Afterword/Afterward

by PondSong322

Summary

The Doctor and River cope with the aftermath of losing Amy and Rory in Manhattan. Where do they go from here?

Amy's afterword written by Steven Moffatt.

*screenplay format

Notes

This has taken an eternity to finish. I was hung up on a few things and just kept tinkering for so long!!

AMY (VO)*

Afterword by Amelia Williams. Hello, old friend. And here we are: you and me, on the last page. By the time you read these words, Rory and I will be long gone, so know that we lived well and were very happy. And above all else, know that we will love you, always. Sometimes I do worry about you, though. I think, once we’re gone, you won’t be
coming back here for a while and you might be alone, which you should never be. Don’t be alone, Doctor. And do one more thing for me: there’s a little girl waiting in a garden. She’s going to wait a long while, so she’s going to need a lot of hope. Go to her. Tell her a story. Tell her that if she’s patient, the days are coming that she’ll never forget. Tell her she’ll go to sea and fight pirates. She’ll fall in love with a man who’ll wait two thousand years to keep her safe. Tell her she’ll give hope to the greatest painter who ever lived and save a whale in outer space. Tell her: this is the story of Amelia Pond. And this is how it ends.*

FADE IN:

INT. TARDIS CONTROL ROOM

THE DOCTOR enters at the front doors, despondent.

He closes the door and stands there for several beats, not moving.

He takes in the huge, empty space. RIVER SONG was here when he left, but now there's no sign of her.

He sighs.

He climbs the steps to the console. He stares at it for a moment, perhaps hoping it might just start on its own. The effort of piloting seems almost too much.

Wearily, he puts his hands on the console and leans his weight into his arms, knowing what he needs to do but lacking the energy, or courage, to do it.

Finally, he reaches for a lever.

A sound suddenly strikes his ears. A sound that makes his hand and his hearts pause: the sound of high heels clicking down the corridor.

The Doctor turns to see River enter the control room. She's still wearing her black corseted cocktail dress with her hair messily pinned up.

She's carrying a mug of something hot. When she sees the Doctor, her whole expression is energized.

RIVER

(hurrying up the steps)
Oh thank god! What happened?
The Doctor blinks at her.

RIVER (CON'T)

Doctor? What's wrong?
(Beat)
Why are you looking at me like that?

THE DOCTOR

I...I thought you'd gone.

RIVER

Well, I haven't. Obviously.

THE DOCTOR

Right...

Beat.

RIVER

Did you really think I'd leave you now, at a time like this?

The Doctor, a bit dazed, says nothing. He can’t get past the fact that she's still here, and how relieved he feels.

River holds the mug out to him.

RIVER (CON’T)

Made you some tea.

THE DOCTOR

What?
RIVER

Tea. Thought you could use some.

He looks at her blankly, trying to process, but his mind is a muddle.

THE DOCTOR

Tea...yes...of course.

Beat. He musters a weak, but grateful, smile.

He carefully takes the mug from her and goes to sit in the jump seat.

River stands beside the console, considering the Doctor with sympathy as he sips his tea.

RIVER

Alright?

THE DOCTOR

Perfect.

(Beat)

Thank you.

RIVER

S'okay.

The Doctor nurses his tea. He studies the steam as it curls up from the mug and dissipates into the air.

Beat. River patiently tries to get him back on track.

RIVER (CONT)

So, what happened?
He looks up at her questioningly.

RIVER (CON’T)

You ran off so suddenly.

The light bulb comes on at last.

The Doctor finally shakes off his distraction, rising purposefully from his seat.

He sets the mug against the time rotor and reaches into his jacket pocket.

THE DOCTOR

Went back for this.

He fishes out a folded piece of paper and hands it to River.

RIVER

What is it?

THE DOCTOR

Last page of your book.

She hesitates, holding the paper away from her as if it might explode.

THE DOCTOR (CON’T)

It's okay, you can read it. Can't do any harm now.

She exhales, unfolds the paper, and reads as the Doctor perches on the edge of the console with folded arms.

Beat.
RIVER

Well, there, you see? They're alright. They're happy.

Beat.

THE DOCTOR

We don't know that.

RIVER

She says so.

THE DOCTOR

She could be lying.

He begins to pace, circling the console.

RIVER

What? Why would she lie?

But the Doctor isn't listening.

THE DOCTOR

It's my fault. Should have known better – should have been ready! I let my guard down for one moment --!

RIVER

Doctor, stop --
THE DOCTOR

It happened again, like it always happens —

RIVER

Doctor —

THE DOCTOR

I lost them - *I lost them*, River!!

She intercepts him mid-pace and takes a firm hold of his shoulders.

RIVER

Doctor, listen – listen to me: there was nothing you could have done. No way any of us could have been prepared. Rory was gone before any of us knew it, and Amy...Amy made a choice. And it was the right one. One day you'll see that.

He stubbornly shakes his head, pushing her reasoning aside.

THE DOCTOR

No no no, there's gotta be something, some way —

He turns to the console and starts to enter coordinates.

RIVER

Doctor, no --

THE DOCTOR

There's always a way!!
RIVER

Not this time!!

She slams down a lever. The Doctor is taken aback.

RIVER (CON’T)

You are being irrational and reckless. You know the TARDIS can't go back there, it's too unstable.

(Beat)

You can’t be selfish now.

(Beat)

There were two names on that gravestone. They found each other. They grew old together. That's what matters.

Beat.

THE DOCTOR

How can you say that? How can you be okay with this?

River stares at him in disbelief.

RIVER

I am not okay. I am leaps and many, many bounds from okay, and thank you so much for noticing, but one of us has got to keep it together and right now I'm pretty sure that's not you!

The Doctor stares hard at the console, refusing to look at her.

RIVER (CON’T)

Do you need me to slap some sense into you, because, so help me, I will!
He turns a glare on her. She doesn't back down. Beat.

RIVER (Cont')

Alright. Alright!

She storms down the steps towards the front doors. The Doctor watches her with mounting concern.

THE DOCTOR

What're you doing? River? River, no! Stop!!

He rushes after her.

She tears open the doors: the Time Vortex roars outside.

The force of it throws the Doctor back against the steps and pins River to the wall.

RIVER

(shouting) Come on, scream! Scream all you want! Tell the universe how unfair it is! Go on! Well, go on!!

The cloister bell begins to sound.

Gripping the railing, the Doctor struggles to his feet.

He reaches out to River; she mirrors him, fighting the force of the Vortex.

Finally, he clutches her hand in his. Their eyes lock, and instantly they each read what the other is thinking.

Together, they push towards the doors and, with great effort, manage to close them. The cloister bell stops.

They slump back against the doors, gasping for breath.

The Doctor glances sideways at River, a bit shaken, but her point is made.

He goes to the steps and sits heavily, head in his hands. River watches him. It hurts her to see him
so broken.

RIVER
It wasn't your fault.

She crosses to the steps and sits next to him. A long beat.

THE DOCTOR
I knew. I mean, I knew it was coming. That one day they’d eventually....Because they all do. They all leave, one way or another. I was prepared...no, that's a lie – but, I was expecting it at least...sort of, in a way, but... not this.

(Beat)
Not like this.

RIVER
(gently)
I know.

Beat. The Doctor gazes sadly into the space before him, as if seeing the faces of everyone he's lost.

THE DOCTOR
Never gets any easier.

RIVER
No, I imagine not.
(Beat)
But you're not alone.

She lays her hand on his. Beat.

The Doctor turns his eyes to meet hers: For how much longer?
He forces a smile and pats her hand. Then, without a word, he jumps up and goes to the console.

River remains sitting on the steps, confused and a little hurt by his attitude. She takes a deep breath and stands, turning to him.

RIVER (CON’T)

I think I’ll go and change.

The Doctor doesn’t reply.

RIVER (CON’T)

Will you be alright for a bit?

THE DOCTOR

I'm always alright.

Her gaze lingers on him for a beat before she exits into the corridor.

She doesn’t see how longingly the Doctor’s eyes follow her as she goes out.

He throws a couple of levers and is half-heartedly tapping the scanner when he notices the mug resting against the time rotor.

She does so much for him, so much he takes for granted.

He picks up the mug and wraps his hands around it. The tea has gone cold.

He closes his eyes, inwardly chastising himself for his selfishness.

INT. TARDIS CORRIDOR – MINUTES LATER

River walks down a dim corridor. Out of the Doctor's sight, her weariness and inner turmoil are apparent.

She seems to be walking for an unusually long time without finding the room she's looking for.

The TARDIS, it seems, is twisting River's path.

Her step falters.
She places a hand on the wall to steady herself.

She tries to keep a tremor out of her voice.

RIVER

(to the TARDIS)
What are you doing?
(Beat)
Look, just stop it, okay?

She continues down the corridor, which remains relentlessly unchanging.

She walks faster.

She feels herself losing control, growing panicked.

RIVER (CON'T)

(to the TARDIS)
Stop it!

She rounds a corner and finds herself facing a dead end.

RIVER (CON'T)

(to the TARDIS)
Oh stop it, please, just stop it – stop it!

She pounds her fists on the walls.

THE DOCTOR (OS)

River...?

Beat. River remains facing the wall, her whole body tensed. Her voice is terse, defensive.

RIVER
What?

When he doesn't answer, she turns to discover the Doctor looking at her with a penetrating, mournful expression.

RIVER (CON’T)

What??

He says nothing.

RIVER (CON’T)

Don’t. Don’t you dare pity me.

THE DOCTOR

Wouldn’t dream of it.

Beat. The Doctor is stoic while River fairly trembles with frustration and grief.

Swiftly, before she can escape, he locks her in his arms, holding her tight.

At first she tenses in his embrace, refusing to give in, to admit she needs comforting.

The Doctor doesn't mind. He only wants her to know that he treasured her, that he understands how she feels.

THE DOCTOR (CON’T)

(whispers)
You're not alone, either.

River finally releases the breath she's been holding, inhaling and exhaling deeply several times.

A long beat.

Her body gradually relaxes against his. Her arms slide under his, encircling him.

In her high heels, she's nearly the same height as him. Her cheek brushes against his jaw.
He brings up one hand so that his fingertips can lightly stroke the back of her neck. She shivers slightly.

His lips find hers and offer her a tender, tentative kiss.

It's all the invitation she needs.

She returns his kiss. Her hands press against his back, fingers closing tightly on his jacket. His hands weave up into her hair, loosening the pins holding it in place.

Their kisses grow increasingly aggressive – greedy, hungry - giving and seeking mutual solace.

When her back meets the wall, he presses into her, thrusting a hand out against the wall to steady himself.

The wall isn't just a wall now, but a wall with a door. A door that slides silently open.

Grasping his shirt and lapels, River tugs the Doctor with her, and the pair disappears through the door.

It closes gently behind them.

INT. THE TARDIS - RIVER AND THE DOCTOR'S ROOM - LATER

River wakes amid rumpled, tangled sheets and bedding. She reaches out into the space beside her and discovers she's alone.

She sighs and turns onto her side.

Any disappointment she feels is soon banished by what she finds on the bedside table: a beautiful, impressive flower in a crystal vase.

The bloom is the size of a poinsettia with three times as many petals, all delicately thin and translucent as glass. It shimmers.

River props herself up on one elbow and reaches a hand out to the flower. When her fingertips touch the petals, the bloom is instantly awash in color.

She smiles, moved.

RIVER

Oh Sweetie...

The Doctor enters, fully dressed but without his jacket. He carries a tray with two mugs and a covered dish, which he bangs clumsily against the doorframe. He winces.

Cracking an eye open, he realizes River is watching him, sitting up in the bed, hair wild and
tousled, sheet tucked around her, a crooked smile curling her lips.

THE DOCTOR

Oh! Hello, Sleeping Beauty.

RIVER

Sleeping Beauty was awoken with a kiss.
(Beat)
You're a bit late.

THE DOCTOR

Oh. Right.
(Beat)
Does that mean you don't want me to kiss you?

RIVER

I didn't say that.

THE DOCTOR

Then you do want me to kiss you?

RIVER

What do you think?

He stares at her with a deer-in-the-headlights look, trying to read the right answer in her face.
She gazes back at him like a sphinx, enjoying how this is torturing him.

THE DOCTOR

Yes...? I think...yes. I'm going with yes. Is it yes?

She breaks into a smile and laughs.
RIVER

Get over here!

He quickly sets the tray down at the foot of the bed.

RIVER (CONT)

You really are the most exasperating man.

THE DOCTOR

I know. Usually works to my advantage.

He gives her a wide grin as he comes to sit down in front of her.

Beat.

RIVER

Any time...

THE DOCTOR

Oh!

He snaps to and cups her face with one hand while the other slips under her arm and draws her body close. It's a surprisingly deep and very earnest kiss.

RIVER

Well. Definitely awake now.

The Doctor blushes. The flower on the bedside table turns a warm pink.
RIVER (CON'T)

You're really very good at that.

THE DOCTOR

Well, I'm a fast learner.

RIVER

Don't I know it.

The Doctor blushes a deeper shade (so does the flower) and clears his throat.

RIVER (CON’T)

Love when your ears go all pink like that.

THE DOCTOR

You just like to torment me.

RIVER

Oh, you love it.

The Doctor huffs and smiles and strokes the backs of his fingers down her arm.

RIVER (CON’T)

You've been a busy bee.

THE DOCTOR

Yeah.

RIVER
Made a little stop, did we?

THE DOCTOR

Hm?

She indicates the flower at her bedside.

RIVER

Mobius Three?

He smiles bashfully.

RIVER (CON’T)

You remembered.

THE DOCTOR

How could I forget?

The flower flushes a deep mauve.

Beat.

River makes an airy gesture towards the tray at the foot of the bed.

RIVER

So, what have we here?

He grins, lifts the tray precariously, and sets it down between them.

THE DOCTOR

Made breakfast! Ta da!
He lifts the domed silver cover with a flourish revealing a fluffy omelet with slices of fruit decoratively arranged around it.

RIVER

My favorite!

THE DOCTOR

I know!

River takes in the savory smells, makes some pleasurable sounds, then narrows her eyes at him playfully.

RIVER

Are you trying to bribe me?

THE DOCTOR

What?! Oh, oh I see – I-I am shocked. Shocked! And – and appalled that you would imply, even suggest, that I would stoop to such – such tricksy, underhanded, devious --

(Beat)

Is it working?

RIVER

It's a beautiful omelet.

THE DOCTOR

I should think so!

He turns in place to flop down next to her. She shifts over to give him room and automatically lifts the tray for a moment to keep him from upending it. He reaches over to the plate, pulls off a piece of omelet with his fingers, and downs it, quite pleased with his work.
River watches him, amused.

He grabs a strawberry next. On the point of biting into it, he notices River looking at him.

He looks back at her quizzically. Her eyes go to the strawberry, then back to his. At last he gets her meaning and offers the strawberry to her.

She leans closer and parts her lips provocatively.

His eyes darken, and he moves the strawberry closer to her mouth.

She bites into it, then rewards him with a kiss.

The flower swirls with reds and purples.

THE DOCTOR

Yowzah...

As they enjoy breakfast together, his fingers unconsciously play along her back, tracing circles into her skin.

Suddenly, he plants a quick kiss on her bare shoulder and springs off the bed.

THE DOCTOR (CON’T)

Well, up and at ’em!

River gapes at him and gestures to all the dishes, and her lack of clothing.

RIVER

I'm going to need a moment!

He spins around in the doorway.

THE DOCTOR

Oh, you're fine. What've you gotta do – your hair? It's always like that! Let's go! Come along, Pond!
He freezes. Beat.

THE DOCTOR (CON’T)

Sorry. Habit.

Beat.

RIVER

Don’t apologize. I am a Pond, aren’t I?

Beat.

THE DOCTOR

You certainly are.

He shifts awkwardly.

THE DOCTOR (CON’T)

Take your time. No hurry.

And he’s gone. River sighs.

The flower turns a deep blue.

INT. TARDIS CONTROL ROOM – A LITTLE LATER

River enters wearing curve-hugging jeans and a dark tank top.

She hurries up the steps to the console.

At first she doesn't see the Doctor anywhere, then she spots him at the front doors. She slouches against the railing and calls to him.
RIVER

Sneaking off?

He jumps and spins around to her.

THE DOCTOR

What? No – I never – I was just --

RIVER

(coming down the steps)
Save it. Whatever you’re doing, I’m coming with you.

THE DOCTOR

(hastily)
Oh - no – you can’t.

River stops and stares at him, eyebrow raised incredulously.

THE DOCTOR (CON’T)

Sorry – it's just...this really is something I have to do alone.

Beat.

RIVER

I can help.

THE DOCTOR
He takes her face in his hands, stroking his thumbs over her cheeks.

THE DOCTOR (CON’T)

Just gimme a mo’, okay? Won't be long, I promise.

Beat. She’s disarmed by his sincerity and relents with a sigh and a nod.

RIVER

Can you at least tell me where we are?

He gestures to the scanner above the console.

THE DOCTOR

Have a look.

River studies his eyes for a moment before she turns and starts up the steps.

As she goes, the Doctor takes a deep breath, opens the door, and slips out.

EXT. A BACKYARD GARDEN ON EARTH, 1996 – EARLY MORNING

The Doctor pulls the TARDIS door closed behind him. He takes a couple of steps, then stops and smiles fondly.

THE DOCTOR

Hello, Amelia.
The 7-year-old AMELIA POND stands before him in her nightgown wearing her winter hat, coat, mittens, red wellies, and an eager smile. Her small suitcase lies on its side on the ground behind her.

INT. TARDIS CONTROL ROOM – CONTINUOUS

River turns on the scanner and sees the Doctor approaching Amelia.

Her breath catches. Her eyes tear up and she smiles, seeing her mother as a little girl. Now she understands where they are, and why.

AMELIA

(on the scanner)
I'm all packed! I'm ready!

THE DOCTOR

(on the scanner)
Yes, I see!

EXT. AMELIA POND'S GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

AMELIA

You said five minutes.

THE DOCTOR

Yes, well, about that --

AMELIA

Have you changed clothes?

THE DOCTOR
Well --

AMELIA

Is that a bow tie?

THE DOCTOR

Yeah! Cool, isn't it?

AMELIA

Uhhh...

THE DOCTOR

We'll come back to that.

AMELIA

Are we going now?

The Doctor hesitates.

AMELIA (CONT)

I can still come with you, can't I?

Beat.

THE DOCTOR

Well, you see, the thing is, Amelia...I can't take you with me. Not yet.

Beat.
AMELIA

Why not?

THE DOCTOR

It's...complicated.

AMELIA

People always say that.

The Doctor sighs.

THE DOCTOR

I know...

AMELIA

Have I done something wrong? Are you angry with me?

THE DOCTOR

(kneeling)

Oh no! No no no, nothing like that! Never think that.

It's just...not time yet.

AMELIA

When is it time?

THE DOCTOR

It's not you, you understand? It's my fault. I made a mistake, got the timing wrong...new body, new TARDIS - it doesn't matter. But - I need you to do
something for me.

AMELIA

What?

THE DOCTOR

I need you to be...very patient. Can you do that for me?

AMELIA

I think so...

THE DOCTOR

Don't give up on me, okay?

AMELIA

I won't.

THE DOCTOR

'Course you won't. Amelia Pond never gives up. And she doesn't suffer fools. 'Specially me.

He pauses, his emotions threatening to get the better of him.

Amelia lays a comforting hand on his shoulder. The Doctor gives her a tearful smile.

He motions for her to sit on her suitcase. He joins her, scooching her over to sit next to her.

THE DOCTOR (CON’T)

You and me, we're gonna have such adventures! Pirates, a whale in space...
AMELIA

No way!

THE DOCTOR

Yes way!
   (Beat)
But there are bigger adventures waiting for you. Life, Amelia, is the adventure. It's all in what you do with it. And the people you meet along the way.
   (Beat)
One day you'll be all grown up, getting married —

AMELIA

Ugh!

THE DOCTOR

What? What's that for?

AMELIA

Married! Euh!

THE DOCTOR

What's wrong with it?

AMELIA

Mushy stuff...

THE DOCTOR

Ah. Mushy's not so bad. Someday you may not mind it.

AMELIA
THE DOCTOR

'Scuse me - as it happens, I am.

AMELIA

Go on, you are not!

THE DOCTOR

Am so!

AMELIA

Really?

THE DOCTOR

Cross my hearts.

AMELIA

Have you got a wife, then?

THE DOCTOR

Yeah!

AMELIA

Where is she? Can I meet her?

THE DOCTOR

Don't worry. You will.
AMELIA

Is she like you?

THE DOCTOR

What am I like?

AMELIA

Funny. A bit weird. Bit mad, too. And brilliant!

THE DOCTOR

Yeah, she's like me. Nah – better. And prettier.

AMELIA

And do you love her very much?

THE DOCTOR

Yeah.

Beat. He’s responded without thinking, and his answer hovers in the air.

The Doctor's eyes turn to the TARDIS, where he knows River is watching. A faint smile ghosts across his face. He clears his throat.

THE DOCTOR (CON'T)

Do you know a boy called Rory?

AMELIA

(rolling her eyes)

Yeah. Aunt Sharon says I have to be nice to him. I guess we're sorta friends. He's always hanging round me an Mels.
THE DOCTOR

Mels, eh?

AMELIA

Yeah, my best friend. Her name's really Melody, but I call her Mels.

THE DOCTOR

Good name – Melody.
(Beat)
Your aunt's right, you know. You should be nice to that boy. I bet he'd do anything for you. You never know. He could be your future.

AMELIA

Rory? No way.

THE DOCTOR

Well. Never say never.

The Doctor winks. He rises and heads for the TARDIS. Amelia jumps up and follows.

AMELIA

Now can I come?

The Doctor sighs and turns back to her.

THE DOCTOR

Oh, my Amelia. Still not yet. You're gonna have to wait a bit longer than that.

AMELIA
How long?

He kneels down to her once more.

THE DOCTOR

I can't say. But however long, believe me when I say I will come back. I always come back. I promise.

On fish fingers and custard.

(Beat)

You have to believe, Amelia. You must never lose that. Patience, Pond.

He tenderly kisses the top of her head then rises and goes to the TARDIS. At the door, he stops and turns back.

THE DOCTOR (CON'T)

Oh - and tell your friend Mels: I look forward to meeting her.

He smiles and enters the TARDIS.

Amelia watches as the TARDIS dematerializes, stirring up the dead leaves till they dance around her.

Left alone, she looks wonderingly up into the early morning sky.

AMELIA

A whale in space!

INT. TARDIS CONTROL ROOM – CONTINUOUS

The Doctor pulls the door closed. He stares at the floor for a moment.

When he looks up, his eyes meet River's.
She's standing on the steps, waiting for him, eyes glistening.

Wordlessly, the Doctor goes to her.

She strokes his face and gives him a comforting smile that tells him he did well.

He hugs her, burying his face against her neck. She envelops him in her arms.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TARDIS CONTROL ROOM – LATER

River is at the console, piloting. The Doctor leans against the railing, watching, admiring her.

THE DOCTOR

Do you have to go?

She smiles sadly.

RIVER

You know what they say about absence and hearts growing fonder.

Beat.

THE DOCTOR

What if you’ve got two?

Beat.

RIVER

Double the fondness?
Beat. They smile fondly at each other.

THE DOCTOR

So...you're a free woman now.

RIVER

In a manner of speaking.

Beat. The Doctor is suddenly struck with a thought.

THE DOCTOR

Where do you live now??

RIVER

Well, you can see for yourself, if you like.

Beat. River lands the TARDIS gently, glides past the Doctor, and heads down the steps towards the front doors.

THE DOCTOR

Oh! What – now?

He grabs the scanner and stares at the image displayed there. He points at the screen.

THE DOCTOR (CON'T)

Are you – are you inviting me in? To your place - thing?
RIVER

I was....
  (shrugging)
If you want to. No pressure.

A long beat. The Doctor studies the image on the scanner.

RIVER (CON’T)

Right. Of course. Nevermi --

THE DOCTOR

Okay.

RIVER

What? Okay?

THE DOCTOR

Yes. Yes! What the hell! River Song's house. Let's do this, I'm game.

Beat.

RIVER

You sure?

THE DOCTOR

Why? I just said --

RIVER

I know you said - but I also know you and houses.
Beat. The Doctor comes down the stairs to meet her near the doors.

THE DOCTOR

I want to, River. Really.

Beat.

RIVER

Careful, Sweetie. You're in danger of being serious.

THE DOCTOR

I mean it.

RIVER

You don't have to humor me, you know.

THE DOCTOR

I'm not! I don't - you just - wait -- !

Looking very conflicted, River takes hold of a door handle with one hand and cups his face with the other.

RIVER

Go, Doctor. Just go, and do...what you do.
I'll call you.

THE DOCTOR

River - River, please - please don't, don't run --
RIVER

I'll call. Take care, my love.

She kisses his cheek and abruptly slips through the doors, which slam shut in his face.

THE DOCTOR

But - but --

He turns to the TARDIS interior and flings his arms wide in a helpless gesture.

THE DOCTOR (CON'T)

What did I say??

The TARDIS emits a series of urgent noises.
The Doctor rushes up to the console and furiously starts mashing buttons and throwing levers.

THE DOCTOR (CON'T)

Right. Fine. If that's how you want it - if that's how you're gonna be -- !

INT. RIVER'S HOUSE - WASHROOM - LATER

The sound of water - a faucet is running.

River stands at the sink in a clinging black slip and robe. Her hair is pinned up in a messy bun.

She bends over the sink and splashes cold water onto her face, hiding her face in her hands for a few moments before reaching for a towel.

She pats her face dry, and her eyes meet those of her reflection in the mirror above the sink.

She sighs and shakes her head at her reflection.

She turns off the light.
INT. RIVER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

River comes out of the washroom and suppresses a gasp of surprise when she finds the Doctor in her living room.

He’s wearing round-rimmed glasses and looking thoughtfully at the framed photos on the wall.

The TARDIS rests by the front door.

River smiles in spite of herself as she crosses her arms and leans against the doorframe.

RIVER

Breaking and entering much?

THE DOCTOR

There was no breaking, I object to “breaking” - you invited me!

(Beat)

I upgraded your security for you.

RIVER

(indulgently)

Thanks.

She comes to stand beside him. He points excitedly at different photographs of River with Amy and Rory.

THE DOCTOR

I took that one! And that one! And that!

River smiles.

RIVER

Where’d you get the glasses?
THE DOCTOR

Oh...

He pulls them off and examines them in his hand, avoiding eye contact.

THE DOCTOR (CON’T)

They were Amy's.
(Beat)
She was letting me try them on and, and then
I was holding them for her... I still had them
when...

(Beat)
They help, you know. With the eyes.

Beat.

RIVER

I like them.

THE DOCTOR

Yeah?

He slips them back on and peers over the rims at her.

THE DOCTOR (CON’T)

Don't make me look too old?

RIVER

Are you really worried about that?

THE DOCTOR
Nah.
(Beat)
You shouldn’t be either.

River looks up at him, surprised, wondering if he’s been reading her thoughts.

He keeps his eyes on the floor. He speaks very quietly.

THE DOCTOR (CON’T)
Do you really think any of that matters to me?

River smiles gratefully, fighting tears.

He takes her hand.

THE DOCTOR (CON’T)
We really have done this all backwards, haven't we?

Beat.

RIVER
Couldn’t be helped.
(Beat)
I'm not sorry.

Beat.

THE DOCTOR
Nor am I.

He kisses her hand, keeping it pressed to his lips for several beats.

Before she can say anything, he turns back to the photos on the wall and gestures to one of River with a group in outdoor gear.
THE DOCTOR (CON’T)

Who are they?

River pulls herself together.

RIVER

Oh - my team. Colleagues from the university.

THE DOCTOR

Ah. More archaeologists.

RIVER

Yes, we breed like rats.

The Doctor tuts and rolls his eyes. Beat.

THE DOCTOR

Do they know you're...well, that you're...

RIVER

An ex-con?

THE DOCTOR

No! ...Married.

RIVER

Ohh...
(Beat)
They think I'm a widow. Which is true, in
THE DOCTOR

Hm. And what do you say when they ask how your husband died?

RIVER

They wouldn’t dare.

THE DOCTOR

Hypothetically.

RIVER

The truth, I suppose. Well, a version of it.

THE DOCTOR

Which version?

RIVER

Spoilers.

The Doctor smiles, amused.

They stand for a while, hand in hand, looking and not looking at the photographs.

RIVER (CON’T)

Fancy a cuppa?

He sighs and gives her a grateful smile.
THE DOCTOR

Please.

She starts to lead him towards the kitchen. They only make it a few steps before he stops.

THE DOCTOR (CONT)

Actually, have you got any cocoa?

She gives him a warm smile and pulls him along with her.

Once in the kitchen, the Doctor starts poking into cupboards and opening drawers as River fills a kettle with water from the faucet and sets it to boil on the stove.

CHILDREN'S VOICES (VO)

Tick tock goes the clock,
And what, then, shall we play...

She gently pushes him away from the cupboards, pulls a container of powdered cocoa out of one of them, and hands it to the Doctor, pointing him towards a tall stool at the small kitchen island. He manages to get himself seated while eagerly opening the container and taking a deep, satisfied whiff.

River smiles indulgently as she opens another cupboard, pulls out two mugs, and turns to the island to set them down.

She deftly takes the container of cocoa from the Doctor before he dumps the whole thing into one mug. He's impatient and fidgety, hopping up and hovering around her as she pulls a spoon from a drawer and begins to spoon cocoa into their mugs.

CHILDREN'S VOICES (VO CONT)

Tick tock goes the clock,
Now the Ponds have gone away?

With all her moving about, River's robe slips off one of her shoulders.

The Doctor's hand instinctively moves to replace the robe on her shoulder, but first he bends down to kiss her exposed skin.
She turns a soft smile on him and in a moment he's lifted her up onto the island.

She embraces him with her legs, pulling him close as she drapes her arms over his shoulders. He holds on to her waist as he presses his forehead to hers, letting their minds mingle as they kiss, cocoa forgotten for the moment as the kettle begins to whistle.

CHILDREN'S VOICES (VO CON'T)

Tick tock goes the clock,
Their family is smaller.
Tick tock goes the clock,
For River and the Doctor.

FADE OUT.

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