the white noise.

~8~

The voice of Harriet Jones called out through the Torchwood base. Gwen jumped to her feet, running over to the computer that was the source.

"This message is of the utmost importance," Harriet called, "We haven't much time. Can anyone
"Someone's trying to get in touch!" Gwen called.

"The whole world's crying out," Jack said from the corner of the room, clutching his phone, just waiting for Evy to call and say they were there, "Just leave it."

"Captain Jack Harkness, shame on you!" Harriet Jones reprimanded. The image on screen slowly cleared, revealing her. Ianto leapt to his feet as did Jack, "Now, stand to attention, sir!"

Jack ran over to the computer, "What? Who is that?"

The image cleared completely. It was Harriet, sitting in front of her computer, in her house. She flashed her ID card at the screen, "Harriet Jones, former Prime Minister."

"Yeah, I know who you are," Jack nodded.

"Harriet!" Rose shouted at the screen, "It's me, it's me! Oh, she can't hear me…" she turned, "Have you got a webcam?"

"No," Wilf nodded at Sylvia, "She wouldn't let me. She said they're naughty."

She turned back to the laptop, "Well, I can't speak to her then, can I?"

"Sarah Jane Smith, 13 Bannerman Road," Harriet called out as Sarah Jane jumped to her feet and ran to the computer, "Are you there?"

"Yeah!" she shouted, "Yeah, I'm here! It's me!"

"Good!" Harriet exclaimed, "Now, let's see if we can talk to each other."

Harriet pressed a few buttons and the screen divided into four squares. Harriet was the first, then Torchwood, Sarah Jane, and the fourth still had white noise.

"The fourth contact seems to be having some trouble getting through," Harriet said.

"That's me!" Rose shouted at the computer, "Harriet, that's me!"

"I'll just boost the signal," Harriet pressed a few more buttons and Martha appeared in the last square.

"Hello?" Martha asked.

"Martha Jones!" Jack laughed, seeing her, so unbelievably relieved that she was ok.

"Who's she?" Rose asked, annoyed, "I want to get through!"

"Martha, where are you?"

"I guess Project Indigo was more clever than we thought," Martha smiled, "One second I was in Manhattan…next second…maybe Indigo tapped into my mind, because I ended up in the one place
that I wanted to be."

Martha's mother appeared on screen beside her, "You came home. At the end of the world, you came back to me."

She and Martha smiled as Martha turned back to the screen, "But all of a sudden, it's like...the laptop turned itself on?"

"It did," Harriet replied, "That was me," she flashed her ID again, "Harriet Jones, former Prime Minister."

"Yes, I...know who you are."

"I thought it was about time we all met, given the current crisis. Torchwood, this is Sarah Jane Smith."

"I've been following your work," Jack smirked at Sarah Jane, "Nice job with the Slitheen..."

"Yeah, well, I've been staying away from you lot," Sarah Jane replied, nodding at Luke, "Too many guns."

"All the same...might I say, looking good, ma'am," he winked at her.

"Really?" Sarah Jane asked, pleased, "Ooh!"

"Ow!" Jack cried as Ianto smacked him upside the head, "Ianto!"

"Sorry," Ianto smirked, "Evy's orders."

Jack couldn't help but laugh at that and turned back to the screen as Harriet spoke, looking just a bit amused, "And Martha Jones, former companion to the Doctor."

"Oi!" Rose cried, indignant, "So was I!"

"But how did you find me?" Martha frowned.

"This, ladies and gentlemen, this is a subwave network," Harriet smiled, "A sentient piece of software programmed to seek out anyone and everyone who can help to contact the Doctor."

"What if the Daleks can hear us?" Martha asked cautiously.

"No! That's the beauty of the subwave. It's undetectable."

"And...you invented it?" Sarah Jane asked, impressed.

"I helped developed it," she admitted hesitantly, "It was created by the Mr. Copper Foundation. Based on some schematics they received."

"Received from where?" Jack asked.

"No one knows," Harriet sighed, "They received an email one day with plans for the network, commands already encrypted into them for just this sort of situation should it arise."

"Do you know who sent the email?" Sarah Jane asked.

"We're not sure. Untraceable, it was signed with 'Beautiful Bird.'"
Jack laughed heartily as Torchwood looked proud, "Oh that girl's done it again!"

"I beg your pardon?"

"Evelyn Daniels," Jack shook his head, "She worked for us a bit, left just after sending out an email," she must have preset the email to only be sent when the Torchwood systems picked up technology capable of creating such a system in an outside source, "Evelyn means 'Beautiful Bird.'"

Harriet smiled, pleased to have learned who had helped them, "When you see her next captain, thank her for me."

"Yeah," he nodded, but got back to business, "Thanks are all well and good but what we need right now is a weapon. Martha, back there at UNIT, what did they give you? What was that key thing?"

"The Osterhagen Key," Martha held up a small black square for them to see.

"That key is not to be used, Dr. Jones," Harriet said in all seriousness, "Not under any circumstances."

"But what is an Osterhagen Key?" Jack asked.

"Forget about the key! And that's an order. All we need is the Doctor."

"And Evy," Jack added.

"Who?"

"Evelyn," Jack corrected, "She likes to go by Evy. Tall, about 5'8", blue eyes, brown hai…"

"It's black now Jack," Ianto corrected.

"Right, black hair. Unofficial member of Torchwood."

"Ianto's 'unofficial' adopted little sister," Gwen added.

"My best friend," Martha smiled, "Travelled with me and the Doctor."

"Still travels with the Doctor," Jack grinned, "She's Linked to him."

Sarah Jane gasped, her eyes widening in shock, "He's found her?" she breathed. The Doctor had told her only once, when they had talked of his home world, of the Linking process, of why he'd left the planet. For him to find his Link now, even after the Time War…that would be brilliant!

"Actually she found him," Jack smiled, happy to know that the Doctor's companion actually knew what Linking and Links were.

"Yes, this is all fascinating," Harriet interrupted, "But we really need to focus on finding the Doctor."

"Won't find him without finding her," Jack told Harriet, "She's with the Doctor right now."

"Oh, excuse me, Harriet, but well, the thing is..." Sarah Jane began, "If you're looking for the Doctor, didn't he depose you?"

"He did," Harriet nodded, "And I've wondered about that for a long time, whether I was wrong. But I stand by my actions to this day, because I knew, I knew that one day, the Earth would be in
danger and the Doctor would fail to appear. I told him so myself, and he didn't listen."

"But I've been trying to find him," Martha said, "Evy's got my phone on the TARDIS, but I can't get through."

"Nor me, and I was here first," Rose muttered, annoyed, "And who's this Evy? His newest companion?"

"That's why we need the subwave," Harriet told them, "To bring us all together. Combined forces. The Doctor's Secret Army."

"Um, we here at Torchwood would prefer to be known as Evy's Bodyguards," Ianto spoke up from behind Jack, "Sort of know her better and all..."

"Wait a minute," Jack cut in, thinking of something, "We can boost the signal, that's it! We transmit that telephone number through Torchwood itself, using all the power of the rift..."

"And we've got Mr. Smith!" Luke called, "He can link up with every telephone exchange on the Earth. He can get the whole world to call the same number, all at the same time. Billions of phones calling out, all at once!"

"Ha ha, brilliant!" Jack laughed, pointing at Luke, "Who's the kid?"

"That's my son!" Sarah Jane beamed proudly.

"Excuse me," Ianto cut in again, shuffling forwards, "Sorry. Sorry. Hello. Ianto Jones," he officially introduced himself, "Um, if we start transmitting, then the subwave network is going to become...visible. I mean, to the...Daleks."

"Yes," Harriet replied grimly, "And they'll trace it back to me, but my life doesn't matter. Not if it saves the Earth."

"Ma'am," Jack saluted her.

"Thank you, Captain. But there are people out there, dying. On the streets."

"Ah, marvelous woman," Wilf commented, listening in, "I voted for her."

"You did not!" Sylvia shouted.

"Now, enough of words," Harriet shook her head, "Let's begin," she turned and began typing on the keyboard, Rose watching as Torchwood burst into action, running from terminal to terminal. "Rift power activated!" Jack called.

"All terminals coordinated," Gwen shouted, running to help Ianto with a bunch of wires. He connected them to the column rising up into the water feature outside the Millennium center.

"National Grid online, giving you everything we've got!" Ianto added.

The machinery whirred, powering up.

Sarah Jane and Luke took that as their cue and began punching in instructions on Mr. Smith's controls.

"Connecting you to Mr. Smith!" Sarah Jane called.
"All telephone networks combined!" Luke added.

A map with red dots of the networks appeared on screen.

"Sending you the number...now!" Martha called, sending them the number of her mobile.

"Opening subwave network to maximum," Harriet called, receiving the number.

Sarah Jane and Luke stepped back, ready for Mr. Smith to take over, "Mr. Smith...make that call."

"Calling...the Doctor," Mr. Smith stated, the number on screen.

"So am I," Rose replied, pulling out her own phone.

"And...sending!" Jack shouted, pulling a lever and sending rings of electric blue light waves travelling slowly up the column, up and out to the Universe.

~8~

Evy and the Doctor were still attempting to slip through the rift when Martha's mobile began to ring.

"PHONE!" the Doctor shouted.

Evy ran to it and picked it up just before the Doctor could, she smirked up at him and put the phone to her ear, "Martha, are you there?" she hesitated a moment, hearing a beeping instead, "It's a signal!"

"Can we follow it?" Donna asked.

Evy handed him the phone which he put his stethoscope to, grinning, "Oh, just watch us!" he put the phone down in front of the monitor and pressed his stethoscope to it.

~8~

The monitor in the Noble home flashed with light as equipment on the screen was exploding, sparks flying, utter chaos reigned around the Torchwood base.

"I think we've got a fix!" Jack shouted.

"Mr. Smith now at 200 percent!" Sarah Jane replied, jumping back as sparks flew out of Mr. Smith, "Oh, come on, Doctor!"

Wilf, Sylvia, and Rose stood together, each dialing the number that had appeared on screen on their mobiles. Rose lifted hers above her head, "Find me, Doctor," she whispered, closing her eyes and praying, "Find me."

~8~

"Got it!" the Doctor shouted, "Locking on!"

Evy pulled a lever, causing the TARDIS to shudder, sending them falling all over the place again with sparks flying from the console.

~8~
"Harriet, a source has locked on to your location," Gwen said into the computer as Ianto and Jack ran around, "They've found you."

"I know," Harriet replied, "I'm using the network to mask your transmission. Keep going!"

"Exterminate!" they could hear a Dalek say from just outside her door. There was a small explosion and a hole was blasted in the side of her house, but she just kept working.

~8~

The whole console went up in flames, the TARDIS shaking violently. Donna gasped.

"We're travelling through time!" the Doctor shouted above the noise, "One second in the future!"

Evy laughed, "The phone call is pulling us onward!"

~8~

"Captain, I'm transferring the subwave network to Torchwood," Harriet said, "You're in charge, now. And tell the Doctor from me, he chose his companions very well."

Jack nodded with a sad smile.

"It's been an honor," Harriet said.

They watched as Harriet got up and turned to face the Daleks, flashing her ID one last time, "Harriet Jones, former Prime Minister."

"Yes, we know who you are," a Dalek replied.

"Oh, you know nothing of any human. And that will be your downfall."

"Exterminate!" the Dalek called. Harriet braced herself.

In a moment, she was dead.

Harriet's square went back to white noise.

~8~

"Three!" the Doctor and Evy shouted at the top of their lungs, "Two! ONE!"

They held tight, screaming like they were on a rollercoaster and not a potential ride of death. The TARDIS hurtled through the rift, pulled to the other side where the Earth and the other planets became visible one by one.

The fires on the console died down as the TARDIS slowed and soon stopped shaking. The Doctor and Evy stared at the monitor, seeing the planets before grinning.

"The 27 planets!" Donna gasped, looking at the monitor as well, "And there's the Earth! But why couldn't we see it?"

"The seal the Doctor used on the rift left the entire Medusa Cascade just a second out of touch with the rest of the Universe," Evy said, standing up.

"Perfect hiding place, tiny little pocket of time," the Doctor laughed, "But we found them!"
There was a whirring noise and the monitor screen blurred.

"Oh, oh...what's that?" he frowned, "Hold on, hold on..." he turned a knob and peered into the monitor.

"It's the subwave network!" Evy shouted, pushing him out of the way and punching in some instructions.

"The what?" he looked at her

Evy grinned up at him, "I may have left some instructions back on Earth in case they ever needed to contact you."

"You...how?" he asked, stunned. Even he hadn't thought of that.

She just reached out and lifted up the Spatial Shifter he still wore, but clipped to his tie, "I'm very good at backup plans," she smiled at him as he grinned widely.

"Oh, I love you!" he shouted.

Evy just laughed, thinking nothing of his words, before turning back to the monitor. A moment later the images cleared to reveal Torchwood, Martha, and Sarah Jane Smith!

Jack laughed with relief, seeing them there, before glaring, "Where the hell have you been Evelyn Daniels?!" Evy laughed, "Doctor, it's the Daleks!"

"Evy!" Ianto and Gwen shouted.

"Hello!" Evy grinned at them, so relieved to see them ok.

"It's the Daleks!" Sarah Jane said after a moment of looking at the woman who had reacted to the name Evy, the Doctor's Link was beautiful, "They're taking people to their spaceship!"

"But it's not just Dalek Caan!" Martha shouted.

Sarah Jane and Martha began to jabber over each other as the Doctor, Evy, and Donna looked on, a smile growing across the Doctor's face.

~8~

"That's Donna!" Sylvia gasped, seeing Donna on the other side of the Doctor.

"That's my girl!" Wilf called proudly.

Rose was silent, just overcome with seeing the Doctor again, but her glance flickered to the black haired woman next to him.

~8~

"Sarah Jane!" the Doctor beamed, "Who's that boy? That must be the rest of Torchwood. Aren't they brilliant?" he glanced at Evy.

"Oh I knew they would figure it out!" Evy exclaimed, seeing the network up and running.

"So it was you!" Jack laughed, "I knew it Miss Beautiful Bird."
"Beautiful Bird?" the Doctor looked at her questioningly.

"I told you I thought Evelyn was a lovely name," she shrugged, "That's what it means."

He smiled softly at her, "Very you," he told her quietly before turning back to the screen, "Look at you all, you clever people!"

"That's Martha!" Donna gasped as Martha waved, "And who's..." she pointed to someone on the screen, "...he?"

"Captain Jack," the Doctor introduced.

"Don't!" Evy shook her head laughingly, "Just...don't."

"Hey!" Jack called.

"Ianto," Evy turned back.

Ianto nodded, straightening before smacking Jack upside the back of his head again.

"She's got you doing it too?" the Doctor asked Ianto before turning to grin at Jack, "At least it's not just me eh?"

~8~

"Doctor, it's me," Rose whispered, touching the screen lightly, lingering on his face, "I came back."

~8~

"It's like...an outer space Facebook!" Donna laughed, but then the screen turned white and their relief quickly faded, "We've lost them!"

Evy turned a knob, "No...it's another signal trying to come through, there must be someone else out there."

"Doctor?" Martha called, there was still audio it seemed, "What's going on?"

"Hello?" the Doctor leaned forward, "Can you hear me?"

"Your voice is different, and yet, its arrogance is unchanged," a familiar, raspy voice replied.

The Doctor stiffened. Evy grabbed his arm, her eyes wide as they both froze when Davros appeared on screen.

"Welcome...to my new Empire, Doctor," Davros grinned, "It is only fitting that you should bear witness to the resurrection and the triumph of Davros, Lord and Creator of the Dalek Race."

The Doctor's mouth dropped open as he laid a hand on Evy's, grabbing it tightly.

"Doctor?" Donna asked, "Evy?"

"Have you nothing to say?" Davros demanded.

"It's alright," Donna stepped forward, putting a hand on their shoulders, "We're...we're in the TARDIS. We're safe."
"But you were destroyed," the Doctor said numbly, shaking, "In the very first year of the Time War, at the Gates of Elysium. I saw your command ship flying into the jaws of the Nightmare Child. I tried to save you..."

"But it took one stronger than you," Davros replied, "Dalek Caan himself."

He motioned behind him where the mutant that was Dalek Caan became visible, "I flew into the wild and fire. I danced and died a thousand times!"

"Emergency Temporal Shift took him back into the Time War itself."

"That's impossible, the war is time-locked," Evy shouted.

"And who is this?" Davros asked, eyeing her.

"You leave her out of it," the Doctor nearly spat, trying to push Evy behind him.

Davros smirked. He could recognize a Time Lady when he saw one, and the protectiveness the Doctor displayed…it went far past protection of the species, "Ah a Link."

Evy stepped back willingly now, terrified, as the Doctor glared daggers at the man. On Gallifrey, during the war, Davros, and then eventually the Daleks, would have Linked Time Lords and Ladies captured alive, just so he could force one to watch the other die. He would let them suffer in the agony of their own hell until they begged for death, and only then would he give them the relief they sought.

"The time-lock is impenetrable," the Doctor bit out, hoping to get Davros's attention away from Evy.

"And yet, he succeeded in breaching it," Davros replied, "Oh, it cost him his mind, but imagine, a single, simple Dalek succeeded where Emperors and Time Lords have failed. A testament, don't you think, to my remarkable creations?"

"And you made a new race of Daleks."

"I gave myself to them. Quite literally. Each one grown from a cell of my own body," he pulled his leather suit open to reveal his rotten, thin form, his ribs and heart for them to see, "New Daleks. True Daleks. I have my children, Doctor. What do you have, now?"

"After all this time..." he began, barely breaking through his anger and shock, "Everything we saw, everything we lost...I have only one thing to say to you," he glared at the man, shouting loudly, manically, "BYE!"

He pulled a lever, cutting him off, immediately on his feet, spinning to pull Evy to him. He held her tightly as she shook in his arms.

~8~

On Earth, Captain Jack was off his seat, running around Torchwood's base frantically, grabbing various things off of tables, his phone to his ear.

"Gwen!" Ianto called her over to a terminal, "Dalek saucer heading for the Bay. They've found us."

Ianto rushed away, the blinking red dots getting closer to them as Gwen took over the terminal.

"Martha, open that Indigo device!" Jack instructed over the phone, "Now, listen to me, lift the
central panel. There's a string of numbers that keep changing," he picked up a gun, "But the fourth number keeps oscillating between two different digits. Tell me what they are."

"It's a four and a nine," she replied, "We could never work out what that was."

"That's a teleport base-code, and that's all I need to get this thing working again," Jack said gleefully as Ianto helped him into a jacket. He looked down at his Vortex Manipulator, Evy had instructed him over the phone once on how to undo the Doctor's sonic ing, it was working again. He tapped a few coordinates in, "Oscillating four...and nine. Thank you, Martha Jones," he flipped the phone shut and turned to Gwen as she handed him his gun, "I've gotta go. I've got to find the Doctor and Evy," they watched him, silent, "I'll come back," he reassured them, still no answer, "I'm coming back!"

"Don't worry about us," Gwen told him, needing him to leave soon, knowing the Daleks were only moments away, "Just go."

"We'll be fine," Ianto added.

"You'd better be, or Evy will kill me," he nodded at them before teleporting out.

Gwen and Ianto looked at each other fearfully moments before something crashed above them and rubble began to fall around them. They crept forward silently, listening.

"Exterminate!" a Dalek shouted from above them, "Exterminate!"

"They're here," Gwen said resignedly before resolve kicked in and she went for the guns...if she was going to die, she was going to go out with a fight.

~8~

The TARDIS materialized on a street, just outside a church. The road was full of abandoned cars, parked haphazardly around, overturned pushchairs and bikes, scattered rubbish, unnaturally silent. A dog barked in the distance.

"It's like a ghost town," Donna whispered as they stepped out.

"Sarah Jane said the Daleks were taking people," Evy replied, "But why?"

"Think, Donna," the Doctor turned to her, "When you met Rose in that parallel world, what did she say?"

"Just...the darkness is coming," Donna replied.

"Anything else?"

Evy smiled softly, looking over his shoulder, "Why don't you ask her yourself?"

He looked at her, confused, before turning to follow her gaze, his eyes widening as he saw Rose standing there, at the far end of the street, with a rather large gun. He looked back at Evy, his eyes pained and almost a bit reluctant, "Evy..." he searched her eyes, wanting her to understand something, he missed Rose, yes, but he didn't want her to misunderstand that he only missed her as a companion, "I..."

She just shook her head and nodded towards Rose who was now running down the street, "She's missed you."
The Doctor smiled just a bit, reaching out to squeeze her hand reassuringly before turning to run down the street. Evy frowned as she followed him, in all his excitement his thoughts were racing a million miles a second, she had no idea why he'd taken her hand or what his looks were meant to mean. She looked at Donna who just gave her a smug smirk which just confused her even more. She was about to ask just what was going on when something caught her attention in the corner of her eye.

She turned back around to see a small jolt of electricity flicker in the middle of the air just down the road. Her eyes widened in horror when she realized what it was. Her mind only took one second to make the connection of what was about to happen before her body took off down the road, a now confused Donna calling after her.

She paid the woman no heed as she ran as fast as she could to get to the Doctor in time.

She could see the Dalek fully glide out of the Emergency Temporal Shift and could see it powering up a shot.

"Exterminate!" the Dalek called. The Doctor stupidly stopped running to turn around and she took the opportunity to half throw herself at him and, in a move similar to when she'd saved her brother, just managing to push him down before she was shot in the shoulder by the Dalek and sent flying backwards.

After that everything was a blur of pain and noise. She could hear the soft crackle of a Vortex Manipulator before a voice that sounded like Jack called out. She turned her head to see Jack standing there aiming and firing a gun at the Dalek as Rose helped a stunned Doctor off the ground.

She convulsed in pain just as Jack ran to her side, "Evy!"

Moments later the Doctor managed to shake himself out of his shock and rush to her side just as Donna also reached her.

"I've got you," the Doctor said, reaching out to pull her into his arms, cradling her body to his chest, "It missed you…it had to have missed you…"

"Daleks never miss," she gasped out, wincing as Donna tried to put pressure on her wound.

But it was too late.

The Doctor looked down in horror, seeing the wound already healing, "No…" he breathed, "No…this can't be happening…"

"Don't really have a say in it, do I?" Evy groaned at the feeling of the regeneration on the horizon.

"Just wait," he muttered, his mind racing again, "Just wait a bit…I'll…I'll figure something out."

She convulsed.

Jack stared at the Doctor in shock at seeing him so utterly lost and frantic. But he shook himself around when Evy began gasping.

"Get her into the TARDIS, quick," he ordered. He never would have thought he'd ever be ordering the Doctor around but the man was in another world, "Move!" he ground out, frustrated. He reached out and tried to pull Evy away from the Doctor's arms, but he wouldn't let go, "You really want this to happen in the street Doctor?"
The Doctor flinched before his grip on Evy loosened enough for Jack to pick her up. He half jogged towards the TARDIS, the Doctor and Rose running behind, Rose clutching her gun to her chest with a look of confusion, disappointment, and worry on her face. Donna ran ahead and opened the doors for Jack.

He gently laid her at the base of the console, trying his best not to flinch every time she twitched and moaned in pain. He hated seeing her like that and he knew Ianto would kill him for not having gotten there in time. He looked up to see Rose and Donna standing behind him, tears in Donna's eyes, confusion in Rose's, as they looked on helplessly. The Doctor was already at Evy's side, holding her hand.

"What…what do we do?" Donna asked, trembling, "There must be some medicine or something!"

Jack threw his gun down on the captain's chair in frustration, "Just step back," he turned to them, seeing them still crowded around her body. Seriously? Was he the only person capable of sensible thought? He hated seeing Evy like that, but there was nothing he could do but let it flow its course, "Do as I say, and get back!" he barked. Rose jumped at the sound and stared at him, confused. Donna seemed to finally come around and pulled the other woman back gently.

Jack looked over at the Doctor, seeing him brushing Evy's hair away from her face with one hand and gripping her other. He sighed and made his way over, laying a gentle hand on the distressed man's shoulder, "She's dying," he said softly, "You know what happens next."

Donna gasped. Evy had told her about regeneration, but she never thought she'd have to experience one of her best friends going through it.

"What do you mean?" Rose asked, looking even more confused. But that only lasted a moment before Evy held up her free hand to reveal a dim golden-orange glow beginning to emit from it, "Oh my God!"

The girl was a Time Lord!

"It's starting," Evy began to shake as her whole body began to glow. She looked up at the Doctor, tears in her eyes, it was too soon, "I don't want to go."

"I'll be here," he whispered, promise in his voice, "Every step."

"Doctor you can't," Jack reminded him, trying to tug him away. Regeneration energy could be dangerous if you were too close. He thought back to when the Master had tried to hold onto Evy when she regenerated last time only to be forced away by the raw power of it.

"I'm sorry," Evy whispered as another jolt ran through her.

"It's my fault," the Doctor shook his head, "It should have been me…I've had plenty of time…you…you've barely gotten a year."

She smiled a bit despite the pain, "Seems to be a conditional clause with you…the bodies never last."

"Don't worry," he soothed, before glancing at Jack, "I'm not leaving."

"But Doctor…" Jack began.

"You don't know anything about Time Lords," he nearly growled, he'd had enough of these humans trying to pull him away from her, "I'm the only person who can be near her when she
regenerates, and I'm not leaving."

"Doctor...did you..." Jack trailed, his eyes widening as he realized what the Doctor was implying.

But he didn't think they'd Linked yet. Evy would have certainly called to tell them *that* bit of information.

Evy groaned, the golden light surrounding her, growing stronger in intensity...it had begun.

To be continued...

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Chapter End Notes

All I have to say is...what happened to the Perception Filter as a result of Evy's last regeneration? ;)

Next chapter...will Evy regenerate? Will they be able to save Donna from the meta-crisis? What will happen when Rose finds out about the Link?
"Doctor?" Jack asked, "Did you Lin..."

"No," the Doctor answered, looking down at Evy as she struggled to hold off the regeneration as long as possible, "But it doesn't matter, Linked or not, we're compatible...completely compatible...regeneration energy and all..." his eyes started to widen, "Compatible? Compatible! Jack! The hand!"

Jack ran over and picked up the hand, setting it down where the Doctor was pointing, just by Evy's head. As soon as he stepped back, Evy twisted over on her side, reaching out and slamming her hand onto the top of the container, pushing all the regeneration energy out of her and into it.

Moments later the golden-orange energy died down, leaving her heaving and slumped over from the exertion. Jack knelt at her side, the Doctor having backed up, "You ok Eves?"

She took a few deep breaths and nodded, pushing herself to sit up a bit more, "Fine."

"Evy..." Jack began, quietly.

Evy frowned at the concerned tone in his voice and looked up at him, only to see him looking down at her Filter. She looked down as well, her eyes widening in horror as she saw it was completely destroyed. Her eyes snapped up at the Doctor who was staring at her with a curious expression on his face.

~8~

Gwen and Ianto shot at the Daleks, raging, but then they noticed something strange and stopped. They walked forward, cautiously, to see their bullets hanging in the air, stopped by an invisible wall and stuck there. Gwen reached out slowly to touch it, but couldn't as her finger made a ripple in the air.

"What the hell..." she gasped

~8~

"You're the same!" Donna shouted, rushing forward and hugging Evy to her before the woman could get a word in to the Doctor.

"Um...used the regeneration energy to heal myself," Evy mumbled, her eyes still on the Doctor. She was blocking her thoughts and so was he apparently, "As soon as I was fine, I siphoned the rest of it into a bio-compatible receptacle, the Doctor's hand," she smiled softly at Donna, "I'm still me."

She glanced back at the Doctor, he had closed his eyes and she knew, from experience, he was trying to sort through her rampant memories. The smile on his face...she recognized it as well, he was feeling the connection, the power of it, the overwhelming sense of being that completely connected to another person. She looked over at Rose who was staring straight at her in shock of her being a Time Lady.
She looked down, frowning, this was what she was trying to avoid.

~8~

Gwen and Ianto were working on the computer, trying to figure out what stopped the bullets and the Daleks.

Ianto clicked on a small icon of an hourglass and suddenly Evy's previous face popped up. It was a video about halfway through, as though she were explaining something.

"...a time-lock," she said, "The ultimate defense program. If you get it up and running the Hub will be sealed in a time bubble, nothing can get in. But be careful, because that also means nothing can get out. Only use it as a last resort," she finished seriously, "I'm leaving you the instructions and schematics Tosh, I know you guys will be able to figure it out."

"We're trapped inside," Ianto sighed, thankful that, for now, they were safe, "It's all up to Jack now."

~8~

Evy pushed herself off the floor, stumbling a bit, but Jack caught her and steadied her. She smiled at him in thanks, when the power suddenly cut out.

The Doctor and Evy immediately turned to the console, flipping switches and buttons, trying to figure out what had happened, "They've got us," Evy breathed in shock.

"Power's gone..." the Doctor mumbled, "Some kind of..."

"Chronon loop!" they shouted together.

Then there was a crash, throwing them all to the side violently. Evy and the Doctor managed to hold on just enough to see that they were being pulled towards a Dalek ship on the monitor.

"There's a massive Dalek ship at the center of the planets," Jack commented, pulling himself up as well, "They're calling it the Crucible. Guess that's our destination."

"You said these planets were like an engine," Donna said, looking at the Doctor who was staring across the console at Evy, who was trying her best to avoid looking at him, "But what for?"

The Doctor frowned a moment before he suddenly spun to face Rose, "Rose!" Rose looked up, startled, this was the first time the Doctor had spoken to her since she found him, "You've been in a parallel world, that world's running ahead of this Universe, you've seen the future, what was it?"

She frowned, that was not what she was hoping his first words to her would be, "It's the darkness."

"The stars were going out," Donna nodded, remembering what the other Evy had said, what she had seen in the alternate world.

"One by one. We looked up at the sky and they were just dying. Basically, we've been building this um...this travel machine, this...uh...Dimension Cannon, so I could...well, so I could..." she trailed off, looking down. She couldn't look at him, at the Doctor, standing there, staring at her with his gaze just...missing...something.

"What?" he asked, raising an eyebrow at her hesitation.

"So I could come back!" she shouted as though it should be obvious.
The Doctor just looked at her blankly for a moment before nodding his head slowly in understanding, many of his companions looked towards a day when they might travel with him again.

"Anyway…" she looked away, frowning, "Suddenly, it started to work. And the dimensions started to collapse. Not just in our world, not just in yours, but the whole of reality, even the Void was dead. Something is...destroying everything."

"In that parallel world..." Donna began, thinking on something, trying to remember it, "...you said something about me."

"The Dimension Cannon could measure timelines, and it's...it's weird, Donna," Rose said, smiling softly at the woman, "But they all seem to converge on you."

"But why me? I mean...what have I ever done? I'm a temp from Chiswick!"

"You're amazing," Evy called, drawing her attention back to the Time Lady, "I told you, you are special Super Temp," she smiled softly at Donna, earning a smile in return. She would get Donna to believe that if it were the last thing she did, even if it meant having to make the ginger an entire super hero outfit instead of just a cape.

The computer beeped and Evy looked back over at it, "The Dalek Crucible."

The Doctor walked around the console, about to lean over Evy's shoulder when she stepped back to give him space, "All aboard..." he mumbled, his hearts breaking at how she kept pulling away from him. Her thoughts were guarded, as were his, he couldn't tell just why she was doing it.

"Brace yourselves!" Jack shouted as the TARDIS landed with a mighty crash.

"The TARDIS is secured!" they could hear a Dalek shout from outside the doors. Evy tensed, still not having the best reaction to Daleks. The Doctor moved to take her hand, but she turned away, looking back at the console. He frowned, something that didn't go unnoticed by any in the room.

"Doctor!" another Dalek called, "You and the Time Lady will step forth or die!"

"We'll have to go out," the Doctor said, glancing at Evy, pain clearly evident in his eyes at her less than favorable reactions to him, "'Cos if we don't, they'll get in."

"You told me nothing could get through those doors!" Rose turned to him, alarmed and more than a bit hurt that he seemed to be focusing so much on the woman and no one else.

"You've got extrapolator shielding," Jack agreed.

"The last time you three faced the Daleks, they were mad, hybrid, scavengers," Evy said, not looking at anyone in the room, "But this...this is a fully fledged Dalek Empire...it's at the height of its power, experts in fighting TARDISes, those things out there...they can do anything."

Rose gasped with fear as Jack stiffened.

"Right now, that wooden door..." the Doctor looked over at it, "Is just wood."

Evy frowned a moment when she realized Donna hadn't said anything. She looked up to see Donna looking down, a distant look on her face. She stepped over to the woman, putting a hand on her shoulder, shaking her out of her thoughts.
"What about your Dimension Jump?" Jack tried.

"It needs another twenty minutes, and anyway, I'm not leaving," Rose declared.

"What about your teleport?" the Doctor turned to Jack.

"Went down with the power loss," Jack replied.

"Ok, so," Evy nodded, "All of us together then..." she looked over at Donna who was drifting again, "Donna?"

But the red haired woman made no move to show she'd heard Evy. Evy frowned and focused on the woman, concentrating on reading her mind. Moments later a faint heartbeat filtered through her mind.

"Donna," she said a bit more firmly, giving her a little shake.

"Yeah," Donna looked over at her.

"I'm sorry," the Doctor said, drawing their attention to him, but his gaze was focused on Evy who, for the first time since her near death, kept his gaze, "There's nothing else we can do."

She nodded, "I know."

The Doctor stared at her one moment longer, nodding and mouthing 'ok' before turning to the door.

"Surrender, Doctor, and face your Dalek masters," the Supreme Dalek shouted.

"Crucible on maximum alert!" another Dalek reported.

The Doctor took a breath before slowly opening the door to the TARDIS.

"Daleks," Rose laughed nervously, staring at them, "Heh!"

"Oh, God!" Jack groaned.

They both laughed tensely, watching the Doctor face the Daleks as though he were absolutely certain that he would figure something out.

"It's been good, though, hasn't it?" he glanced back to ask them. Donna smiled, "All of us...all of it...everything we did..." he looked over at Donna, "You were brilliant," he turned to Jack, "And you were brilliant," and then to Rose, "And you were brilliant," and then to Evy, "And you..." he couldn't seem to muster the words to describe it, but Evy seemed to know despite the fact his thoughts were still guarded.

"You as well," she smiled at him as Rose's smile slowly faded into a sad one watching the looks on their faces, she could tell, even from those looks, this Evy woman wasn't just a Time Lady, not to the Doctor.

"Blimey," he breathed before turning to the door, resigned, and walking out.

"Daleks reign supreme!" the Supreme Dalek called as the Doctor stepped out followed by Rose and Jack, "All hail the Daleks!"

"You ready?" Evy asked Donna quietly. The ginger nodded and began to walk towards the door, just making it a few feet before she slowed, the heartbeat back, "Donna?"
"Daleks reign supreme!" the Daleks called, "All hail the Daleks! Daleks reign supreme! All hail the Daleks!"

Evy looked up to see a huge ship just outside the doors of the TARDIS, the air thick with Daleks chanting.

"Behold, Doctor," the Supreme Dalek began, "Behold the might of the true Dalek Race."

Evy's attention was drawn away from the Daleks by Donna who had turned around to stare back at the console, confused, "Donna what is it?"

"I dunno," Donna breathed, shaking her head.

The Doctor squared his shoulders, ready to face anything with Evy at his side…he turned around to see her and Donna still inside the TARDIS, "Donna? Evy? It's no safer in there…"

"Come on," Evy said gently, nudging Donna.

Donna shook herself and gave her friend a smile before turning back to the door with her…just as it slammed shut.

The Doctor spun around at the sound of a slam to see the TARDIS shut with Evy and Donna still inside. He dashed back to it as banging came from inside.

"Doctor?" Evy shouted, banging on the door as Donna rattled the handle, "What've you done?"

"It wasn't me, I didn't do anything!" he called back to them, banging on the door as well.

"Oi!" Donna yelled, "Oi, I'm not staying behind!"

"What did you do?" he demanded, spinning around to face the Supreme Dalek, his face set in a furious glare. All he knew, all he could feel, was that his Link was trapped inside the TARDIS and, right now, in the TARDIS was not a safe place to be. He was not very happy.

"This is not of Dalek origin," the Supreme Dalek remarked.

"Doctor!" Evy shouted, pulling the Doctor's attention back to the door. He looked at it, his expression morphing to desperate concern before turning to the Dalek.

"Stop it!" he shouted, "That's my friend and my Link in there. Now, open the door and let them out!"

"This is Time Lord treachery!" the Supreme Dalek replied.

"Me? The door just closed on its own!"

"Nevertheless, the TARDIS is a weapon and it will be destroyed," the Supreme Dalek said just before a hole opened in the floor and the TARDIS fell through it.

"NO!" he shouted, about to lunge down it had Jack not grabbed a hold of him and pulled him back.

He could only watch in horror as the TARDIS fell away, taking Donna and Evy with it.

~8~

Evy and Donna were thrown to the side as the TARDIS fell, jostling about as it spun and flipped.
"Let me go!" the Doctor struggled in Jack's grip, desperate to get to Evy. He turned to face the Dalek, "What're you doing? Bring it back!"

Evy grabbed onto the railing, holding it for dear life as she grabbed Donna and pulled her to the railing as well.

"Doctor!" Donna called, as though he could still hear them.

"What've you done?!" the Doctor asked, panicking, as the TARDIS fell out of sight, "Where's it going?"

"The Crucible has a heart of Z-Neutrino Energy," the Supreme Dalek replied, "The TARDIS will be deposited into the core."

"But you can't!" he shouted in horror, his breath hitching as his mind realized just what had been said…the TARDIS was about to be destroyed, with Evy inside it, "You've taken the defenses down! It'll be torn apart!"

Evy and Donna were thrown into the wall as the TARDIS crashed into something. Immediately the lights on the console began to smash and fires began to spring out all around them. Donna screamed as Evy looked around in horror.

"But Donna's still in there!" Rose shouted, advancing on the Dalek.

"Evy too!" Jack glared at him, "Let them go!"

"Get down!" Evy shouted, pushing Donna over to the console and trying her best to shield her friend and herself from the small explosions and sparks flying around them.

"The females and the TARDIS will perish together!" the Supreme Dalek replied, "Observe," a holographic screen appeared above them, the Doctor approaching it with fear and dread as he watched the TARDIS bobbing in the core energy, "The last children of Gallifrey are powerless."

The Doctor felt like he could barely breathe as he watched the TARDIS fight to remain whole, to protect the precious cargo she carried within her.

Sparks were flying everywhere, glass smashed all around them, the smoke filling the room was choking the two women who fought desperately to get steady enough to do something.
Tears were forming in the Doctor's eyes. He couldn't feel Evy, she was blocking her feelings, something Time Lords only did when there was something they didn't want their Link to feel as well…like impending death. It happen often during the war, Linked pairs would keep their feelings buried if they were in danger of dying so as not to distract their Link in the middle of battle. Once they died, of course, it was the end for the other Link, but till then, every second counted.

"Please," he turned to the Supreme Dalek, desperation in his voice which cracked with emotion, "I'm begging you, I'll do anything!" he looked back at the screen and swallowed hard, "Put me in her place," he said softly, meaning every word. He would do anything for Evy, to save her, even if it meant giving himself up, "You can do anything to me, I don't care, just get her out of there!"

Rose frowned just a bit…the Doctor had stopped referring to the two women in the TARDIS and she could feel it in her bones, the her he was talking about was Evy.

Evy managed to pull herself to her feet just enough to grab onto the console, trying to get some sort of instruction keyed in to get them out of there, but it would take two people at least to work that as quickly as she needed and Donna was in no state. She glanced down at the ginger to see her on her hands and knees beside the console, coughing and panting from the smoke. She was about to drop to her knees beside the woman when something caught her attention.

The hand was glowing, even more so than when she'd put her regeneration energy in it…and Donna was staring right at it. Her mind immediately realized what would happen if Donna touched it, two-way biological meta-crisis could be damaging, even deadly, for those not of the species of the main biology.

"Donna no!" Evy shouted but it was too late, Donna had touched the jar. The orange-gold regeneration energy began to swirl out of the jar and towards Donna, engulfing her. Evy dropped to her knees beside the woman when something caught her attention.

It was painful to say the least, to pull all the leftover energy back into herself, but she would do it for Donna.

The jar smashed.

The Doctor grit his teeth, watching as the TARDIS continued to struggle, he could the distress of the box through the psychic connection shared with the pilot. His breathing became deep and labored as he trembled, watching, praying that Evy would find a way to get her and Donna out.

"You are connected to the TARDIS," the Supreme Dalek said, "Now, feel it die."

A sweat began to break out on his forehead as he could feel the strain on the Link. Evy was in terrible danger and pain.

"Donna!" Evy called as Donna fell back onto the floor of the TARDIS. She scrambled to her friend's side and reached out to her, helping her sit up. Donna looked strangely calm even though
the TARDIS was still being destroyed around them.

"What is that?" Donna breathed.

Evy looked over her shoulder to see the hand lying on the floor, the fingers twitching. They both watched in awe as the energy spread around the hand outwards and into the shape of a man. As soon as the energy had formed fully it jolted up into a sitting position, shaking off the energy as it went to reveal the Doctor! Evy almost laughed, not exactly the Doctor, but close.

The new Doctor stared at them, eyes wide.

"It's you!" Donna exclaimed.

"Oh, yes," the New Doctor agreed.

Donna glanced down at him and then looked away quickly. The New Doctor gave them a confused look, "You're naked," Evy said, this time she did laugh.

"Oh, yes," he agreed again.

~8~

"Total TARDIS destruction in ten rels!" a Dalek announced.

The Doctor paled considerably, his eyes focused on the screen, unwilling to believe that he might lose both his TARDIS and his Link in just ten seconds, and be completely powerless to stop it.

Rose stepped forward reaching out to take the Doctor's hand, but his hands curled into fists, shaking with rage, not even noticing her. She flinched at the rejection of her comfort but stood by him nonetheless.

"Nine!" the Daleks counted down, "Eight! Seven! Six! Five!"

~8~

"A little help!" Evy shouted to the New Doctor as she pulled herself back to the console, standing on the other side and beginning the instructions for teleportation.

The New Doctor reached out and pushed a button on the console near him, his teeth gritted and eyes wild. He pulled himself up and began to help her pilot the TARDIS.

~8~

"Four! Three! Two! One!"

The Doctor fell to the ground as the TARDIS faded away. It was gone…everything was gone…Evy was gone…

"The TARDIS has been destroyed along with your Link," the Supreme Dalek noted, "Now, tell me, Doctor...what do you feel?"

He felt numb, closing himself off, trying to block the emotions, the pain, he knew was coming and not all stemming from the Link. He felt worthless. How much of a Doctor could he be if he couldn't save the one person who meant the Universe to him? He felt empty. Void. He felt like there wasn't anything left for him anymore…without Evy…he just…it hurt. It hurt so much...
"Anger?" the Supreme Dalek asked, "Sorrow? Despair?"

Not so much. But the more he thought about it. Yes. He did feel that. Anger at the Daleks. Sorrow for the loss of Evy. And despair at the prospect of a life he knew he couldn't live without her. He could feel the despair consuming him. Whenever he was melancholy, just Evy's smile would brighten him up. But now…

"Yeah," he whispered brokenly.

Rose knelt down next to him, putting an arm around him, but he made no move to show he even knew she was still there, so lost in his own thoughts.

"Then, if emotions are so important, surely we have enhanced you," the Supreme Dalek suggested.

"Yeah?" Jack glared at the Dalek, unlike the Doctor, who he could see was now a broken shell of a man, he was full of rage, "Feel this!" he turned and shot the Supreme Dalek, the blast bouncing off him.

"Exterminate!" the Supreme Dalek shouted, sending a shot at Jack. He screamed and fell to the floor, dead.

The Doctor didn't even flinch.

"Jack!" Rose shouted, turning and scrambling to his side, "Oh, my God, oh, no…"

The Doctor didn't even look over, his eyes still focused on the screen of the energy.

"They killed him…" Rose whispered, checking him.

"Escort them to the Vault," the Supreme Dalek ordered, "They are the playthings of Davros now."

The Daleks moved, nudging Rose away from Jack. The Doctor didn't even struggle as they moved him out of the room, if he was going to be killed, all the better. He didn't look back, not even as Jack awoke with a gasp.

~8~

As Evy worked on raising the TARDIS's psychic shields to keep them undetected from the Daleks, the New Doctor, wearing a blue suit with a red top, was just finishing up fixing the TARDIS door, jumping off the railing and pulling on his jacket, "All repaired! Lovely. Shh! No one knows we're here. Gotta keep quiet," Evy looked up, amused, as the New Doctor walked around the console, Donna following him. He must have picked up more traits from Donna than she originally thought, he was far too hyper, "Silent running, like on submarines when they can't even drop a spanner. Don't drop a spanner," he turned suddenly to face them, "I like blue, what do you think?"


"I second that," Evy grinned, leaning against the console to watch them.

"Why?" he frowned, "What's wrong with blue?"

"Is that what Time Lords do?" Donna asked, looking between them, "Lop a bit off, grow another one? You're like worms!"

"No, no, no, no, no, I'm unique. Never been another like me! Because all Evy's regeneration energy went into the hand, look at my hand, I love that hand..." he grinned, wiggling his fingers, "But then
you touched it…WHAM!" Donna jumped, about to scream, "Shh...instantaneous biological meta-crisis. I grew...out of you," he looked her over, "Still, could be worse."

Evy snorted.

"Oi!" Donna called, "Watch it, spaceman."

"Oi!" he matched her, "Watch it, Earthgirl."

And then he realized what he had done, "Oh…"

They stared at each other as Evy doubled over in laughter at the console, they were both staring at each other with identical 'oh' looks on their faces, it was hysterical.

"I sound like you!" the New Doctor stared at Donna, "I sound all...all sort of, rough."

"Oi!" Donna glared.

"Oi!"

"Oi!"

"Spanners, shh!" he warned her. Donna pursed her lips, glaring at him more intensely, "Must've picked up a bit of your voice, that's all. Is it? Did I? No. Oh!"

"Oh my God," Evy gasped as she actually fell to the floor with laughter.

"You are kidding me," the New Doctor said a moment later, his eyes wide in shock, "No WAY. One heart..." he felt his chest, "I've got one heart! This body...has got only one heart!"

"What?" Donna asked, completely gob-smacked, placing a hand on his chest as well, "What, like...you're human?"

"Oh, that's disgusting," he grimaced.

"Oi!" Donna shouted, offended.

"Oi!" he mimicked.

"Stop it!" she stamped her foot.

"No, wait, I'm..." he trailed, still not believing it.

"Part Time Lord, part Human," Evy answered, gathering herself again, they looked at her, "Biological meta-crisis," she looked at the New Doctor, "The hand was touched by a human, therefore, human DNA mixed with Time Lord DNA and we get you."

"Well, isn't that wizard?" he said in thought, smiling.

Evy rolled her eyes and pulled herself back up. Donna looked between them startled, they weren't bickering like the Doctor and Evy usually did, it was more a playful banter, almost sibling-like.

She shook her head, "I kept hearing that noise…"

"A heartbeat," Evy answered.

"Oh, that was me," the New Doctor agreed, a bit distracted still, "My single heart…" he shook his
head and walked over to join Evy at the console, "Cos I'm a...complicated event in time and space, must've rippled back. Converging on you."

"But why me?" Donna frowned.

"Because you're special, because you're brilliant, because you're amazing," Evy shook her head at the woman, "I keep telling you that."

"And I keep telling you I'm not."

"No, but you are," the New Doctor agreed, "You..." he paused, realizing something, "Oh...you really don't believe that, do you?" he frowned, "I can see, Donna...what you're thinking. All that attitude, all that lip, 'cos all this time...you think you're not worth it."

"Stop it."

"Shouting at the world 'cos no one's listening. Well...why should they?"

"Doctor," Evy said gently, but firmly, he looked at her, "Stop it," he frowned, sad by what he'd said, but Evy turned to Donna and walked over to her, taking her hands in her own, "Just look at what you did Donna..." she said, smiling proudly at the woman, "Him?" she nodded back at the New Doctor, "No, it's more than just that, it's like..." she smiled wider, realizing something as well, "We were always heading for this. Remember, you came to the TARDIS..."

"And you found me again," the New Doctor added, thinking about all the signs as well, "Your granddad...your car...Donna, your car! You parked your car right where the TARDIS was gonna land, that's not coincidence at all!" Donna looked at Evy in question, she never could understand the Doctor's thought process.

"Wait for it," Evy grinned.

The New Doctor spun on the spot, his fingers at his temple, "We've been blind! Something's been drawing us together for such a long time."

"But you're talking like...destiny," Donna breathed, "But there's no such thing...is there?"

"It's not finished yet," Evy said, confirming that there was, in fact, destiny, "Whatever is meant to happen...it's not complete. There are still things that have to fall in place."

"But heading for what?" Donna asked, starting to follow along.

~8~

"Activate the holding cells," Davros commanded as spotlights of energy appeared over the Doctor and Rose. Rose kept glancing at the Doctor who had yet to look up from the ground. She was starting to get extremely worried about his lack of response to anything.

He didn't even move as Davros wheeled over to him, "Excellent. Even when powerless and broken, a Time Lord is best contained."

"Still scared of me then?" he asked, looking up finally, but his words were not as confident as usual, it sounded almost tired, drained, hopeless. He reached out and pressed his palm against the light, but it rippled with a blue light.

"It is time we talked, Doctor, after so very long..."
Suddenly something in the Doctor snapped and he glared at the Dalek creator, "No. We're not doing the nostalgia tour. I want to know what's happening right here, right now, 'cos the Supreme Dalek said 'vault,' yeah?" the more he could learn about where he was the better, he was going to make sure each and every Dalek was destroyed before the day was out.

They killed Evy, he'd kill them or die trying.

He was blocking everything out so he could survive long enough to do just that, "As in, dungeon. Cellar. Prison. You're not in charge of the Daleks, are you? They've got you locked away down here in the basement, like, what, a servant? Slave? Court jester?"

Rose looked up, startled, she could tell he was trying to bait Davros.

"We have...an arrangement," Davros replied.

The Doctor laughed mockingly, a small tinge of hysteria lining the sound, "No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. I've got the word. You're the Dalek's pet!"

"Doctor!" Rose shouted, the last thing she wanted was for him to get exterminated.

Unfortunately her outburst drew Davros's attention to her. He wheeled over to face her, "So very full of fire, is he not? And to think, you crossed entire Universes, striding parallel to parallel to find him again, only to find him in the arms of another...how does that feel? It shouldn't matter, she's gone after all..."

"Leave her out of this," the Doctor spat in cold anger. He would be damned if he let Davros even speak of Evy.

"But this one," Davros ignored him, "She is mine. To do as I please."

"Then why am I still alive?" Rose demanded.

She was hurt to realize the Doctor hadn't just been speaking of her, telling Davros to leave her alone, but to not mention Evy. What had happened? She couldn't have been gone so long that he'd already moved on! Not after she'd tried so hard, worked so long, focused everything, all that time, on getting back to him.

"You must be here. It was foretold. Even the Supreme Dalek would not dare to contradict the prophesies of Dalek Caan."

He pressed a button on his control panel and a light turned on behind him, revealing Dalek Caan, sitting on a platform, "So cold and dark," he sang, "Fire is coming...the endless flames..."

"What is that thing?" Rose asked the Doctor, but he was glaring so forcefully at Davros still.

"The last of the Cult of Skaro," Davros answered instead, "He flew into the Time War, unprotected, but did more than that. He saw Time. Its infinite complexity and majesty raging through his mind. And...he saw you. Both of you."

Rose glanced at the Doctor.

"This I have foreseen in the wild and the wind," Caan shouted, "The Doctor will be here, as witness, at the end of everything. To the end of his world. The Doctor and his precious Children of Time!" he giggled, "And one of them will die!"
The Doctor's hands tightened into fists, a Child of Time had already died. He turned to face Caan, barely able to hold back his rage, "Was it you, Caan? Did you kill Evy? Why did the TARDIS door close? Tell me!"

"Oh, that's it," Davros exclaimed, delight in his words, "The end, the fire, the rage of a Time Lord who butchered millions only for them to take revenge and murder the only one you hold so dear," the Doctor closed his eyes.

Rose swallowed hard, she may not be a super-intelligent alien, but she could work it out. Davros seemed fond of gloating about it, to get to her, as he did of gloating of what he'd done to anger the Doctor. Evy...the Doctor loved her. But how? Why? He knew how she felt about him, she'd told him on the beach! How could he just...he was going to say it too, she knew he was. So what if he loved this Evy woman, he loved her too, he'd loved her longer, and even with their parting he had to love her still...he had to.

"There he is," Davros laughed, "Why so shy? Show your companion...show her your true self...as you did for the Child of Gallifrey..." he smirked, "See what that has led to?" the Doctor flinched, "Dalek Caan has promised me that, too."

"I have seen it," Caan trilled, "At the time of ending, the Doctor's soul will be revealed."

"What does that mean?" Rose asked him, but he didn't answer. She frowned as she saw his shoulders heaving, as though he were trying and failing to keep his emotions in check.

"We will discover it together..." Davros spoke, "Our final journey. Because the ending approaches. The testing begins."

"Testing of what?" the Doctor breathed.

"The Reality Bomb."

"Testing calibration of Reality Bomb," the Supreme Dalek announced, "Firing in ten rels, nine, eight, seven..."

"Behold...the apotheosis of my genius," Davros remarked, using his control panel to activate another holographic screen, displaying a number of people standing in the testing chamber.

"...two, one, zero...activate planetary alignment field!"

~8~

The TARDIS shuddered, throwing the group to the side. As soon as it was steady, Donna, Evy, and the New Doctor were at the monitor of the console, "It's the planets," the New Doctor said, "The 27 planets."

~8~

The Doctor's eyes widened in horror as he stared at the screen, "But that's Z-Neutrino Energy. Flattened by the alignment of the planets into a single stream. No..." he spun to face Davros, panic exuding from his entire being, "Davros. Davros, you can't! You CAN'T! NO!"

He'd lost Evy, he couldn't lose anyone else.

~8~
"Ah!" Evy winced, rubbing her head.

"What is it?" Donna asked, concerned.

"It's the Doctor…something's wrong," she mumbled. She was trying to get through to him, trying to get to his mind which he'd blocked off as heavily as he could, to make him see she was still alive. She could feel everything he was feeling, the despair, the panic, the hopelessness. It was crushing. But he was a stubborn ass most of the time, she really needed to focus everything she had just to break through his mental barriers and call out to him.

"Single-stream Z-Neutrinos compressed into..." the New Doctor mumbled as he stared at the screen, oblivious to the women. He faltered when he realized what was about to happen, "No. No way..."

The girls looked up as a bright flash of light emitted from the screen, "What is it?" Donna asked, rushing over, "Doctor? What did it do?"

The New Doctor couldn't speak, completely shocked by the lengths the Daleks were going to.

"Reality bomb," Evy mumbled, "It destroys everything, literally makes it all fall apart."

Donna gasped in shock.

~8~

"Doctor?" Rose asked, terribly shaken by what they'd just seen, a group of people disintegrate in golden energy, "What happened?"

But the Doctor could do nothing but stare at the screen.

"Electrical energy, Miss Tyler," Davros explained, "Every atom in existence is bound by an electrical field. The Reality Bomb cancels it out, structure falls apart. That test was focused on the prisoners alone. Full transmission will dissolve every form of matter."

"The stars are going out..."

"The 27 planets..." the Doctor said quietly, "They become one vast transmitter. Blasting that wavelength..."

"Across the entire Universe," Davros agreed, "Never stopping. Never faltering. Never fading. People and planets and stars will become dust. And the dust will become atoms and the atoms will become...nothing. And the wavelength will continue, breaking through the rift at the heart of the Medusa Cascade into every dimension, every parallel, every single corner of creation," he let out a manic laugh, "This is my ultimate victory, Doctor! The destruction of reality itself!"

~8~

The New Doctor was staring at the screen, Evy leaning over his shoulder before she jumped back and began running around the TARDIS, gathering different items. She tore some apart and began to piece them together.

"So..." Donna began, watching her, "What is this thing?"

"A Z-Neutrino biological inversion catalyzer..." Evy began.

"You're making one?" the New Doctor turned to her, shocked.
"I'm trying."

"Um, yeah…" Donna trailed, "Earthgirl, remember?"

"Davros told us that he made those Daleks from himself," Evy explained, screwing a few pieces together, "That means *his* genetic code runs through all of the Daleks out there. If I can get a sample of the transmission that Davros has tuned himself into and lock the Crucible's power to it…"

"It destroys the Daleks?" Donna asked, eyes wide.

"Biggest backfire in history," the New Doctor grinned.

"Let's hope we don't have to use it," Evy muttered. She didn't like the idea of genocide any more than the Doctor did.

~8~

The holographic screen turned on once more, Martha appearing before them, "This message is for the Dalek Crucible. Repeat: can you hear me?"

"It begins as Dalek Caan foretold," Davros grinned.

"The Children of Time will gather...and one of them will die!" Caan laughed.

"Doctor!" Martha called as they were put through to her, "I'm sorry. I had to."

"Oh!" Davros laughed, "But the Doctor is powerless, my prisoner. State your intent."

Martha held up a black square key, "I've got the Osterhagen Key. Leave this planet and its people alone or I'll use it."

"Osterhagen what?" the Doctor frowned, he was trying to make sense of it all, but he was having a hard time focusing on anything, it was all too much, he hadn't realized just how much he'd come to rely on Evy to ground him, to keep him calm and focused, without her...it was hard just to breathe, "What's an Osterhagen Key?"

"There's a chain of 25 nuclear warheads placed in strategic points beneath the Earth's crust. If I use the key, they detonate and the Earth gets ripped apart."

That made it through.

"What?" he gaped at her, completely stunned by what she was planning, "Who invented that? Well, someone called Osterhagen, I suppose, but Martha, are you insane?"

"The Osterhagen Key is to be used if the suffering of the human race is so great, so without hope...that this becomes the final option."

"That's NEVER an option," the Doctor replied firmly.

But he knew she wouldn't listen to him...she only ever seemed to listen to Evy…

Evy…

"Don't argue with me, Doctor," she snapped, "Cos there's more than that. Now, I reckon the Daleks need these 27 planets for something, but what if it becomes 26? What happens then? Daleks? Would you risk it?"
"She's good!" Rose grinned, impressed.

The Doctor's head snapped to stare at her, his expression just as stunned as with Martha but mixed with a grim sort of disbelief. He'd felt the first stirrings of the revelation now blooming in his mind when Donna had spoken of the parallel world, of how she'd managed to fix it, of the blonde woman who had told her she had to die. Rose.

"Who's that?" Martha asked.

"My name's Rose," she answered, "Rose Tyler."

"Oh, my God..." Martha breathed, her eyes widening as she realized something, "Doctor... where's Evy?"

The Doctor looked away, back down at the ground, too overcome to speak. Martha could feel tears collecting in her eyes, his reaction said it all.

Just then, another holographic screen appeared beside Martha, this one with Jack standing there, very much alive, holding something connected to a few wires with Jackie and Mickey and Jackie and Sarah Jane standing beside him.

"Captain Jack Harkness calling all Dalek boys and girls!" Jack grinned, "Are you receiving me? Don't send in your goons or I'll set this thing off."

"He's still alive!" Rose gasped, amazed, "Oh, my God, that's... that's my mum!"

"Captain, what are you doing?" the Doctor looked up, shaking, praying to the stars that the necklace in Jack's hand wasn't what he thought it was.

"I've got a Warp Star wired into the mainframe," Jack said, confirming the Doctor's worst fears, "I break the shell... the entire Crucible goes up."

The Doctor couldn't believe what was happening, "You can't! Where did you get a Warp Star?"

How had it all gone so wrong? Hadn't traveling with him taught them anything? He supposed one thing Martha and Jack at least had learned, give them a choice... but these consequences were too extreme. Everything he'd ever done had been to protect the Earth, the Universe, but here were his companions, one threatening to destroy the planet, the other threatening to destroy the only thing that could return the planets to where they'd been.

"From me," Sarah Jane stepped up, "We had no choice, we saw what happened to the prisoners."

"Impossible," Davros gaped, seeing Sarah Jane, "That face... after all these years..."

Sarah Jane's eyes widened, "Davros..." she whispered, before growing angry, "That's been quite a while. Sarah Jane Smith. Remember?"

"Oh, this is meant to be," Davros grinned, quite happy that everything was coming together, "The Circle of Time is closing. You were there on Skaro at the very beginning of my creation."

"And I've learned how to fight since then. You let the Doctor go or this Warp Star, it gets opened!"

The Doctor looked down, he just couldn't bear to look at them. This was his fault. Everything was his fault. The Daleks, his companions... Evy...

"I'll do it," Jack threatened, tweaking the necklace, "Don't imagine I wouldn't."
Rose laughed, "Now, that's what I call a ransom," the Doctor flinched, something she noticed, her grin fell as she saw him, "Doctor?"

"And the prophesy unfolds," Davros was beaming now.

"The Doctor's soul is revealed!" Caan cackled, "See him! See the heart of him!"

Everyone's eyes were on the Doctor as he stared down at the floor, alone, practically sagging from unbearable guilt and despair.

"The man who abhors violence, never carrying a gun," Davros began, "But this is the truth, Doctor, you take ordinary people and you fashion THEM into weapons. Behold your Children of Time transformed into murderers. I made the Daleks, Doctor. You made this."

"They're trying to help," he said quietly, trying to convince himself more than anyone, but failing.

~8~

"God!" Evy fell to the floor, holding her hand against her heart this time.

"What's wrong?" the New Doctor asked, kneeling next to her as Donna knelt on her other side.

"The guilt…it's crushing him," she gasped, "The pain, the despair…he's blaming himself…" she looked up at the New Doctor, "Can you finish this?" he nodded, getting to work on the device as she stood up and walked over to the wall of the TARDIS, "Please," she whispered to the TARDIS, laying her forehead against the cool wall, "I need help to get through to him."

The TARDIS hummed.

Evy scrunched her eyes shut, focusing with all her might on the Doctor. She almost crumpled to the ground under the full weight of his pain. His companions were preparing to blow themselves up to stop the Daleks, Davros was mocking him, and worse than that…she could see he still thought she was dead. He was so deep in his despair that he'd closed himself off, thinking if he were receptive to anything else he wouldn't be able to handle it. He was forcing himself not to feel her, oblivious to the fact that that wouldn't have saved him from the pain of the death of his Link. It just made it all the more difficult to reach him.

She pushed against his mind and soon she could hear him.

"...I have seen them sacrifice today for their beloved Doctor," Davros was saying, "The Earth woman who fell opening the subwave network."

"Who was that?" the Doctor asked.

"Harriet Jones," Rose replied.

"Harriet Jones," Rose replied.

Evy winced, the burden just increased. Someone else had died for him in his mind.

"She gave her life to get you here," Rose continued, not helping to ease his guilt in the slightest.

"How many more?" Davros asked, "Just think. How many have died in your name?"

Evy bit her lip as the Doctor remembered all those he'd met who had either died for him, died helping him, or died because of him. He was barely holding it together, she could feel herself trembling as he was. He was on the verge of being utterly broken.
'Don't you dare,' she hissed, forcing her way past the last of his mental walls and into his mind. She could feel him immediately respond to her presence, 'Don't you dare Doctor.'

She could sense him shutting his eyes from where he stood to focus more on her, 'Evy?' he whispered back, hope in his hearts, 'You're alive?'

'Course I am. You're not on the ground in crippling pain and excruciating agony are you?'

'No…' he whispered, still a bit in shock. She could feel him reaching out for her in her mind and smiled.

'Remember all those you saved,' she told him, pushing images into his mind. She forced him to relive the hundreds of thousands of millions of people he'd helped in his considerably long life, knowing full well about all of them.

She could hear Davros in the background, still trying to break the Doctor, thinking his silence and shut eyes were his surrender, "The Doctor...the man who keeps running, never looking back, because he dare not, out of shame. This is my final victory, Doctor. I have shown you...yourself."

'No, I have shown you yourself,' she corrected in the Doctor's mind just as the last of the images faded, 'You make people better,' she whispered to him, her mind caressing his own with all the love and faith she had in him, she could feel his hearts lifting, 'You give them the power to survive, the strength to go on. You give them the ability to help. You make them into healers...into doctors.'

He smiled gently at her reassurances, his hearts already soaring at just the fact that she was alive. The cold and the guilt and the despair faded as though it had never been there as he felt her presence in his hearts and soul, the Link and his mind telling him this was real, she was alive.

'Thank you,' he whispered to her.

He would survive this…otherwise Evy would kill him.

~8~

Rose stared at the Doctor in concern. Halfway through Davros's speech he had shut his eyes and seemed like he was about to cry, only to smile softly as though everything was right with the world. She was worried that he'd finally snapped, that he might try something drastic or stupid.

"Enough," the Supreme Dalek ordered, "Engage defense zero-five."

"It's the Crucible...or the Earth," Martha threatened, holding up the key.

But suddenly there was a light that struck Martha as well as Jack, Sarah Jane, Mickey, and Jackie, forcing them to drop their weapons to the ground as they found themselves transported to the vault of the Crucible.

Jack pushed himself up before rushing over to Martha to help her up, "Martha! I've got you, it's alright…"

"Don't move!" the Doctor shouted, snapping his eyes open and sounding very much like his usual self, startling everyone, especially Martha and Jack, who knew full well that he should have been torn up with Evy's death, Linked or not, as she was the last of his people, "All of you! Stay still!"

"Guard them!" Davros ordered as Sarah Jane, Mickey, and Jackie began to advance, "On your knees, all of you. Surrender!"
"Do as he says."

The Daleks glided around them as they stood there unmoving for only a moment before kneeling down with their hands behind their heads.

"Mum, I told you not to!" Rose hissed to her mother.

"Yeah, but I couldn't leave you," Jackie replied.

"The final prophesy is in place," Davros smirked, "The Doctor and his children all gathered as witnesses. Supreme Dalek...the time has come! Now...detonate the Reality Bomb!"

"Activate planetary alignment field!" the Supreme Dalek ordered as the planets began to glow, "Universal reality detonation in 200 rels!"

Davros pointed a shaking finger upwards, an evil grin on his face.

Everyone looked at the Doctor to see what he would do, only to find him rocking back and forth on the balls of his feet, a smile on his face.

"Nothing can stop the detonation!" Davros shouted gleefully, "Nothing! And no one!"

The Doctor's grin just widened, "Wanna bet?"

~8~

'Any day now,' the Doctor's voice drifted into Evy's head.

"Ready!" the New Doctor shouted, finishing the device and tossing it to Donna as Evy typed away at the console.

"Maximum power!" Evy grinned, flipping a lever upwards as the New Doctor pulled another one down, tilting the TARDIS sideways.

~8~

The familiar whirring of the TARDIS filled the room moments before it began to materialize.

"But that's..." Jack said in shock as Dalek Caan giggled. Rose and Martha's mouths dropped open.

"Impossible," Davros's eyes widened as the TARDIS fully materialized, light shinning from the windows.

"No," the Doctor smirked as the doors began to open, "That's Evy."

Evy's head popped out, grinning widely at everyone. She looked over at the Doctor, "Told you I'm just as resilient as you," he just nodded and grinned, "Oh...got a surprise for you too."

She stepped aside as the New Doctor stepped out.

"Brilliant!" Jack laughed.

The Doctor's mouth dropped open in disbelief.

Davros wheeled backwards, staring in fear at the New Doctor and Evy...he was safe from one furious Time Lord, but not from an even angrier Time Lady.
The New Doctor glared at Davros for a moment before rushing at him with a gun shaped device in his hands.

"Don't!" the Doctor shouted just before the New Doctor was hit with a bolt of electricity from Davros and sent flying backwards, luckily only winded.

"I told him not to do that," Evy remarked, calmly leaning against the TARDIS, before walking forwards, "He listens to me almost as much as you do," she shot a grin at the Doctor as she moved to pick up the device.

"No!" Davros shouted, seeing her reach for the device. He made to blast her as well only to have the bolt hit what seemed like an invisible wall and fly back at him.

Donna poked her head out of the TARDIS, seeing Davros pushed back.

"Donna," Evy called, wiping her nose, "Come on!"

Donna ran out, clutching something to her chest, and over to her friend's side.

Davros, seeing that, managed to fire another shot at the still fallen device, destroying it. He cackled, "I was wrong about your warriors, Doctor. They are pathetic."

"How comes there're two of you?" Rose asked in shock.

"Human biological meta-crisis," the Doctor answered, half waving off her question as he turned to face Evy, "Never mind that, now you've gone and destroyed the only way of stopping the Reality Bomb! That was your plan?"

"Detonation in twenty rels!" the Supreme Dalek announced, "Nineteen..."

"Oh, you think so?" Evy smirked, opening her mind for him to see their true plans, half of which had already been accomplished.

"Stand witness, Time Lords," Davros grinned, "Stand witness, humans," he activated the holographic screen showing the 27 planets, "Your strategies have failed, your weapons are useless, and...oh, the end of the Universe is come!"

"Nine...eight...seven...six...five...four...three...two...one..."

Everyone but the Doctor, Donna, Evy, and the New Doctor braced for impact, but the bomb just powered down, the screen going dead moments before an alarm sounded.

"You really think we'd leave the device out in the open?" Donna smirked, wiggling a different device in front of her, one that looked like a small box with a single blue electrical line flickering across a small screen. The small bolt that Davros had sent at the gun, which had a transmitter to their device in it, contained just enough of his biological signature along with the transmission frequency that Davros had tuned himself into for the device to pick up on and replicate. Donna linked arms with Evy as the two women walked over to the control panel.

Evy took the device and plugged it into the system, tapped a few buttons, smiling as she glanced up at the group now staring at her in confusion, "Oh...I hacked into the Crucible's controls on the TARDIS," she explained, "Closed all Z-Neutrino relay loops using an internalized synchronous back-feed reversal loop!" she looked down at the panel, "That button there!" she nodded at Donna who flipped a switch.
"System in shutdown!" a Dalek announced.

"Detonation negative!" another called.

"Explain," the Supreme Dalek demanded, "Explain! EXPLAIN!"

The Doctor watched, bemused, as Evy and Donna got to work shutting down the rest of the Crucible, Evy giving a few instructions here and there and Donna typing away as instructed, "Donna, you can't even change a plug!"

"Do you wanna bet, time boy?" Donna grinned, suddenly feeling more confident than she ever had before. Everything Evy was telling her to do seemed to make sense.

"You will suffer for this," Davros threatened.

"Really?" Donna tilted her head to the side before glancing at Evy who flicked a switch, electrocuting Davros's arm.

"Bioelectric dampening field with a retrogressive arc inversion," Evy laughed.

"Exterminate them!" Davros ordered, furious.

"Exterminate!" the Daleks called, "Exterminate!"

The Doctor's breath hitched as he watched the Daleks advance on both Donna and Evy, but the girls didn't seem fazed in the slightest, Evy just pushed another few buttons and Donna flicked a switch and…

The Daleks began to power down, their laser arms twitching uncontrollably.

"Weapons non-functional!" a Dalek reported.

"What?" Evy smirked, "Macro transmission of a K-filter wavelength…"

"Blocking Dalek weaponry in a self-replicating energy blindfold matrix?" Donna finished for her.

"How did you work that out?" the Doctor looked up at Donna, impressed.


"Part Human!" Donna agreed, loving it, "Oh, yes!"

The Doctor looked at Evy, confused, "There was a small three-way biological meta-crisis…"

"Half Doctor," Donna grinned, "Half Donna! With just a little pinch of Evy!"

The Doctor's eyes widened as Evy nodded, "It's the Eve of the Doctor-Donna...just like the Ood said, remember?"

"They saw it coming!" the Doctor realized, he'd thought they had just been getting Evy's name wrong, but they'd said it, in the end. That they would sing of the Eve, of the Doctor-Donna, the eve of the Doctor-Donna, "The Eve of the Doctor-Donna."

"Holding cells deactivated," Donna announced as she flipped a few switches, turning off the lights surrounding the Doctors and Rose.
"And seal the Vault," Evy added, locks clicking into place.

The women looked up to see both Doctors staring at them, Donna rolled her eyes "Well, don't just stand there, you skinny boys in suits, get to work!"

That seemed to snap them out of it. The Doctors jumped up and ran to help out at the control panel.

"Stop them!" Davros shouted, "Get them away from the controls!"

"And…spin," Evy muttered, flipping a switch, causing the advancing Daleks to spin in circles, much to the amusement of the others in the room.

"And…the other way!" Donna laughed, flicking another switch.

"What did you do?" the New Doctor asked them, amused.


"But that's brilliant!"

"That's Evy!" the Doctor laughed, reaching out to hug her from the side.

"Why did we never think of that?"

"Because you two...are just Time Lords!" Evy grinned, when she'd sucked the energy back into her, just a tiny bit of Donna got to her as well, the best part, her human nature, just enough to inspire the inspired part of her, "Donna's got that little bit of human…"

"That gut instinct that goes hand-in-hand with planet Earth," Donna finished, "I could think of ideas that you two couldn't dream of in a million years! Ah, the Universe has been waiting for me!" Evy grinned widely, happy her friend was finally seeing just how amazing she was, "Now...let's send that trip-stitch all over the ship. Did I ever tell you…" she gestured to herself, "Best temp in Chiswick?" she wiggled her fingers at Evy, "A hundred words per minute!"

The quartet laughed amongst themselves, oblivious to the Daleks still rolling around uncontrollably or the group of humans watching them in amazement.

"Come on then boys," Evy stepped away from the Doctor to get more in front of another set of keyboards, "We've got 27 planets to send home. Activate magnetron."

"Stop it at once!" Davros demanded.

Jack ran into the TARDIS and grabbed his and Rose's guns, carrying them out with him to face the Daleks, "Mickey!" he called, chucking a gun at him.

"You will desist!"

Mickey just got in front of Davros, gun pointed in his face, "Just stay where you are Mister."

"Out of the way!" Jack yelled, kicking the Daleks out of the way and spinning down another corridor to be pushed on by Rose and Sarah Jane.

"Ready?" Donna called to the trio around her, "And reverse!"

They all hit a few coordinates and commands and soon the planets were all disappearing in flashes of light.
"Off you go, Clom," the Doctor grinned.

"Back home, Adipose 3!" the New Doctor added.

Donna clicked two switches while Evy hit one that was just out of reach for her.

"Shallacatop!" Evy called.

"Pyrovillia!" Donna added.

"The Lost Moon of Poosh."

"Topping."

"We need more power..." the Doctor said suddenly as he and Evy moved towards one console to begin siphoning off energy from around the Crucible to help.

"Is anyone gonna tell us what's going on?" Rose asked, stepping up with Martha, her mother, and Sarah Jane. She was more than a little confused, what was a Link? Davros had said it a number of times, that was Evy, she knew, but what did that mean for the Doctor? What did it mean for her and the Doctor?

Donna, either not realizing what Rose was asking or ignoring it, gestured instead to Evy, "She poured all her regeneration energy..." then nodded at the Doctor, "Into his spare hand, I touched the hand, Evy grabbed me," she gestured to the New Doctor, "He grew out of that. Evy tried to suction off as much of it as she could but some of that fed into me. Took a little while but with all the excitement the synapses got that little extra kick and sprang into life. Part human...part Time Lord. And I got the best bit of them," she grinned as the New Doctor raised an eyebrow, "Their minds."

"So there's FOUR of you?" Sarah Jane breathed, she was so ecstatic to hear that the Doctor had found his Link, he wouldn't be alone anymore.

"Three Doctors?" Rose asked slowly, "And...one Time Lady?"

"I can't tell you what I'm thinking right now," Jack shook his head.

"I don't think we'd want to know Jack," Evy called over.

"You're so unique that the timelines were converging on you," the Doctor turned to Donna, "Human being with a Time Lord brain."

"But you promised me, Dalek Caan," Davros called out, drawing their attention to the Dalek creator, "Why did you not foresee this?"

Dalek Caan just giggled.

"Can't you see, he did," Evy said seriously, "Something was manipulating the timelines for quite some time...working to get Donna to the right place at the right time."

"This would always have happened," Caan stated, "I only helped."

"You...betrayed the Daleks?" Davros gasped.

"I saw the Daleks. What we have done throughout time and space. I saw the truth of us, Creator, and I decreed 'no more.'"
Evy smiled gently at that. She never thought she would see Daleks evolving into semi-understanding beings. But then she'd met Dalek Sek, and never thought it would happen again, and now with Dalek Caan. Maybe it was possible that they could change.

"I will descend to the Vault!" the Supreme Dalek announced.

"Head's up!" Jack called as the Supreme Dalek began to lower himself down.

"Davros, you have betrayed us."

"It was Dalek Caan!" Davros defended.

"The Vault will be purged! You will all be exterminated!"

Or maybe not, Evy thought.

The Supreme Dalek sent out a rally of laser blasts around the room, making them all duck for cover, as the lasers struck the central column of the controls repeatedly, causing sparks to fly.

"Like I was saying, feel this!" Jack fired his gun at the Supreme Dalek, blasting it in half.

"We've lost the magnetron!" Evy shouted, examining the central column.

"And there's only one planet left…" the Doctor began before laughing, "Guess which one," Evy rolled her eyes, "Look, we can use the TARDIS!"

He ran back towards the box and began pressing various buttons as Evy, Donna, and the New Doctor worked on trying to do something from the Vault.

"No…" Evy whispered quietly, but Donna and the New Doctor heard her.

"What's wrong?" Donna asked, moving over to her, next to the column with the New Doctor to talk without the others hearing.

"This here," Evy pointed to a circuit sparking, "It's fused with the magnetron…it's going to overheat before the Doctor can get the TARDIS prepared to get the Earth home!" she ran to the controls, beginning to quickly punch in some instructions.

"No!"

"There's got to be some way to stop it," the New Doctor mumbled, watching her in confusion.

Evy sighed, "There is. It's a complex sort of configuration," she looked down at the panel she was working on, "But…it has to be continuously put in in order to hold it off even a few moments. I'm putting it in now."

"No! You'd have to stay here in order to do that!"

"The whole place would blow with you in it," Donna agreed.

"Look," she snapped, "It's already started overheating. The Doctor won't be able to get everyone in the TARDIS and out in time. This will buy us enough of it."

"I'll stay," the New Doctor said, reaching over about to push her out of the way, "I'll do it."

"If I stop this place blows in an instant," she warned him, he backed up a bit, "Once it's been put in,
it has to be maintained, I stop and we all die. And you don't know the configuration. Even if we
could switch places safely it would take too long to give it to you, even in the crudest way."

The New Doctor ran a hand through his hair.

"There's got to be something we can do," Donna mumbled.

"Promise me," Evy began, "You'll get the Doctor out."

"But you're his Link! If you die…he's…he can't…"

"Rose healed him once. She can heal him again."

She was trying to convince herself that if she died, the Doctor wouldn't follow after her. But even
she couldn't make herself believe that.

"There's no healing from something like that," the New Doctor stated.

Evy flinched, she knew that. She could remember how the her in Donna's alternate world felt. But
the Doctor…he was stronger than her…he hadn't been Linked too long, there might be a chance
that he'd survive…

"Please," she whispered, "I just want him safe."

Donna frowned, but somehow she could sense that if they didn't agree, Evy would do something
drastic to make them all go whether they liked it or not, "Ok."

"Donna," the New Doctor began.

But before Donna could defend herself Evy spoke, "You need to prepare the Earth for transport."

The New Doctor sighed and went to the other side of the controls, "Holding Earth
stability...maintaining atmospheric shell…" he mumbled, flicking switches, glancing up at Evy
who was frantically typing.

"The prophesy must complete," Caan shrieked at them.

"Don't listen to him," Evy mumbled.

"I have seen the end of everything Dalek. And you must make it happen, Doctor."

The New Doctor looked up, struck by his words, "He's right. Because with or without a Reality
Bomb, this Dalek Empire's big enough to slaughter the cosmos. They've got to be stopped!"

"No!" Evy shouted. That was genocide!

"Just…just wait for the Doctor," Donna tried to reason.

"I am the Doctor," he said seriously before getting to work, "Maximizing Dalekanium power
feeds."

"No!" Evy called, she wanted desperately to rush to him and pull him away from the controls, but
she'd already put in the configuration, she couldn't stop now.

"Blasting them BACK!" he flipped the device she'd made on.
And then the Daleks exploded, one by one, each screaming in agony.

"What have you done?" Evy breathed, staring in horror, "I didn't rig that device to kill them! Only to incapacitate them!"

The New Doctor looked up at her, "I upgraded it while you contacted the Doctor."

"What've you done?" the Doctor demanded as well, rushing out of the TARDIS.

"Fulfilling the prophesy."

The ship jolted, sending everyone but Evy, who had half thrown herself onto the controls to keep typing, flying while the New Doctor just observed with a wild expression in his eyes.

"Do you know what you've done?" the Doctor demanded furiously, "Now, get in the TARDIS!" the New Doctor hesitated a moment, before going to stand next to the TARDIS doors, sending a meaningful glance at Donna and Evy. The Doctor turned to face the rest of them, "Everyone! All of you inside, run! In, in, in, in, in!"

Evy watched as they ran to the TARDIS, the Doctor following close behind, assuming she was following him. She saw Donna rush past the door and into the TARDIS, straight to the controls while the New Doctor nodded at her. She nodded as well just before he shut the TARDIS doors.

She continued to punch in the configuration, trying in vain to block the Link just enough to not feel the Doctor's impending rage…she failed…

As soon as the door slammed shut the Doctor knew something was wrong. He turned around to see everyone but Evy standing inside the TARDIS.

"No!" he shouted, rushing for the door, only to be intercepted by the New Doctor who grabbed him and pulled him, struggling, away from the door. He could hear Donna behind him punching in some coordinates just before the TARDIS began to activate.

"No!" he shouted again as they were all thrown to the floor, "Evy!" he ran to the door, but it was too late, the TARDIS had taken off, leaving Evy stranded there, "What have you done?" he demanded, turning to face the New Doctor and Donna.

"She knew you'd never make it off before the Crucible blew," the New Doctor replied, "Even just seconds to spare."

"She's working on an algorithm to keep it from blowing long enough for us to get away from it," Donna added.

"We're going back," he stated, stalking over to the controls, he wouldn't lose her again.

"I've locked the coordinates," Donna replied solemnly, "We can't go back."

The Doctor looked frantic at that, he turned to Mickey and Rose, "You're transporters…"

"Need to power up," Mickey frowned, "Still got another 10 minutes."

The Doctor ran a hand through his hair, "Transporters…teleporters…" he placed a hand on one of his hearts where he could feel the warmth of the Emergency Spatial Shifter Evy had made for him, "Shifter!"

He ran to the console and began punching in some instructions. He had to hope Evy's Shifter hadn't
been damaged in the near regeneration before. He slammed his hand down on a button just as a large explosion appeared outside the TARDIS.

For one brief moment his hearts stopped beating.

And then a figure went flying through the air, slamming into the wall of the TARDIS and fell to the ground. Evy.

He ran over to her side, pulling her into his arms as he checked her. She was a bit battered, her clothes burned, and she would have a horrible bruise on her back from where she'd hit the wall, but she was alive, if unconscious. But the Link assured him, she was very much alive.

He let out a breath of relief before burying his face in her shoulder as he cradled her to him. His mind racing a mile a minute, but one prevalent thought striking the forefront, never again. He would never ever put her in a position where it was her life for others. Never again.

"Is he alright?" Mickey asked the group quietly, watching as the Doctor sat almost curled in a ball with Evy on his lap, just stroking her hair.

Donna smiled gently, "He's just thinking."

"'Bout what?"

Donna glanced at them sadly, "He's praying he never has to make a decision where it's her or the Earth."

"Why?" Rose asked, her heart breaking as she watched the Doctor. Davros's words came back to her, he truly was in the arms of another. And it wasn't fair.

"Because I don't think I could pick the Earth," the Doctor mumbled, so quietly they almost didn't hear him, "Not now…"

They were silent.

It was one thing for them to be willing to destroy the Earth but it was quite another for the Doctor to agree to it, especially given how often he saved it.

"You would," a voice mumbled, a bit hoarse. He looked down to see Evy's eyes fluttering open, "I would make you," he grinned down at her as she smiled up at him, "The Earth is far too amazing to just let it go in anything but the expansion of the sun in 5 billion years."

He laughed.

"Um…speaking of the Earth," Sarah Jane interrupted, smiling though at the Doctor's display of affection, "It's stuck in the wrong part of space!"

"I'm on it," he got up, but not before moving Evy so she was sitting against the wall, "You. Stay," he pointed a warning finger at her before he walked over to the monitor, punching in some coordinates, "Torchwood Hub, this is the Doctor. Are you receiving me?"

"Loud and clear," Gwen appeared on screen, grinning, with Ianto, "Is Jack there?"

"And Evy?" Ianto added.

"Can't get rid of him," he glanced at Jack, before smiling softly, "And Evy's just fine," but then he paused, a thought coming to him, he turned to Jack, "Jack, what's her name?"
"Gwen Cooper," Evy called, answering for them, "Hi Gwen! Ianto!"

"Hi!" Gwen waved, not able to see Evy though from the crowd in front of the monitor.

"Tell me, Gwen Cooper, are you from an old Cardiff family?" the Doctor asked.

Evy rolled her eyes, she'd already looked into that.

"Yes," Gwen answered slowly, unsure where this was going, "All the way back to the 1800s."

"Hmm, thought so!" he grinned before looking at Rose, who wasn't quite smiling as widely as she normally did, "Spatial genetic multiplicity…"

"Oh," she faltered, "Yeah."

"Yeah, yeah!" he said, excited, not noticing Rose's lack of enthusiasm, "It's a funny old world!" but then he shook himself out of it, getting down to business, "Now, Torchwood, I want you to open up that Rift Manipulator, send all the power to me."

"Doing it now, sir," Ianto called.

"What's that for?" Martha asked.

"It's a towrope," Evy answered again, her eyes closed and her head resting on the TARDIS's wall.

"Right," the Doctor grinned and turned to Sarah Jane, "Now then, Sarah, what was your son's name?"


"Calling Luke and Mr. Smith!" the Doctor turned to the monitor, "Come on, Luke, shake a leg!"

"Is mum there?" Luke appeared on screen.

"Oh, she's fine and dandy."

"Yes!" Sarah Jane laughed, seeing her son was alright as well, "Yes!"

"Now, Mr. Smith, I want you to harness the Rift power and loop it round the TARDIS, you got that?"

"I regret I will need remote access to TARDIS base code numerals," Mr. Smith replied.

"Oh, blimey," he ran a hand through his hair, "That's gonna take a while."

"No, no, no," Sarah Jane called, darting around to the monitor, "Let me! K9, out you come!"

The Doctor grinned as K9 scooted onto the screen.

"Affirmative, mistress!" K9 answered.

"Oh, good dog!" the Doctor laughed, "K9, give Mr. Smith the base code!"

"Master," K9 greeted, getting to work, "TARDIS base code now being transferred," the base codes appeared on the screen, "The process is simple."

Evy snorted, "Figures…" Donna looked at her curiously as she moved to sit down next to her, "His
The Doctor rolled his eyes and turned back to the monitor, "Now then, you lot…" he tugged Sarah Jane around to where she had been standing, "Sarah, hold that. And Mickey, you hold that. Because, you know why this TARDIS is always rattling about the place?"

"You're a horrible driver?" Evy supplied, already knowing why it was so bad.

"Ha ha," the Doctor replied sarcastically, still positioning people, "Rose, that there. It was designed to have six pilots and I have to do it single handed…" Evy coughed, "I mean, Evy and I have to do it by ourselves," he flashed her a grin, "Martha, keep that level. But not anymore! Jack, there you go, steady that. Now we can fly this thing…" he turned to see Jackie standing there and hesitated, "No, Jackie. No, no. Not you," he patted her shoulder, "Don't touch anything, just…stand back…" he spun around to look at the console again, "Like it's meant to be flown! We've got the Torchwood Rift looped around the TARDIS by Mr. Smith. We're gonna fly planet Earth back home," he moved over to his place at the console, "Right, then! Off we go."

He pulled a lever and they were off, actually flying smoothly as the TARDIS pulled the Earth along. Donna laughed as they flew, the New Doctor coming over to lean against the wall beside them, just watching, though Evy could see his eyes were trained on Rose. She smiled softly to herself.

"Rose," the Doctor gestured to a button which she pushed. Jack pumped a lever, Sarah Jane pushed another lever down, as the trio watched.

"That's really good, Jack," Donna called, "I think you're the best."

"Oi!" Evy nudged her friend in the arm, "Stop it! You're just as bad as him!"

Donna just laughed.

Moments later the Earth was back to its original position. Everyone cheered and hugged each other in happiness. Donna jumped up and ran towards the hug fest, pulling Sarah Jane away from Jack and hugging him herself.

Evy laughed, getting up as the New Doctor walked forward, but her grin faded when she noticed Rose standing there, off to the side, frowning as the Doctor gave her a simple high-five and moved on to high-five Martha as well.

~8~

The TARDIS materialized in front of Sarah Jane's house, everyone stepping out for a moment to look around and enjoy the sunlight as the Doctor said goodbye to his former companion.

"You know...you act like such a lonely man," Sarah Jane commented, "But look at you! You've got the biggest family on Earth!" she smirked, teasing him, "And you've found your Link to boot!"

The Doctor's smile became somewhat dreamy as he glanced back to see Evy standing there, talking with Donna as the two walked back into the TARDIS. Just the thought of it, being Linked, it was something he'd dreamed of on Gallifrey but never thought he'd ever get to have. Now…he couldn't explain how amazing it felt. To know he wasn't alone, to have a constant reminder of that, to be so completely connected to another person the way he was, the warm feeling in the pit of his chest which he knew was the Link's way of telling him Evy was safe and happy…

He turned back as Sarah Jane held her arms out to him and pulled him into a tight hug.
She let go of him suddenly, remembering something, "Gotta go! He's only fourteen! It's a long story. And thank you!"

The Doctor laughed before waving her off as she turned to leave, running down the path towards her house.

~8~

Evy watched as the Doctor spoke to Sarah Jane before heading into the TARDIS with Donna who walked off, getting a call from her mother.

She looked around, seeing Martha, Jack, and the New Doctor talking, while Mickey and Jackie sat next to each other on the captain's chair. Rose was off to the side, standing at the console, looking down at it sadly.

Evy frowned and walked over to her. Rose didn't look up, for a moment it was silent, but then Rose spoke, "I imagined this so differently," she commented quietly, "That I'd come back, and the Doctor would sweep me off my feet, and we'd just be together but...he's so different."

"I'm sorry," Evy looked down at the console as well, "It's my fault."

Rose looked up at her, confused. A small part of her did blame Evy, but Evy also knew she had no idea just how large the situation actually was.

She sighed, "On Gallifrey, there's a thing called Linking. It's...it's when you meet the Time Lord that is perfectly compatible to you, not just in your current regeneration but in all others. The Link creates a mental and emotional bond to the other person and...and often, that sort of deep connection and understanding, leads to something more. I wore a Perception Filter," she dangled it, scoffing to herself, "It's useless now, the near regeneration destroyed what was left of it...it was the only thing keeping the Doctor from forming a Link with me."

"So you mean..." Rose trailed, tears collecting in her eyes.

Evy nodded solemnly, "The Link was completed," she looked up sadly, truly feeling regret for what had happened. She watched as Rose looked down, her heart breaking, "I'm so sorry," she whispered, "I tried so hard to keep it from happening, but it did anyway."

"So...he doesn't love me anymore?" Rose breathed.

"Of course he does," Evy reassured her, "He will always love you, the way he loves all his previous companions, they are his greatest friends and..."

Rose frowned at the thought, shaking her head, "No, no, I don't believe that. What I had with the Doctor...what we've been through...feelings like that don't just go away."

"They didn't," Evy swallowed, "But things have changed Rose, feelings can change. His did."

Rose glared at her, "Because of you," she half spat.

She knew she needed to calm down, that she had no right to act this way. She had been gone for years now, she hadn't had any sort of claim on the Doctor before she left either. She hadn't been the first companion, she wouldn't have been the last, Martha and Donna's involvement had proved that, she wasn't a Time Lord, she wasn't even the same age as him! She had no right to expect him to not move on at some point, knowing that he thought she'd be trapped in Pete's world forever. She should have been happy that he'd managed to find love again, that he was happy...but damn it! She
She didn't know if it was because Evy was a Time Lady or his Link or what, but she just...didn't want him to be with HER. If he'd fallen for anyone, another human, she wouldn't have felt so...she didn't know the word. If he loved a human then that meant he truly had loved her as well at some point, that he would have told her it on the beach too. But to find he had fallen for a Time Lady, one of his people who should have been dead...how could she compete with *that*? She should have been thrilled he wasn't alone any longer, but to know that she'd never be able to share things with him like a Time Lady could...it hurt. A Time Lady would have survived/fought in the war, faced Daleks, attended the same schools, learned the same lessons, share the same weaknesses and strengths as the Doctor, understood...something she knew she would never be able to do, not entirely.

Evy glared at her, "Don't you dare Rose Tyler," she hissed at the girl.

She had tried to be kind, to explain it as gently as she could. Rose had no idea the hell she'd put herself through trying to keep the Doctor from Linking to her. She had tried to respect Rose's memory, the things Rose had done for the Doctor, by not pushing him, by not letting him jump into a relationship he wasn't ready for. She'd given him time to grieve for the loss of this human, time to mourn, heal, move on. She'd kept her distance as much as it killed her to do so, to honor Rose...and here was this...human...having the audacity to get angry at *her*?

"It's all your fault!" Rose nearly shouted, managing to keep it to a loud whisper.

Evy's hand clenched at her sides, she could feel the urge to smack Rose rising but she'd rather have her hand touch the Doctor and not soiled with Rose's cheek.

"Rose, I am just trying to explain..."

"Don't say it," Rose snapped, glaring at her, "It's not true. He loves me and I love him!"

"You love him do you?" Evy's lifted an eyebrow at her.

Rose huffed, "Yes."

"What's his greatest fear?" she asked. Rose's eyes widened and she blinked. Evy could see it, she didn't know, "What was his favorite past time as a child? What's his favorite thing to eat? His favorite color?" Rose floundered for answers, "What's his name?"

Rose's jaw tensed, "Daleks," she answered, "Adventures, bananas, brown, the Doctor."

Evy let out a little laugh, shaking her head, "Losing the people he cares most dearly about, standing on the beaches and watching the stars and imagining flying out among them, Jelly Babies, burnt orange, and do you really think anyone would name their child 'Doctor'?"

Rose stiffened, trying to hear any sort of falseness in Evy's voice that would tell her the woman was just making up wrong answers...but there was nothing. She crossed her arms, "You don't have to know all that about someone to love them."

"No," she conceded, "You just have to actually *care* about them and not what they represent."

Rose gasped, her mouth hanging open at Evy's implication, "How dare..."

"You killed Donna," she cut in. Rose's eyes widened as she tried to defend herself, but Evy wouldn't let her, "I know all about it Rose. She tried to tell us, but the dream had started to fade.
But I saw it."

She had. When she'd absorbed the memories of her other self, her parallel self, she'd also seen what Donna had experienced in the other world even if Donna hadn't remembered much of it. She'd seen Rose, what she'd done, how she'd manipulated Donna into thinking she had to die.

"What on Earth would make you think the Doctor would ever be ok with anyone trying to manipulate someone into dying?" she asked, her voice a cold whisper, "Do you know what that would do to him? And you, the woman who claims to love him, willingly and knowingly manipulated Donna into thinking she HAD to die? Just to get you out of another parallel world?" Rose opened her mouth again, but Evy was on a roll, "You know as well as I do that anything could have gotten the parallel Donna to turn left, it didn't have to mean my Donna's death. You could have given her a mobile, a bomb for the roadway, hell even a bike to get there in time, you didn't. There were dozens of ways you could have stopped Donna turning left but you took the easy way, the quickest way. And that way would have killed the Doctor to do. How could you possibly claim to care even a lick about him if you're willing to murder his best friend to get back to him? What, did you think he'd thank you for that?"

Rose swallowed hard.

"And you went about making everyone think you knew anything about time travel just because you'd done it with him?" Evy shook her head, "Rose you could have caused more damage than ever. You gave them access to the TARDIS! Don't think that just because the Doctor died that the doors magically opened. Someone gave UNIT the key, someone gave humans access to time travel technology before they were meant to even know it was possible! And you cannibalized her! You tore her apart to make some rickety smoke and mirror trick that could have just as easily killed Donna to send her back in. You didn't think, at all, about the consequences. You just wanted, what you wanted, damn the consequences."

"I didn't..." Rose began.

Evy cut her off once more, "The Doctor is an amazing man, and he's easy to fall in love with," she smiled a bit, putting a hand to her chest, "Believe me I know, but Rose..." she looked at her, "You don't know him. You don't know anything about him."

"And you do?" Rose had to ask, had to try and get one jibe in there...

"Yes," she nodded, "I do. And I love him, not for who he is now, but for who he always was," she eyed Rose a moment, "I think he did love you once, in some way, Rose Tyler," Rose looked up, "But things, people, and feelings can change given time, and he's a TIME Lord. I've seen them changing, even before the Filter stopped working."

And with that, she turned and moved around the console just as the Doctor strode back in, a happy grin on his face, oblivious to the tense discussion that had just gone down, as he walked over to her and began to help prepare the box to take the rest of the group to Torchwood.

Evy glanced up to see Rose had walked off to go stand with her mother. She sighed, that had not gone as well as she had hoped. But it needed to be said, Rose had to hear it. She had seen a change in the Doctor for a while now...but she'd tried to act like she hadn't...she didn't want to encourage his feelings, but let them happen naturally. She didn't want to influence them, so she tried not to see it, tried not to get excited by how he looked at her with more and more care and...and love...in his eyes as time had gone by.

~8~
"I TOLD you, no teleport," the Doctor said as he soniced Jack's Manipulator again, he looked over at Evy meaningfully, telling her not to undo what he had done again, "And Martha, get rid of that Osterhagen thing, eh? Save the world one more time."

"Consider it done," Martha grinned.

Jack saluted the Doctor, then Martha, and turned to salute Evy who glared at him for the action. He hesitated before grinning and scooping her into a bear hug.

Martha laughed as she just barely heard the Doctor growl and glare at Jack. As soon as Jack pulled away she stepped forward and hugged the woman as well.

They turned and walked off when Mickey appeared behind them.

"Oi!" the Doctor called, seeing him, "Where are you going?"

"Well, I'm not stupid, I can work out what happens next," he replied, "And hey, I had a good time in that parallel world but my Gran passed away. Nice and peaceful. Spent her last years living in a mansion. There's nothing there for me, now. Certainly not Rose."

He wouldn't tell them, but he'd heard everything Evy had said to Rose in the TARDIS. He had to applaud the girl's guts, telling Rose exactly what she deserved to hear. He knew Rose needed to hear just how much she'd changed, but he also knew that, despite what Evy had said, Rose wouldn't be getting over the Doctor any time soon. He'd had to spend ages waiting for Rose when she'd gone off to travel with the Doctor, then he'd had to spend years waiting for her to get over the fact they were in a parallel world and competing with the memory of the man. He wasn't going to waste any more time secretly hoping that something would begin especially when it had ended long ago. He realized that now.

"What will you do?" Evy asked, grinning as his gaze flickered to Martha. She'd seen the looks he'd been shooting her on the way back and she knew things hadn't worked out with Tom, meaning her dear Martha Jones was, as she had once called Donna, single and sexy.

"Anything!" Mickey grinned, "Brand new life. Just you watch," he knocked fists with the Doctor, "See you, boss," and nodded at Evy, "Ma'am," Evy rolled her eyes at him as he winked at her and turned to catch up with Martha and Jack, "Hey you two!"

The Doctor smiled as he and Evy headed back to the TARDIS, they only had one more stop to make.

~8~

The TARDIS materialized on the sand of the beach of Bad Wolf Bay, the sun in the sky. Jackie stepped out first, followed by the New Doctor, and then Rose.

"Ugh, fat lot of good this is!" Jackie commented, looking around, "Back of beyond, bloody Norway! I'm gonna have to phone your father. He's on the nursery run."

Rose just looked around, confused as to why she was back here again.

"I was pregnant," Jackie continued, turning to the New Doctor, "Do you remember? Had a baby boy!"

The Doctor, Donna, and Evy stepped out of the TARDIS. The Doctor had his hands in his pockets, but he kept glancing at Evy who stood on the other side of Donna. He could sense that if he tried
to take her hand like he wanted, she would put more distance between them.

"Ah, brilliant!" the New Doctor grinned, "What did you call him?"

"Doctor," Jackie answered.

"...really?" the New Doctor asked, not quite sure what to say. Who in their right mind would ever name a baby 'Doctor?"

"No, you plum. He's called Tony!"

"Hold on," Rose interrupted, turning around to face the trio by the TARDIS, "This is the parallel Universe, right?"

"You're back home," the Doctor nodded.

"The walls of the world are closing again..." Evy began.

"Now that the Reality Bomb never happened," Donna finished, "It's dimension retro closure," she grinned as the New Doctor did as well, "See, I really get that stuff now."

Rose shook her head, close to tears, looking at the Doctor, she was not about to let Evy's words deter her, "No, but I spent all that time trying to find you, I'm not going back now!"

"But you've got to," the Doctor said, stepping forward with Donna and Evy, "Because we saved the Universe, but at a cost. And the cost is him," he nodded at the New Doctor.

"In destroying the Daleks," Evy added quietly, "He committed genocide. He's just too dangerous to be left to his own devices."

"You made me!" the New Doctor exclaimed angrily, looking between the trio. All three of them had had a hand in his creation, the Doctor's hand, Evy's regeneration energy, Donna's DNA, and there they were, seeming like they wanted nothing to do with him.

"Exactly," the Doctor agreed, "You were born in battle, full of blood and anger and revenge," he looked at Rose, "Remind you of someone?"

Rose frowned, she knew who it was.

"That's me," the Doctor continued, "When we first met. And you made me better. And now you can do the same for him."

"You healed him once," Evy mumbled, repeating what she'd said to Donna only moments ago, "You can heal him again."

She hadn't exactly meant it in this context at the time.

"But he's not you," Rose said, tears in her eyes, frustrated.

"He needs you," the Doctor shook his head, "That was very me."

Rose flinched at the past tense.

The TARDIS made a grinding noise, drawing all their attention to it, "We've gotta go," Donna announced.
"This reality's sealing itself off," the Doctor said, "Forever."

He turned, about to head back to the TARDIS, when Rose ran forward, "You can't just leave me here!" the Doctor turned round to face her, "Please Doctor...I...I need you..."

"And he needs you," the Doctor nodded at his doppelganger again.

Rose shook her head frantically, trying to make him see what she was saying. Suddenly, an idea came to her, "When I last stood on this beach on the worst day of my life...what was the last thing you said to me?" she prayed that this would be just the jolt to his hearts that she needed, bring back the part of him that seemed so clearly and entirely lost to her now, "Go on, say it."

Evy frowned, seeing what Rose was trying to do. Bring back some semblance of the Doctor who left her on the beach years ago, the one who didn't want to be without her. But that was a different Doctor, much like the Rose before them was a different Rose than the one who stood on the beach before as well. The only one who didn't seem to realize that was Rose. She sighed, she knew...this would hurt Rose more than anything. It always hurt to have one's last hope crushed.

"I said, 'Rose Tyler,'" he answered.

"Yeah, and how was that sentence going to end?" she looked at him expectantly, she had guessed what it was going to be, but if he said it...if he confirmed it...if he just said that he loved her...

The Doctor frowned, growing just a bit uncomfortable with how Rose was practically demanding this of him, "Does it need saying?" he asked, just a little confused as well.

He would have said he loved her. He still did, but not in the way she wanted, he couldn't love her in that way, not anymore. He loved all his companions in his own way and most of them he never said it to. But Evy...everything changed when she'd come into his life.

At first, he hadn't wanted to replace his first human companion after the war with anyone, not Martha, not Evy when he'd thought she was human. But...even when he'd thought that, he knew Evy was different than Rose in some way he couldn't place. When he'd discovered she was a Time Lady...it was easier to be around Evy, knowing she couldn't take the place of a human companion, she wasn't human. He'd still felt a bit like he was dishonoring the memory of Rose and all she'd done for him, she was a dear companion, but Evy wasn't her. Evy was different, she was a Time Lady...he just...had to let himself care for her as that. River's words had jolted him, it was alright to care for her in that way, in a way he knew he could never come to care for any human who might travel with him, he couldn't ever let himself fall completely in love with them knowing how fragile the human life was. He'd never truly cared for another of his species before either, loved them, he hadn't known then that he'd fallen in love with Evy. Once he'd let himself feel what he'd been holding back on, it just kept growing. He couldn't say those words to Rose, not now, not in the way she wanted, because there was only one person that he felt that way about, that he loved truly and completely and naturally, and that was Evy.

He smiled softly, he loved her.

He really did.

And he wouldn't hurt her, even if that meant Rose would be hurting in the process.

Rose let out a breath, her heart finally breaking into pieces. She turned around, stunned, and walked off to a line of rocks that jutted into the sea.

The Doctor looked around, confused and a bit concerned, he'd hoped that he'd said that gently
enough to not hurt her too badly, "Did I do something wrong?"

Evy took a breath and shook her head, despite what Rose had said and done, she couldn't leave any of the Doctor's companions like that, "Let me talk to her. I'll sort it out."

"Just be quick," Donna added as Evy walked off motioning for the New Doctor to join her, "The dimensions close to closing."

Evy nodded and walked over to Rose.

"I didn't want to believe it," Rose said to herself, sensing Evy approaching. She turned around, tears streaming from her eyes, "But he looks at me…like I'm just a companion again…like everything we've been through didn't mean anything."

"I know," Evy nodded sadly, "He doesn't look at you like you're special anymore."

She recalled the last time she had said something like that, to Nurse Redfern when the Doctor had been human. She turned to the New Doctor, gesturing for him to step up and stand next to her.

"But there is someone who does," she continued. Rose looked up to see the second Doctor standing there, "I tried to keep the Doctor from Linking to me because I knew you Rose Tyler, through the Doctor's memories of you…I had no doubt you would try and find your way back to him…and I didn't want to be the thing that stood in the way of the two of you being together…if you made the Doctor happy," she looked down at her broken Filter, "But Fate had other ideas," she shook her head, "I know how much the Doctor cared for you Rose, before the parallel world sealed…I know how much this must be hurting you now…I'd like to make up for it."

"How?" Rose asked, her voice breaking. She felt a shame rise in her. She'd been so angry at the woman before her for seeming to have taken the Doctor's hearts, and here she was, trying to offer her solace.

"Tell her," Evy said to the New Doctor, "Go on."

"I look like him and I think like him..." the New Doctor began, "Same memories, same thoughts, same everything. Except..." he smiled, "I've only got one heart."

"Which means?" Rose asked, not daring to get her hope up.

"He's part human," Evy answered, "Specifically the aging part."

"I'll grow old and never regenerate," he nodded, "I've only got one life...Rose Tyler. I could spend it with you. If you want."

"You'll grow...grow old at the same time as me?" Rose swallowed.

"Together," he smiled.

Rose shook her head, "But if he's the same as the Doctor..." she looked at Evy, "Then he loves you too. He's Linked to you and..."

Evy smiled softly, "The Link only works on one person. I once told Donna, if the Doctor had a twin, who was exactly like him in every way, same thoughts, same looks, same personality, same mannerisms, same everything...I would still only love the Doctor and the Link..." she shook her head, "Rose, it's not like we Link and fall in love. I'll admit it happens more often than not, but it's not instant. It takes time, to sort through everything, the memories, thoughts, feelings, the
connection of the Link. It's just an instant connection, not an instant love," she looked at the New Doctor, "And besides...he sprang from my regeneration energy and Donna's DNA...makes him more like my brother than anything."

She stepped forward and gently took Rose's arm, tugging her to stand before the New Doctor. She lifted Rose's arm and placed her hand on his chest so she could feel his single heart beating.

He smiled softly at Rose, "Would you like to hear how I would have ended that sentence?" he asked her. Rose looked up at him as he leaned down and whispered something in ear. Evy's smile widened as Rose leaned back, pulled the New Doctor to her by his lapels, and kissed him.

She nodded at her work before walking back towards the TARDIS as the New Doctor and Rose continued to kiss passionately on the beach.

"Was it something I said?" the Doctor asked as she approached, still concerned he'd said something to upset Rose before.

Evy looked back at the kissing couple and grinned, "Oh yes."

The Doctor frowned, but Evy just took his arm and led him back into the TARDIS, shutting the door behind them.

As the TARDIS dematerialized Rose and the New Doctor separated and looked over to watch the blue box disappear. Rose frowned for a moment but then an arm wound its way around her waist and she was pulled back against a chest, a grin slowly formed on her face.

~8~

The Doctor was leaning against the wall of the TARDIS as Donna and Evy fiddled with the controls, just watching them silently.

"I thought we could try the planet Felspoon..." Donna mentioned, "Just 'cos. What a good name, 'Felspoon.'"

"It's got mountains that sway in the breeze," Evy nodded, "Mountains that move. What do you think of that?"

"And how do you know about Felspoon?" the Doctor frowned, eyeing Donna, recalling that a biological meta-crisis had occurred...knowing what that could mean for Donna.

Donna paused, frowning, "I...I'm not sure..."

"That was my fault," Evy replied, stopping her actions as well.

The Doctor frowned this time, "What do you mean? How was it your fault?"

"The meta-crisis," she sighed, coming around to lean on the console next to Donna, "When Donna touched the hand, the regeneration energy started to go to her, but I grabbed her and tried to siphon the energy back into me. A bit of the energies and DNA got mixed up..." she rubbed her head, "Donna got a bit of us...mostly your confidence," she grinned at the Doctor, "And a bit of my inspiration..." she looked at Donna, "You see things now, don't you? Things that didn't make sense before you get now."

"Uh, yeah," Donna nodded.
"The Time Lord mind is allowing you to understand things that confused you before. It sort of gave
us a connection, I can feed you information, like in the Vault, and it makes sense to you."

"But…" Donna began, sensing something coming.

"There's never been a Human-Time Lord meta-crisis before now," the Doctor answered sadly,
"You got very lucky that Evy was able to pull some of it back from you…" if she hadn't, Donna's
mind would have overloaded, they would have had to wipe it clean of all talk of aliens and their
adventures, and that would have killed him, "But she didn't pull enough of it."

"What do you mean?" she frowned, not willing to believe what her mind was telling her.

"You said before that the excitement fired up your synapses," Evy replied, "The more excitement,
the more danger, you face, the faster they'll fire…but if they fire too fast…it'll damage your mind,
it could kill you Donna."

"It's not safe to travel with us anymore," the Doctor sighed, "I can't say we won't find ourselves in a
predicament worse than that at some point, and I…"

"We," Evy cut in.

"We," the Doctor amended, "Would never forgive ourselves if something happened to you because
of us."

"I want to stay," she whispered, tears in her eyes.

"But you can't."

"I was gonna be with you two forever. The rest of my life…travelling…in the TARDIS…"

"But that's just it," Evy smiled a bit, "You can live out the rest of your life, just on Earth. You have
no idea how amazing and special the human life is, and you get to experience it," she reached out
and took Donna's hands in her own, "You can live your life anyway you want…and I can't wait to
see what you do with it. Because I know…" she grinned widely, "It'll be amazing, like you."

Donna sniffled and forced a smile, "You better be around to see my amazing life," she told her,
looking between her and the Doctor, "The both of you."

The Doctor smiled sadly, "Wouldn't miss it."

Donna nodded and turned to the console, punching in the coordinates for her house and flipping a
lever.

~8~

"But…I don't understand," Wilf said as he and Sylvia sat with Donna on the sofa as the Doctor and
Evy sat on a chair across from them.

"She took our minds into her own head," Evy repeated the story to Donna's family, "I managed to
pull enough of it out but not enough for her to be safe travelling with us. And Donna's far too
special to risk."

Donna smiled lightly at her friend. One thing still remained from the crisis, her confidence and
belief in herself, apparently Evy's firm belief that she was special and amazing had carried over too.

The Doctor frowned when he saw a look on Sylvia's face, one he'd often seen when it came to
Donna, "I just want you to know that there are worlds out there, safe in the sky, because of her," the Doctor added, speaking more to Sylvia than anyone, "That there are people living in the light, singing songs of Donna Noble, a thousand million light-years away...they will never forget her..." he smiled at Donna, "And for one moment...one shining moment...she was the most important woman in the whole wide Universe."

"She still is," Sylvia replied shortly, cross with how the Doctor was speaking to her, as though she didn't know how truly remarkable her daughter was, "She's my daughter."

Donna's smile widened considerably as she heard her mother's words. She knew her mother loved her, but hearing it, it made her day.

Evy grinned at Sylvia's words, the Doctor as well. He stood, sensing the family had much to talk about and held out a hand for Evy. She took it, allowing the Doctor to pull her off the arm of the chair. They bid farewell to Donna, Evy sonicing her phone so she could call the TARDIS whenever she wanted, and left the house.

It was dark and pouring rain, thunder rumbling in the distance, but the Doctor and Evy just smiled, stepping into it.

"Ah...you'll have quite a bit of this," the Doctor remarked, staring up at the sky, "Atmospheric disturbance."

Evy laughed, "It'll pass though. Everything does eventually."

Wilf came up behind them, watching as they stared at the sky before turning to him, "Bye then, Wilfred!" the Doctor said as Evy nodded.

"What about you, now?" Wilf called after them, "Who've you got? I mean, all those friends of yours..."

"They've all got someone else," the Doctor shrugged, "Still, that's fine. I'm fine."

"We're fine," Evy corrected, taking his hand, "You've got someone too."

The Doctor smiled down at her, warmth filling his hearts at her words, seeing she seemed to have gotten past whatever had affected her after she'd nearly regenerated. He squeezed her hand gently.

Wilf smiled as well at the display of affection, he had seen it before when the Doctor and Evy had come to their house during the whole ATMOS debacle. But now, it just seemed stronger.

"Every night," Wilf promised them, "When it gets dark...and the stars come out...I'll look up, we all will, up at the sky and think of you two."

"Thank you," the Doctor breathed before turning around and walking off to the TARDIS with Evy.

~8~

The Doctor leaned against a Y-beam, watching Evy as he had before they'd taken Donna home, a small frown on his face. As soon as they'd gotten inside the TARDIS she'd gone off to the console. Her thoughts were still guarded, as they had been since they'd Linked, and he didn't like it. But then again...his own thoughts were guarded as well, but he wanted to wait for her to react to the completed Link first before he lowered his mental shields.

"I'm sorry," she said after quite a bit of him staring at her.
"What for?" his frown deepened.

"For Rose. For the Link triggering just as you found her again. It wasn't fair, to either of you."

He blinked, realizing something. That was why she'd acted the way she had, distant, when they'd Linked. Rose had been there, and they both knew how Rose felt about him. It would have hurt the girl much more than back on the beach to see him trying to be so close to someone else. Evy had been distant out of respect for Rose's feelings, not because he had seemingly accidently Linked to her.

He sighed, he'd sensed that and seen it in her mind the moment he'd Linked, how frightened she'd been that it happened because of her near regeneration. He walked over to her, taking her hands in his own, halting her movements, "There's something I need to tell you," he stated, pulling her attention away from the console, "You were worried that I would Link to you before I was ready to let go and move on, yeah?" she nodded, frowning, unsure of where this was going, "I was ready to Link to you, and I mean consciously ready to Link to you, after Midnight."

Her eyes widened in shock, "What?"

"Just before you woke up on the TARDIS, I was about to take off the Filter."

Her hand reached for the necklace she still wore despite the fact it was utterly destroyed, the small glass shattered, the sand having run out. He reached out as well and traced it, he'd have to get her a new necklace, he just couldn't picture her without one.

"But..." she began, but the Doctor interrupted.

"I didn't want to lose you," he told her, "God, how I didn't want to lose you," he took a breath, "It forced me to realize quite a few things about how I felt about you though and I realized, I love you, so much, the only thing I wanted was to see you happy, to be the cause of your happiness, to see you safe, to love you, to be Linked to you forever."

She let out a breath, actually falling back onto the captain's chair as he knelt down to continue speaking to her.

"I actually tried to take the Filter off a few times in Shan Shen," he admitted with a grin, "Guess I'm not that good at being sneaky yet."

She laughed, before shaking her head, "But...Rose..."

He sighed, "I was happy to see her. As happy as I am to see any other companion of mine...maybe a bit more. But there's something else I need you to understand," Evy looked at him, "When I was in the Vault, and Martha and Jack were on screen ready and willing to blow up everything..." he shook his head, on the verge of being disgusted but unable to muster such an emotion against his companions, "She was impressed with them, she was as willing as they were...and I realized then...Rose, she wasn't the same Rose I remembered, she was different..."

Evy opened her mouth to argue but the Doctor held up his hand.

"It wasn't the connection of the Link influencing me," he assured her, "It was a fact. I know how I thought of Rose, how I remembered her, and what I remembered didn't match up with what was before me or with what Donna told us about in the parallel world, what she'd gotten Donna to do. It's like..." he trailed, trying to find the words, "It's like having a friend who moves away, and you remember all the great aspects of them, and when you meet again, it's different, they're different, you're different. I think...I think I idealized Rose in my mind when she left, I remembered only the
best parts of her, the great things she did for me, how human she was…but that's just it. She was human, will all their flaws and weaknesses. She couldn't see the big picture of destroying the Earth," he smiled up at her, "Not like you could. You told me, when I was saying I couldn't choose the Earth over you, that you would make me pick the Earth, you could no more see it destroyed than I could. You couldn't even destroy the Daleks, like I couldn't. Humans…they're all rash and guns blazing and ignorant of how amazing they are."

He squeezed her hands, "They are amazing. Rose was amazing too. But she wasn't the same Rose I cared for and I realized that then," he reached forward and rested his head against her's, opening his mind to her, showing her exactly what he'd realized at that moment when Martha and Jack had made their threats.

He was telling the truth. He realized that Rose was different than how he remembered, but that so was he. He took her to the moment he saw Rose again, realizing at the sight of her, that he'd moved on and let go quite a while ago and that, while happy to know Rose was alive and well, he hadn't felt the way he felt before. And that was before the Link.

Evy opened her eyes, looking straight into the Doctor's, seeing all the love he had for her shining through at her. She could feel the Link humming between them, fully reciprocated, finally, she could feel what he felt for her. He truly had fallen in love with her before the Link had even been established, all it had done, was solidify his feelings, make them stronger, connect them on a more intimate level. She felt her breath catch in her throat, he felt the same way as her, he loved her. He really did.

She reached out, laying a hand on his cheek, he leaned into her palm, still looking straight at her.

"All your companions promise you forever," she said quietly, afraid that speaking louder would ruin the moment, "But they always leave…" she smiled softly, leaning forward, "But I'm not just a companion, and I won't ever leave you…for forever."

And with that she pressed her lips to his, dropping her mental barriers as she did.

The stories were wrong.

The first kiss between those Linked was far more amazing.

To be continued...in...Together At Last!
Woo! FINALLY! Right? The Doctor finally Links to Evy! And it's a romantic one!
Yay!

I've slowly been making the Doctor more and more ok with Rose being trapped in the parallel world. Evy, in a way, is healing him from that loss much like Rose healed the 9th Doctor from the war. And, much like with 9, he's slowly been falling for her in the process. This series was about building a foundation for a relationship between the two outside the Link. Almost like it's proving to Evy that it isn't the Link making him love her, but just him, the Link just makes them more connected. I honestly don't know if there would be a case on Gallifrey where a partial Link was in place for so long as well as having the un-Linked party able to get to know their Link before Linking. Oh Doctor and Evy, you never play by the rules do you? lol. This idea of love before Link will actually come up again...oh in Series 6? :)

I hope it was believable how the Doctor reacted to Rose. He does love her in a way, but as a companion, like Sarah Jane. He's really been slowly realizing that nothing could have really happened with Rose, being human, and that the understanding and the empathy he shares with Evy he'd never have had with Rose. Evy understands the laws of time, the pain of their losses from the war, the difficulty of the responsibility the last Time Lords have. I doubt that, even if Rose had become an old woman with the Doctor, she would have been able to understand even a fraction of that. If she stayed with the Doctor, her family would be gone in the parallel world, but her people, the humans, and her planet, the Earth, would still be there. She'd never seen war,
destruction, death on that scale. She'd never be able to grip a true understanding of the complexities of time and fixed points the way the Doctor could.

I hope the little twist with Evy staying in the Crucible was believable. In the episode, I think the magnatron was only hit once, but here it was hit quite a bit, which would make it more damaged than in the episode, and that would have more severe and quicker consequences than in the show. And of course, you have to have just a little terror and angst when in a relationship with the Doctor eh? I also hope that the twist with Evy's regeneration energy being the thing that creates meta-Doctor was ok too. I've mentioned it when talking of the Link that it means the Time Lords are compatible, doesn't just mean in mind or personality. In a way, it's even more of a connection that the Time Lords who are Linked are the only ones who can bear the regeneration energy, be there with you, at your side, as you're dying and regenerating. So the energy had to be compatible as well. I DO have a twist for the end of 11's era regarding this though ;)

And woo! Evy put Rose in her place! It definitely wasn't as dark/angry as the Doctor vs. Rose in the Academic Series, but I think Evy did alright, using her words and common sense about the Doctor to make Rose realize that she really wasn't doing anything for love, at least not because the Doctor loved her or even her 'love' for him. She was doing it because she wanted to, not because she thought the Doctor would. The Doctor clearly wanted her to stay with her family but Rose came back, he clearly wouldn't have wanted Donna to die for him, Rose had no qualms with it. She needed to point out to Rose that she loved what the Doctor offered her and not the Doctor himself. Once she realized that, she got the Doctor without the adventure, the human-Doctor :)

Thank you to everyone who has read and enjoyed this story, I hope you'll like the next one :)

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!