Always Bad Wolf

by Hairi_Esh_Mooncake

Summary

A month after the unfinished confession of the Doctor at Bad Wolf Bay, Rose meets her end, just to find herself back at the Henrik's in 2005. What is death to her? And does he get his second chance to say it?

Season 1, 2 - done. Coming up next - AU before Season 3

Notes

I guess the philosophy of my story is the cruel fate of living through the same while knowing what's going to happen next. And things obviously can't always happen the same. This is not a flat out canon following rewrite. This is reliving with the old eyes with some of my bits thrown in between.

I play with plot a lot. Time is not linear and neither is my story. But for that... you'll have to read to understand.
Prologue

A month had passed since Rose Tyler last seen her Doctor. A month since she heard his voice call her name, and a lot longer since the time when she was able to touch him.

"Can I..." She suspected what answer she would get, but still couldn't stop herself hoping to touch him one last time.

"I'm still just an image." He told her with a sorrowful smile. Crushing the last hope.

Also, a month since her tearful confession, which she never had a chance to hear a reply to.

"And I suppose, if it's one last chance to say it...Rose Tyler-"

And today, the 22nd of January is the day she dead. After a series of nearly successful attempts on her life, in the form of: accidentally fallen brick, broken stairs, robbery in the bank, nearly drowning, it was finally it. Pete's World finally gotten rid of her.

She should have noticed it. After all, the whole month was quite 'bad' for her. Jackie would complain how bad this January was, with so much snow that she couldn't get outside at all. The news would broadcast the weather starting with words "We know how bad this January has been for all of us...", and let's not forget her "accidentally" finding a book in Pete's residence library of Anglo Saxon. Which she continued to read while trying to bury her depression and learnt many interesting things (or at least things which should have been interesting), such as the name of January in Anglo Saxon having a symbolic meaning of a wolf moon.

Bad Wolf.

She should have known, that Bad Wolf doesn't end with death, and that it was just the beginning of what is awaiting of her.

Everything was moving in a slow motion. She heard concerned voices of her family and friends calling her name, pleading her to stay awake, but by each second it was starting to get harder and harder to breathe. Her eyelids were getting heaver and she couldn't keep her eyes open anymore. Voices becoming more distant, until she couldn't hear anything whatsoever. It was all just blackness.

Nothingness.

And she thought that this was it, this was how her life was gonna end. Inside her mind she was cursing the universe for such an unfair fate, with all her might she tried to keep her mind awake at least, even if her body had succumbed to darkness long ago. And then, all of a sudden, she felt very light, like something was carrying her. She tried to open her eyes but it didn't work. So all she could do was wait and absorb the feeling she was getting.

Thud

She felt a heavy blow to her back. She could feel something hard and cold against her back. If one can laugh in one's mind then Rose did just that. She couldn't believe that she was going to stay awake while her body was being transported to morgue.

But something was wrong. Very wrong about that thought. She couldn't have been in morgue because dead bodies are laid down on the table, not standing.
Wait.

Standing? How come she was standing if she could barely breathe or feel her body moments ago? And that light. Her eyes, still closed, could feel light on them. She tried moving her eyelids and little by little they came to focus. At first she didn't see anything. Everything was kinda blurry, but after blinking a few times her vision started to become focused. What she saw in front of her made her gape, speechless.

She couldn't quite comprehend what she was feeling. Who could, when the very Living Plastic was cornering her to the wall, trying to kill her. *Once more?*

*to be continued...*
The Living Plastic was dangerously getting closer to Rose Tyler, and at any minute could have grabbed her by the collar. Of course, from years of experience by encountering various aliens, it would be no problem for her to escape them, but Rose was too shocked to move even an inch. She was literally a standing, living statue, that way letting the plastic to get near her way too close.

And just as she expected to be struck by the plastic hand, Rose felt a too familiar hand grabbing hers tightly, and when she turned around to face the source of that, was welcomed by the very first word her Doctor once told her.

"Run."

And they ran, hand in hand, the man ahead and Rose following behind. A man with the leather jacket and big ears made his way to the elevator with Rose in tow. Having reached a stop she tried to get her breathing back together. Her heart was still racing wildly in her rib cage from sheer adrenaline that was running through her veins. Calming herself down as she was taught by the Torchwood protocol, she tried to make sense of the situation. *What exactly was going on?*

Was she dreaming? Was this part of her self-induced dream? Did she have too much too drink with Mickey or... what *was* happening here?

Soon enough, her thoughts were disturbed by a plastic hand which got trapped between the still half-way closed elevator doors. The Living Plastic were still eagerly trying to get inside and squeeze the life out of them it seemed.

She guessed it suited her life. Never enough time to think for yourself. Not even in a crazy situation like this.

She couldn't help but snort at it. It was just too good to be true. Without even thinking about what she was doing, Rose grabbed the hand and pulled it off of the dummy. With the obstacle out of the way, the elevator doors finally could close shut. The hand in Rose's grip, though, didn't seem to be giving up so soon just yet. It started twisting itself around, squeezing the fingers in thin air until it finally slipped from Rose's grip and could grip firmly around Rose's throat. Soon enough it began to choke her, and her complexion turning blue.

Finally having enough of idling around in the shadows, the Doctor decided to take some action and fought the hand off of Rose. "Give me that," he exclaimed, pulling his sonic screwdriver out to deactivate it while Rose wheezed in the background.

"Living plastic, so fierce, but look, now became just another hand of a dummy." He tossed the hand to Rose, who caught it from instinct. Only then did she seem to have opened her eyes to finally see who had she came into the elevator with. Who had saved her. Once again.

Her breath caught in her throat as she stood frozen in the elevator even when it opened again on an empty floor and the Doctor stepped outside. She watched how he turned around and seeing her frozen form gained a look of mild annoyance, rolling his eyes and getting a hold of her wrist, dragged her out of it.

Rose stumbled outside from the sheer force and got struck with emotions of how utterly unbelievable the whole situation truly was.

"This can't be real..."
"Oh believe me, it's very real," rich Northern accent reached her ears. "What's with you humans trying to deny the existence of something that's looking right into your eyes?" She could hear the disapproving tone in his voice, reaching her to the depths of her core. Of how long has it been since she heard his voice. This voice. It was only something she would reminisce with a nostalgic ache while thinking of all their travels together. But now... here he was. Speaking to her.

This couldn't be real.

"No..." her voice quivered slightly as she took a deep breath in. "No, but you don't understand... this just... it can't be true, it's not-

"Mind your eyes", the Doctor cut her short while sonicing the elevator controls, jamming the whole thing altogether. Before long he hurried towards the metal doors, ready to make his exit.

"Oh, no, you don't," Rose whispered to herself as she ran to follow the Doctor.

"What're you doing here?" Was her first question. She cursed herself silently. She couldn't have thought of something better to ask, could she?

"Oh, you know, just trying to save the lives of all you stupid little apes. Good thing I have this." He waved a device at her. "The living plastic is being controlled by a relay device on the roof. So, I'm gonna go upstairs and blow up. I might well die in the process, but don't worry about me, no. You go on, go on," he was telling her was simultaneously pushing her out of the doors. "Have your lovely beans on toast, and don't tell anybody about this cause you'll get them killed."

At that moment Rose was just gaping at her surroundings as she viewed her home, London of 2005.

"Well, goodbye." She heard the voice behind her as the doors closed. She quickly turned around and was about to go after the man, when the doors opened once more, startling her; the Doctor's head peeked out the door.

"I'm the Doctor, by the way, what's your name?" he asked with a smile.

"R-Rose..." Not yet understanding what she was doing, Rose answered the question in reflex.

"Nice to meet you, Rose," he added with a huge grin. "Oh, and one more thing, do you have a habit of involving yourself with plastic things or do you only have no sense of danger?"

"Eh?" Rose found it hard to find the right words, if there were any in this situation. "No, I was just... trying to help."

"Ah." The Doctor smiled slightly at that. "Well, better be more careful next time. Now then, run for your life." The Doctor waved the control device in his hands and was gone inside the building once more.

Rose stood there, expressionless. She had just had a conversation with her Doctor. It could have been a dream, and she was still pretty sure it was. "Run for your life." All too familiar words. Run for your life...why? Dummies where inside so what wa-...

"Explosion! He's gonna blow up my job" Rose exclaimed and was already starting to run farther from the building.

Just as she crossed the street, the building exploded. People in the street went into panic; screaming and scurrying around. Rose snorted and just moments later started snickering. She
watched her work-place exploding like fireworks and just laughed hysterically like there was no tomorrow.

"I'm...un-employed again." She spoke between the laughing. Right to her side, an elderly woman was staring at her with horror in her eyes.

"No, but seriously, though. This can't be true! It's just..." Still not stopping laughing, Rose addressed the woman. "Oh, my God. This's 2005!" Clenching her stomach as it started to hurt already from all the laughing. She waved the plastic hand, still in her grip, around. "But I don't care!" She shook her head, making the elderly woman step backwards in defense. "If by going mad I can finally be together with him again, so be it."

When she finally calmed down, the street was already empty of the people and resembled the likes from the horror movies. All quiet and dirty - the leftovers from the runaway people the only reminder of them ever being there once. It seemed everyone had run away, scared. Well, it made sense; she had done so too, the first time round.

She soon felt her cell phone buzz from inside her pocket. She answered it, noticing that it was her mum.

"Mum? Of course I'm all right. No, I was not inside. Yeh, I'm coming back home." Jackie was still as protective as ever and having no idea still just how much more dangerous her daughter's life would soon get.

At Powell Estate, Jackie was on the phone for ages, talking with everyone she could talk to about how Rose was lucky to be alive and how she should get compensation. Mickey was soon in the room too, speaking all the same.

Rose remembered feeling slightly annoyed by all this behavior the previous time, but now she just grinned at them. It all felt so nostalgic. As it was, and right. In the right universe with her Doctor still in it. The Doctor!

Mickey was already offering her something stronger to drink when suddenly Rose jumped off the couch and was nearly running through the door.

"Rose! What're you doing?" Mickey shouted behind her.

"Where the bloody hell are you going?" Jackie exclaimed with a bossy voice. "You nearly died tonight and you want to go outside now? Sit back down, missy."

"That makes twice today," Rose muttered.

"What?" Jackie asked.

"Nevermind. But seriously, Mum. I'm fine." She put her hands on her mum's shoulders and looked her in the eyes. "Everything's going to be all right. Now more than ever, I promise. I'll come back soon."

Jackie was too confused by her daughter's words to react fast enough. Before long, Rose already left the flat.

Once outside, Rose started roaming the streets, aimlessly searching for the blue police box. To her utter disappointment, she had no such luck. She wandered the streets for hours, when she understood that she wouldn't find the TARDIS tonight, especially if she didn't want to be found.
When she returned home, Jackie and Mickey were at her all over again but she quickly dismissed them and went to her room. Once she was there she tried to remember all the little details of how she came to travel with the Doctor. She remembered that the Doctor was supposed to come to her flat to search for the hand tomorrow! The hand! Right. Where was it?

She returned to the living room with Mum and Mickey still in there, grabbed the plastic hand, and returned to her room.

It was silly, really, but she didn't have much to do and falling asleep obviously scared her (in case she woke up from this dream of hers in the parallel world with no Doctor), so she decided to stare at the hand. It was already 3 am when she started to feel kinda drowsy. Even though she was fiercely fighting her sleep she couldn't stay awake much longer. She fell asleep.

At 7:30 Rose was woken up by an alarm. She reached over with her hand and turned it off. Still sleepy and with blurry vision she tried to identify her surroundings. Her room looked quite odd. At Pete's estate she didn't have such a room. It almost looked like...

"Powell Estate." At once she jumped out of the bed, turned a few circles around the room as she spotted the hand. It was still here. The Doctor should come soon.

"He's coming!" Beaming at the hand like it could understand her. She quickly got dressed and left her room with the plastic hand.

While eating breakfast, Rose was shining with energy and still not letting go of the hand. She could feel Jackie's eyes on her, trying to read the suddenly changed mood of her daughter. If only she knew.

"Are you sick, sweetheart?" she asked softly with concern.

"No, mum. I told you. Everything's brilliant!" She beamed at her mum, making her all the more nervous about her daughter.

"Did loosing your job made you in such a hyper mood?" Jackie narrowed her eyes at Rose, giving her a stern motherly look.

Rose's smile momentary faded. "No!" she breathed out. "I'm just... happy! That's all. It's brand new day, yeh?" She grinned, trying a reassuring look at her mother.

"But what's with the hand?" Jackie asked with confusion and slight disgust in her voice.

"Oh, it's my safeguard," Rose answered simply and once again gained a doubtful look from her mother.

When Jackie went to her room to get dressed and dry her hair, Rose heard some flipping sound. She turned to the door. He was here!

Some more flips on the door.

She ran to the door and was about to open it when she came to the realization that she couldn't just jump onto him with a hug. That's not what happened. She was certain he would not understand. If she talked about things that had not happened then, it would seem she had admitted that she was thrown into her past with her older self's consciousness. She had to play along. She might be able to change some things, but she had to stick with the basics.

Some more flips on the door.

She took a deep breath and opened the door. And there he was. Standing tall right in front her. In
his leather jacket, cropped hair and big ears. He was standing here. Existing in the same universe as her... Rose nearly lost herself, starting to make a move to launch herself at the Doctor in a tight hug, but luckily the Doctor moved faster than her.

"What are you doing here?"

Rose blinked a few times. Right, she had to stick to the script. "I live here," Rose answered as calmly as she could.

"What do you do that for?"

Rose couldn't help herself and snorted. "'Cos I do. Not much else to do, 'cos someone blew up my job." She tried to end the sentence with all seriousness and a bit of forced blame.

The Doctor seemed like he was not paying that much attention to that, as he quickly pulled out his sonic screwdriver and looked at it in confusion.

"Must have gotten the wrong signal. You are not plastic, are you?" He knocked on her head nonchalantly. "Bye then."

But Rose was quicker. "You. Inside, right now."

Once inside, Rose was pacing around the room, thinking of what to say next. Somehow she just thought to the point of dragging the Doctor to the flat. She knew what she did before. All questioning about Henrik's and living plastic, but she had no desire for such questions now. But it was not like she could just tell the Doctor that she was his companion from the future either. Which was not entirely true either... or was it? What was the truth anyway?

At that moment, the Doctor was looking around the room.

"Rose Tyler." He read the name. Then looked at himself in the mirror and inspected himself. When the hand that was under the couch came back to life, it came at the Doctor. Rose was still deep in her thoughts, so she didn't notice the Doctor's struggles until later.

When she turned and found, the Doctor 'under' the plastic hand, she quickly dropped what she was doing and rushed to aid him. She pulled the plastic off of the Doctor's face. It suddenly turned at her, though. Soon enough, the Doctor made his way to it, but it took a while and some 'table crashing' until it finally came off. Then he took his screwdriver from his pocket and deactivated it.

"There you go. Signal stopped. Auton." The Doctor smiled at his work. "But wait a minute. Wasn't this the hand I deactivated in the elevator yesterday? How come it's alive?" Confused, the Doctor frowned. "Do you have dummies hands' collection at your house?"

"That was me." A voice from behind came and they soon found Mickey standing in the doorway watching nervously at the scene. "I saw it in the street, moving on its own and thought it was cool. So I took it. Are you alright, Rose?" Mickey came to her.

"She could not have been. You saw the moving hand in the street and just took it home. Fantastic," the Doctor said sarcastically.

Mickey whipped his head sharply at the Doctor, furrowing his brows in challenge. He took a threatening step towards him. "And who the hell are you?"

Before the Doctor could have a go at poor Mickey, Rose stepped in. "I'm all right. Don't worry, Mickey. Thank you, Doctor..." Realizing that just the Doctor was kinda strange to let it pass; she
moved her hands around to let him speak.

"Just the Doctor. And now, off I go." The Doctor soon dashed from the flat, but Rose followed close behind.

Rose tried to play along.

"Hold it on. You can't just leave like that." And she didn't want him to. Not when she somehow, against all odds, found him again!

"Yes I can. Here is me, leaving. See ya." The Doctor descended the stairs and was soon outside.

"That arm tried to kill me. Twice at that. Somehow everything comes twice at me these days..." Rose muttered the last sentence, barely audible.

"What was that?" The Doctor was once again perplexed by this human. Something about her bothered him, but he just couldn't understand what exactly it was. "But no, it did not try to kill you. It was after me. You just got in the way. The world does not revolve around you."

"So the whole world revolves around you instead?" Rose said mockingly, but fully well knowing the answer, added a bit of a tease.

"Sort of, yeh," the Doctor said with a grin.

"You're full of it." Rose laughed, walking by his side in quick steps to match his speed.

"Sort of, yeh." He grinned, not the least bit conscious.

They bickered teasingly some more, getting some details about the living plastic, just as the old times, no matter if it was the new times to the Doctor.

"Do you believe me?" he asked.

"Yeh," she said simply.

"Really?" he asked in disbelief and failing to hide a smile. Rose decided it was about time she made a move.

"So, all this plastic things... who else knows about this?" she asked softly.

"No one." The Doctor shrugged it off.

"So what, you're on your own?"

"Who else is there? I mean you lot, all you do is eat chips, watch telly, go to bed. While all the time around me is a war going on."

"If you need someone, I can help you," Rose said with all seriousness in her eyes. She knew the Doctor would be shocked by her suggestion, as it was something she did not say before. She just hoped the Doctor would take it the right way.

"You think it tried to kill you and you come after it. Very brave indeed," the Doctor said, grinning, which Rose returned. "But stupid." With a cold face again. Rose frowned.

"I know what I'm doing," Rose persisted.
"No, you don't." He dismissed her. "And frankly speaking, you are a bit crazy, you know that? For a human at least."

"What, is it so hard to believe that a human can love the adventure?" Rose said with a teasing grin, tongue between her teeth.

The Doctor seemed to be taken by surprise. He lost his words for a while. "Okay then, Rose Tyler. If you say so, meet me near that shop of yours at 7 pm and we can go do a bit of inspection." As he said that, he was soon out of sight.

Rose couldn't believe her ears. It worked! She will soon go on adventure with her Doctor. A wide grin appeared on her face. She turned around and skipped towards her flat to get ready. She couldn't wait.

At 7 pm, Rose Tyler was already waiting for the Doctor when the TARDIS materialized right in front of her. She was a bit shocked, as she didn't expect him to be so bold.

"Right, here you are. Off we go then. Ready?" The Doctor smiled at her with a fake-smile-you-could-see-through. It was obvious he was trying to scare her off with the TARDIS, but that wouldn't work on Rose. She was determined to make her choices right this time.

The Doctor seemed to have found himself speechless once more when he didn't get the reaction he was expecting, such as screaming or backing away. Rose just grinned a wide smile at him instead.

"Off we go, then," Rose said simply.

"You are taking this awfully well," the Doctor said to her with a growing suspicion in his voice.

"Oh, you know. Too much Star Trek and you believe all the things." Rose grinned. "Besides, you told me how impressive you were," she continued, poking at his chest. "So it is just right that I was expecting something extraordinary from you."

The Doctor just shook his head. "Rose Tyler, I'm gonna work on figuring you out soon enough. But for now, we've some important things to do." He grinned and grabbed Rose's hand in his. With that they ran in search of an adventure.

When a dummy disguised as a random person in the diner came to life, they let themselves out through the back door. As they ran back to the TARDIS, the Doctor soon inside and Rose not falling behind, they both stopped for a moment.

The familiar buzz welcomed her senses and she couldn't believe how she managed to survive without her for so long. She took a deep breath in, calming her heart while keeping her joy out of her face as much as she could. Her eyes fell on the expectant blue orbs, waiting for her reaction. Brushing all other thoughts aside, Rose took matters in hand.

"It is bigger on the inside," Rose stated, biting her lower lip to prevent the snort. She knew just how much he loved when people noticed that.

"Yes," he just said simply.

"It's alien, then. Are you alien?" she asked.

"Yes. Is that alright?" the Doctor asked with a bit of concern in his voice.
"Yeh," she answered without hesitation.

"It's called the TARDIS. This thing. T.A.R.D.I.S. Time and Relative Dimension in Space." A slight pause. "Okay then, no more wasting time, let's go outside." The Doctor was making his way through the door.

"We have moved," Rose stated, once outside. "Does it fly?" she asked mockingly, fully well knowing the answer.

"Disappears there and reappears there. You wouldn't understand." The Doctor was pacing outside frantically, looking for the signal of the alien.

"Try me," Rose told him in all seriousness.

The Doctor just looked at her like she was some kind of alien and was about to say something, but decided to drop the subject. "Next time."

Rose beamed. Next time. She couldn't help but smile at that.

"What's the police call box?" Rose decided she had to keep asking to not sound too obvious.

"It's a telephone box. From 1950s. A disguise," he answered with a grin.

"That's a really good disguise." She beamed at the wooden box, caressing it a little. "I love it."

The Doctor looked at her with a furrowed brow. "I mean," Rose was quick to correct herself, after catching herself on her suspicious behavior. "It's lovely. The retro style and all." She grinned with tongue between her teeth smile, her eyes twinkling.

"Exactly!" the Doctor exclaimed, proud of himself. Rose chuckled silently at him, then stopped, taking a breath in.

"So, this plastic thing. What're you gonna do about it?"

"Ah," he remembered. He put his one hand inside his pocket and took the blue liquid out. "Anti-plastic." He showed it to her in all proud manner.

"Riiight, anti-plastic." Rose nodded, suppressing the smile.

"Anti-plastic!" the Doctor exclaimed again. "But first I've got to find it. How can you hide something that big in a city this small?" He began pacing about, concentration showing on his face.

Rose bit her lower lip. "Hide what?" she asked innocently.

"The transmitter," the Doctor said like it was obvious. "The Conscience is controlling every single piece of plastic so it needs a transmitter to boost the signal."

"Yeh? And what's it look like?"

"Like a transmitter. Round and massive, slap bang in the middle of London." His pace became more agitated, looking around for a clue.

"A huge circular metal structure... like a dish..." He kept going on, gesturing with his hands, not really paying much attention to Rose, just for the sake of thinking.

"...like a wheel. Close to where we're standing. Must be COMPLETELY invisible." And there he
stood, his back to the railing of the bridge, facing Rose, right behind him, the London Eye looming 450 foot above them. The Doctor, oblivious to the fact, didn't seem to register it at all, just kept on frowning in concern.

Rose raised an eyebrow, giving him a hint to look behind.

"What?" the Doctor asked, not getting it.

She tried again, by nodding towards the Eye. This time the Doctor turned around, but when saw nothing, switched back to her, completely nonplussed.

"What?" he asked again.

Rose shook her head, rolling he eyes. It never changes. It just never does. Looking at the Eye still, she gestured with her head once more. The Doctor turned around again, but still failed to make the connection.

"What is it? What?" he kept asking.

Rose gave him a non impressed stare. Shifting a bit uncomfortably under her gaze, the Doctor risked to turn once again and FINALLY, it clicked.

"Oh... fantastic!" He gave her one of his toothy grins and ran off with Rose's hand in his.

Once they found the consciousness (with Rose's help, of course), Rose was surprised how things seemed to play out all the same as the last time even if she tried to change some things. Even Mickey was found there all the same, being swallowed by the trash bin when he was outside looking for Rose.

And now here they stood. Mickey staggering from the TARDIS with Rose helping him while the Doctor stood between the TARDIS door.

"Nestene Consciousness. Easy," the Doctor exclaimed and clicked his fingers.

"You were useless in there. You would be dead if not for me," Rose teased.

"Yes, I would," the Doctor agreed with a smile. "Thank you," he sighed. "Right then. I'll be off. Unless, I don't know." He shrugged. "You could come with me. This box isn't just a box you know, it goes all around the universe. Free off charge." He beamed and Rose smiled right back at him.

Mickey put his nose into the conversation. "H-he is an alien. He is a thing." Pointing at him.

"He is not invited," the Doctor added. "What do you think?"

Mickey clung to Rose like his life depended on it.

"Yeh. I...um, can't. I got to find my mum, and someone's gotta look after this lump. So..." Rose was careful to use the same words as the last time as she was hoping for the same reaction. She just couldn't suppress the temptation to make the Doctor ask her twice.

"Okay. See you around."

For a lingering moment, the Doctor kept his eyes locked with Rose's, who were sparking with hope and wonder, but in the end, he turned his head away, disappearing inside the depths of the TARDIS.
The sounds of the universe echoed in the dark alley of Powell Estates, leaving the wind behind as the ship dematerialized. Rose waited for a bit, but then nothing happened. It was like the box was never even there, like the Doctor was never there.

A howling of the dog echoed somewhere in the distance and that was all of the sounds she could hear. She swallowed. Did she do something wrong? Was she too...forward, or not...helpful enough or...he wouldn't just leave her like that! Not after all that. Well...he didn't know her, yet, not really.

She turned around, just to find Mickey already going off. She turned back to the street. Shaking her head. "But you can't..." Her voice breaking mid-sentence.

"Rose? You coming?" Mickey's voice calling her.

She lingered in the place some more and started to walk backwards. And that's when it happened. In the midst of darkness and the silent life of the night in the Estates, the sound of the universe reached their ears once more. As the blue police box materialized, the Doctor popped his head out.

"By the way. Did I mention? It also travels in time," he finished, leaning on the TARDIS doors, leaving them open.

It was all the invitation she needed.

Rose beamed at him with a smile full of delight. Laughing in relief. She turned to Mickey with beautiful smile lighting her whole face.

"Thank you." She kissed his cheek.

"For what?" Mickey asked, puzzled.

She laughed. "Exactly." And ran with all her might, grinning, inside the TARDIS.

The Doctor in the TARDIS with Rose Tyler, just as it should be. Their story just resumed.

_to be continued..._
"Right then, Rose Tyler - you tell me, where do you want to go? Backwards or forwards in time. What's it going to be?" The Doctor was asking Rose while playing around with a part of TARDIS in his hands.

"Forwards. Definitely forwards." She grinned.

"How far?" Rose was sure that the Doctor was expecting something big as her answer, but she just couldn't help wanting to tease him a bit more.

"One hundred years," she just stated with all seriousness.

As she expected, the Doctor was a bit surprised by that. Disappointed? Maybe a slightly bit. "Only one hundred?" He raised an eyebrow. "Alright, you should get that." He hit a few buttons and switches, and the TARDIS began pulsating and echoing, the sound of the universe ringing throughout the console room. And soon, with a bump, they landed.

"Step outside. It's the 22nd century," he said.

"You are kidding," Rose said, smirking.

The Doctor frowned at her. "You surely don't believe that I can't do better than that, do you?"

Desperation to show what he was capable of was clearly visible in his voice.

"You think you are so impressive." Rose told him teasingly.

"I am so impressive," the Doctor sounded like a lost puppy.

"You wish." Rose shook her head with a grin.

"Oh, you have asked for it." He pointed a finger at her. "I just know the right place for you." He gave her a manic grin. And soon enough, he was all over the switches; pressing and pumping everything he could see. Or it looked like that from aside. And with a ding on the bell, they had landed.

"What's out there?"

Rose could barely hold her legs in place so not to run outside. She knew exactly where they were. But luckily the Doctor just pointed to the door for her to look for herself. And she didn't waste any time. She ran outside the door, and soon found herself 5 billion years into the future.

As she looked around the familiar surroundings, despite the obvious joy, she knew she had work to do. Maybe she couldn't do much about living plastic, but Cassandra had caused too many casualties here. She had to stop it. She slowly moved to the glass window where she saw her planet - Earth, so close to death once more. Shortly after, she felt the Doctor stand by her.

"You lot," the Doctor said softly. "You spend all your time thinking about dying. Like you're going to get killed by eggs or beef, or global warming, or asteroids. But you never take the time to imagine the impossible. Maybe you survive." The Doctor paused a bit. "This is the year 5.5/apple/26. Five billion years in your future. And this is the day… hold on…" He looked at his watch and Rose smiled. "This is the day the sun expands. Welcome to the end of the world."
The Doctor looked at her, but what he saw in her expression was only a half-sad smile and understanding.

An announcement about guests rang over the intercom.

The Doctor was about to say something with his mouth already half open, when Rose interrupted him.

"So when they say...guests. Does it mean people?" Rose asked him carefully.

"Depends what you mean by people. Aliens on board," he announced all happy.

"So, they go, have fun, while the world explodes?" She raised an eyebrow.

"Pretty much, yeh," he agreed like it was the normal thing. Which, as he did not know, was way too normal for Rose too.

"Let's go explore then!" Rose beamed at him while starting to skip around. When she noticed that the Doctor was not following her, and only looking at her with an intense stare, she started to get nervous.

"Doctor? What is it? What's wrong?" she asked slowly.

He darkened his gaze a bit. "I'm just thinking, if I did not take a mental person with me." Still staring at her. Rose was about to say something, but the Doctor was faster.

"Oh, well. Let's us go. Come on," he urged her and gone ahead.

Mental person. "Great, first impression of me is perfect," she cursed under her breath.

As they went further into the room, Rose spun around while grinning and absorbing the feeling of 'home'. She finally felt like she was home and so alive, that she just wanted to share her joy. And although, she knew that this regeneration of the Doctor still had too much darkness from the Time War, she just wanted to make him better. Even if it was only by taking little steps. She came to a stop from spinning around, and was walking backwards while facing the Doctor, when she crashed into someone.

"Look out," the Doctor warning her at the same time.

She spun around to face the source and found the blue Steward glancing at her in confusion.

"Oh, please excuse me. I was too absorbed in my...admiring of the place." Rose waved her hand around. Steward seemed not to buy it. She sighed. Why sweet talk only works for the Doctor?

"Who the hell are you?" The Steward glanced at them frantically. "How did you get in here?"

"Oh, we are the guests." The Doctor made his way to the Steward. "The Doctor plus one. I'm the Doctor, see." He showed his psychic paper. "And this is Rose Tyler. She's my plus one." Pointing at Rose. He leaned near her ear and introduced the psychic paper's abilities to her.

"As he says," Rose agreed with a nodding smile. The Doctor glanced at her again like facing an alien. Which she was, considering that humans ARE aliens to him, but she was more alien to human race than to him. Or so he thought at that moment.

She just talked to an alien in such a long time. And it was brilliant! But then she remembered that she talked with the alien in English, which should be odd for a human her.
"He speaks English," she said in a fake unbelief.

"No, you just hear like that. It's the TARDIS. It gets inside your head and translates all the alien languages."

"So, she is telepathic?" Rose said and at once cursed herself that she let herself slip by regarding TARDIS as a she.

The Doctor seemed to notice that too. "How did you know the TARDIS is a she?" he asked her in suspicion. "And she is sentient."

Rose struggled to find the right words. "Well..." She started slowly. "The TARDIS is a time machine. And machine is feminine. So, I just thought..." She shrugged, trying to sound nonchalant.

The Doctor paused for a moment, trying to analyse her, but then it seemed like her answer was good enough for him and he didn't ask further.

The guests were then introduced. When the Trees came, Rose made a note to save Jabe from her fate no matter what. Rose was glad to see the Face of Boe again. She wondered whether she could have a chat with him some time. And then came the last human. Rose's face twisted at once.

Rose couldn't help feeling angry at the things she did. Part of her felt pity to her, and she didn't like it, because at today's events she did, or will do, nothing to be pitied about.

The Doctor seemed to take notice of her reaction.

"How does it look?" he asked her lightly. "The last human. Don't you look similar?" The Doctor snickered at her.

Rose gave him a look. "She's just skin," she stated with an empty face and hollow voice. Which made Doctor wonder why the sudden seriousness.

"Oh, no need to hate your race just so soon. What did she do to you?"

Rose glanced at the Doctor and just sighed. Not like she could explain any of it to him. Which made the Doctor all the more puzzled. He was getting quite way too much confused about this one particular human and in a relatively short time, which troubled him. There was just something...off about her. Not that she was a potential threat by any means, no. But it was like she said less than she knew.

As the Tree woman named Jabe approached the Doctor and Rose, they exchanged greetings. The air of my lungs considered being intimate gesture, of course, made Rose grimace. She blamed herself for not remembering this detail to put it the other way. But now it was too late for that.

"Okay then. I'll be off to make some...acquaintances with faces...or black furry species..." Rose tried deliberately to sound dumb. The Doctor just smiled at that.

"Look, I know you are all, madcap-y and all, but try to not to start a fight." The Doctor beamed at her.

"Madcap-y." Rose looked at the Doctor in bewilderment.

"That's right. Your nickname," the Doctor exclaimed like it had been the obvious.

"Since when do I have a nickname?" Rose narrowed her eyes in question.
"Since I gave you one." The Doctor grinned at her all happily.
Rose just shook her head. Somehow she was making more changes than she thought she would.
And in such a short time too! She wasn't sure, whether to feel happy or nervous.

What made her unable to do anything the last time, was the fact that Cassandra held her captive.
Obviously, Rose had pissed her off with her remarks about her "skin image". Good thing Rose
knew that now. So, she noted that it would be best to avoid Cassandra.

As she was about to make her way to the Face of Boe, some other guests approached him and Rose
was left standing. Then a voice came behind her.

"Good fellah. Face of Boe is," the Doctor started the conversation with her. "And wise too. They
say his age is of millions. Nobody knows exactly, though." He talked as they slowly exited the
room and were heading to where they once parked the TARDIS.

"Yeh." Rose just made a longing smile while facing in Face's direction.

"Do you know the Face of Boe?" the Doctor asked her, knowing full well, that it was impossible,
but her reactions were far from normal.

Rose was taken by a surprise when he asked her that. She knew that she was acting oddly and she
had to pull herself together, or she would fail them all. She feared the Doctor would throw her out,
either because she was suspicious or just too mad.

"'Course not. How could a mere human like me know such a divine creature?" Rose tried to defend
herself.

"I thought as much," the Doctor agreed. "But you are way too weird, you know that, Madcap-y?"
He put his eyebrows together while sneering at her.

"Shut it, you." She hit his arm playfully. The Doctor rubbed his arm while making an ow sound.
After they entered the room he continued.

"So what do you think?" he asked her expectedly. He patted the spot next to him, gesturing her to
sit.

"Great!" She beamed at him and soon realised that a bit too much, when it made the Doctor jump
slightly. "They are just...so alien," she said, a bit calmer now. "In a good way. You go all over the
world to meet different people, different races and never think that maybe there's just a lot more
out there. That you can meet different species too." They both laughed a bit at that. She tried to
approach the next subject carefully.

"Where're you from, by the way?" she asked softly.

The Doctor's smile seemed to fade and Rose felt a lump in her throat. The last thing she wanted to
do was make him uncomfortable, but she knew that it was the only way to make him talk and to
learn that she was there for him.

"From all over the place." He tried to dismiss it.

"Okay, but from what planet are you from?" She locked her gaze to his for a while, but he soon
looked away.
"Not like you would know it," he said more sadly than bitter now. And for that, Rose was very glad. She was way too much aggressive the first time, as she was scared and so far away from home, but now she knew a whole lot more.

"Can't I at least get a name?" she asked hopefully. "I mean, you come to my planet, then bring me to the day of its explosion, and you don't even tell me your own planet's name? That's a bit unfair." She knew that it sounded awful, but not like she could say I know about Gallifrey.

He stood up at those words and came to the window. There was a huge silence and Rose understood that he would not break it first, so she joined him to stand near the window.

"Alright. As my mate Shareen says - no arguing with the designated driver." She could hear him chuckle as she pulled her phone out of her pocket, trying to make it look like a search for a signal. "Besides...not like I could call for a taxi. There's no signal here. We're out of range!" she exclaimed. "Just a bit..." And soon the Doctor took her phone from her.

"Tell you what. A little bit of jiggery-pokery..." The Doctor was already pulling insides out of the phone.

"Is that a technical term, jiggery-pokery?" she asked him teasingly.

"Yeh, I came first in the jiggery-pokery," he told her affectionately. "What about you?" He tried to sound nonchalant.

"Nah, I took hullabaloo." She couldn't help but laugh at that.

"Ah." And with that he put her phone together and handed it to her. "There you go." He looked at her to try it out.

She was very thankful for that the other time. And she nearly jumped at him, but suppressed it, as she couldn't have known what to thank for just yet. Rose pressed the button to call her mum and had a short conversation where she tried to hint her mother that she may be late home, late as in a month or so from now and not as in later today. Sure enough, it made the Doctor make a questioning look at her once more, but she didn't care. She had to make her mother's worry at least a bit less this time.

"That was billion years ago..." she said with a distant voice after the call. "I don't know what you did, but thanks." She smiled fondly at him. He smiled back at her, making a short, but not awkward pause.

"Gallifrey," he said. Rose nearly jumped at that.

"What?" She looked at him, puzzled.

"My home planet." He looked at her. "I'm a Time Lord."

"So you control time and go about it?" Rose tried to form a stupid human question.

"Not controlling it, looking after it. So that it would not get messed up. And we can't just go anywhere we want. There are timeliness to be preserved and you cannot cross your own. That being said, you can't come back here tomorrow at this exact moment because you would cross paths with yourself and that would create a paradox." He pointed a finger at her.

"Alright, I get it." She nodded.
"Good." Was all he said, when the room shook. "That's not supposed to happen." He grinned with excitement.

"Is there any trouble in time we got to fix?" Rose asked him innocently.

"Let's find out." He grinned at her and grabbed her hand. They ran back to the main room.

After a few hints of Bad Wolf here and there, like the Moxx of Balhoon talking to the Face of Boe about it, they stopped to talk with Jabe about the situation.

"Where's the engine room?" the Doctor asked.

"I don't know... but the maintenance duct is just behind our guest's suite, I could show you and... your wife?" She gestured to Rose.

"Oh, she's not my wife." The Doctor ended with a half smile.

"Partner?"

"No."

"Concubine?"

"Nope."

"Bride of the Wolf?"

"N-" The Doctor began to say, when Rose got in between.

"A what?" she asked in disbelief. That was not mentioned the previous time.

"Bride of the Wolf. Some species call their trusted one's mates like that. I just assumed since I don't know your species all that well..." She pointed to Rose, who just blinked at her repeatedly.

"Oh, she's human," the Doctor answered her simply.

"I wouldn't fully agree..." She began to say, but Rose decided to hear no more.

"So then, should we head off?" she asked suggestively, pointing at the doors. The Doctor seemed to want to ask something, but decided to drop it.

Once back from their little inspection, they confirmed that the little pets, as the Doctor called them, indeed, were sabotaging with the engines, and that they were all over the platform. Cassandra still tried to put the blame to the Face of Boe, but the Doctor heard no more.

"Here's an easy way of finding out. Someone brought a little pet on board. Let's send it back to master." He put it on the ground and it soon stopped at Adherents of the Repeated Meme. Cassandra was already sighing in relief, when Rose, not having enough patience, stormed to them and pulled one's arm off as they crumbled to the floor.

"You got something against hands, don't you?" the Doctor exclaimed to her in amusement and confusion. Rose only shrugged her shoulders. "But that's right. Those there only an idea. The real mastermind is someone else." He gave a light nudge with his foot "Go on, Jimbo. Go home." And it soon found his way to Cassandra.
"At arms!" the last human shouted.

"What are you going to do? Moisturize me?" the Doctor asked her with a mocking voice, his hands on his chest.

"With acid," Cassandra threatened, but soon fled the scene with her teleporter, announcing how her "pets" have destroyed the safety systems just before that.

When the three of them came back to the engine room, Rose went deep in her thoughts about the conversation she heard her Doctor and Jabe have while they were here the previous time.

"What about your ancestors, Doctor?" Jabe asked him delicately. "Perhaps you could tell a story or two... Perhaps a man only enjoys trouble, when there is nothing else left. I scanned you out there. A metal machine had trouble identifying your species. And when it did, I couldn't believe it." She shook her head. "I know, where you are from," she said softly. "I just want to say...how sorry I am." As she put her hand on his arm.

It broke Rose's heart to see her Doctor like that. But she remained silent, looking from behind, suppressing the urge to bury him into her comforting arms. "It should have been her, not Jabe", she thought. But she knew that she was way too far behind to act upon her feelings. So, she just closed her eyes and remained quiet the whole road ahead.

"Rose?" The Doctor's voice shook her from her thoughts.

"Yeh? Sorry. What was it?" She sounded still a bit dazed.

"You alright?" He sounded concerned. "If you feel unwell you can wait in the main room, I can handle this here."

What was she doing? She was losing her only chance to help by having her silly thoughts. Even feeling what she felt, she knew other priorities came first now. She couldn't lose herself.

"No, I'm fine, really," she answered firmly. "I'm ready to help." She gave him a reassuring smile, which relaxed the Doctor a bit. "Besides, it's a bit hot in here." She picked on her clothes to make some wind. "You shouldn't be here, Jabe. I'll take over. You go." She looked at Jabe with deep concern in her eyes.

"No, how could I leave you two here..." Jabe protested.

"Rose's right, Jabe." The Doctor's voice was serious. "Rose, put that lever down while I walk to the other side." He pointed to her. "And you." He was looking at Jabe softly. "Go back to the main room and help to make things go under control there. We need you there." His gaze was too intense for Jabe to protest any more.

When the Doctor stood ready to go further and Rose near the lever, Jabe came to her to whisper. "Be careful. Even if you are not exactly human, there is still too much heat for your skin here."

Rose was lost for a moment. The Tree woman kept talking about her not being fully human and that bothered her a lot, but she also came to a realisation that, indeed, her body won't be able to hold down that much of heat either. However, she was too determined to back down now. She would never back down when her Doctor was included.

With Jabe leaving the room, Rose pulled the lever down and quickly experienced just how not alright she was going to be in the upcoming minutes. The Doctor was halfway through,
when the heat started to make its way around Rose and the metal lever was getting extra hot. She tried to hold her breath in, but failed. She let a sound of pain escape as she winced.

As the Doctor heard that, he quickly turned around to face Rose, but by that time she had already had a stone mask on her face, not showing any pain on her face, only gripping the lever even harder as she felt it slipping from her grip.

"Go on!" she shouted at him. "Don't waste time, Time Lord." She grinned at him and that was enough for him to get back to work.

Rose could feel her flesh burn and it nearly made her gag at the smell and she began to worry if she would survive this. No. She had to survive. There was no ifs here. She came too long of a way to fail here. It was only the beginning. As her consciousness began to leave her, neither of them saw, that just for a moment she was surrounded by a golden light.

"Raise shields!" She heard the Doctor shout.

When Rose opened her eyes, she saw herself still at the lever. As she withdrew her hands from it she shook her head in surprise. Her palms were barely burnt! She looked at the lever and saw blood stains covering it, even though her palms were quite clean. Once she heard steps approaching, she quickly placed herself in front of the lever to hide it from the view.

"Everything alright?" the Doctor asked.

"Yeh." Rose nodded nervously. "Just a graze."

At that the Doctor took her hands to check them out. He frowned. "We'll fix them up, once we are in the TARDIS." He gently put his hands around her shoulders to lead her out of the room.

Back in the main room the Doctor was furious. "I'm bristling with ideas." He sounded more angry than excited. "Idea number one - teleportation through 5,000 degrees needs some kind of feed. Idea number two - this feed must be nearby." He made his way to the ostrich egg and smashed it hard.

"Idea number three - if you're as clever as me, then a teleportation feed can be reversed." He spun the button on the teleportation feed device and Cassandra soon appeared. Everyone started arguing.

"Someone had died Cassandra. You murdered him… Tried to murder all these people here," the Doctor accused.

"That depends on your definition of 'people'," she said smartly. "And that's enough of a technicality to keep your lawyers dizzy for centuries. Take me to court then, Doctor! And watch me smile, and cry, and flutter-"

"And creak?" the Doctor said in an uncaring voice.

"And what?" she said in confusion.

"You are creaking," the Doctor announced like it was the obvious.

Rose knew what was coming and it was hard to watch. As Cassandra was creaking more and more she couldn't watch it anymore.

"Help her," she whispered to him.
"Everything has its time and everything dies," he said harshly.

Rose was taken aback by that. She couldn't believe that she couldn't change his mind at all on this. And if Cassandra survived she could have been brought to court, then maybe the meeting with her on the New Earth would not have taken place.

As Rose watched the end of the Earth outside the glass window, she didn't notice how small tears fell down her cheeks. "The end of the Earth," she said sadly. This was the year 5 billion, so far away from her own time of 2005. She understood that the power of the Sun was not something she could mess around with, so she didn't cry for that. She grieved for everyone out there, back in 2005, who weren't aware in the least that they soon would experience something so similar to the end - The battle of the Canary Wharf.

The Doctor gently pulled her in for a comforting embrace, which made Rose jump a bit, but soon she was crying hard. She hugged him tightly while sobbing and never wanted to let go.

When they landed on the Earth of 2005, Rose found it hard to control her insides scream. She wanted to yell so everyone would hear. To warn people, to tell them to hide, to not believe in ghosts. And it tore her insides apart. She didn't dare to look at the Doctor. If he saw her face now, so full of horror and pain, she would not be able to go without explanation. She felt how her body shook.

Once her body relaxed, she sniffed the air around. "Chips. Do I smell chips?" She turned to face the Doctor after a long while.

"Yeh." The Doctor sniffed himself. "Yeh! Let's us take a bite?" He grinned at her.

"Absolutely," she said with a wide smile. "And I guess it is on me. Doubt you got any money on you." She looked sceptically at him.

"Yep, no money." He smiled all happy. After a pause his expression became serious. "My planet is gone. It burnt just like the Earth." He locked gaze with her.

"What happened?" she asked softly.

"There was a war. And we lost." He looked away. "I'm a Time Lord. But not just any. I'm the last of the Time Lords. They are all gone." He faced her with a face full of sorrow.

Rose shook her head. "You are not alone," she told him tenderly. "There is me. And always will be. I'm not going to leave you." Her eyes burning intensely.

The Doctor was speechless. After such a long time, for a moment he understood the weight of those words. And for a minute he felt that he was not alone.

_to be continued..._
"Hold that one down!" the Doctor shouted through the alarms in the console room.

"I'm holding this one down!" Rose shot back.

"Well, hold them both down!" he instructed her, sounding like that was the obvious.

*She hated his guts sometimes.*

"I promised you a Time Machine, and that's what you are getting." The Doctor had his voice raised, talking over the alarm sound. "Now, you've seen the future. Let's have a look at the past. 1860. How does 1860 sound?"

"Good enough." She grinned at him.

With a big bump, they landed, throwing the TARDIS passengers on the floor rolling and giggling. *Oh, she so missed this!*

"Blimey!" Rose cried in between laughs.

"Tell me, mate, are you alright?" the Doctor asked while offering his hand for Rose to stand up.

"Yeh, sure I am. Nothing broken," Rose teased. The Doctor was already focusing on the screen at that moment.

"I did it!" he exclaimed out of sheer joy. "Give the man a medal. Earth - Naples - December 24th, 1860."

Rose gave him a sceptical look. "Are you sure you didn't make a few wrong turns?" she teased.

"What do you mean?" He looked hurt. "I'm a good driver!" he cried. "Let me show you, it's Christmas time." He grinned, gesturing to the doors.

"Christmas!" she repeated with enthusiasm. And was about to rush through the door when she came to a stop. She turned to the Doctor, finding his mouth half open.

He was about to say something, but Rose was first. "Right. Wardrobe." She made a few steps through the console. "And where was it again?" she asked innocently.

"How do you know we have a wardrobe?" the Doctor asked in bewilderment.

"Well, I doubt you are going around the nineteen century with sweat pants..." Rose looked at the Doctor with head down, just eyes fixing on him. "Although, you may do that," she added sarcastically. "But in this era, women wear dresses, how can I go like this?" She pointed at her clothes meaningfully.

"That makes sense," he agreed proudly. "Very good. I was just about to direct you. It's your first left, second right, third on the left, go straight ahead, under the stairs, past the bins, it's the fifth door on your left. Just hurry up!" He urged her, grinning.

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A nostalgic feeling overwhelmed her once she found herself in the massive room. She took a few steps round the railing, remembering it all. A familiar trenched coat, caught her attention. She ran a
hand through it affectionately with a small smile on her face. Rose bit her lip as tears gathered up inside her eyes, but after a few blinks and a relieving sigh - they disappeared.

She looked through the clothes and found out, that the TARDIS picked the same dress for her like the last time. "I guess, this will do" again.

When the Doctor heard footsteps across the grating, he looked up. "Blimey," he gasped in astonishment.

"Don't laugh!" Rose joked, pointing a finger at him.

"You look beautiful." He checked her out from head to toe.

"Considering I'm human..." She rolled her eyes.

"Ho-" the Doctor began to say, but was interrupted. "Nevermind, lead the way," She beamed at him.

The Doctor offered his arm for Rose and they both went through the TARDIS door. Once outside, Rose's excitement only doubled. She broke free from the Doctor's arm and skipped through the snow. She played there for a while while the Doctor leaned on the doors, thinking.

He always knew that there was something different about her. When he was standing helpless near the edge of the pit towards the Nestene and looked into her eyes, he saw something connect between them. Before she even stood up, he knew what she was going to do.

She was going to stand up for her life and safe his in the process.

The Doctor met many people over his travels, but in Rose he saw something different... She had that spark of adventure in her, just like him. And she proved to be clever so far... That's why he had to come back to ask her again. He never looked back when they refused him. He would make sure it was what they wanted and leave them live out their lives. But when she refused, he felt that she was doing that out of her responsibility and good heart as she had, but in truth she could do so much more.

And he just knew that her place was to come with him.

As he watched her play and make snow balls, he couldn't help but think how beautiful it was. The Doctor was too deep in his thoughts so he didn't notice when a ball flew right into his face.

**POOF**

*Laughing*...

Laughing. Who was laughing? He couldn't see from the snow. The Doctor rubbed the snow off of his face and found Rose hysterically laughing at him.

"Your face!" she cried, clenching her stomach.

"Oi! You are asking for it!" he threatened her with a grin. As he bent down to pick some snow. Rose was already running away from him.

After a while of running and chasing, they found themselves panting as they walked in the streets. The Doctor spotted an elderly man with newspaper and quickly grabbed for it. His face soon fell, as he read what it said.
"I got flight a bit wrong. It's not 1860, it's 1869." He grimaced at that.

"I knew you would," she said playfully, chuckling.

"How would you know?" he asked her in disbelief.

"But don't worry. I don't care!" She beamed at him.

"And it's Cardiff," he announced, looking at her for a reaction. She was silent for a moment. But not for long. Seconds later, her mouth twitched. And she burst out laughing.

"Brilliant," she exclaimed. He narrowed his eyebrows in total confusion.

"How is that brilliant?" He tried to reason.

"But you know," Rose said softly. "Whenever we go, we are still together in this, right?" She smiled with tongue between her teeth.

"Yeh," he agreed, looking Rose in the eyes. It seemed as if he was about to say something else, when a scream from the inside of the theatre shook them. "That's more like it." He grinned manically and threw the newspaper over his shoulder, running to the source of the distress call.

Once they made their way through the running crowd, they saw the blue gas flying all over the place, making a screaming sound.

"Fantastic," the Doctor exhaled.

As the Gelth made its way inside the dead elderly woman, the Doctor tried to approach Charles about the situation. From the corner of her eye, Rose saw how Mr. Sneed and Gwyneth were already picking the body up and carrying it out the doors.

"Oi! Leave her alone!" she yelled at them. "Doctor, I'll get them." She gave a quick glance at the Doctor before following the pair.

"Be careful!" She could hear the Doctor's voice just before she left the room.

Once outside, Rose ran towards Gwyneth. "You can't do this." She looked worriedly at her.

"Oh, it's a tragedy miss. Don't worry, Mr. Sneed and myself will deal with it," she spoke lightly as Rose was looking at the body being carried inside the carriage by Mr. Sneed.

"Look. I'm not here to hurt you or give you away to the authorities. I'm only trying to help. I'm here with the man, the Doctor, and we can help." Rose was looking at Gwyneth's eyes with full sincerity. But soon enough, she felt two hands and a cloth on her mouth pressing tightly. Mr. Sneed. She felt as her consciousness was leaving her. *You gonna pay for this.*

"Rose!" Being the last thing she heard, before the darkness consumed her.

Her head was still spinning, when she came to. She rubbed her temple while her eyes focused on the view ahead. The room was filled with candles. And she was on the table. Gelth. She turned to her left and saw a dead man getting off the coffin while snarling at her.

"Oh, wonderful," she said sarcastically. "Stay where you are!" she warned him, but her efforts all
gone in vain. The man was slowly getting closer to her, not stopping in the slightest. She made a
jump off the table making her way to the door. And they were closed, of course. She turned around
calmly to face the threat and saw how the elderly woman came back to life too.

"You!" She pointed at her. "Don't you move! Go back to the coffin!" She tried to reason with them,
getting convinced that none of that would work on them, though. "Oh, it's not gonna help." She
rolled her eyes. "I don't wanna hurt you..." she muttered sadly as she kicked the approaching man
in the stomach, making him fall on the ground. But soon enough he was standing on his legs again,
elderly woman right beside him.

"Doctor! Let me out!" she yelled as the man tried to grab her. Thankfully she felt him approaching
and managed to dodge his arms, but now was steadily backing away from the door with two
zombies marching at her. "Doctor!" she shouted out.

When their arms were inches from her throat, she heard the door being kicked open as the Doctor
made his way to them, removing the man's arm from Rose. "I think this is my dance." As he pulled
her closer to his side, his one arm around her waist.

"It's a prank," Charles Dickens said from behind them. "It must be. We're under some mesmeric
influence."

"No, we're not. The dead are walking," the Doctor told him with all seriousness when he turned to
face Rose. "Hi," he greeted her all happy.

"Hi." She grinned. When she noticed Charles, she nearly called out to greet him too, but stopped
herself with a mental reminder. "Who's your friend?" she asked lightly.

"Charles Dickens." The Doctor beamed at her.

"Nice to meet you, Charles!" She smiled at him, making him flush a bit in return.

"My name's the Doctor. Who are you, then? What do you want?"

"We are failing," the Gelth breathed. "Open the Rift, we are dying. Trapped in this form. Cannot
sustain. Help us." As they left the bodies, screaming.

Rose looked at them in disgust. She would not let them have their way this time. Not over her dead
body.

"First of all, you drug me." Rose started talking furiously with Mr. Sneed. "Then kidnap me!" she
yelled. "And don't think I didn't feel your hands having a wander, you dirty old man!" she spat her
words at him. She could see the Doctor watching the scene in amusement. Well, at least someone
is having fun here.

"I won't be spoken to like this!" Mr. Sneed murmured.

"Yes you will!" she shouted with eyes full of fire. "Now, shut yourself up!" adding with a deadly
voice.

"Yes, Ma'am." Mr. Sneed lowered his head.

"And to add to all this, you swan off and leave me to die with a room full of zombies! So come on,
talk!"
"It's not my fault." Mr. Sneed talked back in defence. "It's this house. It's always had a reputation. Haunted-" He was desperately looking for pity.

"Oh, don't you put the blame to the house for drugging, kidnapping and making a wander with your hands!" She was losing the last bits of patience and it was clearly visible in her voice.

When Rose managed to get her composure back, and allowed Mr. Sneed to talk, he told them pieces of what he knew about the departed while arguing with Charles who was sternly sceptical about it.

"Oh, Charles, you were there," the Doctor said in exasperation.

"I saw nothing, but an illusion," Charles replied, uttering each word in a meaningful tone.

"If you are going to deny it, don't waste my time. Just shut up," the Doctor shot back, clearly annoyed.

Then they learnt about the gas being a new phenomenon and the growing strength of the Gelth.

"What's the rift?" Rose asked absentmindedly.

"A weak point in time and space," the Doctor said smartly. "The connection between this place and another. That's the cause of ghost stories most of the time."

Rose just smiled fondly. *He loved to show off.*

After that, the Doctor left after Charles to check how he was doing and apologize for his rudeness. In the meantime, Rose and Gwyneth were both talking about life, school, boys and all that stuff.

"Maybe your Dad will be there too, Miss," Gwyneth said softly.

Rose nodded slowly. "You have no idea how right you are," she muttered.

"What was it, Miss?" Gwyneth looked confused.

"How did you know that my dad passed away again?" Rose asked lightly.

"Oh, I don't know. Must have been the Doctor," she answered nervously, looking away.

"Hmm." *Rose knew she lied.*

"I bet you have dozen of servants," Gwyneth said cheekily.

"Oh, just a few. But I only had them for a short while. It makes me uneasy." Rose gone into her thoughts.

"And you come such a long way...You are from London. I have seen drawings of it, but never like that. All those people rushing about half naked..." Gwyneth said in half disgust. "And the noise." She shook her head. "And then comes the beach. So full of sorrow and sadness. It's like it ripped you apart. You are like two people torn between one world and another. London should be your home, but you feel it foreign to you," she ended in disbelief.

"Wow," Rose exclaimed. "I always knew you were psychic, but didn't expect to be *that* much."

Gwyneth backed away. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to."
"It's alright. I don't blame you. I understand. But if you see it, can you tell me, why I'm here or how did I get to become like that?" Rose asked her with pleading eyes.

It scared Gwyneth. All her power and the strange things she had seen of Rose's life. She shook her head. "I don't know. One minute you are in some kind of place full of rocks and dust and the next minute you are in the basement. And the light. That golden light that surrounds you. Big Bad Wolf." She put her brows together like asking Rose for an answer.

**Bad Wolf. Oh, for goodness sake, how long it's gonna follow?**

"I'm so sorry, Miss." She closed her eyes, feeling a bit ashamed. "I can't help it - ever since I was a little girl. My mum said I had the sight. She told me to hide it!"

"But it's getting stronger," the Doctor suddenly said from the doorway. Rose felt a cold sweat run through her body. How much did he hear? She was already suspicious enough, now it just got worse.

Gwyneth nodded. "All the time, Sir. Every night. Voices in my head."

"You grew up on top of the rift. You're part of it. You're the key," the Doctor said softly.

"I tried to make sense of it. But nothing helped," she said in desperation.

"We can try one more thing. Show us what to do. We are going to have a seance," the Doctor announced.

When in the "Seance Room", Gwyneth explained the rules of it. The Doctor was nodding in understanding as he spotted Rose all frowning.

"Rose? What's the matter?" he asked. "Isn't it exciting? All those spiritual seances with ghosts, and now you gonna get just that." He grinned at her, expecting a similar reaction out of her. But got none of that.

Rose gave him a warning look. "Those are not ghosts," she muttered while turning her head away and their conversation ceased.

Charles was still talking back and tried to make a run from it, but was soon forced to stay.

"They can't get through the Rift," the Doctor said while looking at the Gelth above. "Gwyneth, it's not controlling you, you are controlling them. Now, look deep, allow them through," he said convincingly to her.

"Don't!" Rose shook her head in horror. That made the Doctor spare her a puzzled look. Rose didn't mind him. "Don't let them through. They are bad, Gwyneth," she said with deep voice as she tried to break the circle.

"Let them through, Gwyneth!" the Doctor said more sharply, squeezing Rose's hand hard to not let her off.

And soon Gelth appeared behind her. "Pity us. Pity the Gelth. There is so little time. Help us."

"A scam!" Rose yelled. "You are not worth pity."

The Doctor shot a look back at her now filled with a bit of anger. "Rose, what's wrong with you?"
he asked in disbelief.

Rose just looked at him, swallowing her words.

"What do you want us to do?" The Doctor turned back to the Gelth.

"The Rift. Take the girl to the Rift. Make the bridge. We are so very few. The last of our kind. We face extinction."

"Why? What happened?" the Doctor asked in concern.

"Once we had a physical form, like you. But then a war came. The Time War," the Gelth spoke. Rose closed her eyes. She knew that it would make the Doctor waver, as he was still feeling very guilty about it. She looked back at him and saw just that.

"So, that's why you want the corpses," he stated.

"We need a physical form, and your dead are abandoned. They're going to waste. Give them to us!"

"No," Rose said coldly.

"And why not?" The Doctor looked at her sceptically.

"It's not-" she began.

"Not decent? Not polite? It can save their lives," he said firmly.

"We can't make Gwyneth do this. I'll not let you do this," Rose said with firm anger and desperation rising into her.

"You are not the one in CHARGE here!" the Doctor shot back coldly.

As the Gelth left her body, Gwyneth soon collapsed and they rushed to lay her down. While Rose was looking after her, she avoided any contact with the Doctor. She was angry at him. But at the same time she understood, that she wasn't the easiest herself to trust or follow. And that just made her more dispirited.

As soon as Gwyneth woke up and started asking about her angels, the Doctor and Rose continued with their argument. The Doctor was firm as a stone to help the Gelth while Rose tried to reason with him and at the same time trying to protect the girl.

"Don't I get to say, miss?" She heard as Gwyneth spoke. Not again...

"Look, you don't know what you are up against," Rose said, her voice cracking a bit, worried for the girl's well being.

"You would say that. 'Cos you think I'm stupid." Rose tried to say something. "But it's alright though," Gwyneth continued. "Things may be very different from where you are from, but here and now, I know my own mind. And the angels need me."

"And you got it all wrong," Rose muttered while shaking her head.

"So tell me, Doctor. What do I need to do?" Gwyneth asked him, and they were preparing to leave in the search of the Rift.
"But you can't!" Rose blocked their way.

"Look, I know you think using the dead bodies is wrong, but it's not. It's just like recycling!" The Doctor tried to convince her in all honesty.

"No, it is not about that!" Rose shook her head. "Although, that one is wrong too...But I'm talking about Gwyneth!" She shot a glare at the Doctor.

"What about her?" the Doctor asked in astonishment. "She is just helping those in need. I hoped you would be up for it too. I'm a bit disappointed that you are so against helping them out." He knitted on his brows.

Disappointed.

Stab.

"Help those in need?" she exclaimed. "They do not need our help! They are dangerous." She tried to reason with him, desperation in her voice.

"How are they dangerous? Now you are talking nonsense, Rose Tyler." His voice became cold.

"They tried to kill me!" She was practically shouting now. "Back then, inside that room, they grabbed me with their cold hands and I could feel them against my neck. And those same "not dangerous" species are going at innocent Gwyneth." She felt a lump in her throat.

Just listen for once!

"You are delusional. They were only searching for help." The Doctor held a cold gaze at her, which made her shiver. He wouldn't look at her like that. Not her Doctor.

"They are going to hurt her," she said with a hurt expression. "Can't you believe in me?" Her voice slightly broke at the end.

Just this little bit...She wasn't asking much. Just...faith.

The Doctor kept silent. His eyes were trailing from her to the side of the room, frantically looking for the right answer. With the last glance he showed her, she knew. There was no hope.

"Charles. We are going. Gwyneth, Mr. Sneed, lead the way." As he walked past Rose.

Rejection.

More stabs.

She could feel how her breath quickened and it was harder to breathe. He did not believe in her. She was nothing to him! Heh, how could she blame him? He barely knew her! She knew him for years, but he only have met her not long ago. She could bet he only thought of her as some crazy ape.

And she was so alone.

She felt how her consciousness literally split into two. In one way, she was happy to be with her Doctor again, in her rightful universe with mum, also, soon they would meet Jack, Pete, Harriet Jones...On the other hand, she was all alone. Since the moment her timeline was somehow reset to the beginning, she was left there alone with all the knowledge. And not like anybody came forward to explain her why was this happening.
She would still feel sometimes that maybe all that was happening was just a dream. A very cruel dream. And once she wakes up, it will all be gone. Even the slight hope of being with her Doctor would be gone. Her body shook as silent sobs echoed inside the room.

Rose took a deep breath before leaving the room to follow the others.

When she came to the morgue, Gwyneth was already making her way towards the arch, with everyone else stepping back. Rose was walking towards Gwyneth, when she felt firm arms hold her back.

"Stay put." The Doctor's voice reached her ears. "She needs to do that." Rose tried to move away, but the Doctor was holding her too tightly.

*She couldn't let that happen.*

She struggled some more, hitting the Doctor in the stomach as she made her way to Gwyneth. The girl was already one foot on the arch, when Rose grabbed her hand and tossed her aside stepping in the arch herself.

She could feel a sudden energy thrown inside of her, which suffocated her.

*Now she had done it.*

She started coughing and it was starting to be hard to breathe. She was loosing her focus. But there was still enough of her to remember the grip in her hand a minute earlier still beating a pulse.

She felt her head spin and soon her knees were on the ground. Her throat was on fire as Gelth tried to pass through, but from lack of power from the source, they were stuck in between.

"*Let us THROUGH!*" They struggled fiercely, making Rose lose air more and more. Her eyes were all watery and she couldn't see a thing anymore.

"ROSE!" She heard a frantic voice calling her name somewhere distant. She couldn't reply.

Only then she understood just what it meant for her to save their lives. Why it was so hard with the lever and now. Those people sacrificed their lives not for nothing. They were meant to do a greater good with their actions. And now, while saving them, Rose took upon herself all what they were meant to do. She painfully realised that while saving the others she may lose her own life in the process, and she may never reach Canary Wharf that way.

Second by second she felt her breathing become more shallow, her whole body was feeling limp and she would lose conciousness any minute now.

"Rose! Stay awake!" The voice still calling her.

And then the blackness came.

Rose felt her body being carried by strong arms. She could feel leather against her skin. Wait. Leather? As in the Doctor's leather jacket? She had to wake up. She fluttered her eyelids and slowly slowly opened them. The view was still a bit hazy, but soon she came to focus. She saw a familiar face sigh in relief, and she could see a soft smile make its way on his lips.

"You are going to be alright." His eyes were full of concern and warmth now. "A bit of lack of
oxygen, but you are going to get it back. Look, it's snowing outside," he exclaimed with a huge smile.

Rose formed a faint smile. She was glad, the Doctor was not cold to her anymore. She reached for his cheek with her hand and cupped it. The action shocked him a bit and he made an odd expression on his face, but he soon relaxed on her touch, letting her do as she pleases.

She felt her heart fill up with warmth. She did it, didn't she? She came back alive, and her Doctor was warm to her, and Gwyneth should be here somewhere... *Gwyneth.*

Rose made a jump at that thought and the Doctor, losing balance, kinda let her roll on the snow.

"What, Rose! What are you doing?" He looked all confused at her. He squatted down near her.

"Gwyneth!" Rose yelled, pulling onto his sleeves. "Gwyneth! Where is she?" Her frantic eyes where looking for an answer in his.

There was a pause, after which the Doctor's expression shadowed. "She is gone," he muttered. *Gone.*

"Gone how?" she yelled back at him. "How do you mean gone? I-I pushed her aside, didn't I?" Her voice shaky.

He grabbed her by her shoulders. "There was nothing we could do, it was the only way to stop the Gelth from coming through. She had to keep them with her." The Doctor told her with regret in his voice.

*No.*

*No.*

"NO!" Rose shouted. "No, she couldn't." She shook her head. "She is not, right? She is not!" Desperately looking at the Doctor, Rose tried to find reason in him.

"I got to find her. Help her." She was standing up, or more like standing and falling, so in the end crawling throughout the snow, but was soon stopped by the Doctor. He grabbed her on her waist as he was pulling her back.

"No, let me go!" Rose struggled. "Let me go! I got to go!" she cried, tears falling down her cheeks.

"I'm sorry." The Doctor soothed her. "I'm sorry."

"NOO!" she yelled out. "If I didn't save her, then why I'm HERE?. WHY?" As she sobbed the Doctor pressed her against him rocking her slightly.

She failed her. She failed Gwyneth, and she couldn't do anything to help her.

When everything calmed down, they found themselves at Dickens' house. The Doctor and Rose sat in the living room silently, Rose holding a cup of tea in her hands.

"I shouldn't have doubted you," the Doctor began faintly. "It's all my fault." He closed his eyes. "When they mentioned the Time War, I couldn't resist. I pitied them!" he said angrily.

Rose couldn't bear to see him like that. She reached for his hand and placed hers on his. "It was not
your fault, Doctor," she said tenderly, looking him in the eyes. "Neither was."

"But it nearly cost you your life," he added painfully.

Rose just shook her head. "It's alright. I chose this. I made my decision to help them out, even if I failed..." She turned her gaze away.

"Now, Rose Tyler. You, from all of the people, cannot blame yourself for this." His voice serious but gentle. "You were so brave back then. And so human," he ended softly. "And I lost that, back there. I lost humanity and I need you to remind me of that sometimes. I won't doubt you anymore.” He smiled at her.

Rose felt how her heart filled with warmth and love for this man. She ached to share all her thoughts and worries with him, but even if she couldn't do that, she was at least allowed to do this.

And then, she leaned forward, her arms around his neck, burying her head in his shoulders. She felt the Doctor stiffen for a bit, but not for long. Soon his arms were wrapped around her. They would have stayed like that, if a cough from behind them wouldn't have startled them.

"I'm sorry to disturb your..." Charles gestured at them meaningfully. "I got to say your bold movements perplex me, but I guess with all the things I have seen today, nothing should surprise me anymore."

"We were no-" The Doctor tried to defend himself but that moment Rose stood up and walked towards Charlie.

"Thank you for all you did, Charlie," She smiled at him fondly and kissed his cheek softly, making the Doctor jump a bit in disbelief and jealousy?

They left Charles house, told their goodbyes and were walking towards the TARDIS.

"I don't mean to impose on you, Doctor. But I gotta ask this...my books.. Do they last?" Charles asked hopefully.

"Oh yeh!" The Doctor beamed.

"For how long?"

"Forever," the Doctor answered softly.

*Forever.* Rose had a gentle smile on her face at hearing those words.

"Right. Shed. Come on, Rose." The Doctor's voice shook her slightly.

"In - in the box? Both of you?" Charles said, slightly scandalised.

"Down boy," the Doctor told him. "See ya."

They decided to make one last surprise for Charlie as the TARDIS dematerialised right in front of him.

*to be continued...*
With a wheezing sound the blue police box landed outside the Powell Estate. Shortly after, the TARDIS doors swung open and Rose stepped out.

As she breathed in the familiar air of her home city, she felt her heart tighten. She missed this place so much. And the last time she was here, all her thoughts were on the Doctor. So in the end, she didn't take in her surroundings all that well.

"How long I've been gone?" Rose asked as she heard him coming behind her.

"About 12 hours." The Doctor smiled at her proudly.

"You sure you didn't get a few years wrong this time?" she teased him.

"Oi! I'm sure. Go and check for yourself." He sounded a slightly bit hurt, but soon a smile returned on his face. "What're you gonna tell them?"

"Oh, you know. That I have been to 5 billions years in the future, saw the Earth explode and then I met Charles Dickens in 1869." She shrugged. The Doctor just snorted at that.

"No, I'm just gonna tell her that I spent the night at Shareen's," she ended lightly. Although, maybe telling mum the truth would have been wiser. Oh well, she is gonna learn it anyway.

"Besides, I have already left a few messages for her from the TARDIS, so she shouldn't be that worried, right?" she asked mockingly. "Unless, they didn't reach the recipient. That wouldn't be any surprise," she joked.

The Doctor frowned. "Hurry up, go on. You have been standing here for too long. Don't make your mother wait." Feeling clearly offended, he tried to dismiss the subject. He could hear Rose chuckle as she ran towards her flat.

Just outside the doors, Rose came to a stop. She gave herself a few deep breaths, mentally preparing herself for her mother's chiding. She warned her mother about possibly being away for a month and left a few messages, but they should have arrived in the few days after her departure. Thus they wouldn't be much of help. The remaining eleven months Jackie would have been left without a word from her daughter. Rose sighed. She so didn't wait for this part.

"I'm back!" she called out in the hallway.

No answer.

"Mum? Are you inside?" Okay, that was new. She was already starting to feel worried, when she spotted her mother casually drinking tea in the kitchen.

"Look who is back," Jackie said bitterly.

"Eh? Yeh, well. That's me." Rose laughed nervously. She inspected the kitchen table and saw no fliers of her Missing.

Weird. Could it be that the Doctor got the time right this time 'round?
"I thought you never would return from your travelling," she spat the last world with disgust. "You disappear one day, making me only one call and then those few messages coming throughout the months. Do you feel so little of your mother?" Jackie asked her with hurtful expression.

"Ah. Um. I don't!" Rose tried to form words. So she was gone for a year. But the messages? Of course. How could the TARDIS get them in time. They must have arrived months delayed.

Seconds later, the Doctor burst out the doors.

"It's not 12 hours. It's 12 months. You have been gone a whole year. Sorry." He laughed nervously.

"I noticed." Rose shot him a look and sighed.

"So tell me then, where were you travelling?" Jackie began her interrogation. "For days and weeks and months I have been left alone. Wondering what could have possibly had happened to make you run away from home in such a state."

"I didn't run away from home, mum. As you said, I was travelling." Rose tried to reason.

"That's what I was doing." Blimey, how did the conversation came to be the same as the last time.

"When your passport's still in the drawer? It's just one lie after another!" Jackie shouted.

"But I phoned you," Rose said innocently.

"One phone call and a few messages in a whole year?"

"Actually, it's my fault. I sort of er...employed her as my...companion." The Doctor tried to defend Rose carefully.


"No!" Rose and the Doctor both shook their heads in disbelief. Great, so one way or another, officer or her mum, it still comes to that. Is that's how they look like to them?

"Then what is it?" Jackie came forward. "You come one day at my house, make my living room a mess, and the next thing I know, my daughter somehow disappears while travelling. And how old are you? 40? 45?" she spat her words. "Who are you anyway?"

"As I said. I am the Doctor," he said nonchalantly.

"I'm asking for your name!" Jackie gave him a warning look.

"I just told you that." He looked at her in bewilderment.

"Is that right? Then stitch this, mate."

SLAP

Rose looked at her mother as shocked as the Doctor himself.
"I can't believe she still slapped you," Rose exclaimed while waving her legs on the roof.

"Still?" the Doctor asked, puzzled. *As always with Rose Tyler.*

"She got all those messages, but she still found fault in you." She chuckled. "You were being rude," she teased him.

"No, I was not." The Doctor defended himself. "She asked for my name, and I did tell her," he cried. "And I'm never rude. Why would you say that?"

"Not just yet," she muttered under her breath.

"What was it?" the Doctor asked.

Rose just shook her head. "You should know, that, The Doctor, doesn't really work on humans. In the end, you kinda asked for that slap." She smiled at him, pitying.

"Asked for it? Since when do I ask for slaps!?" he exclaimed. "900 years in time and space and I have never been slapped by someone's mother," he grumbled. Pause. "What are you gonna do now?"

*Wait for the next spaceship to hit the Thames.*

"Well, we gonna have to come for some visits. I can't put her through that again," she only said.

"So you are still coming with me?" he asked in relief.

"Why wouldn't I? Oh. Right. I guess I do have a bit of reasons why," she teased and the Doctor frowned. "So, you are 900 years old?" she asked softly, fully well knowing the answer.

"Yeh," he answered seriously. Rose just nodded in understanding.

"A bit young, aren't you?" she mocked him.

"I'm though!" he cried. Then his face became serious. "I'm sorry. I made things difficult for you and your mother. But she can't become part of this."

"Maybe she can," Rose said softly, looking him in the eyes.

"She is not coming with us!" the Doctor shot back. "I don't do families." Then he turned his head back to facing the scenery.

"I'm gonna use those same words against you one day." She pointed at him, chuckling.

And soon enough, the spaceship engine's sound could be heard in the air. As it passed above their heads, it flew through the Big Ben, finally crashing into the Thames.

"Here comes our prey." Rose grinned at the Doctor and he laughed out loud.

They rushed towards the path the spaceship passed by seconds ago and soon found themselves trapped in a jam. All the roads were blocked, with people pacing about and military officers maintaining the order of things.

"I can't believe it! This is fantastic," the Doctor said in a voice full of excitement.
"Yeh, but we are trapped and unable to get close enough as we are now." She smirked at him.

"What are you suggesting, Madcap-y?" he asked with expectation.

"You are still gonna use it, aren't you?" she asked him in a slightly disappointed voice.

"What?" the Doctor asked her in bewilderment.

"Madcap-y."

"'Course I will. What would be the nickname for, if only used once?" he asked her in an obvious tone.

"Alright. Well, this is not gonna work," Rose exhaled. "We gotta do this the human way. Let's go back to my mum's and watch it on telly." She grinned.

"You got the brain, Rose Tyler," he said in a scoffing manner and it made Rose laugh.

"Sometimes," he ended, making her scowl.

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**LONDON UFO CRASH**

**ALIEN EMERGENCY HELPLINE**

Were all over the news. It made Rose restless. She wanted herself back in the action, as she already knew all the details of the fake alien crash the world was so concerned about. On the other hand, Slitheen were something to be worried about.

"They found the body. I've been informed, that the body has been found," the voice in the telly reported.

Rose looked back at the Doctor and found his eyebrows raised with a smile making its way on his face.

*The body.*

The poor little creature. Rose wondered if dying was the best solution for it. If any association would have gotten hands of it, he would have suffered a great deal of fear. A lot more than what he had felt while running away from the lab. Rose hated it. Hated that even with such a great knowledge of things, she was useless in some ways. And she hated all the more to think that death could be a solution. Of course, it would be even worse if Torchwood would get hands on him.

*Torchwood.*

Rose felt a stab in her heart. And it hurt quite a lot. She wondered when she would get over it. At the same time she watched as the Doctor was trying to pull the TV controller from neighbour kid's grasp. He looked so adorable with the child, that Rose chuckled. And the next second was shaking her head, trying to shake her thoughts away.

When she looked up to the Doctor again, she found him looking at her with one of his *you must be mental* expressions. Rose frowned at once.

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After sunset, the Doctor was ready to leave on his own private inspection. This time Rose wanted to come too. Hence, after informing her mother that she is going to meet Mickey, she carefully left the flat before being noticed by the Doctor. She rushed to the place where the TARDIS was parked
and waited patiently for the Doctor to come.

She hid herself on one side of the TARDIS, so when the Doctor unlocked the doors, Rose was left unnoticed.

1...

2...

3...

She counted and rushed inside the TARDIS at the same time making the Doctor jump in surprise, therefore accidentally pressing the last button to dematerialise the TARDIS.

"What are you doing here?" He looked at her in bewilderment.

"I knew you would be up to something. Don't think you can make me stay out of it," she chided him while pointing a finger at him.

"I'm guessing Mickey is not with you?" He frowned at her.

"Nope." She pointed the "p". "But we'll see him soon." Before the Doctor could comment, she added. "So, what's the plan?" Rose grinned, making the Doctor answer her with a grin of his own, in full excitement.

They parked the TARDIS in some kind of storage room. And it was quite cramped in there.

"Where are we exactly?" Rose whispered.

"In the hospital where the alien pilot has been taken," he whispered her back with a smile while unlocking the doors with his sonic screwdriver.

With the doors opened, they found themselves in a room full of military officers. It took them a while to react, but soon they were at arms, pointing their guns at them.

"Excellent landing," Rose whispered to the Doctor with half of her mouth, seconds later smiling innocently at the men in front.

"Ah." Was all the Doctor said while smiling at the threatening guns in front.

Then a scream echoed somewhere distant and the Doctor was once again in charge. "Defence part delta. Come on!" he commanded the men, taking Rose's hand in his and running ahead.

While running in the long hallway, hand in hand, Rose tried to hide her smile, but failed most of the time. She loved this. Running together with her Doctor. And she will make sure that he will not be able to drop her somewhere while he was out there alone in the action. When they reached the room where they heard the scream come from, they saw a woman crawling on the floor with eyes full of fear.

"It's alive!" she said with a trembling voice.

"Spread out. Tell the perimeter it's a lock down," the Doctor instructed the men behind.

"What does it look like?" the Doctor asked the woman while kneeling beside her.
"Clang."

"It's still there," the Doctor exclaimed.

After hearing the sound, Rose followed it. "Rose! Come back here, we don't fully know what's out there," the Doctor warned her.

But she knew. So she didn't stop.

"Clang."

The sound of some metal being dropped echoed in the room. Rose crawled on the floor, following the sound. She could feel the Doctor just behind her. She guessed he understood, that there was no way to convince her to back down, so the only thing he could do was look after her back, in case she was put in danger.

She peeked out of the corner of the table at the same time as the pig creature. As it made an oink sound, Rose greeted it. "Hello there," she greeted him softly. The Doctor stiffened at once, as he was yet to see what Rose was seeing and put his arms on her shoulders in defence.

And that action alone was enough for the pig creature to jump and start running from the possible threat.

"No!" Rose stood up at once. "Don't run away!" she cried.

"Click."

The sound of the gun being loaded was heard. "Don't shoot!" the Doctor ordered.

The pig was running around the room aimlessly, when Rose quickly made a jump on it and wrapped her arms around the creature. It tried to struggle, but as Rose soothed it to calm down, it ceased to try to get away. Everyone in the room looked at her and the pig in her arms in astonishment.

When the military squad was dismissed, the Doctor, Rose and the woman scientist called Tosh made their way to the holding cell room. The pig creature was put under bars in some sort of cage and it seemed like it was starting to get nervous again. Rose tried to calm it down as much as possible while the Doctor was talking with the woman.

"I just assumed that's what alien's look like. But you're saying it's an ordinary pig? From Earth?" Tosh was still in denial.

"More like a mermaid." The Doctor's face shadowed. "It was genetically modified into a Humanoid form with an enhanced brain."

"So it's a fake," Tosh stated. "A pretend. But the technology augmenting its brain... it's like nothing on Earth. It's alien. Aliens are faking aliens...Why would they do that?" They could hear the woman's voice as the Doctor and Rose left the room.

"We got to get him out of here," Rose said in all seriousness.

"Yeh."

"Have you got a plan yet?" she asked, expectation on her face.
"Nope."

"Well, better make one soon. We don't have much time until they start some more dangerous experiments on it." Rose and the Doctor locked their eyes for a moment and rushed towards the TARDIS.

As they landed in Rose's neighbourhood, she saw her mum on the monitor with Mickey right beside her. _Here it comes._

"My mum's here," Rose said simply.

When the Doctor turned around, he saw Jackie and Mickey already inside of the TARDIS. "Oh, that's just what I need," he said bitterly. "Don't you dare make this place domestic." The Doctor pointed a finger at Rose.

"You've ruined my life, Doctor," Mickey started. "I just mentioned it once, that maybe you have been sold in some kind of alien land." He pointed at Rose. "And they held me for questioning 5 times, thinking I was part of Human trafficking organisation because of you." He looked back at the Doctor.


"I bet you don't even remember my name!" Mickey came forward in a stance like he was looking for a fight.

"Rickey," the Doctor said dismissively.

"It's Mickey." Mickey frowned.

"No, it's Rickey," the Doctor said in a voice like he knew better.

"I think I know my own name." Mickey didn't budge.

"You think you know your own name. How stupid are you?" The Doctor looked down at Mickey from where he stood.

"Don't start a fight here," Rose rolled her eyes and saw how Jackie was already making a run through the TARDIS doors. _Go. Call the authorities. Inform them of another alien._

Rose shook her head. "You aren't going after her?" She heard the Doctor ask.

"Not like I can stop her." She faked a sigh.

Moments later, Rose found the Doctor and Mickey already bickering with each other.

"So, what're you doing down there?" Mickey asked the Doctor as he was making some adjustments to the TARDIS under her console.

"Rhikey," the Doctor answered him with sonic screwdriver in his mouth.

"Mickey," Mickey corrected him once again.

"Rickey," the Doctor repeated as soon as he pulled the screwdriver out of his mouth. Mickey just rolled his eyes. "If I were to tell you, what I was doing to the control's of my friendly magnificent
time ship...would you even begin to understand?" he ended with a sneer.

"I suppose not."

"Then shut it." The Doctor smiled at him coldly.

Clearly losing the "fight" Mickey came to stand besides Rose. "Some friend you've got there."

Pointing at the Doctor's direction.

Rose just smiled at him sadly. "I'm sorry for putting you through this." And she was. Mickey was a good guy and she wanted him happy.

"Alright." Mickey turned his gaze away.

"I am though!" Rose pleaded with her eyes for him to understand.

Mickey looked back at her. "Every day, I looked. On every street corner, wherever I went, looking for a blue box for a whole year. " His voice clearly hurt.

"I'm sorry." Was all Rose could say.

"Did you even miss me?" Mickey looked at her with eyes full of last hope.

She didn't see much of Mickey back in the parallel universe. He was always rushing about, helping people in need. And she was so proud of him.

"Yeh. I did miss you," she said fondly.

She cleared her throat while turning her eyes away on the grating. "Look, Mickey...once this is all over...can we go have a cup of tea or something?" Rose said slowly.

Mickey beamed at her words. Sigh. She hated to give him false hopes, but not like she could have that talk with him in front of the Doctor. She had to let Mickey free. And the sooner the better. Since she knew, that whether she lives a few days, a few years, or a few decades, her life will always be dedicated to her Doctor.

Mickey was already leaning in to kiss Rose when the Doctor's voice startled him. She breathed in relief and gratitude. "Got it. HAHA!" the Doctor exclaimed lively, making Rose and Mickey come closer to the monitor he was now looking all madly at.

They learnt that the spaceship originally flew into space from the Earth itself and that it was possible it has been there for a while now, waiting for the right moment.

They watched the News and the Doctor saw a few familiar faces from the UNIT, who were pointed out by Mickey in all proud manner.

"There's aliens out there and fake aliens. We want to keep this alien out of the mix," the Doctor ended, pointing at his chest. "I'm going undercover."

"Or straight in the spotlight," Rose muttered, making Doctor shot her a questioning look, which Rose just shrugged at.

"And eh, better keep the TARDIS out of site. Rickey! You've got a car - you can do some driving."

"Where to?!" Mickey asked.
"The roads are clearing. Let's go and have a look at that spaceship," the Doctor said as he left through the TARDIS door.

At that moment TARDIS was already surrounded by police and military, and lights were shot at them with loudspeaker echoing in the neighbourhood.

Mickey made a run from it, making the corner under the trash bin as his hideout.

"Take me to your leader," the Doctor exclaimed all happy with hands put in defence mode. Shortly after, they were put in the police car and, as the Doctor said, *escorted to 10 Downing Street.*

Giggling and laughing could be heard outside, echoing from the driving police car.

As they got out the police car, they found themselves once again in a full spotlight. All paparazzi going around, making pictures, asking questions made Rose feel a bit tired. She was not very thrilled to meet her old friends Slitheen again. Although, making a visit to 10 Downing Street once more before they blow it up was worth it. It seemed the Doctor was keen on blowing things up. And he dared to blow up Her Majesty’s headquarters. She still couldn't believe it.

Once they made their way inside some kind of big waiting room, the man, Rose could remember from the previous time, came up to the Doctor and gave him his ID card.

"Here's your ID card. I'm sorry, your companion doesn't have clearance." He pointed at Rose.

"I don't go anywhere without her," the Doctor answered him like it was the obvious, while looping the ID card around his neck.

"You are the code 9, not her. I'm sorry, Doctor." He tried to reason. "She will have to stay outside."

"She's staying with me." The Doctor refused to budge. That made Rose smile. *Oh, she loved to see him like that.*

"It's alright, you go," Rose told him with a smile.

"Are you sure?" The Doctor was still sceptical about it.

"Yeh, I'll just wait for you to come back...or go investigate something else..." Rose added innocently.

"Don't go looking for trouble!" The Doctor gave her a warning look.

"I'll be alright, Doctor," she told him fondly.

"Okay. I'll see you then." And with a quick last glance he turned and exited the room.

The previous man was already trying to make Rose sit down and wait for the Doctor, when Harriet Jones interrupted him, telling him that she would look after her. *Good ol' Harriet.*

After leaving the room, Harriet introduced herself and soon after she told Rose of all the things she had seen recently - burst out in tears. After soothing the woman, she held as a dear friend, they resumed their walking through the hallway.

As they continued walking, Rose disappeared into her own world of thoughts. *Vinegar.* Maybe with some vinegar they could defend themselves from Slitheen Blaine. She needed to find the
kitchen. Wait. Did 10 Downing Street even had a kitchen? And anyway. Could she just kill her off in cold blood? She needed a second chance. They gave it to her, by make her an egg. Could she just take that chance from her?

"Kitchen or no kitchen." Rose didn't notice how she started muttering out loud.

"Young lady, I don't understand how could you be thinking about food in a moment like this," Harriet stated in disbelief. "How would you even be able to stomach anything!"

"It's no-" Rose began.

"Throw those thoughts away. We got more important things at hands." Harriet Jones cut her off sharply.

"No, but really-" Rose tried to reason, but was soon pushed inside the room. Great. She was here again. Her glance quickly fell on the wardrobe at the end of the room. She was sure that the very prime minister's body was laying there at this moment, waiting until someone opens the doors, so that it could fall out. Rose winced at the scene she remembered.

She started blabbering about something alien and signals as she made her way near the wardrobe and with a deep breath opened the doors - prime minister falling out of it. Harriet gasped at that.

Soon enough, the man caught up to them and was pacing inside the room unhappily. "Harriet, you can't just take people under your control like that-" He saw the Prime Minister on the ground. "Oh, my God! It's the Prime Minister," he breathed. Rose was already looking frantically at the doors, waiting for Blaine to show up.

"Uh..." A sly voice echoed through the doors. "Has someone been naughty?" Her figure could be seen in the shadows. Rose frowned as Blaine closed the doors.

"That's impossible." The man was still trying to make some sense. "He left this afternoon. The Prime Minister left Downing Street, he was driven away!"

"And who told you that? Hmm?" Slitheen woman was slowly making her way further inside the room. "Mee," she sang as she pulled her zipper to show her true form. When she was about to grab the man in front, Rose tried to push the Slitheen away, but unsuccessfully. Blaine sharply pushed Rose away, making her fly into the wardrobe's doors, wincing at the pain on the head.

Okay, it was time she started worrying.

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to be continued...

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Chapter End Notes

Leaving your thoughts in comments would prompt me to keep on posting. Thanks!
Blon dropped the body from her grasp, as she felt high volt of electricity run through her body. *It was the chance to get away.* Rose grabbed Harriet's hand into hers and pulled her away from the wardrobe, towards the doors. She could hear the future Prime Minister gasp, when she saw the Slitheen squeal and struggle, from the shock she was getting.

They ran through the corridors. Taking turn after turn. It had been a while since Rose was last here. *Great. It seems she was lost.* "No, wait." Harriet Jones' voice stopped her into her tracks. "The emergency protocols! They're still in there. We need them!” Harriet said, desperation in her voice. Before Rose could react, the woman was already making a turn to the room where the Slitheen was.

"Wait!" Rose yelled out. But it was too late. Harriet came to a stop, when she saw the Slitheen there and quickly exited the room, running from its sight. They dashed through one door just to exit another one, as the alien kept following them with high speed and strength, breaking through any barriers.

*Okay, Rose. Think, think. Where is the safe place to hide now...*

*Ring*

The elevator sound disturbed her thoughts.

"Doctor!" she shouted out to him.

"Hello." The Doctor greeted them both and the Slitheen, which was cornering him into the lift. In a second he buzzed his sonic screwdriver to close the lift. Soon enough, the Slitheen from the lift were following Harriet and Rose instead. *Brilliant.*

Once they got inside the room, Rose didn't bother to check the doors, since she knew that none of the doors in *this* room were open. She hid herself besides the curtain with Harriet close to her. *Okay. Just a moment and Doctor should come with the fire extinguisher.* She would have gotten it herself, but then again, she didn't know the place of where it was kept and maybe by taking it before the Doctor she would put him in danger instead.

"Well, this has worked out the last time. Should be the same now," Rose muttered under her breath, making a nervous laugh sound. Moments later, she could hear as Margaret entered the room and started talking with her *sweet* voice.

"You are such fun. Little human *childreeen.* Where *aaare* youuu?" she sang.

*Oh, Rose hated this alien.* She wondered if she made the right choice by giving her her second chance for the second time. She observed the room for any weapons, but soon thought otherwise, when two more Slitheen entered the room. *She was clearly outnumbered.* In a few steps Blaine made her way to Rose and pulled the curtain open to reveal the human there.

It came to a bit of a shock to her, when she saw only a disappointed expression on the girl. "What's it with you, little human?" She began, curiously, glancing Rose from head to toe. "I don't smell fear from you..." Her face was beginning to look angrier, if her face could show any emotions altogether.
"I don't fear you, Slitheen." Rose gave her a smirk, which seemed to offend Blon even more.

"Then I shall show you, where you were wrong, my dear." And the next moment she was already pointing her claws at Rose. For a moment Rose could feel her heartbeat quicken a bit. *Fat lot of good you are.* Rose chided her body.

"NOO!" Harriet's voice echoed inside the room. "Take me, FIRST!" Her hands pulled in the air.

And with those words, the doors burst open, the Doctor running inside with a big fire extinguisher in his hands. As expellant gas emitted from the extinguisher into aliens' faces, Rose didn't need to be asked twice to get out of the room. But just before exiting, she pulled the curtain on Blon and kicked her in the legs to see her fall down on the ground.

When they gone out of the room, only then the Doctor seemed to notice Harriet. "Who the hell are you?" he asked in wonder.

"Harriet Jones. MP of Flydale North," she announced.

"Nice to meet you," the Doctor said lightly.

"Likewise." Harriet rushed her response as they were running towards the cabinet room. Behind their backs, the three Slitheen were jumping in full speed to catch up to them. After passing a few corridors, they gone inside the cabinet room just to see the trio on the other side of the doors.

Then the Doctor bluffed his way through with the decanter, making them believe that he would blew them all up if they made another step. *Though the bluff won't stay a bluff for long.* After a few questions, one of the Slitheens seemed to caught on.

"Aaaaahhh, Excuse me? Your device will do what? Triplicate the flammability?" he asked sceptically.

"Is that what I said?" the Doctor said while biting his lower lip.

"You're making it up!" the Slitheen accused.

"Oh well, nice try. Harriet." The Doctor offered Harriet Jones the decanter. "Have a drink. I think you're gonna need it."

"You pass it to the left first," Harriet said, not breaking eye contact with the aliens ahead.

"Sorry." The Doctor handed it to Rose, but she refused to take it and with a laugh gave it back to Harriet.

"No, it's alright. You can keep it." She grinned at the woman. It made the Doctor and Harriet look at her in bewilderment.

"What?" Rose just asked innocently.

"Better pass it to the left," the Doctor said while getting his gaze back at Slitheen.

"To the left." Harriet slowly gave Rose the decanter back, not meeting her eyes. Rose just looked at her hands, now occupied once again and frowned. *They think I have gone mad already.*

The Doctor tried to look tough for a moment, not showing any sign of fear while facing the aliens, while they, on the other hand, were sharpening their claws.
"Fascinating history, Downing Street..." The Doctor began to show off his unlimited knowledge. "If the Cabinet was in session, and in danger, these were about the four safest walls in the whole of Great Britain. End of Lesson." He hit a switch, activating the steel safety doors.

"Installed in 1991, 3 inches of steel lining every single wall. They'll never get in," the Doctor exclaimed proudly, to which Rose just rolled her eyes.

"Great!" Rose beamed at him mockingly. "But how do we get out?"

The Doctor looked around and nodded. "Ah."

Inside the Cabinet room, the Doctor pulled the *unnamed* man inside the cabin. "Sorry," the Doctor said, looking at him. Seconds later, he was going about the room, trying to find the signal to get out. *It's never going to work.* Rose took her surroundings as she knew it would be the last place she was in of the Downing Street. *Now, only the rocket will get us out.*

The Doctor told her about the Slitheen having an ability to compress themselves to become a bit smaller for fitting into human bodies. "Oh, it could come in handy if I had such an ability," Rose said jokingly, he just grinned.

"Excuse me, people are dead. This is no time for making jokes," Harriet scolded them.

"Sorry," Rose said in a voice which didn't sound sorry at all. "You get used to this stuff, when you stay friends long enough with him." Rose pointed towards the Doctor.

"Well, that's a strange friendship," Harriet stated.

While the Doctor tried to find reason how did he knew Harriet Jones, the future Prime Minister was complaining about not getting any use of the emergency protocols, since all of the needed people were downstairs - dead.

"We could just launch a missile at them." Rose shrugged. Harriet looked at her in astonishment and horror.

"You are very violent, young woman."

"I'm serious, we could," Rose said simply.

The Doctor and Harriet were having a small conversation when Rose's phone buzzed. "How do you get a signal here?" the woman asked in disbelief.

"Oh, he's got a super phone," Rose said teasingly.

A picture of Slitheen was seen on the phone. Rose could feel her blood drain. *Her mum! She forgot about the Slitheen at Mickey's. How could she had done that?* She was already panicking when the Doctor asked her. "What is it?" With a gulp Rose answered. "It's Mickey." Her forehead wrinkled.

"Oh, tell your stupid boyfriend, we are busy." He shot a look of annoyance. Rose glared at him in hurt, though he was not the one at fault.

"He's not stupid. Look!" She showed him the picture. Moments later they were on the phone.

"Is that Rickey? Don't talk. Just shut up and go to your computer," the Doctor instructed.

"It's Mickey. And why should I?" Mickey's voice could be heard from the other side of the phone.
"Rickey the idiot. I might just choke up before I finish this sentence but...ah... I need you," he finished forcefully. Rose grinned at that.

Mickey was hacking into the UNIT's database, Harriet was pacing the room while Jackie was talking from the speaker. "I have seen this life of your's, Doctor. And maybe you get up for it. And maybe you think it's all clever and smart. But, you, tell me. Just answer me this." Rose closed her eyes, knowing what was coming.

"Is my daughter safe?"

"I'm going be just fine, mum," Rose told her mum through the speaker.

"Is she safe?" Jackie repeated. "Will she always be safe?"

Rose took a deep breath.

"I won't be, without him, mum," Rose said softly. The Doctor looked up at her in confusion. Rose gave him a small smile. "I'll see you at home, alright?" She spoke to the speaker again.

A pause.

"We are in." Mickey's voice echoed in the room. The Doctor instructed Mickey about the site when a door bell buzzed.

*Thump.*

"Mum, don't answer the doors!" Rose warned her.

"It's Mickey here. And she's already left to open them."

"Get her out of there!" Rose shouted, making the occupants of the Cabinet room jump in surprise. "It could be the Slitheen!"

"Oh, my god," Mickey said. "We forgot about him. Jackie?" he called out.

Rose was looking frantically at the phone. The Doctor seeing her state, placed his one hand on her shoulder. He locked his gaze with hers, trying to convey what words couldn't. Rose just nodded simply.

"They found us," Mickey stated.

Rose could feel her legs become numb. "We need that signal," the Doctor said. Rose gave him a warning look. "Never mind the signal, mum, just get out!"

"We can't. He is at the front door."

"Then defend yourselves!" Rose said in desperation.

Harriet was talking in frustration at the Doctor. "You are supposed to be the expert, think of something!"

"I'm trying!" the Doctor cried.

Rose closed her eyes and clenched her fists. *She can't interfere. She can't. But she was loosing it.*

"I'll take him on, Jackie. You just run." A voice came from the speaker.
"If we want to find their weakness we need to find where they are from," Rose stated in monotone voice.

"Right," the Doctor agreed. "So judging by their body shape that narrows it down to about 5,000 planets in travelling distance. Now what else do we know? Information!" he urged them.

"They are green." Rose said.

"Yep, Narrows it down." The Doctor nodded.

"Good sense of smell," Rose said still in monotone.

"Narrows it down."

Rose was losing her patience. The next time he says narrows it down she is gonna show him just how she will narrow him down.

"They can smell adrenaline." Either Harriet or Rose said. She was not sure as her head was thumping.

"Narrows it down."

Snap. Rose could hear herself snap inside.

"The pig technology," Harriet said.

"Narrows it down."

"The spaceship in the Thames; you said slipstream engine," Rose breathed.

"Narrows it down."

"It's getting in!" Mickey's voice announced.

"They hunt like it's a ritual."

"Narrows it down."

"Wait a minute. Did you notice?-" Harriet began.

And before anyone could continued, Rose interrupted in a rushed voice "When they fart, it doesn't just smell like a fart, it's more like bad breath," Rose said blankly.

"That's it!" Harried exclaimed.

"Calcium decay. Now that Narrows it down!" The Doctor beamed.

"We're getting there, Mum!" Rose tried to assure her family.

"Too late!" Mickey yelled back.

"Acid. Vinegar!" he was shouting in the speaker.

"We got that!" Jackie said in relief.

"You do?" Rose asked in disbelief.

"What, do you think I didn't go shopping just because I'm at Mickey's flat?" Jackie mocked.

"Great. If you did, great, mum," Rose breathed in relief. "Now, pour it on the Slitheen once it reaches you." She instructed, making Doctor turn to face her.

"How did you know that?" he asked her.

"What else you gonna do with it?" She grimaced at him.

And soon a farting explosion sound could be heard. Everyone exhaled a sigh of relief. "Here you go, then." Rose picked her glass of wine in a toast, grinning.

"Our race will face extinction. Unless we strike first." The newly appointed Prime Minister's Slitheen voice could be heard on the telly. "I beg the UNIT. Give us the codes to the nuclear weapons." He faked a concerned face. "Because from this moment on...it's my duty, to inform you. Planet Earth is at war," he ended with a strong impact on the word.

Then the Doctor, Harriet and Rose were back to arguing with the Slitheen about the missile. "I give you a choice. Leave this planet or I'll stop you." The Doctor's voice cold. At that, the aliens just giggled.

"What, you?" Blon mocked him. "Trapped in a box?"

"Yeh," the Doctor simply said. "Me." And pressed the button to separate them from the alien threat.

"Okay, Doctor. I'm not saying I trust you, but there must be something you could do." Jackie was speaking on the phone, when everyone learnt from the News that the massive destruction weapons did exist.

"There is a way out." The Doctor's voice faint. Rose looked up at him. "There was always a way out."

"Okay. Then we use it," Rose said simply.

"But I can't guarantee your daughter will be safe." The Doctor walked to the speaker.

"Don't you dare. Whatever it is. Don't you dare," Jackie warned him.

"That's the thing. If I don't dare, everyone dies," the Doctor said, his voice wavering.

"Do it," Rose said simply.

"You don't even know what it is. You'd just let me?" The Doctor looked at her in bewilderment. How could she trust him so much?

"Yeah." Rose smiled at him fondly. She could remember the first time he had to make this same decision. She had already had full trust in him back then. And it never changed. She wouldn't toss
her life pointlessly, but if she was needed by the Doctor, she would always be by his side.

"Please, Doctor, please, she's my daughter, she's just a kid," Jackie pleaded.

"Do you think I don't know that? 'Cause this is my life, Jackie - it's not fun, it's not smart, it's just standing up and making a decision because nobody else will." His voice cracked a bit.

"Then what are you waiting for?" Rose locked her eyes with his. She hated to make him choose, so she wanted him to know, that it was her choice. "I've made my choice. I'm staying with you no matter what." Her eyes didn't waver.

It scared him. He was scared to lose her. Since the moment the two of them met, she always followed him around recklessly, and made it certain to ensure her presence never leaving his side. Whereas now, it could be all lost in seconds. "I could save the world, but lose you." Words escaped his mouth in a voice full of devastation.

"Except it's not your decision, Doctor." Harriet came forward. "It's mine."

"And who the hell are you?" Jackie spat in disgust.

"Harriet Jones. MP for Flaydel North. The only elective representer of this room. Chosen by the people. For the people. And on the behalf of the people, I command you. Do it."

When the Doctor looked back at Rose, he found her grinning widely at him and he grinned back.

"How do we get out, Doctor?" Harriet asked.

"We don't. We stay here," Rose said simply.

"You knew?" the Doctor asked her in astonishment.

"I read between the lines." She gave him a small smile.

After picking the correct missile everyone waited in anxiety. "Rickey the idiot. The World is in your hands," the Doctor announced.

"Fire."

"How solid are these?" Harriet was asking about the steel doors.

"Not solid enough. Build for short range attack. Nothing this big," the Doctor told her, not sure about the escape plan himself.

Rose made her way to the cabin. "Alright. Now, it's my time to make a decision. We are not going to die. We are going to survive," she exclaimed. "This is small. Solid enough." She checked the cabin. "Both of you, inside," she ordered and the trio sat inside.

"Nice meeting both of you," Harriet said. "You too," the Doctor agreed then looked at Rose.

"I'm so glad I've met you." He smiled at her warmly.

"It was the best thing in my life," Rose said with a tender smile. And the three of them linked their hands tightly, waiting for the destruction to reach them.

Then something hard hit them. The whole place shaking horribly. The cabin rocked hard. Rose wondered if it was that bad the last time. Then it started to roll, throwing its passengers around.
Rose could feel how she crashed onto the Doctor at one moment, since he put his protective arms around her.

And with the last thud they stopped.

*Creak.*

The Doctor kicked the doors out and the three of them stepped outside. Harriet Jones didn't waste time and soon left to attend her "responsibilities". The Doctor just beamed at her. "I thought I knew the name. Harriet Jones. Future Prime Minister."

"She is a great woman," Rose added in agreement. The Doctor looked back at her. "You alright, though?"

"Yeh," she told him fondly. "And we got one more rescue to do." She pointed at him.

"Right," he agreed.

The TARDIS landed in the same storage room they had been the day before. Once they opened the door, Rose sighed in relief. "No military officers here." She grinned.

"Everyone has gathered outside the 10 Downing Street. Or now, outside the pile of rocks and dust." He gave her an innocent look.

"I can't believe that we've actually blown Her Majesty's government headquarters up." She shook her head, chuckling. They started going down the hallways. "And I so wanted to go there at least once." Rose spoke in nostalgia.

"Well you did. And now hush," he warned her.

They listened for any signs of the disturbance, but there was none. The halls were empty so they managed to run towards the holding cell unnoticed.

The doors were locked, however, the Doctor quickly opened them with his sonic screwdriver. Once they made their way inside, they saw nothing. It was pitch black.

"Can't you turn the lights on?" Rose asked him.

"It's not working," he answered.

"Not that kind of light. Use your sonic screwdriver!"

"How do you know it makes a light?"

"Oh, for goodness sake. With hundreds of actions it can perform, you would just leave the lights out." She mocked him.

"Makes sense," he agreed as he made the screwdriver glow. It was still quite dark.

"Um." The Doctor frowned at that. Not like anybody saw that, though.

"Maybe you could move the TARDIS here then, yeh? It would emit the light, better than this. I see no-" She began but cut herself short when her foot met something hard. She winced in pain. "-thing," she choked through her teeth.
"Alright. You stay here," he told her and was about to move, but kicked the same thing Rose had just moments ago and it made him stagger. In the end he fell on something.

"Uff. Really, better get the lights here." His sonic screwdriver could be seen somewhere in the distant. "Something soft here."

"That would be me," Rose told him from underneath.

If anyone could have seen the Doctor's face now, it would be a great show to watch, but now only a gulping sound was heard. "Sorry. You alright? Didn't break you or anything?" He tried to sound nonchalant as he stood up, pulling her up on her feet moments later.

"Nah. It needs better than that," she joked. "Now, go on," she urged him and he soon left the room, grabbing the sonic screwdriver just before.

Thump.

Okay. *That surprised her.* She shook her head. No time for this.

Rose looked around the room. And well, saw nothing. So she walked her way forward, putting her hands ahead of her. She came to a stop, when she felt cold metal bars and a warm even breath on her fingers.

"Hello there." She greeted the living thing lovingly.

"Oink." It made a sound.

"We've found you!" she exclaimed happily, but lowering her voice at the end. Seconds later the TARDIS materialised into the room, illuminating it and showing the occupant of the cell.

With doors opened the Doctor stepped out. "Right, then." He came forward and with a few buzzes let the Space Pig free. "Hurry up, come on," he told Rose and the pig as they followed him inside the TARDIS.

Inside the console room the Doctor gave Rose the directions of the temporal room their new companion would be staying at and after pressing the necessary buttons, he directed them to the Powell Estate.

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After the emotional reunion with Jackie, Rose found herself sitting in the living room, watching Harriet on the telly.

"Harriet Jones. Who *does* she think she is?" Jackie complained to the telly. "Taking all the credit. My daughter saved the world." She leaned in to it.

"Thank the Doctor," Rose smiled. "He's not that bad, if you give him the chance." Rose grinned at her mother.

"Alright. I give him that," Jackie said, unhappy to admit.

"Oh my. The world does change. You actually approve of him." Her grin was wide now.

"Nothing else I can do. Since you are *infatuated* with him." Jackie looked back at the telly.

"I'm not *infatuated* with him, mum. I love him," Rose said with a fondly smile. She felt her mother's gaze and looked around. It took her a moment to catch on just what had she said.
"Erm... Um," she shuttered. "What I meant to say was..."

"Oh, save it." Jackie just dismissed her. "What does he eat?"

Rose blinked a bit in a surprise of the next topic being dropped at her so soon. "He won't eat with us. But I could bring the tea to him. He just might accept it."

After Jackie went inside the kitchen to prepare her tea, Rose's phone rung with "TARDIS" calling. "Hello?" Rose answered softly.

"Right. It's going be a couple of hours, before we could go." The Doctor's voice echoed from the other end of the line.

"Do you want shepherd's pie?" she asked simply.

"What? Where would you get that?" he asked, slightly confused.

"My mum's cooking."

"Great. Then enjoy yourselves," he said dismissively.

"I was asking about you," Rose persisted.

"I don't do that," the Doctor dismissed her at once.

"I know," she said in a faint voice.

Pause.

"I'll have to go meet Mickey, then I'll come back. Don't disappear on me." She chuckled on the phone.

"Okay."

"You sure you don't want the pie?" she asked him teasingly.

"See ya." And the Doctor hang up.

The talk with Mickey went a bit worse than Rose originally thought. When they broke up the last time, he already understood the situation quite well, from observing. But at this moment, he still held a lot of hope. It hurt her to disappoint him so much. And she wanted to keep in touch with him. Luckily enough, he offered to send her off.

Once they reached the TARDIS, Rose saw some kid kneeling on the ground and scrubbing the graffiti words off the TARDIS side.

What were the words again?

Right.

Of course.

Bad Wolf stood tall, together with the Earth. Once again.

The Doctor and Mickey were having a conversation about "Alien hoax", which the news had
created, being not yet ready to face aliens. Rose felt a stab in her heart. Those same people were going to learn the truth about aliens the hard way. She feared for that day to come.

Then she looked back at the Doctor and her worries seemed to cease to exist for that moment. She grinned at him as she walked towards and pulled her backpack off her shoulders.

"The first time I stepped in, It was the spur of a moment. Now, I'm singing in." Or resigning. "You are stuck with me." Rose pointed at him, smiling with tongue between her teeth. The Doctor seemed to be taken aback by surprise, but not an unwelcome one.

With a few goodbye words they stepped inside the TARDIS, closing from the world outside those doors.

Once inside, Rose rushed to the room to where their new friend was now staying. She found him moving about, sniffing everything - still a bit lost of his surroundings. When he saw Rose, he moved towards her.

"Hello." Rose greeted the piggy.

She seemed to use that word a lot these days. Too much influence of her Doctor, she guessed, as she chuckled sadly. She missed him. The him, who knew everything about her. Who knew her as she first came in contact with him and who burnt the sun just to say goodbye to her. Her heart tightened.

It was just not fair. She wanted to tell him everything. And she hated the knowledge she had. Not only the moments of their adventures, but that she knew better now than to disturb their timelines by telling the Doctor the truth. Which was who knows what truth, still.

Sigh. She sighed out loud and the piggy moved his head to the side in a question. It made Rose chuckle. "Oh, you adorable little thing." She patted him.

She was too immersed in playing with their newly made friend that she didn't notice how the Doctor came halfway inside the room. Just watching her from the doorways.

While watching Rose, the Doctor couldn't believe what he was seeing. How compassionate she was. Rose was the first known human to him who cared so much about aliens. And he was even more amazed just how it suited her. How right the picture in front of him looked. The Doctor still had a few questions of his own about Rose, as she seemed to have some kind of secret around her. Besides the times when she looked too much excited and fantastic, he could see a deep sorrow in her eyes. He recognised it, because it was so very close to his own. And what puzzled him even more, was that it looked like even Jackie and Mickey were not aware of any of it.

But he decided to take one step at a time. To let her keep her thoughts to herself. If there was anyone to be complained about being too much shut off, then it would be him. They will get to know each other as time passes by. For now, this was good enough.

_to be continued..._
"What are we going to do with him?" Rose asked the Doctor while swinging casually around in the jumpseat.

"Possibly send him to The Pig Wonderland," he answered while running around the controls.

"Can't we just keep him?" she asked slowly.

"What? A Humanoid Pig? I'm not making this place domestic, I told you." He pointed at her.

"He's not part of the domestic," Rose insisted. "He's an alien. Well, at least now he is...you said you wanted to help him," she pleaded.

"And that's what we're going to do. Take him back home. Where all the world is full of pigs."

"That's not fair." Rose wanted to say something more, but lost that chance.

"We've landed," the Doctor announced.

"Where? To The Pig Wonderland?"

"No. I've got a signal. We'll have to postpone that trip for later," he said and walked to the doors.

"You coming?"

"Yeh!" she shouted out.

Once they stepped out, Rose saw just where they have landed. She gulped at the thought of what was yet to come. "S-so, where are we?" she tried to ask casually and hoped the Doctor didn't notice a small quiver in her voice.

"Utah. North America. About half a mile underground." The Doctor looked around and turned the lights on.

"And when are we?"

"It's the year 2012," the Doctor said absentmindedly, already immersed in his inspection of the place, pausing near the glass showcases. Rose glanced at the nearest exhibit and walked over it. "It's the Slitheen's arm. It's been stuffed."

But the Doctor already had his whole attention on a specific showcase in place. "Oh, look at you," he breathed out in awe.

*Look at you, indeed.*

Rose went to join the Doctor while memories of long ago resurfaced in her mind.

*What are they?*

*Cybermen.*

*They are people?*

*They were.*

She could hear the conversation in her head, she once had had with her Doctor and it took all her
willpower to remain steady. She closed her eyes. Not just yet. She was not ready to face her nightmares yet, but they were chasing after her in full speed. Not allowing her to forget of all the tragedy she had witnessed.


"Is th..." Rose faltered. "Is that where the signal is coming from?" She knew the answer was negative.

"Nah. It's stone dead," he said softly, never leaving his eyes off the Cyberman's severed head. "This signal is alive. Something is reaching out. Calling for help." He reached out to touch the glass. Rose was already opening her mouth to stop him, but with only a slight contact, the alarm broke out. The Doctor looked around just to find an army of armed men surround them in seconds time. All guns pointed right at them.

"Aliens are collected here. And that makes you an exhibit A." Rose looked at the Doctor meaningfully.

They were brought into the Henry van Statten's cabinet room. And he looked as unpleasant as the last time, sitting in his chair all proud and all. He was talking with Adam about the alien musical instrument, which they didn't know yet about. Oh, Adam. Be glad your head still doesn't open up.

"I really wouldn't hold it like that," the Doctor began, not being able to suppress himself.

"Shut it," the ginger woman chided him. The Doctor looked at her for a moment and back to Henry.

"Really, though. That's wrong." The Doctor tried again.

"Is it dangerous?" Adam asked in concern.

"No," the Doctor answered simply. "Just looks silly." He tried to take it from the man in chair, and although, the men pointed guns at him in defense, Statten quickly stopped them and handed the instrument to the Time Lord.

"You just need to be... delicate," the Doctor said, beaming. His fingertips caressed the surface of the instrument with a gentle touch, making a soft and beautiful music. Completely out of place, compared to the museum it was in.

"It's a musical instrument," Henry said, faking an amazed smile. Not like it was of any use for him.

"Here, let me." He grabbed the instrument from the Doctor's hands and tried to play it himself. In a few seconds it was tossed on the ground, like a piece of trash. It made the Doctor frown.

"I'm the Doctor. And who are you?" he looked at him in a warning.

"Like you don't know." Henry van Statten spoke in a cocky tone. "You just stumbled in by mistake." He joggled his head in a mocking manner.

"Pretty much sums me up," the Doctor just agreed with a laugh.

"Question is..." Henry walked out from his table. "How did you get in? 53 floors down. With your little cat-burglar accomplice. Quite a collector yourself. She's rather pretty." He gestured to Rose,
smiling at her in a wrong way.

"She's gonna smack you if you keep calling her 'she'," Rose shot back.

"She is English too!" Henry exclaimed with fake enthusiasm.

When both - the Doctor and Rose made no effort to recognize Henry van Statten, and since Rose had no intention of pleasing his ego, Adam took the job upon himself.

"So you're just about an expert in everything, except the things in your museum. Anything you don't understand, you lock up." The Doctor mocked him.

"And you claim greater knowledge?" Henry challenged him.

"I don't need to make claims. I know how good I am," the Doctor said simply.

"And yet I captured you," Henry sneered at him. "Right next to the Cage. What were you doing down there?"

"You tell me."

"The Cage contains my one living specimen."

"And what's that?" The conversation got to the next speed level.

"Like you don't know."

"Show me."

"You wanna see it?"

"Blimey, you can smell the testosterone," Rose exhaled.

"You, English. Look after the girl," Henry instructed Adam. "And, you, doctor with no name. Come and see my pet." Gesturing to the doors as they walked out.

Rose followed Adam to his own "little storage room". He showed her some alien weapons and stuff, to which Rose played innocence in not knowing what it was.

"The thing is. It's all true," Adam began with excitement. "Everything the UNIT tries to keep quiet about - spacecraft, aliens, visitors to Earth. They really exist."

Rose just let him talk. "That's amazing," she said in a sneer, but Adam failed to notice that. "So, how did you end up here?" Rose unwillingly tried to keep the talk going.

"Van Statten has agents all over the world looking for geniuses to recruit."

"Oh right, you're a genius." Rose raised an eyebrow to him. "A genius with a chip in his head..." Rose said under her breath.

"Sorry, but yeah. I can't help it. I was born clever." *Clearly oblivious to the last sentence.* "When I was eight, I logged onto the US Defence System, nearly caused World War Three."

"Wonderful," Rose said in a mock.

"Well, you shoulda been there. Just to see them running about... Fantastic!"
That made Rose chuckle. "You sound like the Doctor."

"Are you and him.." He moved his hands in a gesture.

"No," Rose said softly. "We are just friends..." She ended with a sad distant smile.

"Oh." Adam bit his lips. "But you clearly want something more," he stated.

"What? No." Rose tried to deny. "Well, I mean ye-h." She was starting to get embarrassed. "But no, I mean...I don't know." She let out a nervous laugh.

"No, I understand. It's alright," he said in a disappointed voice.

"It's complicated," Rose breathed.

"Right. That cursed word. Complicated," he spat the last word. It made Rose relax a bit as she laughed. "Well, maybe, I can show you something interesting. So you might change your mind," he said teasingly to her.

"Are you trying to win me over?" Rose laughed at her own words.

"Am I so obvious?" Adam grinned at her. Rose chuckled. "Well, look at this." He pressed the button just to show the Dalek on the screen. Rose's face got pale at once. The man in a an orange suit was steadily making his way toward it, with an intention of torture.

A drilling sound could soon be heard together with the Dalek's scream. Rose's face was blank. It was a Dalek. The same species who just refused to go away. And separated her and the Doctor just so many times.

More screams.

Rose closed her eyes. She was battling with herself, not knowing what was the right course of action in this situation.

"We better not look at this, after all..." Adam said silently and was inches from the button to shut it off.

"Take me down," Rose said in a hollow voice as she walked past him.

She couldn't help but remember it reaching out for the sun. It was not the Dalek anymore. It was something else. If by absorbing a part of her DNA it got humanity in it, she would give him enough to stop it from killing.

Adam easily got them in the room with faking a "Special access" from Van Satten. Once Rose locked her eyes on the Dalek, she felt a lump in her throat.

Was this the right choice?

"Dont get too close," Adam said from behind. Rose was slowly walking towards it. Inches from it, she greeted it.

"Hello..." she said softly.

No answer.
"My name is Rose Tyler." She started. "Look...I wan-..." She could feel her voice crack. "I want to help you...but you got to help me too," she said, making her voice more steady.

"You-want-to-help-me?" the Dalek said faintly.

"Yeh." Rose nodded a bit. "I can make you better, but you got to promise me, that you won't hurt anybody else."

"I-am-a-soldier. My-duty-is-to-exterminate."

"No!" Rose shook her head. "You can be better than that." She smiled faintly.

"There-is-no-point-in-me. I-am-all-alone." It lowered its "camera eye".

"You can feel the sun again," Rose said gently. "Don't you want that? To feel again?" she asked carefully.

"I-can-not-feel-anything-but-pain."

"I'll help you," Rose said faintly as she placed her hand on the metal surface of the Dalek. With a single touch it came back to life and it was burning Rose, but she didn't move her hand away.

"Rose! Move away from it!" She could hear Adam's voice. But she stayed in her position.

It hurt. And a lot.

It was similar to the time in the engine room with the lever. She closed her eyes from pain, but soon enough felt how a warm energy surrounded her hand. She fluttered her eyes and saw it glow in gold gentle light. It eased her pain. She watched in bewilderment at her and the Dalek, who was still in chains as it didn't move away from her touch.

Soon she felt herself being grabbed from behind, her palm leaving the Dalek. The man took her hand into his and looked in shock how the wound of her burns closed up in his eyes. "Who are you?" he asked her in disbelief. Rose couldn't really answer that.

Seconds later, the Dalek broke free from the chains and now was dangerously full of life. "Stay back." The man informed Rose as he stepped towards it with a gun. Dalek pointed a plumber towards him.

"What're you going to do?" he said in a sneer. "Suck me in?"

"No!" Rose dashed in front of the man as the Dalek began to prepare itself to do just that. "Don't do that," she pleaded. "You are better than this, I know it." She looked it straight in the "camera eye".

It stopped and backed away a bit. "I-will-obey!" it announced.

"You are together with it," the man stated with his mouth half open. Rose looked at him in surprise. "You are partners with a monster."

"Wha-" Rose began, but soon the man was out running from the room, calling his authorities.

"What did you do?" Adam asked as he walked to her. The Dalek quickly started moving towards him, threateningly. "Whoah." Adam put his arms in defence.

"It's alright. He is a friend." Rose told the Dalek. It seemed to calm down.
"Since when are you friends with it?" Adam asked in disbelief.

"It absorbed my DNA. It feels me," Rose explained in a hurry.

In a few seconds men with pointed guns stormed into the room, quickly making their way to Rose and grabbing her. "What are you doing?" She tried to struggle.

"We've received orders to capture the alien," one of them stated in monotone as they were dragging her outside.

"Then why the hell are you grabbing me for? I'm human!" Rose cried.

"RELEASE-HER! RELEASE! RELEASE!" The Dalek was moving towards the men.

"Don't!" Rose warned it. "No shooting. Please," she pleaded it. However, when the men tried to silence her and dragged her more forcefully, the Dalek started to shout "EXTERMINATE!"

In the meantime, the Doctor was held prisoner, as Henry van Statten started his "scans" on him.

"Fascinating!" He clapped his hands together. "Two hearts." He beamed at the monitor.

"So, that's your secret," the Doctor spat in disgust. "You don't just collect the stuff. You scavenge them."

"This technology has been falling to Earth for centuries. All it took was the right mind to use it properly." He shook his head nonchalantly.

Moments later a call arrived, informing Henry of the disturbance. He left the room for a few moments, leaving the Doctor alone to get his breath back.

"Hold her down." Henry van Statten instructed the men as they put Rose behind bars.

"I'm human! You can't just hold the human imprisoned!" Rose shouted back at him. "It's not even a prison cell! I'm not gonna be your lab rat, you crazy bastard," she finished with deadly voice.

"Oh. I am hardly convinced that you are human, young girl." He sneered at her.

"And what're you gonna do, when you find out that I'm human after all. Eh? The ruler of the internet!" Rose shouted at him in a confident voice, even if she was not feeling all that confident herself.

"If that happens..." He looked away nonchalantly. "Then I'll just clean your memory off, and toss you somewhere in the desert." He looked back at her and shrugged. "Like it never happened." He walked off laughing in evil voice.

"You can't do that!" Rose yelled out to him. "Oi! Come back here!"

With that, the doors closed shut, only an echo of laughter giving shivers to Rose.

Soon enough, Henry was back to the Doctor, with a huge grin and satisfaction onto his face.

"Oh. You are so full of surprises, Doctor," Van Satten said in fascination. "It seems, you brought us another living specimen to experiment with."
"What are you talking about?" The Doctor looked at him in bewilderment.

"Like you don't know," he said blankly. "Your little pretty accomplice was alien too, it seems." His grin back on his face.

"What nonsense are you spouting?" the Doctor said darkly, clearly concerned about another living specimen to experiment with sentence. "She's human."

"Superhuman then!" Henry exclaimed. "She brought the Metaltron, or how do you call it, Dalek, back to life!" He laughed out loud. "And it seems it listens to her. Wonderful!"

All kind of crazy ideas were running through the Doctor's mind, as he wondered what could have happened. "Did she touch it?" he asked sharply.

"It seems so. Why?" Van Satten asked cockily. "Rings a bell?

"She gave him her DNA, as it absorbed it, its life was restored," he explained frantically.

"Mister Van Satten." A voice came through the speakers. "The Metaltron got loose. As we took the girl out of the room, it started shooting at us. Guns ain't working, sir!" The Doctor closed his eyes. "Release me, if you want to live," he said dangerously.

Inside the cell, Rose was anxiously pacing about. She had to think of something. She had completely her responsibility now, and if it could only listen to her - she had to be near.

A faint lock sound could be heard in a distance and soon a familiar face came to view.

"Adam...Adam?" Rose called out to him. "What're you doing here?" she asked in surprise.

"Saving your life," he said while working his way with the locks on the cell. "I don't know how you did that, but you look pretty much human to me. Don't wanna let you scavenged like those other specimen." He smiled at her nervously.

She couldn't believe her ears. She was so disappointed in him, after he put his ambitions before the greater good in Satellite 5. But here he was, helping her out to live.

"Thank you," she said softly.

"You can thank me later. Now there is no time to lose. That Dalek thing got lose after you were taken away. We gotta run," he said while grabbing her hand. Rose shook it off.

"No," Rose said simply.

"What are you doing? We got no time." He tried to approach her again, but she backed away.

"He's my responsibility. I'll take care of it. You go. And thanks again, for letting me out." She smiled at him fondly as she started to move past him.

"I'm going with you."

"Wha-? You can't! It's dangerous." She tried to reason.

"Then you are in it too." He smiled at her, making her grin at him in disbelief.
As Rose and Adam ran through the hallway, they had to pass through the groups of dead bodies, left there on the ground.

*Oh, no. We are too late.*

"Hurry!" Rose shouted out as she ran further.

They found themselves in a corridor with stairs. "Stairs," Adam stated, he breathed a sigh of relief. If only for a moment longer he didn't have to meet face to face with that metal thing, it was worth it. "It could not have gone that way. It has no legs! Let's go back the other way." He started to make a move.

"It can levitate itself. Come on." Rose rushed upstairs.

The momentary relief gone from Adam's face.

They made their way into a huge basement like storage room and saw the men ready at arms to shoot the coming Dalek.

"Hold your fire!" the commander yelled out when he spotted two humans out there in the open.

"Am I still a wanted person?" Rose asked, panting heavily in whisper to Adam.

"Possibly," he replied in a whisper too.

"You two, get the hell out of here!" The commander's voice was heard again.

"Am I allowed to go?" Rose asked.

"We got the special instructions from Henry van Statten to let you go. But if you disturb our operation, we won't be held responsible if we shoot you in the process."

"Oh. Alright then," Rose said in a half-joke. "But if I could just talk to it-" she began again.

"Thank you, miss Tyler. But I think I can handle one robot on my own." The commander dismissed her. "Now move away!"

*This would not work out well.* They both ran further inside, past the men.

As the Dalek came into view, it soon spotted Rose and zoomed in his view on the "camera eye". Adam grabbed her hand and was pulling her to run.

"I got to stop it," Rose said with a firm voice, as she broke free from his grasp.

"You are mad! It will kill you." Adam eyed her suspiciously.

"It won't. It knows me," Rose said unwavering and soon she was out of his sight, running towards the Dalek.

Once she reached it, the commander started shouting at her again. "What are you doing? I told you we will shoot!"

"I told you, I can help!" she said moving backwards towards the Dalek with hands pulled in defence. "There is no need for more death." Her eyes trailed off from one man to another. She was trying to let them understand.
"Move away or we are going to start shooting," the commander warned her as the men loaded their guns.

Gulp.

"YOU-WILL-NOT-HURT-HER!" the Dalek stated shaking. Rose looked back at him.

Back in the van Satten's room, the Doctor was discussing the plan of how to get rid of the Dalek, when the ginger woman announced.

"We got vision." And with those words the screen lit up, showing a very dangerous scene.

"It wants us to see," the Doctor stated, slowly moving to the screen. "Rose!" he called out for her, looking frantically at her so close to the Dalek.

"Hello." She just smiled at the camera. "I'm alright, Doctor. But those men kinda want to start shooting," she half-joked.

"Rose!" the Doctor repeated in a concerned voice.

"Open fire!" the commander announced.

"NO!" Doctor yelled at the screen. And as soon as the shooting started Rose found herself surrounded by some kind of forcefield, the bullets not reaching her. The Doctor breathed in relief, when he saw Rose momentary safe.

The Dalek levitated above everyone's heads and shot a blast to the fire alarm, making water pour out of the ceiling. Rose understood what was coming next, so she shouted out to him.

"No! Don't do that. Everyone, step back!" she yelled out to them, but was left unheard.

"THEY-TRIED-TO-HARM-YOU!" the Dalek replied as he was aiming for the ground.

"But look, I'm alright! Thanks to you!" She made a nervous laugh. "Now, stop it, please," she pleaded.

"I-MUST-PROTECT-YOU!" And with that he beamed his blaze towards the ground, making everyone in the water electrocuted.

Rose closed her eyes. *It was all her fault. She made this happen.*

The deafening silence greeted them.

Completely unfazed, the Dalek made its way to the camera.

"I-WILL-SPEAK-TO-THE-DOCTOR!"

"Alright then. Speak," the Doctor answered in the screen.


"What's your next trick?"

"I-HAVE-BEEN-SEARCHING-FOR-THE-DALEKS."
"Yeah, I saw. Downloading the Internet. What did you find?" the Doctor said, sneering.

"I-SCANNED-YOUR-SATELLITES-AND-RADIO-TELESCOPES."

"And?"

"NOTHING. WHERE-SHAL-I-GET-MY-ORDERS-NOW?"

"You are not going to get any. It's all gone."

"THEN-I-SHALL-FOLLOW-MY-FORMED-ORDER. TO-DESTROY!"

"No!" Rose cried out still in the forcefield. "You can't!"

"BUT-IT-IS-MY-DUTY!" The Dalek tried to reason.

"I'll give you orders," Rose said simply.

"I-WILL-RECEIVE-ORDERS?"

"Yes," Rose simply said. "Now, let me out, and follow me," she said softly and soon was released to the ground.

"Rose! What are you doing? It's going to kill you!" The Doctor looked frantically at her.

"No, he won't." Rose shook her head. "I'll be alright," she said with a sad smile and went further away from the view, the Dalek following behind.

"ROSE!" the Doctor called out.

They walked there for a while. The unlikely duo. Rose and the Dalek with expectations from her. She wondered just where exactly her situation was in right now. They were walking now. But where to? She just legged it, before she could even think what was her plan. Once they reached the staircase, Rose's phone rang. She picked it up reluctantly, having a vague idea what was coming.

"Where are you?" the Doctor's voice asked from the phone.

"Level 49," Rose answered.

"You got to keep moving, the vault is being sealed off up to level 46," he instructed her in all seriousness. "Try to move away from it," he said in a calm voice, but his insides were clearly not feeling so. He felt everything but calm right now.

"I'm going to be alright." Rose tried to soothe him.

"Rose, for God's sake, just keep moving!" the Doctor said in a frantic voice. *He was loosing his composure.*

The duo then continued going up the stairs. Taking up the speed, but not running. Mind you, the Dalek could only levitate and it was not that fast. And there was just no way that Rose would leave him be on its own. Soon enough, they exited through the doors into some kind of corridor. As they went out the corner, they met up with the running Adam.

The alarm of the bulkhead being closed down could be heard somewhere ahead of them.
"Oh, great. You are still with it," Adam complained, when he saw Rose with her companion. "I don't wanna be in the middle of the shooting, sorry." With those words he ran towards the closing bulkhead, leaving other two do as they saw fit.

Of course, Adam.

Rose looked back at the Dalek, who was moving steadily next to her. She heard the steps of soldiers somewhere in the distance.

"Brilliant. If you won't kill me, then they will," Rose said half-jokingly to the Dalek. Time was running short. And she pretty much got the picture of how the events were playing out this time round.

Rose didn't bother to run. She knew, she wouldn't make it. And she had to take responsibility for all those men, who would be left alone with the Dalek, if she were to leave.

And then it closed. "Rose, where are you!?" the Doctor spoke in a worried voice. "Rose! Did you make it?"

"Sorry," Rose only said.

"I-AM-RUNNING-OUT-OF-POWER!" the Dalek announced, shaking.

"What do you mean?" Rose asked, feeling a bit shaken by its sudden exclamation.

"I-WILL-NOT-BE-ABLE-TO-FORM-A-FORCESHIELD!" And with that he opened his casing up, revealing the living creature in it. It blast a hole in the celling as the sun reached out, warming up the lonely Dalek with its light.

"I-AM-GLAD-TO-BE-ABLE-TO-FEEL-THE-SUN-FOR-THE-LAST-MOMENT."

Rose could hear the Doctor gulp in the phone.

"It wasn't your fault, Doctor. Remember that, okay?" Rose said, her voice cracking.

"Can't you stop your own men?!" The Doctor's voice could be heard shouting at Henry.

"They refused to listen, saying its their duty to protect the nation from the monster, there is no way we can make it back there in time. I'm sorry." Even Henry van Satten sounded a bit guilty, although, that could still be a debate.

"It's alright," Rose spoke softly. "I chose this... And you know what? I wouldn't have missed it for the world." She tried to laugh but it only came as a sad sound. She really wished for more time with him. With either of him.


"I... I just-" the Doctor stammered.

And then a huge group of soldiers appeared before their very eyes. They made their formation and got ready, pointing their guns threateningly at the duo. When the men were ready to fire, the Dalek came forward.

"ORDER-MY-DESTRUCTION!" it told Rose.
"Wha-?" Rose blinked at him for a moment. "I can't! Why are you doing this?"


"B-but.." She shook her head.

"ORDER-ME-TO-DIE!"

Rose took a shuddering breath. "Do it," she said faintly.

"I-WILL-OBEY!" And then he levitated in the air, gently crossing the atmosphere. He closed his casing down, and the metal orbs came loose from its surface, making a forcefield around the Dalek. Sparks of electricity flashed and in seconds the Dalek vanished.

*It was like it was never there...*

The men stood there in bewilderment as they lowered their guns down.

Henry van Satten was dragged by the men to have his memories erased and later to be dropped somewhere in the desert for his lack of responsibility and causing so many casualties.

When Rose made her way to the TARDIS, the Doctor was already waiting there for her. He made his way to her to hug her tightly. "I thought you were going to die."

"Can't get rid of me." Rose chuckled.

"I'm sorry," the Doctor continued tenderly. "My people have died because of its race. I wanted it gone...And now I'm really the last one of the Time War."

"Hey, it's alright. I get it." Rose squeezed his hand a bit. "And you are not alone. I'm not going anywhere." He just smiled at her.

"But its actions...they seemed so...human." She looked him in the eyes.

"It absorbed a great deal of your DNA. And it ceased to exist as a Dalek from that moment on. It would still feel the need to obey his orders of destruction, but your word meant more to him."

"What, are you saying that the Dalek fancied me?" Rose said in disbelief.

"They don't really have such emotions... But it felt a need to protect you. Lucky for me." He beamed at her and she grinned.

Adam soon was present in the room. "We better get out. Van Satten has disappeared, they are closing down the base."

"About time." Rose grinned.

"Well then, you better get going home," the Doctor said nonchalantly. *He really felt the need to get rid of a certain English kid.*

"Yeh, and we got to hurry up and leave!" Adam was moving backwards.

Rose stopped him in his tracks. "Thank you, for helping me escape the cell." She told him with all honesty. "But we're going to be alright, you go." She pushed him slightly.
"What are you talking about?" Adam looked at her, bemused.

"Go on, boy," the Doctor urged him.

"You are both mad." He shook his head and ran though the doors.

The Doctor just beamed, watching his retreating back. "He was kinda pretty," the Doctor stated, now feeling more relaxed.

"Really? Didn't notice." Rose laughed.

"I thought you were gonna ask me to take him." He raised an eyebrow at her.

"Nah. He may be a genius, but the stars are better off with only one." She looked fondly at him. "He looked like the type to make some disasters around him," she added.

"Oh. Like you?" He mocked her.

"Shut up." She laughed and slapped on his arm lightly, making the Doctor **ow**, as they walked inside the TARDIS.

[to be continued...]
"You sure you don't regret not taking that pretty boy with you?" the Doctor asked Rose in a mock as they both walked out of the TARDIS.

"Yeh." Rose nodded while smiling fondly at him.

"Looks like it's just you and me then." The Doctor smiled at her.

"Yeah," she agreed.

"Good."

"Yep." And they locked each other gazes for a moment.

"Right." The Doctor turned away a bit. "So, it's two-hundred thousand, it's a spaceship - no, wait a minute - space station, and, er... let's go and try that gate over there. Off we go." The Doctor began to walk towards the gate.

"What, you not gonna say more?" Rose raised an eyebrow. "And it's a bit warm in here. They could have turned the heating off."

"What else you wanna know?" he asked innocently. "You are not an amateur anymore, are you? The thing about time travel, is like visiting Paris. You can't just read the guide book. You've got to throw yourself in, eat the food, use the wrong verbs, get charged double and end up kissing complete strangers - or is that just me?" He looked at her questioningly. "Come on, let's not waste time, tot!" the Doctor said playfully while going ahead of her.

"Right." Rose laughed. "Hold on... Did you just say tot!?" Rose called out for him, following in his tracks.

Once they went through the gate and gone upstairs, a big glass window appeared before their eyes with the Earth as the main view.

"This is..." Rose gave him a meaningful look.

"The Fourth Great and Bountiful Human Empire. Planet Earth is at its height, covered with megacities, five moons, population 96 billion, the centre of a galactic domain that stretches across a million planets and species," the Doctor exclaimed proudly.

"Impressive." Rose smiled at him.

"I am impressive. I know." The Doctor grinned, proud of himself.

"I was talking about the Earth." Rose chuckled.

"Oh. But I'm too."

"Just go!" Rose couldn't help but laugh out loud now. She pushed him towards the exit to where the food counters were. Obviously, the Doctor was still unaware of the situation there, so started to blab about good manners and stuff.

"Let me tell you. You're gonna like this fantastic period of history. The human race at its most intelligent. Culture, art, politics. This era's got fine food, good manners-" He was cut short by a
lout signal of the food courts' opening hours.

Everyone was rushing about, buying fast food, shouting through each other. It was one big mess. Like in the market.

"Out the way!"

"Somebody there?"

"Keep it moving."

"One at a time! Now what was it?"

"Kronkburger with cheese, kronkburger with pajatos."

"Oi! You, mate! stop pushing," the vendor chided one of his customers.

"Fine cuisine." Rose nodded sarcastically at the Doctor.

"My watch must be wrong." He checked it in concern. "No, it's fine. It's weird." He looked around.

"That's what you get for showing off." Rose pointed at him in a smirk. "Your history's not that good."

"My history is perfect," he shot back.

"Well, obviously not," she sang in a voice through her teeth. The Doctor frowned.

"And they're all human, Doctor," she said in a calm voice now.

"Of course they are human," the Doctor said in bewilderment.

"Million species. What happened to that?" She raised an eyebrow in question.

"Ah." The Doctor came to a realisation. "Good question. Actually, that is a good question," he agreed and looked at Rose, who was smiling at him happily. "You have something in mind?"

"Well..." Rose began slowly, not looking at the Doctor. "Since we're already here. And the fine cuisine turned out to be..." Rose gestured to the food courts. "Kronkburgers, chips..." Rose looked up at him.

"You wanna sit around and eat chips here?" the Doctor asked her in a frowned surprise.

"Why not?" Rose asked innocently. "Come on." Rose dragged the Doctor to the court.

"We gonna need money. You stay in the queue, I'll be right back," he said and walked towards the ATM.

Quickly enough, after the Doctor got his money from the cash machine, he walked back to Rose, who was already getting their order and he just had to pay. Once they have decided on the table to sit on, they sat down and started eating between the small conversations.

"You know, smiling expression suits you a lot more than frowning," Rose said lightly.

"I don't frown." He tried to deny while at the same time frowning.

"That!" Rose pointed at his face, laughing and nearly choked up on her food.
"It's how my face looks like. Nothing can be done." He looked away from her, clearly offended.

"Just smile!" Rose teased him.

"What, like this?" He gave a huge fake smile, which looked quite crazy as his eyes popped out a bit.

Rose began to hysterically laugh.

The Doctor continued to frown.

After Rose calmed down, she asked. "So, what's our plan now?"

"I don't know. Must go around, blend in. Maybe something interesting will pop up." He grinned at her. Rose spotted Suki and Cathica, moments later, and pointed at them.

"We could try asking them?" Rose said nonchalantly.

"Good thinking." The Doctor nodded proudly at her. He then stood up and walked towards the girls.

"Erm, this is gonna sound daft, but can you tell me where I am?" the Doctor asked as he approached the girls.

"Floor 139." Cathica pointed at the written numbers. "Could they write it any bigger?"

"Floor 139 of what?"

"Must've been a hell of a party," Cathica said in a mock, eyeing him.

"You're on Satellite Five," Suki answered simply.

"And what's Satellite Five?" the Doctor insisted.

"Come on. How could you get on board without knowing where you are?" Cathica looked him up sceptically.

"Look at me. I'm stupid!" The Doctor shrugged and then smiled widely.

"Hold on, wait a minute." Suki looked around nervously. "Are you a test? Some sort of management test kind of thing?"

"You've got me." The Doctor nodded. "Well done! You're too clever for me." Showing them his psychic paper.

"We were warned about this in basic training," Suki said in an understanding voice to Cathica.

"Right, fire away, ask your questions." Cathica seemed to be not that affected.

"Oh, I'll. But me and my colleague..." He pointed at where Rose was sitting. After seeing them, Rose waved at them with a grin. "Were just having a bit of a break of our own. Would you care to join us?" he asked lightly.

"I suppo-se...that's alright," Cathica said warily, as they began walking towards the table with Rose.
"Hello." Rose greeted them warmly.

"Hi. My Name is Cathica and this is Suki. We hear you are together with the management."

"Yep." Rose nodded. "Now, sit, go on."

The girls glanced at each other for a second, but soon decided to join them.

They talked about their motives to join the company and some other stuff, when the topic about the floor 500 came up.

"If it gets me to floor 500, I'll do anything," Cathica stated in confidence.

"Why? What happens to floor 500?" the Doctor asked her with full attention, while Rose picked a chip from his plate.

"The walls are made of gold," Cathica said in an obvious voice.

"Want one?" Rose offered the chip to the Doctor, lightly waving it into his face.

"No. You take it," he refused it lightly and the next moment directed his attention back to Cathica.

"This is what we do," Cathica continued, glancing at both of them. "Latest news. Sandstorms on the New Venus Archipelago, 200 dead. Over on the Bad Wolf channel, The Face of Boe has just announced he's pregnant."

"De Faze o Boe ish pregnad?" Rose asked with full mouth, taken by surprise and choked up on her food. She started coughing and the Doctor just rubbed her back.

"That's why I tell you, don't speak with your mouth full," he chided lightly.

"Are you two-" Suki gestured to the both of them.

"What?" the Doctor asked.

"You are married, aren't you?" Suki stated.

"Wha-?" Rose began to say, but now clearly was losing air.

"I told you, tot," he said and the next moment hit her back with a force that Rose's eyes just popped out and she let out a very very faint sound. "...am okay..."

"Right then." The Doctor looked back at their guests. "I get it. You broadcast the news."

"We ARE the news," Cathica stated. "We're the journalists. We write it, package it and sell it. 600 channels - all coming out of Satellite Five, broadcasting everywhere."

And then an alarm broke off, informing the end of the lunch break.

"I guess it's time we show you how we work." With that, the group made their way to one of the "white rooms", where the information was being channelled. What they didn't know at a time was, that the Editor was already starting to keep an eye on them.

"Now, everybody behave, we have a management inspection." Cathica started, standing in the middle of the room next to the black chair. "How d'you want it, by the book?"
"Right from scratch, thanks," the Doctor answered and looked to Rose, grinning.

"OK. So! Ladies, gentlemen, multisex, undecided or robot, my name is Cathica Santini Khadeni. That's Cathica with a C, in case you want to write to Floor 500, and, please, do. Now, please feel free to ask any questions." She walked to lay down on the chair.

"Here we go. And. Engage safety." Everyone in the circle placed their hands above the engraved palms.

"And three. Two. And spike!" And soon a light blue blast came through a hole in her forehead to the object above their heads.

Rose looked at the sight in blank expression as she was thinking. Cathica was a clever woman, and they surely will need her this time round too, as she doubted the Doctor will manage to not get in trouble and suppress the urge to not check the floor 500. Although, the upcoming promotion was one thing which had to be taken care of by Rose's hands.

"Compressed information," the Doctor began. "Streaming into her! Reports from every city, every country, every planet, and they all get packaged inside her head. She becomes part of the software. Her brain IS the computer!"

"If it all goes through her, she must be a genius," Rose repeated her previous words automatically.

"Nah, she wouldn't remember any of it." He began walking towards the circle and Rose close behind. "There's too much. Her head'd blow up! The brain's the processor. Soon as it closes, she forgets."

"And the people round the edge?"

"They've all got tiny little chips in their head, connecting them to her. And they transmit. 600 channels, every single fact in the Empire beams out of this place. And that's what I call power."

The next moment Suki was shocked by the power coming through the engraved palms. She jumped in surprise.

"Come off it, Suki, I wasn't even halfway! What was that for?" Cathica shot at Suki.

"Sorry. It must've been a glitch." The woman looked a bit lost herself.

Rose looked at the Doctor meaningfully. He just shrugged.

"PROMOTION!" A woman's voice could be heard in the room and soon a blue screen was present on the wall.

Cathica was praying it to be her, but soon enough the computer revealed the promotion for - "Suki Macrae Fantrell. Please proceed to floor 500."

"I don't believe it!" Suki stood up, clearly mesmerized by the sight.

"How did you manage that?" Cathica asked, blaming.

This was it.

Rose walked up to Suki and placed her hand on her shoulder. "I'm terribly sorry, but there must have been some kind of mistake here," Rose said in a business like voice.
"A mistake?" the woman asked her in disbelief. "I know I cut the contact too soon, but there must have been a glitch, as I said. Certainly it's not a mistake about my promotion, right?"

"I'm sorry, but it is exactly that." Rose tried to comfort the girl. The Doctor came from behind her. He leaned to whisper into her ear.

"What are you doing?"

"She made a mistake and was promoted. It's not logical," Rose whispered back. The Doctor thought for a moment about what Rose just said.

"True. All this technology is wrong. There is something going on here." The Doctor frowned a bit at a thought. Then the screen blinked once and the promotion for Suki was erased.

"What? Where did it go?" Suki walked towards the screen to touch it. Rose just smiled in understanding.

Seconds later a new message appeared on the screen. "Management is requested to be present at floor 500." Rose looked up at the Doctor.

"Trouble?" Rose teased him.

"Oh, yeh." He beamed at her. "Come on, you lot!" He urged everyone to follow him through the doors towards the lift.

Suki was still in a foul mood as they reached the elevator. "I can't believe it was all just a joke."

"No, it was not. You were great down there." Rose tried to comfort her. "But there's something going on here, and we got to find out what."

"You are not management, are you?" Cathica stated.

"At last! She is clever," the Doctor exclaimed while buzzing his sonic at the electronic controls near the elevator.

"I knew it. Look, whatever it is. I don't wanna have any part in this." Cathica put her hands in defence. "I don't know anything."

"Don't you even ask?" the Doctor shot her a question.

"Why would I?"

"You're a journalist!" he exclaimed. "Why's all the crew human?"

"What's that got to do with anything?" Cathica replied.

"There's no aliens on board. Why?" Rose asked in the Doctor's place.

"I dunno, no real reason. They're not banned." Cathica shrugged.

"Then where are they?" the Doctor insisted.

"Immigration's tightened up," Cathica said. "It's had to, with all the threats." She started wondering whether that was really the truth.
"What threats?" the Doctor narrowed his brows at her.

"I dunno, all of them. Usual stuff." Cathica seemed to start to doubt her knowledge.

"There is certainly something going on out here, and you didn't even notice." He sneered at her.

"Doctor, I think if there was any sort of conspiracy, Satellite Five would have seen it. We see everything."

"I can see better." The Doctor gave her a meaningful look, as he opened the case with the cables.

"This is nothing to do with me, I'm going back to work." She began to walk off.

"Go on then, see ya!" the Doctor said nonchalantly.

"I can't just leave you, can I?" She went back to them.

"If you want to be useful, get them to turn the heating down, it's boiling." Rose told her while holding some cables. "Can't they do something about it?" Roast the monster.

"We keep asking. Something to do with the turbines." Cathica paced about.

"Something to do with the turbines," the Doctor and Rose sang in synchrony and that made them look at each other for a moment.

"Well, I don't know!" Cathica cried out.

"Exactly. I give up on you, Cathica." The Doctor faced her now. "Now, Rose, look at Rose. Rose is asking the right kind of questions." He looked at her approvingly.

"Oh, I thank you," Rose said lovingly.

"One minute you worry about the Empire, the next it's the central heating!" Cathica clearly missing the point.

"Oh, never underestimate plumbing. Plumbing is very important." The next moment he showed the monitor to his team. "Here you go. Satellite 5. Pipes and plumbing."

"And there is something wrong." Suki walked up to the monitor, previously only silently observing.


"All the way from the top," the Doctor said.

"Floor 500," Rose added. "Don't know about you, but I feel I'm missing out on a party. It's all going on upstairs. Fancy a trip?" Rose said teasingly to the Doctor.

"We can't. Only you both were called out." Cathica still tried to argue.

"And we are running late," the Doctor sang. "It's just codes." And he began to buzz with his sonic screwdriver.

"I'm coming with you," Suki announced.
"You are not a regular journalist yourself either, are you?" the Doctor asked her in wonder. She just smiled at him with a more mature smile than her usual.

"If you get in trouble, don't involved me!" Cathica turned abruptly and walked away.

And the three of them got into the lift, all the way up to floor 500.

"The walls are not made of gold," the Doctor said sarcastically once they stepped out the elevator. "You should go back downstairs," he said to Rose, but could be meant to Suki too.

"Tough." Rose just dismissed him. *Oh, this unpleasant place.* She hoped that Catchica would get up here in time, if Suki wouldn't be able to override the system herself.

"I started without you," the Editor stated, when he saw the three of them present in the room. He faced them up, turning from the monitors in front. Rose tried to keep her head down, to not see what was staying above their heads.

"This is fascinating!" He shook his head in amusement. "Satellite Five contains every piece of information within the Fourth Great and Bountiful Human Empire. But you two...You don't exist." He laughed gesturing to Rose and the Doctor. "There's not a trace. No birth, no job, not the slightest kiss. How can you walk through the world and not leave a single footprint?" Then he faced Suki. "Although...I got to thank you for bringing the liar to me." He beamed at Suki.

The Doctor and Rose looked at each other in surprise. "Oh. She did not tell, did she?" The Editor nodded in fake understanding. "Let's look at the facts then, shall we?" And with a snap of his fingers, a screen in the middle of the room appeared, showing Suki's real identity to be Eva Saint Julienne, last surviving member of the Freedom Fifteen.

"Mmm, self-declared anarchist, is that right?" The Editor mocked her.

"Who controls Satellite Five?" With those words Suki took the gun from...who knows where and pointed dangerously at the Editor. He seemed to look stunned for a second, but soon burst out laughing.

"There's the truth!" he exclaimed, still laughing.

"The Freedom Foundation has been monitoring Satellite Five's transmissions. We have absolute proof that the facts are being manipulated. YOU are lying to the people!" Suki stated in a cold voice.

"Oooh, I love it! Say it again!" The Editor challenged her, mocking.

"This whole system is corrupt." Suki made a step closer to him.

"Be careful!" Rose shouted back and that made Suki face the pair, who now were holding their hands up in the air too.

"Why are you holding your hands up like that?" Suki asked them in bewilderment.

"Ah. Well. Not very comfortable with guns." The Doctor made a pointed glance at the "thing" in Suki's hand.

Suki seemed to understand the meaning. "Right." But soon was back facing the Editor.

"Who do you represent?" Her voice soft, but firm.
"I'm merely a humble slave. I answer to the Editor In Chief," he said nonchalantly.

"Who is he, where is he?"

"He's overseeing everything. Literally everything. And I'm sorry. It may interest you to know that this is NOT the Fourth Great and Bountiful Human Empire." He started to whisper to them. "In fact, it's not actually human at all. It's merely a place where humans happen to live."

A growling sound echoed inside the room.

"Yep. Yep." He started a conversation of his own. "Sorry! It's a place where humans are allowed to live, by kind permission of my client." And he snapped his fingers, pointing upwards.

Rose grimaced at it. The sight was as unpleasant as the last time. And it was too big of a creature for Rose to mess up with. She had to put her faith in Catchica and it was killing her to not being able to do anything more reasonable.

"What is that?" Suki asked, pointing a gun at it.

"You mean that thing's in charge of Satellite Five?" the Doctor asked in bewilderment.

"That "thing", as you put it, is in charge of the human race. For almost 100 years, mankind has been shaped and guided." The Editor explained. "Edited by my superior, your master, and humanity's guiding light, The Mighty Jagrafess of the Holy Hadrojassic Maxarodenfoe." He paused and chuckled at his last words. "I call him Max!" Rose and the Doctor just smiled nervously at that.

Then his face became stern once again. "Now then, I have provided you some interesting information, but it's only fair we get some information back. Because, apparently, you're no-one." He laughed. "It's so rare, not to know something." He shook his head in disbelief and amusement. "Who are you?"

"It doesn't matter, cos we're off." The Doctor just dismissed him nonchalantly. "Nice to meet you." He nodded to him. "Come on." He tried for the exit, but soon was stopped by a couple of deadly hands. And Rose at the same time too.

"Tell me who you are!" the Editor cried.

"Since that information's keeping us alive, I'm hardly gonna say, am I?" The Doctor shrugged.

"Release them!" Suki threatened the Editor, pointing a gun at him.

"Oh, I'm so scared!" He laughed in her face. "I just know the perfect way to subdue your guts," he said softly and before Rose or the Doctor could see or do anything, the men holding them both hit them on the back of their necks, making them unconscious. The last thing they could hear was Suki's horrified screams.

The second Rose woke up, she quickly glanced over to the "working" people on the computers and saw Suki as one of them.

Stab.

"They killed her..." she said softly.

"I'm sorry." Was all the Doctor could say.
"Now now, she can finally be of some use to her master. Not so bad of a fate then, is it?" The Editor played innocent.

"All those people are just slaves to you." Rose spat her words. She was angry. So angry - at herself the most. She saved Suki just to kill her again. If only she could have made her stay downstairs. She closed her eyes in self loathing. She understood how the Doctor felt all those times, when he took responsibility of all the people all those other times.

It hurt.

"Well, now, there's an interesting point." The Editor disturbed her thoughts. "Is a slave a slave if he doesn't know he's enslaved?"

"Yes," the Doctor answered.

"Oh, I was hoping for a philosophical debate." Disappointment could be heard in his voice. "Is that all I'm gonna get? "Yes"?"

"Yes." The Doctor didn't pay much attention to him.

"You're no fun." He laughed darkly at the Doctor.

"Let me out of these manacles." The Doctor pulled his hands up a bit. "You'll find out how much fun I am."

"Oh, he's tough, isn't he?!" The Editor chuckled.

"You can't hide something on this scale, somebody must've noticed," the Doctor stated.

"From time to time, someone, yes." the Editor started pacing about the room. "But the computer-chip system allows me to see inside their brains. I can see the smallest doubt. And crush it!" he exclaimed with a victorious grin, which made Rose shoot him a deadly look. "And then they just carry on, living the life, strutting about downstairs and all over the surface of the Earth, like they're SO individual."

From the corner of his eyes, the Doctor saw Catchica appear on the other end of the room.

The Editor bragged some more about his long term money investment.

"Also the Jagrafess needed a little hand, to, erm, install himself."

"No wonder, creature that size." The Doctor looked up to it once again. "What's its lifespan?"

"3000 years."

"That's one hell of a metabolism. Generating all that heat. That's why Satellite Five's so hot. You pump it out of the creature, channel it downstairs, Jagrafess stays cool, stays alive. Satellite Five is one great big life-support system," the Doctor ended sarcastically while looking at Cathica from time to time.

"But THAT'S why you're so dangerous." The Editor pointed at the Doctor. "Knowledge is power, but you remain unknown." He snapped his fingers and the electrical surge ran through the both of them.

"Who are you?" the Editor continued.
"Leave her alone!" the Doctor pleaded in desperation, when he saw Rose's pain. "I'm the Doctor. She's Rose Tyler, we're nothing, we're just wandering."

"Tell me who you are!" the Editor insisted, whining like a kid.

"I've just said!" the Doctor shot back.

"Alright then. I guess I have to use our outdated method here. Don't tell anyone about it, okay?" He chuckled, like feeling a bit embarrassed. "It could contaminate our reputation." He snapped his fingers and a video recording of the TARDIS materialising came into view.

The Doctor looked at the screen in bewilderment. "Oh, I though you were clever, Doctor. Although, we see everything with the chips, you better think twice if you want to hide something in the base of the world's news," he said, sneering. "We got cameras, of course!" he exclaimed. "But nobody knows it. It would be embarrassing." He laughed nervously. "And it takes time..." he continued. "I hate wasting time."

"Hm...interesting. A machine. What is it called?" He turned his head to the Doctor.

"It's just a blue box." The Doctor tried to dismiss the subject.

"WRONG ANSWER! Now, punishment time." The Editor laughed and with a snaps of his fingers Rose got another electro wave, not reaching the Doctor.

"Rose!" The Doctor looked frantically at her. "Leave her alone!" he shouted back at the Editor.

"Then answer my questions!" he cried. "It's always the girls, right? Poor little creatures, so easy to manipulate their mates through them." He shook his head.

"TARDIS!" the Doctor yelled out darkly.

"Good. Very good." The Editor clapped his hands, letting the electrocution stop for Rose, then looked back on the screen. "Time travel." As the words of Doctor himself from the video, echoed in the room.

"Are you human?" he asked in a sweet voice.

"Yes," the Doctor said simply.

"Mm." The Editor pressed his lips together. "I think you are not." He shrugged and snapped his fingers again to start Rose's torture.

"Stop it!" The Doctor looked in horror. "I'm a Time Lord!"

With another snap, the electric waves stopped. "Let's not play such games again, shall we?" the Editor warned him, as he walked towards Rose to caress her cheek. She turned her head away.

Rose was panting heavily. Clearly this time round she was getting way more electricity run through her than the last time. At the same time Cathica was already preparing for override.

"Someone has disengaged safety." The Editor went to look at the monitors as an alarming sound gone off.

"Who's that?" he asked in disbelief as Cathica's image appeared before him.

"It's Cathica," Rose exhaled in relief.
"And she's thinking!" The Doctor beamed at the sight. "She's using what she knows!"

"Terminate her access!" The Editor was getting nervous.

"Everything I told her about Satellite Five, the pipes, the filters, she's reversing it! Look at that. It's getting hot." He looked back at Rose and they both smiled at each other.

"I said, terminate! Burn out her mind!" The Editor still tried to escape his fate.

Everything was soon sparking and making alarm sounds scream throughout the room. The whole building was shaking.

The Doctor's manacles came loose first and as he got out, he pulled his sonic screwdriver out to get Rose free. She staggered a bit. She was still quite dizzy from the shocks and the Doctor had to help her to keep steady.

"I'm alright," she said faintly. "You get Cathica out." The Doctor tried to protest, but Rose interrupted. "Go!" With a more commanding voice. And at that the Doctor ran towards Cathica to get her head closed, with him snapping his fingers.

"Okay. I can do this," Rose muttered to herself, trying to keep steady on the ground, waiting for the Doctor to come from the room next door. "I have had worse in Pete's World." She laughed at her words. "Pete's World. It sounds nice." She smiled at her last words and fainted.

When she woke up, she found herself laying in her bed. In the TARDIS. She stretched and made a move out of the bed. It seemed she was not feeling as weak anymore. She went towards the console room and found the Doctor there, fiddling with some controls, just to make himself look busy. When he saw her, he smiled gently at her.

"Feeling alright?" He eyed her a bit.

"Yep," Rose said with a p. "We are already in the TARDIS," Rose stated, looking around.

"As you can see," the Doctor answered absentmindedly.

"I keep missing the good stuff," Rose joked with a disappointed voice.

"If you wouldn't get in so much trouble, maybe you wouldn't," he sang.

"Oh shut it. You were in the same mess, mister." She pointed a finger at him, making her way to him.

"You are not the one who had to drag me all the way to the TARDIS," he said half-blaming.

"Oh." It then dawned on her. "Thanks." She bit her lips nervously.

"You are welcome!" he exclaimed, not meeting her eyes, resuming his work on the console.

Pause.

"So, what's happened to Cathica?" Rose asked softly.

"Stayed behind to inform the world about the whole situation she has witnessed." The Doctor turned to face Rose, who was standing not far from him, leaning on the console.
"She was a great woman," Rose stated with a smile.

"Yeh, she was...All right then. To our next adventure!" He grinned at her. "Ready?"

"Always," she said, giving him her most beautiful grin.

to be continued...
Father's Day

Peter Alan Tyler, my dad. The most wonderful man in the world. Born 15th September 1954. And died on the 7th of November 1987. And today, I'm going to see him die for the third time.

"So I was thinking...could we?" Even doing it for the second time, she still found it hard to ask. What if his mind changed from their original timeline? He did not exactly trust her all that much. Why would he do her this favour? Or maybe...?

"Could we go and see my dad, when he was still alive?" Rose looked into the Doctor's eyes.

"Where's this come from all of a sudden?" the Doctor asked.

"I don't want him to die alone," Rose said in a faint voice, turning her gaze down on the grating. "I want him to kno..." Rose suppressed the sob. "I want him to know that he was a hero to me..." She looked up with a sad smile.

"You don't even know him," the Doctor said in a steady voice while looking at Rose.

"I don't need to. He was my dad. That's all that matters... Can't we?" She looked at him with pleading eyes.

"I can do anything. But I'm more worried about you." He looked at her in concern. There was no way he could resist those eyes. Not that he would admit it to her. Or anyone.

"I wanna see him." Rose formed a faint smile. "Can we see their wedding first, though?" She bit her lips nervously.

"Your wish is my command." He grinned at her and after pressing a few switches, with a familiar bump they landed.

Both Jackie and Peter Tylers looked so lovingly together at their wedding.

"I, Peter Alan Tyler, take you, Jacqueline Susanne." And as the last time, he failed to say her name.

"Suzette." He tried again.

"Anita?" Peter looked ablush.

"Oh, just carry on." Her mother gave up on hearing her name. It made Rose chuckle at the sight. They were so embarrassing to watch, but at the same time one couldn't keep their eyes off of them.

In the parallel world, Rose had Pete with them, but as much as he was so similar to her dad, as she remembered him, he was still not him. Her dad was just a simple man, who not really achieved
anything big in his life, but was the most courageous man Rose had ever known. The Doctor and Mickey were both travellers, they were used to the danger. But this one man - her dad, was just an ordinary man, who gave up his life to save the world.

*And he would never even get to know that.*

Then it was time for their second trip. *The trip to the place where her dad died.*

Rose watched as the TARDIS steadily pulsated in front of her eyes, until it finally came to a stop. Announcing of their arrival.

Once outside, Rose found herself again in the same place - so full of life, on such an ordinary day, without anyone knowing of the sorrows others would be experiencing at this very day.

"I always thought it would be all sort of grim and stormy," Rose said in a soft voice, reminiscing. "But it's just an ordinary day." she smiled sadly in the distance.

"The past is another country," he announced with a gentle voice. "You sure about this?" he asked her firmly.

"Yeah." She turned to face him with a faint smile. *She had to do it. For him, for her dad.*

They went towards the Jordan Road, and stood there, patiently waiting for the man to greet his fate.

"He was late." Rose began.

"He'd been to get a wedding present, the vase...Mum always said, "That stupid vase." Rose chuckled in nostalgia.

"He got out of his car." They saw Peter arrive in his car and park it. He picked the vase out of his car and started to get out of it.

"And crossed the road." Rose felt her heart tighten, and she must have made a painful expression, because at the same time she felt the Doctor take her hand into his and squeeze it slightly in comforting gesture.

Another car made its way from the corner of the building. It was steadily moving towards Peter Tyler, who was getting out of his car, facing away from the upcoming danger, totally unaware of the consequences.

And in a flash of a moment, when he turned around, he froze at the sight. The car hit him and he fell on the ground.

Rose turned her face from the view, burying her head in one of the Doctor's shoulders.

*It still hurt.*

When she looked back at the road, she saw the slight movement her dad still tried to make. Gasping for life, which was steadily fading away.

"Go to him. Quick," the Doctor whispered softly.

Rose turned to face the Doctor for one last moment before she ran towards her dad's body. She reached him in seconds time and fell on her knees while picking him up in her arms.
Peter's life was too faint for him to properly recognize the situation and the stranger holding him in her arms, rocking him slightly with tears in her eyes.

"You were a wonderful man," Rose said softly through her sobs, while holding his hand tightly in her grasp, letting him know that he was not alone in this.

"And your daughter is gonna be very very proud of you...Remember that, alright?" She smiled fondly at the man who was just looking at the young woman with surprise and gratitude at the same time.

*And then the life faded away.*

Just like that. In a split of a second he was gone. Her wonderful dad died today for the third time.

*It was time to go.*

She placed his head gently on the cold cement and after taking a few breaths, kissed his forehead tenderly. Saying one last goodbye.

With that, she stood up. Leaving her dad laying there on the ground. She slowly lifted her head up and saw her Doctor's understanding gaze.

He moved towards her and picked her hand up, placing it into his. He started walking them slowly away from Peter Tyler's body, towards the TARDIS, never letting go of her hand.

And neither of them said a thing until they reached her. It was a silent understanding between the two of them.

And with the doors opened, they gone inside - to their now new home.

____________________

*to be continued...*
"What's the emergency?" Rose asked the Doctor, trying her best to form a concerned look.

"It's mauve," the Doctor stated while rushing about the console.

"I'll never understand what kind of emergency colour is mauve," Rose muttered while shaking her head slightly.

"Universally recognised colour for danger," the Doctor continued without being asked.

"What happened to red?" Rose asked to keep him going.

"That's just humans. By everyone else's standards, red's camp. Oh, the misunderstandings! All those red alerts, all that dancing!" he exclaimed. "I've hacked into the computer, slaved the TARDIS. Wherever it goes, we go!" He looked frantically from her to the monitor.

"Alright then, let's chase it." Rose made a pointed nod at the monitor and started to stare at it in full intensity.

"You don't even ask if that's safe!?" the Doctor asked, narrowing his eyes in disbelief.

"Since when something is safe with you, Doctor?" Rose shot back and soon a grin formed on her face.

"That's more like it." The Doctor grinned at her widely and seconds later had his focus back on the screen.

"Why are we chasing it again, though?"

"It's mauve and dangerous, and 30 seconds from the centre of London."

The whooshing sound echoed in the dark alley of London. Before long, the sound subdued and the two passengers went outside the TARDIS doors.

Rose looked around her surroundings. It was 1941, London during The Blitz, just as she remembered.

*All right then. What do I know? Masked people, Jamie, Nancy, nanogenes...NANOGENES - gotta remember that. Jack. Right, gotta meet Jack. With...barrage balloon? Oh, great.*

"D'you know how long you can knock around space without happening to bump into Earth?" The Doctor began.

"Hm. Five days?" Rose replied absentmindedly. "Or is that just when we're out of milk?" Rose joked.

"All the species in all the universe, and it has to come out of a cow!" the Doctor said in a faint sneering voice. "Must've come down somewhere quite close, within a mile." He started to quicken his pace in walking as he talked. "And it can't have been more than a month ago."

"A month!" Rose exclaimed. "That's not so bad. At least it isn't a year."
"You gonna hold it against me forever, aren't you?" He narrowed his eyes.

"Okay then." Rose dropped the subject lightly. "What's the plan? You gonna do a scan for alien tech?" Rose raised an eyebrow.

"Rose, it hit the middle of London with a loud bang. I'm gonna ask," he said like it was the obvious. *Oh, the domestic approach...*

"What if there was more than one thing that crashed here?" Rose asked and at once grimaced. *Not the right kind of question.*

"Like what?" the Doctor asked in bewilderment.

"Oh...I don't know." Rose played dumb.

"Then that's it! Come on." He turned to face the road ahead of him. After a few strides they were near some sort of gate, the Doctor keeping himself busy, trying to get inside, for whatever was supposed to be on the other side of that gate.

"It's not very Spock, is it, to just ask?" Rose tossed the question lightly while the Doctor was busy buzzing his sonic screwdriver at the lock.

"Door, music, people - what do you think?" He said leaning on the gate, looking at her expectedly.

She could barely hold it for herself and not tell him that he'd better promise her one dance. But she managed to suppress the urge to drag him on the dance floor and instead decided to play her role of the concerned of the alien threat companion.

"I think you should do a scan for alien tech," Rose sang. "Come on. Gimme some Spock for once! Would it kill ya?"

"You sure about that T-shirt?" The Doctor eyed her suspiciously, ignoring her previous remark.

"Oh, I AM sure." Rose nodded. "And it's gonna have a lot of work to do," she ended under her breath.

"What?" the Doctor asked her confused.

"Oh, nothing." She sighed.

"*MU-MMY...MU-MMY...*" A child's voice echoed in the alley.

Rose looked up to see Jamie on the roof and for some reason the Doctor was ignorant of that.

"Come on, if you're coming. Won't take long." The Doctor told her as he began walking through the gate.

"Sorry. Got things to do," Rose said more to herself than him as she began running towards the stairs, where she could reach Jamie. *And why in the world was the Doctor, with his superior hearing and all, being so oblivious to the kid?*

After going up multiple stairs, she finally reached the rooftop and saw the boy sitting there casually, asking for his mummy.

"Alright, Jamie," Rose began with her hands put in defence. "I'm not your mummy, but I promise, we'll get you back to her at the end of the day."
"Mummy?"

"No no-" And at that moment Rose spotted the rope of the barrage balloon, waving in front of her.

"Blimey, this is it," Rose joked nervously. "Please don't let me regret this, Jack. What things I do to meet you." She chuckled at her own words and saw how the rope was starting to "move away".

"Oh, no no!" She started to panic that it would fly away without her. Led by the instinct, she jumped in the air, grabbing the rope.

"Wo-ah!" she yelled out when she felt herself slipping. "Calm down calm down. You gotta keep calm and hold on," Rose muttered to herself and tightened her grip, wrapping her legs around it.

And the barrage balloon began to move through the planes and bombs and dust. If you so wished, you could pretend it was New Years and fireworks playing in the sky. Just that this time, Rose was part of the fireworks show.

"The front line of The Blitz. Oh, well. It's going to be alright. Didn't fell the previous-" And then the realisation came.

She did fell.

And with an explosion underneath, she felt herself lose her balance as she fell. She yelled for her life, as for a moment she thought she must have failed, but good ol' Jack caught her in the middle of the air.

She released a sigh of relief, once she found herself surrounded by Jack's tractor beam.

"Okay. Okay. I've got you." Jack's voice echoed in the air. Oh, she missed him. Since the time he disappeared while rebuilding the Earth, as the Doctor has told her, she never saw him again. Now that she thought about it, it was kinda weird...

"Oh, thank goodness you've got me," Rose answered back with enthusiasm.

"That's a charming way of responding..." Jack trailed off a bit. "I like you," he said with a tease.

"Well thank you." Rose laughed out loud.

"I'm just programming your descent pattern. Stay still as you can, and keep your hands inside the light field."

"Yes, sir," Rose said with a half mock and was about to reach for her phone.

"What are you doing?" Jack questioned her.

"Turning off my phone, so that it would not interfere with your..whatever you've got down there."

"Right. You seem to be awfully familiar with this stuff?" Jack stated suspiciously.

"Oh, just with the basics." Rose chuckled. "By the way, I would appreciate if I could possibly reach the ground?"

"Oh, yeh. Hold on tight!" Jack announced.

"To what?" Rose exclaimed half joking.
"Fair point," Jack agreed and pressed the switch.

While Rose was descending she began to laugh through her screams. *Now that she thought about it, it kinda felt like carousel.* And with a last flash of light she found herself in Jack's arms.

"I've got you. You're fine, you're just fine-" He was cut short by Rose's laughing. He looked at her like she was mad.

"The tractor beam, it can scramble your head just a little." He nodded slightly in understanding.

"Sorry. That was just fun!" Rose beamed at him while pointing upwards. "Like a carousel." She chuckled.

"Ok-ay..." Jack eyed her questioningly. "You feeling alright?" He chuckled.

"Oh, I'm just fine." Rose shrugged while landing off his embrace. "You don't expect me to faint on you, are you?" she teased him.

"We-ll, you look a bit dizzy," he said in concern, still half holding her to keep Rose steady.

"What about you? You're not even in focus-" She pointed at him and those were her last words before she fainted.

When Rose woke up, she found herself laid down on the bed at Jack's ship.

"And I thought I got used to it...guess not with this body," Rose muttered while standing up.

It was quite dark inside. *Captain must be enjoying the view.* "You got lights in here?" Rose called out. And in a moment Jack lit his ship up.

"Hello." He greeted her, sitting in his captain's chair.

"Hello," Rose answered simply.

"Hello," Jack repeated himself and chuckled.

"Let's not start that again." Rose turned her head to the side while smiling and putting her hands in defence mode.

"Again? We didn't even greet each other. I'm filling up for the previous time," Jack answered, chuckling.

"Okay then." Rose nodded with a grin. *Keep your timelines together.*

"Captain Jack Harkness, 133 Squadron, Royal Air Force, American volunteer." Jack introduced himself in a business like manner while showing Rose his psychic paper.

"Sorry, that's not gonna work on me." Rose shrugged. Jack was looking at her in confusion.

"That's psychic paper." She nodded towards it. "It tells me whatever you want to tell me."

"How do you know?" Jack crossed his arms and leaned back on his chair, clearly unhappy about his failed trick.

"Two things. One, I have a friend that uses this all the time." Jack exhaled in understanding. "And,
two, you handed me a piece of paper saying you're single and work out," Rose ended in a soft voice.

"Tricky thing, psychic paper." And he leaned towards Rose to get it back.

"Yeah," Rose just agreed. "Can't let your mind wander when you're handing it over." She grinned at him.

"Oh." Jack looked blankly at the paper. "Oh?" He raised his eyebrow. "So, you are sort of single, but consider yourself in a complicated relationship...And at the same time you consider yourself available for short dates?" He looked back at her, smirking.

"We-ll, that's only sometimes. When I meet interesting people." Rose smirked back. Couldn't steal our first date with Jack now, could she?

"That's a good way of thinking," he agreed with her while standing up.

"Nice spaceship, by the way." Rose looked around it.

"Gets me around."

"Ver-y...Spock." Rose looked back at Jack to see his reaction.

"Who?" Jack looked confused.

"Well, I guess you are still not a local boy then," Rose muttered.

"Judging from your belongings, guessing you are not the local girl yourself."

"Guessing right." Rose smiled as she went to look through the glass window. When she leaned she jumped back slightly as her hands itched. Although, not as much as the last time. The bruises were a lot softer.

"Burnt your hands on the rope?" Jack's voice came from behind.

"It seems so," Rose looked at her hands.

"Can I have a look at your hands for a moment?" Jack asked gently.

"Sure." Rose walked up to him and placed her palms upwards.

"You are very trusting of people, or is it just me?" Jack gave her a questioning look.

"Oh, just you." Rose nodded smirking. "And some other ones," she added.

"Ouch. I am not an exception then," Jack complained, half-laughing, making Rose chuckle.

Rose sat down in captain's chair as Jack was buzzing her hands to check for damages. "You can stop acting now. I know who you are," he stated calmly. "I can spot a time agent, a mile away."

"Oh. 'Guess you've got me." Rose shrugged.

"Mmm, I've been expecting one of you guys to show up. Though not, I must say, by barrage balloon! Often travel that way?"

"Sometimes I get swept off my feet." They grinned at each other. The next moment Jack was
"A bondage? That's modern," Rose said half-mocking. "Though I must say, I'm not really running away, am I?"

"Not that surprising. But I need you to keep still." As he pressed a few buttons, nanogenes appeared on her palms, repairing her damaged hands.

"Nanogenes." Jack grinned, and saw as Rose looked with a gentle smile at her palms. "The air is full of them. They've just repaired two layers of your skin." He untied the bondage.

Okay, one layer less.

"Shall we get down to business?" Jack walked away from her.

"Fine by me."

"Shall we have a drink on the balcony?" He looked at her suggestively while holding champagne. "Bring up the glasses," he shouted out while climbing the stairs.

"I know I'm standing on something," Rose said, when she made the first steps on the spaceship's roof. Still one would feel unsteady, when you don't see the actual object. Thankfully, Jack understood that much and soon Jack's chula ship came into view.

"OK, you have an invisible space ship." Rose tried to play innocence.

"Yeah."

"Tethered up to Big Ben," Rose stated simply.

"First rule of active camouflage-" Jack started.

"Park somewhere you'll remember," they said in unison.

"You know this stuff," Jack exclaimed. "Well, of course, how could you not...Woah!" They both laughed out loud as the champagne shot out.

"It's getting late. I should be getting back." Rose tried to play along.

"We're discussing business. I try never to discuss business with a clear head." He made a toast to her, before drinking. Then he abruptly stood up and walked towards Rose.

"Are you travelling alone? Are you authorised to negotiate with me?" He was looking at her with intention in his eyes.

"Well, I might be, but I don't think my companion would agree," Rose said with a chuckle.

"Companion"?" Jack asked in bewilderment.

"Yeh... I probably should be getting back to him."

"Him? Is that the same one you have the complicated relationship with?" he asked in a disappointed voice.

"Well," Rose started lightly. "That depends how you look at it."
Jack made his way to Rose to grab her into his arms. "Since you are so uncertain of your answer. Does that mean I still stand a chance?" He looked into her eyes, holding her body firmly to his. *He knew how to play this game.*

"Ok. Jack," Rose stated calmly. As much as fun this was, they better start moving to the Doctor.

"Oh, we're getting familiar." Before Rose could say anything, he interrupted her. "Do you like Glenn Miller?" And the next moment the music surrounded them, as he swept her in his arms for a dance.

"It's 1941, height of the London blitz, height of the German bombing campaign. And something else has fallen on London - a fully-equipped Chula warship, the last one in existence." Jack began his story while they swayed together. Rose chuckled at that.

"He is so not gonna sell it this time round.

"And I know where it is, because I parked it. If the agency can name the right price, I can get it for you. But in two hours, a German bomb is going to fall on it and destroy it forever. That's your deadline. That's the deal." He stopped them, ceasing the dance.

Come to think of it. *How did she not see through it the last time?* A valuable object, last in existence, parked on the bomb zone.

"No, seriously. If you want to sell us something, we should be getting back to my companion." She looked him in the eyes. "Although, I don't know where he is." *Oh, a slight lie.*

"That's easy - I'll do a scan for alien tech."

Soon enough, they found themselves in the hospital. It was, obviously, not an ordinary twentieth century hospital. It had new occupants. A hospital filled with masked people, calling for their mummies. Sadly, only Rose knew that.

They met the Doctor in the hallway moments later.

"Good evening." Jack offered to shake his hand to the Doctor. "Hope we're not interrupting. Jack Harkness. I've been hearing all about you." Jack gave Rose a meaningful smirk, which made Rose shot him a warning glare. The Doctor looked at both of them confused.

"He knows." Rose quickly disturbed his thoughts. "About us being Time Agents." The Doctor just nodded.

"And it's a real pleasure to meet you, Mr Spock," Jack said, hitting the Doctor on the back a bit, while making his way forward.

"Mr Spock?" the Doctor asked in bewilderment, when him and Rose were left behind in the corridor.

"You don't give me Spock, when I ask you." Rose looked at him with her head down, but locking her gaze with his. "I just had to create one myself." She shrugged while grinning with tongue.

The Doctor was clearly unhappy, but dropped the subject. "Where have you been? We're in the middle of London Blitz. It's not a good time for a stroll!"

"Who's strollin'? I went by barrage balloon." The Doctor gave her a look, while Rose started walking. "Only way to see an air raid."
"What?" He frowned in surprise.

"Listen, he seems to be a conman, who wants to sell us some kind of...chula warship..." Rose came to a stop to explain.

"What? Why are you together with a conman, then?"

"He looks trustworthy. We should give him a chance." With that Rose walked to the room.

"How would you know? And chula?" The Doctor followed her.

As Jack scanned the masked people, he started pacing about the room. "This just isn't possible." He was waving his hands around. "How did this happen?"

"What kind of Chula ship landed here?" the Doctor asked.

"Does it matter? It's got nothing to do with this," Jack answered harshly, feeling a bit disturbed. *Okay, more than a bit.*

"This started at the bomb site. It's got everything to do with it," the Doctor insisted, now raising his voice. "What kind of warship?!"

"An ambulance!" Jack shot back. "Look, this is what chased you through the time vortex." He showed them a hologram of an ambulance. "It's space junk. I wanted to kid you it was valuable. It's empty. I made sure of it. I threw it at you, saw your time-travel vehicle - love the retro look, by the way - threw you the bait."

"The gift of a conman," the Doctor stated in a steady voice.

"You knew?" Jack asked in bewilderment.

"I... um, suspected," Rose replied innocently.

"Then why? Oh. You are not Time Agents either, are you?" he asked them sarcastically.

"Just a couple more freelancers," Rose muttered. "And we could always use some help from time travellers, when dealing with this kind of situation.." Rose gestured to the beds.

"I should've known, the way you guys are blending with the local colour! Flag Girl was bad enough, but *U-Boat Captain*?" He raised his voice in disbelief, pointing at their clothes. When Jack described the Doctor's outfit, Rose sniggered.

"What? What's wrong with my jumper?" the Doctor asked.

"Anyway, whatever's happening here has got nothing to do with that ship," Jack interrupted.

"Human DNA is being rewritten. And by an idiot," the Doctor stated. "Must be some kind of virus converting human beings into these things."

*Oh, when the answer is simply nanogenes, it is killing to act like you know nothing about it.*

"But why? What's the point?" the Doctor continued. The next moment all masked people woke up and started walking towards the group, cornering them.

*Mummy! Mum-my! Mummy?*
"What's happening?" Jack asked.

"I don't know," the Doctor answered.

*Mummy! Mummy!*

"Just don't let 'em touch you!" Rose shouted.

The Doctor gave her a look. "I saw what happens," Rose stated blankly.

"Why, what happens if they touch us?" Jack questioned.

"You're looking at it!"
They were getting closer and closer, cornering the trio, with no way out. Rose was already starting to prepare herself to give them some of Tylers special scoldings, as she made a step forward. But in the same second the Doctor started ahead of her, leaving her with mouth half opened.

"Go to your room!" Was his first words.

"Go to your room!" He tried again, making the masked people bend their heads on the side, questioningly. "I mean it."

"I'm very, very angry with you." The Doctor gazed at the group with a father's like attitude. "I'm very, very cross."

"GO. TO. YOUR. ROOM!" he shouted at them.

It seemed to work. Before long, every masked person in the room was turning around with their heads lowered down in shame. Step by step they closed the distance to their beds. When they finally reached them, they obediently laid down.

It was sad, looking at people - men and women, elderly and young, being so unlike themselves. Having no will over their body, but a child's mind. Rose looked at them with a half-smile. She could only be glad that this time round everybody lives.

"I wanted to do that," Rose said complaining to the Doctor. As much as pitiful the situation looked like, in the end, everything would work out. So for now, she could certainly use her time to the fullest.

"How did you know that would work?" the Doctor asked her, narrowing his eyes.

"Same way as you did." Rose shrugged.

"But I didn't!"

"Well, neither did I!" They locked their gazes intensely for a moment, but then Jack coughed.

"Guys guys! We don't have time for this!" He put his hands ahead in defence.

"You're right." The Doctor turned his gaze away from the two of them, but seconds later he returned to face Jack. "Did I just say you were right?"

"Yeh, I guess you did." Jack beamed at him.

"I take that back," the Doctor said while walking away further into the room. Jack's face twisted to an unhappy one.

"I thought men don't take back their words?" Rose asked, following the Doctor.

"That's right - men," he agreed. Rose rolled her eyes.

"How was your con supposed to work?" the Doctor asked Jack harshly.

"Simple enough, really." Jack came to sit on the chair. "Find some harmless piece of space junk, let the nearest Time Agent track it back to Earth, convince him it's valuable, and name a price. When
he's put 50% up-front, oops, a German bomb falls on it, destroys it forever," he said nonchalantly. "I buy him a drink with his own money and we discuss dumb luck. The perfect, self-cleaning con."

"Yeah. Perfect," the Doctor said sarcastically.

"The London Blitz is great for self-cleaners. Pompeii's nice if you want to make a vacation of it, though. But you've got to set your alarm for Volcano Day." Jack joked. But the Doctor's face didn't look amused at all. Quickly Jack stopped laughing.

"Take a look around the room," the Doctor told him. "This is what your piece of harmless space junk did."

"It was a burnt-out medical transporter, it was empty!" Jack defended himself.

"Rose." The Doctor called out for her while walking towards the doors.

"Coming!"

"I even programmed the flight computer so it wouldn't land on anything living," Jack said to their backs. Rose looked back to him and gave him an understanding smile. "I harmed no-one! I don't know what's happening, but I had nothing to do with it."

"I'll tell you what's happening." The Doctor looked back at Jack. "You forgot to set your alarm clock. It's Volcano Day!" he exclaimed.

*Soon an alarming sound echoed from the outside.*

"What's that?" Rose asked in reflex.

"The all clear." Jack tried his luck.

"I wish," the Doctor said sarcastically before running through the doors.

They ran through the hallways, the Doctor ahead of Jack and Rose.

"Mr. Spock?" Jack called out. "Doctor," Rose corrected. "This way." She lead them to the stairs.

"You got a blaster?" the Doctor asked Jack, when the two caught up to him.

"Sure," Jack said with enthusiasm. Before long, he was pointing a blaster towards the door, creating a big hole in it.

"What's wrong with your sonic screwdriver?" Rose asked cheekily.

"Nothing," the Doctor answered simply.

"Sonic blaster, fifty first century. Weapon Factories of Villengard?" the Doctor said in a smart tone.

"You've been to the factories?" Jack asked, interested.

"Once. There's a banana grove there, now. I like bananas. *Bananas are good.*" The Doctor smiled and entered the room. Rose just shook her head, smiling when following his back with her gaze.

"Nice blast pattern," Rose said teasingly to Jack.
"Digital," Jack told her proudly.

"I like it." Rose beamed to him and heard Jack chuckle.

Inside the room Jack and the Doctor were both gathering information about the angry and powerful. When moments later, the Time Lord pressed on the switch.

"Are you my mummy?" the child's voice asked in the recorder. "I want my mummy. Are you my mummy?"

The people with masks were not the real pitiful ones. Jamie was. Nancy. His mother, giving birth to him in her teens, in twentieth century... the poor child just wanted his mum.

"He doesn't know who his mum is..." Rose said faintly.

The Doctor wore an unreadable expression. He couldn't grasp what was going on. Shortly after, he started pacing around the room, his anxiety rising.

"Can you sense it?" he asked frantically. I can't sense, but I can remember.

"Sense what?" Jack asked.

"Coming out of the walls. Can't you feel it?" He raised his voice. Rose turned her gaze towards the doors - they were half open.

"Mummy?"

"Funny little human brains! How do you get around in those things?" The Doctor mocked them.

"When he's stressed, he likes to insult species," Rose told Jack in a hurry.

"Rose, I'm thinking!" the Doctor shot back. And at that Rose saw how the doors slowly opened more widely and a small figure could be seen.

"There are these children. Living rough, round the bomb sites. They come out during air raids looking for food."

'Mummy, please?' Rose saw Jamie standing behind the tape.

"Doctor," Rose called out.

"Suppose they were there when this thing, whatever it was, landed," the Doctor continued, not paying attention to Rose's call.

"It was a med-ship, it was harmless!" Jack dug in.

"You keep saying harmless. Suppose one of them was affected, altered."

"Doctor," Rose said in a more firm voice.

'I'm here!'

"It's afraid, terribly afraid. And powerful," the Doctor continued his rambling. "It doesn't know it yet. But it will do. It's got the power of a god and I just sent it to its room!"

"Doctor!" Rose shouted.
"What?" The Doctor looked at her, confused.

"The tape!" Rose cried.

"What ta-" he began, but then the realisation came. "Ah." He pressed his lips together.

'I'm here! 'Can't you see me?'

"What's happening?" Jack asked both of them.

"The tape ended 30 seconds ago...I sent it to its room. This is its room!" The Doctor laughed nervously.

And at once he turned around to face Jamie.

'Are you my mummy? 'Mummy?' Rose could see Jamie looking directly at her. I'm sorry. I'm not your mummy.

"OK, on my signal, make for the door," Jack said, after calculating the situation, his voice low.

"NOW!" he shouted, pointing a banana towards the doors. When he noticed what he was holding, he looked at it in horror. The Doctor grinned at the sight, satisfied with his successful trick. Moments later, he was searching his pockets for the blaster.

He took it out and pointed towards the wall, wanting to make the door space, but found another banana in his hands.

"What?" He looked at it in same horror as Jack.

Shortly after, a space appeared at the same place where the Doctor was pointing at seconds ago, Rose holding the blaster.

"Hurry!" she shouted out to them, going out first, Jack just behind.

"Don't drop the banana!" the Doctor warned Jack just before going out himself.

"Why not!?" Jack cried.

"Good source of potassium!" the Doctor answered.

"Switch!" Rose called to Jack as they tossed their objects to each other, and now Jack having a hold of his blaster, was making the wall whole again.

"Nice switch." Jack beamed at Rose, making her grin.

"Okay. If you are done flirting, we might as well move," the Doctor said sarcastically, clearly not happy with the view.

At his words the wall started breaking.

"Come on!" the Doctor shouted as they ran, just to be stopped in their tracks by another army of masked people.

"This way!" Rose called out and ran back to the breaking wall. Going down again, it seems.

The trio ran back and as the last time another side was blocked. They were trapped from all the
"OK." Jack tried to sum up the situation. "This can function as a sonic blaster, a sonic cannon and it's a triple-enfolded sonic disruptor," he announced, pointing it from one side to another. Rose tried to grab it from his hands, but he was waving it too quickly. "Doc, what you got?"

"I've got a sonic-!" the Doctor exclaimed enthusiastically. "Uh...Never mind." He turned back.

"What?" Jack repeated the question.

"It's sonic, OK, let's leave it at that." The Doctor began buzzing the sonic, frantically pacing about in place.

"Disruptor, cannon, what?" Jack was getting nervous. One more time Rose tried to grab the blaster, but Jack just wouldn't stop moving.

"It's sonic, totally sonic, I am sonic-ed up!" The Doctor was making no sense.

"A sonic WHAT?" Jack now shouted.

"Screwdriver!" The Doctor shot back, turning to face Jack, looking a bit embarrassed. As Jack looked back to face him, he was making a surprised puppy's face. Lucky enough, he froze for a moment and finally Rose could grab it from his hands.

"Going down!"

With a big thud they crashed one floor below, Jack filling the ceiling seconds later.

"Doctor, are you okay?" Rose leaned beside him.

"Could've used a warning," the Doctor replied, standing up.

"Oh, the gratitude," Rose said sarcastically.

"Who has a sonic screwdriver?" Jack asked simply.

"I do," the Doctor exclaimed.

"Lights," Rose muttered, walking in circles.

"Who looks at a screwdriver and thinks, ooo, this could be a little more sonic?" Jack mocked the Doctor, both not paying attention to Rose.

"What, you've never been bored?" The Doctor challenged him.

"There's got to be a light switch." Rose talked to herself, it seemed. Why did it felt like such a deja vu. Like a bad idea...

"Never had a long night? Never had a lot of cabinets to put up?" the Doctor still continued.

And then Rose found the switch only to have a vision in her head of the fully equipped hospital room, with masked people waking up. Oh, hell.

"Mummy. Mummy." The patients sat up in their beds.

"Door." Jack rushed towards it. He tried to use the blaster, but it wouldn't work.
"Damn it!" He hit it in frustration.

"Mummy."

The army was slowly making their way towards them. The Doctor was already at the doors, buzzing them.

"It's the special features. They really drain the battery." Jack talked in excuse. Rose just rolled her eyes. The battery.

They soon ran outside the doors, the Doctor sonic-ing them shut, as they found themselves in a dark storage room.

When the Doctor pressed the lights on, Rose grinned at the sight. It was hers and the Doctor's dancing hall.

"Am I missing the inside joke here?" Jack asked, looking at her. Rose just shrugged nonchalantly, making Jack even more intrigued, but got no chance to ask more, as the Doctor spoke up.

"Okay, that door should hold it for a bit," the Doctor announced.

"The door?" Jack felt shaken by the words. "The WALL didn't stop it!" Jack shouted in disbelief.

"Well, it's got to find us first!" the Doctor said like it was the obvious. "Come on, we're not done yet! Assets, assets!"

When they ended the talk about no other exists, the Doctor looked at Rose, annoyed by Jack.

"So, where'd you pick this one up, then?"

"Doctor," she chided him.

"She was hanging from a barrage balloon, I had an invisible spaceship. I never stood a chance," Jack joked, smiling at Rose.

That clearly hit the nerve, the Doctor didn't feel like listening anymore. "Okay. One, we've got to get out of here. Two, we can't get out of here. Have I missed anything?" the Doctor asked them.

"We-ll... " Rose trailed off.

"What it is?" the Doctor asked her frantically.

"Jack kinda disappeared." She bit her lip.

"Okay, he just vanished, without a word of explanation," Rose said in a bit angry tone, pacing about the room. "Why is it always the good looking ones who do that?" Rose asked the question in general.

Always making the decision on their own. He hated when her Doctor done that.

"I'm making an effort not to be insulted." The Doctor looked at her meaningfully.

"I mean... men." Rose looked at him softly.

"Okay, thanks." He looked at her softly as his grin was all over his face. "That really helped." They
locked their gazes for a moment, before a voice disturbed them.

"Rose? Doctor? Can you hear me? I'm back on my ship." Jack's voice echoed in the room. In a flash the Doctor ran to the speaker.

"Used the emergency teleport. Sorry I couldn't take you. It's security-keyed to my molecular structure."

"How're you speaking to us?" the Doctor asked, pulling the cables out of the speaker.

"Om-Com. I can call anything with a speaker grill."

"The child can Om-Com, too," the Doctor said. "Anything with a speaker grill. Even the Tardis phone."

"So, the child can phone us?" Rose formed an innocent question.

"And I can hear you. Coming to find you. Coming to find you."

"I'll try to block out the signal. Least I can do," Jack announced.

"Coming to find you, mummy."

"Remember this one, Rose?" Jack said lovingly, as Moonlight Serenade echoed through the radio. The Doctor looked around, from Rose to radio suspiciously.

"Our song." Rose nodded, biting her lips. The Doctor just nodded in fake understanding and a forced smile.

*Your song, eh?*

---

Rose was spinning around in a wheelchair, listening to Glenn Miller and watching her Doctor focus on buzzing his screwdriver in an attempt to loosen the bars.

"What're you doing?" Rose asked softly, barely holding out a chuckle.

"Trying to set up a resonance pattern in the concrete, loosen the bars," he answered, not looking at her.

"You don't think he is coming back, do ya?"

"Wouldn't bet my life," he said sarcastically. "Why do you trust him?" He somehow found himself interested in the latter bit more than he would admit.

"He saved my life. But well mostly because he is like you. Except for dating and dancing," Rose muttered the last words, but loud enough to be heard.

He looked at her. "What?" Rose asked teasingly.

"You just assume I'm-"

"What?" Rose persisted.

"You just assume that I don't dance."
"Are you telling me you do dance?" Rose grinned at him.

"Nine hundred years old, me. I've been around a bit. I think you can assume at some point I've danced," he ended with a duh voice.

"Never saw you dance..." Rose sang.

"Well, I've got the moves, but I wouldn't want to boast," he ended with a hidden meaning.

Now you've done it.

Rose stood up to turn the volume on the radio. Moonlight Serenade echoing in the room. The Doctor turned his head around a bit nervously, but quickly was facing the bars again. Anxiously waiting, but pretending not to notice.

Rose walked up to him and held up her hand. "You've got the moves?" Rose asked teasingly. "Show me your moves."

"Rose, um, ah, I'm trying to resonate concrete." He still tried to back away.

"Jack'll be back. He'll get us out," Rose said lightly. "So come on," she urged him. "The world doesn't end because the Doctor dances."

That's all the Doctor needed or that was the point where his rational part of mind snapped. Because soon enough, he jumped from the windowsill and the chair, leaving his eyes on Rose.

He took her hands abruptly into his, still facing her, but then glancing at her palms. "Barrage balloon?"

"What?" Rose said softly, too immersed in the view in front of her.

"You were hanging from a barrage balloon," the Doctor stated, inspecting her palms.

"Oh, yeah. About two minutes after you left me. Thousands of feet above London, middle of a German air-raid, Union Jack all over my chest," she joked.

"I've travelled with a lot of people, but you're setting new records for jeopardy friendly." He looked at her while raising his eyebrows, still her hands into his, not letting go, as he continued to inspect them.

"Is this you dancing, Doctor?" She chuckled at him.

"Hanging from a rope thousands feet above London. Not a cut, not a bruise." He turned her palms around for a few times.

"Yeah, I know." Rose bit her lips. "Captain Jack fixed me up." She looked at him innocently.

"Oh, we're calling him Captain Jack now, are we?" he snapped a bit.

"We-ll, his name's Jack and he's a Captain," Rose said slowly.

"He's not really a Captain, Rose." The Doctor shook his head.

Rose chuckled while grinning at him. "You'll find your feet at the end of your legs. You may care to move them." She told him like he was a kid, while placing her hands into his and slowly swaying around.
"If ever he was a Captain, he's been defrocked." The Doctor told her in a low voice, being close to her now as they moved around a bit.

"Yeah? Shame I missed that," Rose said ironically. She locked her eyes to the Doctor's as he was looking tenderly at her now, forming a faint loving smile on his face.

"Actually, I quit." Jack's voice startled them, making the Doctor only look up a bit, but not move away from her.

*Oh, second time and still didn't feel the teleport.* Rose thought while closing her eyes and smirking. Rose looked up at the Doctor who was now once again looking at her, possibly unaware of him still holding her hands.

"Most people notice when they've been teleported. You guys are so sweet." Jack pointed at them and finally Rose backed away reluctantly from the Doctor, turning her head down, and the alien himself just looked sideways.

She didn't want to let go. It was only those small rare moments when they were so close together back then or, as she should call it, *now.*

"Sorry about the delay," Jack continued.

"This is a Chula ship," the Doctor exclaimed.

"Yeah, just like that medical transporter. Only this one is dangerous."

The Doctor snapped his fingers and nanogenes surrounded his hand.

"These fixed my hands up." Rose pointed and started to open her mouth to talk again.

"Nanogenes," they said in unison. The Doctor just nodded. "There's millions of them in here, see? Grazed my hand while landing before. All better now." He moved his hand to send nanogenes away. "Take us to the crash site. I need to see your space junk," he told Jack.

"As soon as I get the nav-com back online. Make yourself comfortable. Carry on with whatever it was you were... doing." Jack waved his hands gesturing to the both of them.

"We were talking about dancing," the Doctor told him innocently, in a fully-believing-that voice.

"It didn't look like talking," Jack countered him.

"Didn't feel like dancing." Rose shook her head while grinning at the Doctor. He just stared at her in bewilderment.

They talked about Jack's motive behind his conning, about his lost memories and soon found themselves at the crash site.

"There it is," Jack began. "Hey, they've got Algy on duty. It must be important."

"We've got to get past him," the Doctor said.

"You should go distract him then, Jack," Rose said innocently, grinning meaningfully at him.

"I don't think that'd be such a good idea." Jack made a worried face.
"What? Why not?" *What is happening?*

"Yesterday, Algy and I...kinda had a...well, misunderstanding let's just say. I would be punched if I go there now." He made a nervous laugh.

"That's still a distraction," Rose persisted.

"Thank you, but I want to keep this face intact," Jack said sarcastically. "Besides, we already got a volunteer." Rose began to mouth a "what", when she saw where Jack was pointing at. The Doctor was steadily moving towards the infected Algy, all free of worries.

"No," Rose whispered in horror.

"It's alright. He is Algy's type." Jack tried to reassure her.

"He can't come near him!" And with that she started running towards the Doctor. She could hear Jack call her name in a warning, but she wouldn't be stopped.

For all she knew, nanogenes may have repaired the infected humans, and Time Lords may have similar DNA, or as the Doctor said, they came to look like that before humans, but if nanogenes were to fix him after Nancy, he could very likely become human. *Or couldn't he?* Either way, she was not gonna risk that chance.

She shook her head violently before finally reaching the Doctor. Unfortunately, Algy was facing his back on them at the moment and the Doctor was holding his hand to pat him to turn around. *It was not enough time.*

"Don't touch him!" she yelled out, as the Doctor turned to face her in confusion.

Rose managed to toss the Doctor aside, making him fall on the ground, but she herself staggered and then, as Algy turned around, he caught her to steady her.

*Game over.*

"*Are you my mummy?*" When those words came from his mouth, the Doctor could feel shiver go down his spine.

*Rose touched him. Or he touched her. But the aftermath was the same. Rose was...*

"Oh, God." Jack now was standing near them and looking at Rose.

Algy started coughing moments later, and he fell on the ground, his face forming into a mask. Rose looked at the view in a pained expression.

"Great, one time without face, now with a few corrections. Just my luck," she muttered to herself. At the same time the Doctor stood up.

"Rose," he said warily. She didn't dare to look at him, she couldn't tell him everything is going to be alright, it was not her place.

"Rose!" he said in a louder voice and began walking towards her. Once she felt that, she quickly moved away, finally turning to face the two of them.

"Don't touch me!" she warned them. The Doctor was trying desperately to say something, but each time he failed.
"I'm so sorry, Rose," Jack said with a comforting smile. And seconds later an alarm echoed, informing of the upcoming army. "We gotta move," Jack said silently, but firmly.

"It's alright." Rose tried to shrug it off, but her voice was starting to sound weak, and she was already sweating. "Oh boll," she said while wiping her sweat off her face.

"Nothing is alright here!" the Doctor shouted out angrily. Rose's forehead wrinkled.

"Doctor..." Rose said softly.

"You are being transformed into a masked monster and I can't even touch you." He looked down on the ground frantically looking for the solution.

"Can I-"

"I'm still just an image."

She could hear and feel herself back at that same moment. So desperately wanting to hold him, even if that was for the last time. But being robbed off even from that. She knew better than anyone here, how did that feel like and she wanted to make him better. But was there a way?

Cough.
Cough.

It was starting.

The Doctor looked back up at her with eyes filled with horror.

"You have to go," Rose said while panting.

"I'm not leaving you here." The Doctor was making a step forward, but Jack held him back.

"You have to." She smiled weakly at him "I wish nanogenes could fix this fever of mine," Rose joked lightly. And the next moment she felt losing herself.

"Mm-.." She tried to force her mouth shut, she didn't want them to see this sight. And they were still not moving away. So she made a choice herself. She ran from them with her last strength.

"ROSE!" The Doctor's frantic voice could be still heard from the distance, but it was not getting closer. She thanked Jack silently.

"Someone is singing," Jack stated blankly.

"So? Let them sing," the Doctor said harshly.

"No, but seriously." Jack made his way towards the tent. "In here!" he shouted out to the Doctor. He was not moving. "Doctor!" it made him make a look at him, but soon he was in the tent with Jack, getting Nancy out of there.

They made their way towards the ambulance, and as Jack showed them that it was empty, it sparked and sounded an alarm.

"Didn't happen the last time," Jack said, annoyed.
"What is happening?" Nancy asked nervously.

Soon the banging sound on the gate could be heard. They were here.

"Jack, secure those gates!" He pointed to Jack.

"Nancy, how did you get in there?" he asked her in a hurried voice.

"Cut the wire," she replied.

"Show Rose-" he began, but then fell silent.

"Rose? Who-" Nancy began.

"I need you to do something." He walked towards Nancy as he gave her his sonic screwdriver with an already adjusted setting. "Hold this button down while pointing at the cut wire, it will grow back."

"Wha-? How can it grow back?" Nancy asked in disbelief.

"Just do it! Please." She still looked at him questioningly, but soon took the sonic and went towards the wired fence.

Once she was done, she gone back to where the Ambulance was at, with Jack and the Doctor standing beside it.

"What do you expect in a Chula medical transporter? Bandages? Cough drops?" the Doctor began sarcastically. "It wasn't empty, Captain. There was enough nanogenes in there to rebuild a species."

"Oh, God."

"Getting it now, are we? When the ship crashes, the nanogenes escape. Billions upon billions of them, ready to fix all the cuts and bruises in the whole world. But what they find first is a dead child, probably killed earlier that night, and wearing a gasmask."

"All would be good, except one problem. These nanogenes have never seen a human being before. Don't know what a human being's supposed to look like. All they've got to go on is one little body, and there's not a lot left. But they carry right on. They do what they're programmed to do. They patch it up. Can't tell what's gasmask and what's skull, but they do their best. Then off they fly, off they go, work to be done. Because, you see, now they think they know what people should look like, and it's time to fix all the rest. And they won't ever stop." The Doctor was raising his voice.

"They won't ever, ever stop. The entire human race is going to be torn down and rebuilt in the form of one terrified child looking for its mother, and nothing in the world can stop it!"

"I didn't know!" Jack shot back.

"Your excuses will not exactly bring Rose back now, will they?" he shot sharply at him. Jack lowered his gaze.

"Mummy. Mummy."

An army of masked people were getting closer to them from all sides. No gate stopped them anymore. They were out in the search of their mummy. And somewhere in between the group, blonde hair could be seen, being scattered by the wind.
They discussed the ship siren being a sign of it being under attack, and that way making it gather its troops.

"It's a fully equipped Chula warrior, yes. All that weapons tech in the hands of a hysterical four year old looking for his mummy. And now there's an army of them."

The patients surrounded them, outside the barbed wire.

"Why don't they attack?" Jack asked, looking around.

"Good little soldiers, waiting for their commander."

"The child?" Jack said.

"Jamie," Nancy said softly.

"What?"


"I know," the Doctor agreed. "There isn't a little boy born who wouldn't tear the world apart to save his mummy. And this little boy can."

"So what're we going to do?" Jack asked.

"I don't know," the Doctor said faintly.

"It's my fault," Nancy began.

"No," the Doctor said firmly.

"It is. It's all my fault." She started sobbing.

"How can it be your-" The Doctor was cut short by patients crying for their mummy. He looked around frantically to see everyone react to her tears.


"Nancy, what age are you? Twenty? Twenty one? Older than you look, yes?" the Doctor asked her.

The bombs exploded somewhere not far away from them.

"Doctor, that bomb. We've got seconds." Jack was beginning to pace about.

"So it's volcano day. Do what you've got to do," the Doctor said, not looking at him.

And the next moment Jack vanished.

"How old were you five years ago? Fifteen? Sixteen? Old enough to give birth, anyway. He's not your brother, is he? A teenage single mother in 1941. So you hid. You lied. You even lied to him."

The bomb site gate opened and Jamie stood there at the front.

"Are you my mummy?"
"He's going to keep asking, Nancy. He's never going to stop," the Doctor told her softly.

"Mummy?"

"Tell him. Nancy, the future of the human race is in your hands. Trust me and tell him."

Nancy and Jamie walked up towards each other.

"Are you my mummy? Are you my mummy? Are you my mummy?"

"Yes. Yes, I am your mummy," Nancy told him, while bending on her knees to see him face to face.

"Mummy?"

"I'm here." Nancy looked at Jamie with soft eyes.

"Are you my mummy?" he kept asking.

"I am your mummy. I will always be your mummy. I'm so sorry. I am so, so sorry." And with that she hugged her child with full motherly love. Apologizing and loving.

In that moment nanogenes surrounded them. The view was spectacular. Both of them were glowing - a mother and a child. The Doctor looked at the sight with big eyes.

"Oh yes..." he began faintly. "Oh yeh!" he shouted out. "Oh, Rose. Fantastic." He talked with a proud smile on his face. "Come on, please. Come on, you clever little nanogenes. Figure it out! The mother, she's the mother. It's got to be enough information. Figure it out," he urged them frantically.

And with that Jamie let go of Nancy, letting her fall on her back with Jamie standing there.

"Oh, come on. Give me a day like this. Give me this one." The Doctor walked towards the child to take his mask off. When he saw the kid's face, he couldn't suppress his victorious exclamation.

"Ha-ha!" He took Jamie into his arms, as he swung him around. "Welcome back! Twenty years till pop music - you're going to love it."

"What happened?" Nancy asked with a happy smile on her face.

"The nanogenes recognised the superior information, the parent DNA. They didn't change you because you changed them! Ha-ha! Mother knows best!"

"Oh, Jamie."

In a few seconds a bomb was making its way towards them, but then Jack's beam suspended it into air, showing the Captain sitting right on top of it.

"Doctor!"

"Good lad!" The Doctor beamed at him approvingly.

"The bomb's already commenced detonation. I've put it in stasis, but it won't last long," Jack announced.

"Change of plan. Don't need the bomb. Can you get rid of it, safely as you can?" the Doctor asked.
"Doctor, about Rose..." Jack began.

"No need to worry. She will be back to normal in a sec." The Doctor beamed at him while saying that.

"You kidding." Jack's face twisted into a smile. "Never doubted you, Doc." He smirked at him. The Doctor nodded to him in understanding. "Tell her goodbye for me."

And the next moment he was gone with a bomb, just to come back seconds later. "Oh, and, Doc?" The Doctor looked up. "Tell her, I loved the t-shirt." He grinned one last time.

Maybe he will not tell her that, - the Doctor thought.

The Doctor looked at his palms starting to glow with nanogenes. And he just had an idea of his own...

"You want moves, Rose? I'll give you moves," he muttered happily. "I'll sweep you off your feet." He grinned and passed a bunch of nanogenes towards the masked army, making everyone fall down.

He watched in ecstasy as people started to stand up. "EVERYBODY LIVES! JUST THIS ONCE, EVERYBODY LIVES!"

He ran towards the doctor to help him stand up and told him to look after his patients.

And then he spotted Rose, coming forward to meet him. He hurried to her to hug her tightly. It made Rose chuckle. It felt so familiar, this feeling. After a long adventure, just the two of them. Together.

"That was a close one," the Doctor told her while breaking away from the embrace.

"Nah. I knew you would think of something." Rose just beamed at him. She took his hand and squeezed it. "You made this happen, everybody lived thanks to you."

"With you together." He smiled at her tenderly. "Still got the moves."

"Oh?" Rose raised an eyebrow. "You better show them to me once more. I was a bit out of it just now." She grinned with tongue between her teeth.

"Right, then! Back to the TARDIS!" he exclaimed.

Back inside their magnificent ship, the Doctor was full of energy. He felt so alive to be able to save everyone for once.

"And everybody lives, Rose! Everybody lives! I need more days like this."

"Doctor," Rose called out.

"Go on, ask me anything. I'm on fire." He was indeed full of fire.

"What about Jack?" she asked him softly.

"Oh, that lad asked to tell you goodbye," the Doctor said absentmindedly.

"Why?" Rose asked, narrowing her eyes.
"Had to take care of the bomb..." He trailed off.

"We can't leave him," Rose insisted. The Doctor stopped in his fiddlings with the controls to spare a look at Rose.

"Oh, alright alright," he sighed. "After all, everybody lives today." He reluctantly set the coordinates for Jack's ship.

"Now then." He turned the music on. "Shall we continue where we left off?" he asked her teasingly while making his way to her. Rose laughed out loud.

Glenn Miller was echoing in the TARDIS with Rose and the Doctor moving into rhythm. Or at least the Doctor tried to synchronise their movements.

"Let's just try another song," Rose suggested lightly and began to move towards the switch, but was soon grabbed by the Doctor, him drawing her closer to his chest, holding her with his hand on her back.

Thump

"Doctor?" Rose asked softly.

"We can do this." His voice low. "That lad could, there is no way I'm any worse."

Oh.

"You know what I think? I think you're experiencing Captain envy," Rose teased him.

"I don't envy him, Rose." He shook his head. "I know I'm better." And with that he tried to spin her around, but failed.

"Okay, really not this song." Rose chuckled, moving away from his embrace. She spotted Jack looking at them in bewilderment. "Come on in!"

"I'm sure I used to know this stuff," the Doctor muttered to himself. "Close the door, will you? Your ship's about to blow up. There's going to be a draft."

Jack shut the door and the Doctor started up the engine.

"Welcome to the TARDIS."

"Much bigger on the inside," Jack noted and moments later spotted something else moving its way from the inside. "I see you got one more companion for yourselves." He pointed.

The Doctor turned around to look behind him with narrowed eyes. "Oh! Jimbo, boy!" the Doctor exclaimed and walked up towards the piggy. "Come on, dance with us."

"Jimbo?" Rose asked while shooting him questioning daggers.

"Yep, good ol' Jimbo boy."

"You named him Jimbo," Rose stated, her voice clearly annoyed.

"That's right. Common name," he answered innocently.

"You are not naming him after Cassandra's pet," Rose said in a deadly voice while making her way
to face the Doctor face to face.

"Why not?" the Doctor asked simply. Rose let out an exasperated sound. They stood there for a few seconds, looking intensely at each other, when Jack cut in.

"Woah woah. Sorry to disturb your lovers spat, so soon after I just came on board, I gotta note, but the little one here, is getting nervous." He pointed lightly at the pig.

At the same moment the music changed from waltz to swing - *Glenn Miller's In The Mood*.

The Doctor's face lit up at once, all intense emotions flowing out of the window.

"Rose! I've just remembered!" he exclaimed with enthusiasm.

"What?" Rose asked him a bit sharply, still unhappy about Jimbo.

"I can dance! I can dance!" He began moving into rhythm, snapping his fingers, his face beaming all happily.

Rose tried, she really tried to maintain her serious face, but who could possibly resist the Doctor?

"Actually, Doctor, I thought Jack might like this dance," Rose said, already softened up.

"I'm sure he would, Rose. I'm absolutely certain. But who with?" The Doctor looked suggestively at Jack. Jack looked at him a bit lost whether to accept the offer.

"I'll take Jimbo then." Jack nodded lightly and went towards him.

Rose could barely suppress her chuckle. In seconds time she joined the Doctor, placing her hands into his, while moving about, laughing happily, until the Doctor ended the dance with making her back fall down at the last accords.

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to be continued...
Six months later, after the Slitheen family nearly destroyed the Earth, Mickey Smith was casually getting off the train in Cardiff Central railway station. He was found heading towards the redeveloped Oval Basin.

Once he spotted the TARDIS in front of the huge water tower, he made his way to it, knocking on the doors.

"Who the hell are you?" Was Jack's first words, once he opened the doors, seconds later after the knock.

"What do you mean, who the hell am I? Who the hell are you?" Mickey glanced Jack over.

"Captain Jack Harkness," he announced. "Whatever you're selling." He glanced at him from above."We're not buying."

"Get out of my way!" Mickey was clearly having enough of him, as he pushed Jack aside while coming inside.

"Don't tell me. This must be Mickey," Jack stated while closing the doors.

"Here comes trouble! How're you doing, Ricky boy?" the Doctor asked lightly from above the ladder where he was fixing something.

"It's Mickey!" he shot back at him.

"Don't listen to him, he's winding you up." Rose chuckled.

"You look fantastic." Mickey praised her. Rose smiled at him tenderly. And before she could pull him for a hug, Mickey held out a rose from his jacket.

"Oh." It came as a surprise for Rose. Well, that could be as well considered a friendly gesture.

"Thank you." She smiled at him sincerely. And was once again trying to hug him, when Mickey gave her a soft peck on her cheek. Oh well, this could still be considered as a friendly gesture, right? Yeh, no problem.

Rose made a nervous laugh while looking at him. What she didn't notice was that the Doctor was looking at the sight slightly unhappily, still mending something with his hands, but his gaze on the two of them.

"Aw, sweet, look at these two. How come I never get any of that?" Jack complained.

"Buy me a drink first," the Doctor suggested.

"You're such hard work."

"But worth it." The Doctor smiled at Jack.

"I'm so glad you could come by," Rose continued her talk with Mickey.

"Didn't see you in all those months, couldn't miss my chance." He smiled at her. Rose nodded at him, smiling.
"What're you doing in Cardiff anyway?" Mickey asked lightly. "And who the hell's Jumping Jack Flash?" he said mockingly, pointing his head at Jack. "I mean, I don't mind you hanging out with big-ears up there-" He pointed at the Doctor.

"Oi!" the Doctor exclaimed.

"Look in the mirror," Mickey said in a hint, the Doctor just shook his head. "But this guy, I don't know, he's kind of..."

"Handsome?" Jack suggested.

"More like cheesy."

"Early twenty first Century slang. Is cheesy good or bad?" Jack began walking towards them in deep thoughts.

"It's bad," Mickey replied at once.

"But bad means good, isn't that right?" Jack calculated.

"Are you saying I'm not handsome?" the Doctor shot a look at Mickey.

Mickey looked up at the Doctor before glancing towards Rose's direction and that's when his face fell. It was getting pale.

"Mickey?" Rose asked, waving her hand in front of his face.

"You got an alien on board," he stated breathless.

"Perspective, aren't you?" the Doctor said sarcastically. Making Rose snort a bit, but then she got her focus back on Mickey.

"Not that one," he grimaced. "That..." he began when his face twisted in realisation. "Oh no. Is it like in the movies? When only the chosen one sees it? It is, isn't it?" Mickey looked frantically at each of them, but they just stood there looking at him while making faces like "What the hell you are on about?"

"Oh God, now I gotta describe it to you." He began pacing nervously at his feet. "He has got this sort of...snout...a-and blue jumper...and he looks like a...pig! Like a pig just fully clothed!" He pointed at the direction of the arch towards the TARDIS hallway.

Dead silence.

Seconds later sniggering sounds could be heard. At first still faint, then becoming louder evolving into chuckling and laughing.

Mickey looked around the the trio to see Jack clenching his stomach from laughing, the Doctor shaking his head with a grin and Rose desperately trying to suppress the snort, but failing.

"Have you gone mad? You got to stop it!" Mickey still persisted.

Then the Doctor descended the stairs, casually patting on Mickey's shoulders. "Rickey the idiot, never cease to amuse us." He smiled at him.

"What?" Mickey was watching them with eyes narrowed in confusion.
"It's-" Rose's voice faltered from all the laughing. "It's alright, Mickey. We see him." She nodded at him while pressing her lips together.

And before Mickey could say anything more she continued. "He's travelling with us. Our companion."

"A what?" Mickey couldn't believe them. "But he is an alien!" He pointed at him.

"Oi!" the Doctor exclaimed in a warning.

"That one at least looks human, who knows how much he is, though." He glanced at him from head to toe making the Doctor roll his eyes. "But that is...a walking pig!"

Rose chuckled. Jack was still shouting in laughter. "Anyway!" Rose tried to calm them down. "We just stopped to Cardiff to refuel," Rose began.

"The thing is, Cardiff's got this rift running through the middle of the city. It's invisible, but it's like an earthquake fault between different dimensions." Rose moved her hands, gesturing.

"The rift was healed back in 1869," the Doctor added up.

"Thanks to a girl named Gwyneth, because these creatures called the Gelth, they were using the rift as a gateway, but she saved the world and closed it." Rose talked in excitement, Mickey nodding.

"But closing a rift always leaves a scar, and that scar generates energy, harmless to the human race-" Jack cut in, now having calmed down.

"But perfect for the Tardis, so just park it here for a couple of days right on top of the scar and-" the Doctor complemented him.

"Open up the engines, soak up the radiation-" Jack started raising his voice in enthusiasm.

"Like filling her up with petrol and off we go!" Rose exclaimed, Mickey watching from one side to another, getting lost.

"Into time!" Jack said lively while high five-ing Rose.

"And space!" the trio said in unison, Rose spinning around to high five the Doctor. Everyone was grinning all happily.

"My God, have you seen yourselves? You all think you're so clever, don't you?" Mickey asked them.

"Yeah." The Doctor nodded happily with his mouth half open in a grin.

"Yeah." Same for Rose.

"Yep!" And Jack, who slapped Mickey on the face lightly.

"Should take another twenty four hours, which means we've got time to kill," the Doctor announced, once the four of them made their way outside.

"That old lady's staring," Mickey noted.
"Probably wondering what four people could do inside a small wooden box." Jack sneered while chuckling together with Rose seconds later.

As the group started to walk away Mickey butted in again. "Wait, the TARDIS, we can't just leave it. Doesn't it get noticed?"

"Ricky, let me tell you something about the human race. You put a mysterious blue box slap bang in the middle of town, what do they do?" The Doctor placed his hands on Mickey's shoulders and as Mickey started to mouth the answer- "Walk past it. Now, stop your nagging. Let's go and explore."

"What's the plan?" Rose asked lightly while skipping towards the Doctor and linking their arms together.

"I don't know. Cardiff, early twenty first century and the wind's coming from the east. Trust me. Safest place in the universe."

"Something to eat first?" Jack suggested.

"You're on it!" the Doctor agreed.

They found themselves in a restaurant on a small jetty.

"I swear, six feet tall and with big tusks" Jack was telling his story in full excitement.

"You're lying through your teeth!" the Doctor exclaimed while looking at Jack in amusement.

Rose was laughing out loud. No matter how many times she heard the story, it never ceased to amaze her.

"I mean, it turns out the white things are tusks and I mean tusks! And it's woken, and it's not happy," Jack continued.

"How could you not know it was there?" the Doctor asked incredulously.

"And we're standing there, fifteen of us, naked-" Jack exclaimed the word with much power.

"Naked?!" Rose repeated while chuckling.

"And I'm like, oh, no, no, it's got nothing to do with me." Jack moved in a comic show gesture. "And then it roars, and we are running. Oh my God, we are running!" He pointed a finger in the air to make his point. "And Brakovitch falls, so I turn to him and I say-"

"I knew we should've turned left!" Mickey finished.

"That's my line!" Jack cried while everyone burst out laughing.

"I don't believe you." Rose hit Jack playfully. "I don't believe a word you say ever. That is so brilliant."

At that moment the Doctor saw the newspaper with a familiar face on the cover. He walked towards the elderly man as he snatched it from his grasp. His face fell as he read it and turned around to show his group.

"And I was having such a nice day."
"Oh, right."

Rose bit her lip. *Nearly forgot about that.*

And here they stood. The invincible team of four. At the City Hall foyer. *Just add James Bond Mission Impossible and you get the image.*

"According to intelligence, the target is the last surviving member of the Slitheen family," Jack began his smart talk while taking off his gloves. "A criminal sect from the planet Raxacoricofallapatorious." While taking off his scarf. "Masquerading as a human being, zipped inside a skin suit."

"Okay, plan of attack, we assume a basic fifty seven fifty six strategy." That made the Doctor look up at him sceptically. "Covering all available exits on the ground floor. Doctor, you go face to face. That'll designate Exit One," He faced the Doctor, who was still looking incredulously at him, but Jack seemed to fail to notice that. "I'll cover Exit Two. Rose, you Exit Three." Rose suppressed the chuckle while watching the scene. "Mickey Smith, you take Exit Four. Have you got that?" He ended in an all smart tone.

"Excuse me." Jack glanced at the Doctor. "Who's in charge?"


"Right." The Doctor turned his head ahead. "Here's the plan." *Pause.* "Like he said. Nice plan. Anything else?"

Rose chuckled now audibly.

"Present arms." And to that everyone pulled out their mobile phones.

"Ready," the Doctor said.

"Ready." And Rose.

"Ready." With Mickey.

"Ready. Speed dial?" Jack asked.

"Yup." The Doctor.

"Ready." Rose

"Check." Mickey

"See you in hell," Jack said with a tease and walked off to his exit.

Rose started to run towards exist three as she knew the Slitheen would try to go North first. Even if her running was not that required, as Mickey would surely turn up with a leg in a bucket, and the Doctor would just have to use the teleportation reversal, but still, running always felt good.

So she ran.

She ran with a full concentration just to see Blon stop in her tracks with a surprised expression.
She snarled at her and it only made Rose snort at the sight. *Not running away this time.* She faced the other direction just to see Jack running at full speed and then, the only available exit was exit 4. *Oh dear Mickey.*

"Margaret!" the Doctor called out to the Slitheen. As he climbed down the ladder, Blon was already making her way towards exit 4.

"Who's on Exit Four?" Jack shouted out.

"That was Mickey!" Rose answered him lightly.

"Here I am." Mickey ran to them panting.

"Mickey the idiot." The Doctor mocked him.

Rose was already preparing to tell them that Blon is not gonna outrun them, when Mickey had other thoughts. He was too determined to let it pass. Moments later, the group watched as Mickey took the bucket off his foot just to throw it at Margaret's direction, and surprisingly, it hit her in the legs. Making her fall face flat on the ground.

"Ouch," Jack said in a mock, while grinning.

"Nice job, Rickey." The Doctor patted Mickey on the shoulder.

"Oh, well." Mickey just shrugged.

Rose just watched the scene in surprise and nodded in approval.

"So, you're a Slitheen, you're on Earth, you're trapped. Your family get killed, but you teleport out just in the nick of time. You have no means of escape. What do you do? You build a nuclear power station. But what for?" The Doctor interrogated Blon, once the five of them made their way back in the City Hall.

"A philanthropic gesture." The Doctor smiled, nodding in feigned understanding. "I've learnt the error of my ways," Margaret said while putting ice on her nose, which was now swelling up.

They learnt that the power station was going to be built on top of the rift, exploding the minute it reaches capacity.

"But why would she do that? A great big explosion, she'd only end up killing herself," Mickey asked.

"She's got a name, you know," Margaret countered.

"She's not even a she, she's a thing."

"Oh, but she's clever." The Doctor looked at her while saying, biting his lower lip with his teeth when he turned the model of the station upside down.

"Fantastic."

Jack's eyes popped out. "Is that a... tribophysical waveform macro-kinetic extrapolator!?" Jack exclaimed in excitement.

"Couldn't have put it better myself." The Doctor looked at him approvingly.
Jack was enjoying himself while he explained to the group that when the reactor blows, the rift would open, making a disaster, but the extrapolator would serve as a shield.

Somewhere along the conversation, the Doctor steadily made his way towards the project poster. Rose noticed his movement from the first steps and let her gaze follow him, until she looked up to see the haunting words, which the Doctor was now looking at.

*Blaidd Drwg - Bad Wolf.*

"How'd you think of the name?" the Doctor asked.


"I know, but how did you think of it?" the Doctor asked again.

"I chose it at random, that's all. I don't know. It just sounded good. Does it matter?" She shrugged.

"Blaidd Drwg," the Doctor stated while turning around at his friends.

"Bad Wolf," Rose said absentmindedly.

The Doctor looked at her in question. "You know Welsh?"

"J-just the basics." Rose played innocent. *Stop it. Get a hold of yourself.*

"Everywhere we go. Two words following us. Bad Wolf." The Doctor looked concerned.

It was the first time when the Doctor noticed the repetition of the words. And it meant that the end would be near. She gulped at the thought. *This is it.* Her creation of the Bad Wolf is waiting for her just around the corner.

"How can the words be following you?" Jack stated a question.

The Doctor still looked a bit troubled, but soon dismissed the thought. *And she was not fooled this time.* In his long life, he knew better than to disregard such things. He knew something was coming. *Just like with the storm approaching.*

"Nah, just a coincidence. Like hearing a word on the radio then hearing it all day. Never mind. Things to do. Margaret, we're going to take you home," he said nonchalantly.

"Hold on, isn't that the easy option, like letting her go?" Jack didn't want to end it like that.

"I don't believe it!" Rose exclaimed all happy. "We actually get to go to Raxacoricofallapatorius!" And at that she jumped into the Doctor's arms. Both happy to the core at the thought. *She loved the trip the last time, could certainly repeat it.*

"They have the death penalty," Margaret announced, making the Doctor's face shadow. "The family Slitheen was tried in its absence many years ago and found guilty with no chance of appeal. According to the statutes of government, the moment I return, I am to be executed. What do you make of that, Doctor? Take me home and you take me to my death."

It was hard for Rose to hold her laughter as she imagined Blon as an egg in her mind. And it would not be appropriate to laugh in such a dejected statement.

"Not my problem," the Doctor said nonchalantly. Rose raised an eyebrow.
At night the group found themselves at the TARDIS. Slitheen admiring the ship, and faking her acceptance of defeat. Rose just rolled her eyes at the sight. She still had many things under her sleeves.

"We've got a prisoner. The police box is really a police box," Mickey stated in amusement.

"You're not just police, though. Since you're taking me to my death, that makes you my executioners. Each and every one of you," Margaret said slyly, while sitting on the armchair.

*Oh for God's sake, talk about wanting to make them feel guilty.*

"Well, you deserve it," Mickey said with a bit wavering voice.

"You're very quick to say so. You're very quick to soak your hands in my blood, which makes you better than me, *how*, exactly?" she asked meaningfully. "Long night ahead." She smiled pleased at her own remark. "Let's see who can look me in the eye." She showed her snake's eye.

She looked at Mickey first - he glanced away, then at Jack and the Doctor, until it came to Rose. It made her face twist in frustration, when she found Rose smirking at her! Rose could see how she was trying to form a word or two to get back at her, to make her feel ashamed of her reaction, but she failed each time and Rose just shrugged nonchalantly at her.

*Serves you right.*

As Mickey was standing outside, looking at the waterfall, Rose came from behind to stand besides him.

"It's freezing out here!" Rose exclaimed while making a nervous laugh. *It felt so different to stand here with Mickey, compared to the previous time. And that other time ended quite horribly.*

"Better than in there. She does deserve it. She's a Slitheen. I don't care. It's just weird in that box."

Mickey was bothered by it.

"Everything will work out." Rose tried to assure him and smiled at him softly. Mickey glanced at her.

"I've been thinking." *Oh boll, the conversation was heading dangerously at the same direction.*

"Yeh?" Rose asked, her voice cracking a bit, as she was starting to feel uncomfortable.

"You know, we could go have a drink. Have a pizza or something. Just you and me."

Sigh.

"Mickey." Rose began, her eyes down on the ground.

"I know what you said back then. But I don't want us to end just like that," Mickey said in a honest voice.

*It hurt her to make him feel pain.*

"I'm sorry," she said faintly.

Mickey exhaled. "What happened really, Rose?" He was pacing about stressfully. "We were *nice,*
together,” he said lowering his voice to add more meaning into words. "And one day, out of the blue, you disappear with that alien thing and dump me the moment you are back!” he ended in a harsh voice.

Rose looked at him, her eyes filled with pain for him. "...I'm sorry." That's all she could offer. "I didn't mean to hurt you.” Her voice cracked at the end.

"You said it's been only few days for you! Few days!" He raised his voice. "Did you lie about that?"

"No," Rose said while closing her eyes.

"Then how could you run off to him like that only after a few days?!"

She really didn't know what to say. It has been two years for her already. How could she say that, when even the Doctor wasn't aware of that!?

She swallowed a lump in her throat. "Mickey-"

"No, you know what? Forget it." He put his hands in defence while backing away.

"Mickey." She called out for him. She tried to grab him on his arm, but he pushed away.

"It's always just you and him, isn't it?” he asked rhetorically as he already knew the answer. Rose furrowed her forehead as she was making a pained and apologizing expression.

"I get it." He was slowly backing away, refusing to meet her eyes.

It didn't take long for Mickey to completely disappear from Rose's vision, leaving her stand there alone in the open.

Rose entered the TARDIS with a few deep breaths, wiping her tears off her face just before. She found only Jack inside. Blon and the Doctor must be still having their little date.

"Back already?" Jack said with a tease.

"Yeh," Rose said faintly.

Jack seemed to notice her weak voice as he looked up from his work to face her. "Everything alright?” he asked in concern.

"Yeh. Yeh, everything is fine-" She tried to control her voice, but it cracked in the end. She bit her lips while glancing sideways.

"Hey now. Everything is going to be okay. Come here." Jack got beside her to lead her to sit down on the jump seat. He placed his hands on her shoulders, to make her look at him. "So tell me, what's wrong?” He paused a bit and continued with a frown. "Did that Mickey guy done something to you?"

"No, no.” She chuckled sadly. "He's done nothing wrong." Rose assured him. "It's me, that's wrong."

"How could you be wrong, Rose? You are great!” he exclaimed with a grin, making Rose chuckle with tears still in her eyes.
"It's just so hard..."

Jack pulled his hands away from her shoulders to stand a bit further from her, but still near the controls. "Is it about Doc?" he asked softly.

She shook her head slightly. "Sort of."

Jack exhaled. "Look, as you are already aware of it... I have been a conman for long while, and I can spot one like me miles away."

Rose gave him a look. "I'm not conning him!" she hissed.

"I guess you are not, but still you are lying to him." He raised one eyebrow.

"I'm not lying..." she began, but Jack interrupted, "Yeh yeh, not telling the truth, same difference."

"How did you know?" she asked faintly in disbelief.

"As I said, I can spot a lie. And, you!" he pointed at her. "Are horrible at it!" he narrowed his eyes in a mock.

"Heh, I thought I was doing well." She half smiled. At least being undercover with the Doctor was what she was used to do.

"Hmm, I'm not saying you are bad at pretending itself, but you make yourself slip unnecessary." He shrugged. "For all I know, either Doc is pretending extremely well not to notice that or he is completely dense," he ended in disbelief.

Rose chuckled together with Jack at the thought.

"Why are you not telling him about your species?" he asked her.

"Species?" Rose blinked at him in surprise. "I'm human. What to tell?" What is wrong with her species again.

"You got time flowing around you, Rosie." Jack pointed a nod to her side, when saying that.

"Obviously, when you travel in time and space, I suppose you get time in you," Rose joked.

"Not the background radiation from the TARDIS," Jack countered.

"Then what?" Rose asked in bewilderment. Now this was starting to get ridiculous.

"You tell me." Jack shrugged. "I've got no idea what it is, since apparently, something is blocking it out of reach." He paced around a bit but then stopped into his tracks. "I suppose only Doc's equipment could identify it. Guess he didn't try anything yet, then?" He looked back at her.

Rose was just looking at him blankly. She blinked a few more times in silence then with a clear throat decided to get this straight.

"So, what you are saying is, I got something time-ish floating around me, something that makes me not-so-human, and the Doctor didn't even notice that?"

"That's my bet," Jack agreed to her surprise. "As I said, something is blocking it, hiding it away, even from the Time Lord there." He pointed to the TARDIS doors. "I only learnt because I'm more curious and less considerate of others privacy." Jack winked at her, Rose just rolled her eyes, but
smiling at his words. "And you really don't know about yourself?"

"It's complicated," Rose said while sighing.

"Oh, I hate that word." Jack shook his head while chuckling. Moments later he became serious again. "You can tell me." Jack looked at her in all honesty.

There was a short silence before Rose ended it.

"I sort of..." Rose bit her lower lip while searching for words. "I sort of crossed my own timeline..." she began.

"Woah there!" Jack put his hands in defence mode. "That's dangerous stuff you are playing with-"

"But not exactly," Rose interrupted him.

"So did you or did you not?" he asked her again.

"Yes and no." Rose held her gaze firm at his.

Jack gave her a lost look. "Okay! Tell me from the beginning." He urged her, moving his hands in a gesture.

Rose shook her head. "I can't. Anything I say could change everything. And I don't want it to change, Jack." She looked at him with a pained expression. "I don't want us to change." She suppressed the sob. As she took a deep breath she continued. "I don't want him to think of me as some alien or a suspicious threat.." she breathed. "This is all just... wrong!" She waved her hands ahead of her.

"I won't tell, Doc. If that's what you are worrying about. But I might be able to help."

"I can't. I shouldn't even be telling you this, for that matter." Rose laughed sadly.

"It's alright. I can help, as long as it doesn't involve me." He shrugged nonchalantly. Then heard Rose laugh nervously.

"Does it?" he asked her in a rising horror.

And the next moment the tribophysical waveform macro-kinetic extrapolator gone wild, blinking and making sparks come flying inside the TARDIS. The whole console room was shaking with everything inside.

"Do something about it!" Rose yelled out through the sounds.

"We're not done talking!" He pointed at her before running to face the problem.

It was sparking and not making it possible for him to get near the device. Moments later, a key inside the TARDIS doors could be heard, as it opened to reveal Blon and the Doctor together.

"What the hell are you doing?" the Doctor shouted at Jack in question.

"It just went crazy!" Jack defended himself.

"It's the rift. Time and space are ripping apart. The whole city's going to disappear!" the Doctor was running around frantically about the console.
Rose spotted Margaret standing there un-cuffed.

"What are you doing letting her loose?" Rose asked in a blaming voice while making her way towards her.

It was the moment Blon waited for. She soon dropped her human arm to the ground and began to move her claws at Rose. She dodged the alien, leaning back on the console, but unfortunately, letting Slitheen make a hole with her claws at the controls.

Oh.

"What are you doing!?!" the Doctor shouted out. The next moment Jack was making his move towards Rose, but clashed into the Doctor, when the TARDIS shuddered violently as he was moving just in the same side.

"Come here you stinky human!" Margaret hissed, and with one quick move placed her one nail just at Rose's throat, making the Doctor and Jack stop in their tracks.

"One wrong move and she snaps like a promise," Blon said in a warning tone.

"I might've known," the Doctor said in disgust. Rose just rolled her eyes.

"I've had you bleating all night, poor baby, now shut it. You, fly boy, put the extrapolator at my feet," she ordered.

Slitheen pocked her finger deeper in her flesh and it was slightly bleeding now. The Doctor just nodded to Jack to pass the device.

"Thank you. Just as I planned." Margaret smiled, pleased.

"The extrapolator was programmed to lock onto the nearest alien power source and open the rift. And what a power source it found. I'm back on schedule, thanks to you," she exclaimed all happy.

"The rift's going to convulse. You'll destroy the whole planet," Jack stated, looking worriedly at Rose.

"And you with it!" she spat the last words as she stood on the extrapolator, grabbing Rose now by her throat.

And in that moment the TARDIS opened up. Her bright warm light coming through to the surface. Margaret seemed to be a bit startled by that.

"Of course, opening the rift means you'll pull this ship apart. And it's the Tardis. My Tardis. The best ship in the universe," the Doctor said softly.

"It'll make wonderful scrap," Blon spat in disgust.

The sight made Rose gasp. As she locked her gaze at the heart of the TARDIS, she could see the words shinning brightly from the inside.

**Bad wolf** sparked in a most beautiful light. Rose watched it with her eyes wide open as seconds later they blinked and scattered around, disappearing from the sight, like it was never there. Rose blinked as she glanced away.

"Beautiful." Slitheen was as much immersed in the sight, but she didn't question anything. It made Rose wonder if she saw what she did.
"Look inside, Blon Fel Fotch. Look at the light." The Doctor urged her.

Margaret loosened her grip on Rose, but this time Rose just stood there. Jack had to grab her to force her to come stand aside.

"Thank you." Was Blon's last words as she disappeared into the light.

"Don't look. Stay there. Close your eyes!" the Doctor warned them as he rushed about to close it.

*But she already looked.* And nothing happened. It didn't take over her. *Why?*

"Now, Jack, come on, shut it all down. Shut down! Rose, that panel over there, turn all the switches to the right."

With a good teamwork, they finally were able to stop the rift from opening, and the energy ceased to pour in the sky.

"Nicely done. Thank you, all," the Doctor stated proudly.

"What happened to Margaret?" Jack asked.

Rose leaned to the bodysuit of Slitheen, to find an egg resting there.

"She's an egg," Rose stated slightly, smiling.

"Regressed to her childhood." The Doctor found it amusing.

"She's an egg?" Jack asked in disbelief.

"She can start again. Live her life from scratch. If we take her home, give her to a different family, tell them to bring her up properly, she might be all right!" the Doctor said hoping.

"Or she might be worse," Jack countered.

"That's her choice," the Doctor said while juggling Blon in his hands.

"She's an egg." Rose chuckled.

"She's an egg." He grinned. "Okay then." He stood up as he placed the egg in the container. "We're all powered up. We can leave. Opening the rift filled us up with energy. We can go, if that's all right."

"Yeah, fine," Rose agreed simply.

"How's Mickey?" the Doctor asked.

"He's okay. He's gone," Rose said with a sad smile. Before the Doctor could say anything, she continued. "It's okay. We can go."

He made a quick glance at her. "Okay. Off we go, then. Always moving on."

"Next stop, Raxacoricofallapatorius. Now you don't often get to say that," Jack joked.

"We'll just stop by and pop her in the hatchery. Margaret the Slitheen can live her life again. A second chance," the Doctor announced.

"Yeh. Second chances are nice," Rose muttered, smiling in the distance.
to be continued...
They were running. Running with all their mights. They had to get away - and fast.

Rose looked behind her shoulder just to see a group, of around 200 samurai, just behind them, dangerously pointing the edges of their weapons - katanas, right at them. Just a few steps slower and it would pierce their skin.

"How much longer?" Rose yelled out to the Doctor.

"We are almost there. Hurry!" he shouted back while running himself. At the same time he started to slower his pace, falling slightly bit behind Jack and Rose.

"What are you doing, Doc!?" Jack looked at him in horror.

"Take Jimbo." The Doctor told Jack as he placed Jimbo on the ground from his embrace and nudged him on the back to make him run towards Jack. Then he turned to face Rose. "Open the TARDIS, I'll buy you time."

"Wha-. No!" Rose looked at him in horror.

"I'll be alright. Now, hurry!" He told her with a smile.

As Rose and Jack, together with Jimbo in his arms, reached the TARDIS, Rose placed the key in the doors, to let them open. At the same time they saw how the Doctor was standing further away from them, with samurai nearing by each second.

Just when Rose was about to call out for the Doctor, with the warriors making a swing movement towards the Doctor, he pulled out his sonic screwdriver and pointed it at them - a loud siren sound echoing and a blue light emitting out of it.

It seemed to be enough to make the group stop in their tracks, as they covered their ears in defence.

"That's more like it." The Doctor beamed at the sight and seconds later turned around to dash into the TARDIS. "Open the door!"

In a moment the trio plus one were safely inside their protective home. Safe and sound.

"That was brilliant!" Rose exclaimed first and then started laughing.

"Oi! Rose Tyler, we were almost killed by a historical samurai army only so they could get hands on this little fellow here." He pointed at Jimbo."And you laugh at it?" He raised an eyebrow in all seriousness.

Rose put her lips together. They locked their gaze for a moment. But it didn't last long, Rose's mouth was already quivering. And then the hysterical laugh started, together with a background oinking sound.

It would have lasted for hours if a sudden blinding light wouldn't have made them freeze. The Doctor saw how that bright light surrounded Rose firstly, then Jack and himself. Taking them somewhere, where their lives would be changed forever.

And now, here she stands, at the Weakest Link, with her fellow player Rodrick. He was all about
himself again. He didn't care about other people at all. True enough, people weren't killed inside the games, but nor he or anyone inside the games knew it. Only Rose.

She bit her lips to stop herself from talking too many times now. She wanted to comfort the people who were evicted, to make their "last moments" not so frightening. But she couldn't make herself be evicted instead. She had to win. And for all she knew, Rodrick used his "tactical voting" as she expected. That's all she needed.

"Rose," Anne Droid stated the last question. "In history, which Icelandic city hosted Murder Spree Twenty?"

"Pola Ventura," Rose answered calmly.

"That is correct answer," Anne Droid announced. "Rose got 4 right, Rodcrick 2. Rose, you are the strongest link, you will be transported home with one thousand six hundred credits," the droid announced.

"Oh, well. As long as I live." She laughed nervously.

Rodrick looked at the robot with horror filled eyes. "No. You can't. I can't die yet!" He began to shake, when he turned to face Rose.

"You!" He pointed at her. "I thought you were plain stupid, but you just were playing all along?"

Rose shrugged. "Strategic play."

"Oh, wonderful," he spat his words in disgust. "You looked like you cared so much about the others while in turn you just laughed at them, didn't you?"

It made Rose uncomfortable. She knew he was unreasonable, but only to her eyes. From his view of point, she really looked quite bad. But there was nothing else she could have done. She needed to be with the Doctor in this battle. And there was no need to make him worried unnecessary. At least for once, she wouldn't face death in his eyes.

And the next moment the lift opened with a very frantic looking Doctor and Jack, together with Jimbo (?)

"Rose! Stop this game!" The Doctor searched the room with his eyes. When he saw her name still emitting light, he sighed in relief.

"Rodrick, you leave this life with nothing," Anne Droid announced.

"You managed to win?" Jack asked in surprise. Rose just laughed nervously.

"I order you to stop this game!" the Doctor shouted at the Anne Droid coldly while running inside the room. This game was just wrong. He could only be thankful that Rose escaped the punishment, in whatever way she managed to do that, but that didn't mean that other innocent people could die in vain.

"You are the weakest link." The robot was starting to point the beam at Rodrick, but by seeing the Doctor run forward, turned to face him.

"Look out for the Anne Droid, it's armed!" Rose tried to warn the Doctor, but he didn't slow down, so the only thing she could do was step ahead of him.
She dashed in front of the Anne Droid as she was preparing to shoot. "Rose!" The Doctor's frantic voice could be heard. She closed her eyes, waiting to be transported to the Daleks.

But nothing happened.

There was silence in the room. She slowly fluttered her eyelids open to see the droid looking at her. "You are the strongest link. Can't shoot." It spoke and began to move from side to side, shaking. "Cannot shoot. Link. Strongest," it shuttered.

It was enough time for Rose to make her way to the Doctor. Once she was in the reachable distance he took her hand and smiled upon seeing her. "You alright?"

"Never been better." Rose beamed at him and found herself in a tight hug. "Good to see you," she said softly.

"Yeh, you too," he exhaled, squeezing her just a bit tighter. Rose smiled in his embrace.

Moments later Jack, Jimbo and some other girl approached the two of them, forcing the pair to break apart. "Rose, you okay?" Jack was first to ask.

"Same good," Rose answered him, smiling while pulling him in a brief hug. And at that moment Jack saw how Anne Droid managed to fix itself and was once again moving towards Rodrick.

"Stop it!" Jack shouted, now breaking free from Rose's arms and pointing a gun at the Anne Droid, but was too late. Rodrick disappeared in front of their eyes.

"You've killed an innocent man!" the Doctor yelled out with disgust towards this game.

Rose grabbed his hand to squeeze it tightly in assurance. Oh, she so wished she could tell him that it was not what it seemed.

Seconds later, two security guards appeared out of nowhere, separating Rose and the Doctor, taking their arms behind their backs.

"Don't touch them!" Jack was pointing a weapon at them.

"Sir, put down the gun or I'll have to shoot," the security guard warned him.

Jack glanced at the Doctor, who just nodded lightly.

All five of them were brought by the security guards. They took pictures of their faces' front, left and right sides and placed them inside the same cell, even with Jimbo.

Is this the place where they were taken, when she was disintegrated the last time? She felt glad all the more that she managed to stay together with them. It was really too horrible place to be at, when you think that one of your friends were dissolved into atoms just moments ago.

When one of the guards took the Doctor's sonic screwdriver from him, he started talking inside the cell.

"You will be taken from this place to the Lunar Penal Colony, there to be held without trial. You may not appeal against this sentence. Is that understood?" Nobody answered him. The Doctor was silent. And it could only be a sign, that he's thought of a plan.

When the second guard unlocked the cage to let his colleague out, the game began.
"Let's do it," the Doctor said, his head turned to Jack.

Jack was out first, knocking out the guard with a swing movement, the Doctor close behind him, taking care of another one.

"Nice work, boys." Rose grinned at both of them.

"Always." Jack winked at her while reclaiming his Defabricator with the Doctor retrieving his sonic and Rose with Lynda taking the guard's weapons.

They began walking out of the room when Rose came to a stop. "Wait a minute. What's Jimbo doing here?"

"He was brought here the same way as we were. Found him in the cage together with a lion playing gladiator game." Jack told her while still walking. Rose's face started to change colour just by imagining the scene.

"I was about to shoot the beast when our little fellow took care of it himself, by using his canines." He giggled at the memory.

"Canines?" Rose asked Jack in bewilderment. "He has canines?" Now facing the little piggy boy.

"You bet he does." Jack smirked at her while patting Jimbo's head.

They went into the elevator to be lifted to floor 500. Once again something was going on there.

"Okay, move away from the desk! Nobody try anything clever. Everybody clear. Stand to the side and stay there," Jack stated, letting the occupants of the room be aware that they were armed, while the Doctor's team walked forward into the room.

"Who's in charge of this place?" the Doctor said coldly, while standing in front of the controller.

"Nineteen, eighteen." She was counting.

"This Satellite's more than a Game Station. Who is behind the Bad Wolf Corporation?" the Doctor asked.

"All staff are reminded that solar flares," controller continued.

The Doctor pointed his sonic screwdriver at her.

"She can't reply. Don't shoot!" The man put his hands in defence mode when the Doctor turned to face him.

"Oh, don't be so thick. Like this thing can shoot," the Doctor added lightly. "Captain, we've got more guards on the way up. Secure the exits."

"Yes, sir." Jack replied while taking off.

"You. What were you saying?" the Doctor continued. "Why can't she answer?"

"She's, er... The Controller is linked to the transmissions. The entire output goes through her brain. You're not a member of staff so she doesn't recognise your existence," the man stated, looking worriedly at the blonde woman by his side still with the gun. If the thing in the leather man's hands couldn't shoot, he was more than sure, the one in the girl's hands could.
"What's her name?" the Doctor pestered.

"I don't know. She was installed when she was five years old. That's the only life she's ever known."

Rose narrowed her eyes. "Oh, my God. And you just let her stay like that?"

"I...we - don't know anything about her! She was always just...there. It's her only proper existence," the man tried defending himself.

Rose nodded. "Right," she agreed tightly.

"Door's sealed. We should be safe for about ten minutes," Jack announced.

"Keep an eye on them," the Doctor shouted out to him. Then looked back to Rose. "What are you doing with that gun again?" He narrowed his eyes.

"Oh." Rose looked at her hands blankly. "I thought at least I would look dangerous." She shrugged.

"Drop that down," the Doctor said and in a split of a second Rose tossed the gun behind her. The Doctor gave her a look.

"What? You told me to drop it." She looked at him confused. The Doctor just rolled his eyes, before the man started to talk again and he had to turn to face him.

"But that stuff you were saying about something going on with the Game Station. I think you're right. I've kept a log. Unauthorised transmats, encrypted signals, it's been going on for years," the man said.

"Show me," the Doctor said in a low voice. "Rose? Lynda?"

"Coming with you." And with that the Doctor followed the man with Rose, Lynda and Jimbo not far from them.

At the same moment Jack tried to open the Archive six.

"You're not allowed in there. Archive Six is out of bounds," the woman of the staff told him in a warning.

"Do I look like an out of bounds sort of guy?" Jack pulled up his weapons, making his point clear.

Jack placed his palm at the engraved palm, which was emitting some sort of blue light and opened the doors just to find the TARDIS parked in the white room.

Once inside the TARDIS, Jack quickly went to operate the console when his face twisted from the readings he saw on the monitor.

"What the hell?"

On the floor 500, the Controller turned off the monitors and started asking for the Doctor.

"Doctor?"

"I think she wants you," the staff woman told him.
"Doctor? Doctor? Where's the Doctor?" Controller was asking.

"I'm here." The Doctor told her as he walked up to her.

"Can't see. I'm blind. So blind. All my life, blind. All I can see is numbers, but I saw you." Rose looked at her in a pained expression. This was just so wrong.

"What do you want?" the Doctor asked her.

"Solar flares hiding me. They can't hear me. My masters, they always listen but they can't hear me now the sun, the sun is so bright."

"Who are your masters?"

"They wired my head. The name's forbidden. They control my thoughts. My masters. My masters, I had to be careful. They monitor transmissions but they don't watch the programmes. I could hide you inside the games. Knew that you would find me."

"People have dead inside your games," the Doctor said with a cold voice.

"Doesn't matter."

The Doctor's gaze darkened at her words.

"Excuse me, Controller, was it?" Rose interrupted in an offended voice. "That's not sort of way of talking about human life, do you mind?" She knew full well that those same people didn't die, but the Controller's attitude towards that just made her blood boil. What's more, those same people were brought here, inside the warzone full of Daleks. Rose furrowed her forehead. They would die, after all. And she didn't know of any way to save them.

"They've been hiding. My masters hiding in the dark space, watching and shaping the Earth so, so, so many years. Always been there, guiding humanity, hundreds and hundred of years."

"Who are they?" The Doctor's voice stronger now.

"But they speak of you, my masters, they fear the Doctor."

"Tell me, who are they?" The Doctor was getting impatient.

With the power back Controller went back to counting. "Twenty one, twenty two."

"When's the next solar flare?" the Doctor asked the crew.

"Two years time."

"Fat lot of good that is," the Doctor muttered.

"Found the Tardis." Jack called out to them.

"We're not leaving now," the Doctor said firmly.

"No, but the Tardis worked it out. You'll want to watch this. Lynda, could you stand over there for me please?" Jack asked her gently.

"I just want to go home." Lynda shook her head.
"It'll only take a second," Jack pleaded. "Could you stand in that spot, quick as you can." As she went. "Everybody watching? Okay. Three, two, one." He pressed the button and a beam came down, making Lynda vanish in a puff of smoke.

Rose winced at that. The Doctor only stared in disbelief. He couldn't understand why would Jack do it. "But you killed her!

"Oh, do you think?" Jack shrugged lightly.

And with another beam he brought Lynda back next to the Doctor.

"What the hell was that?" Lynda asked as the Doctor just looked at her in bewilderment. A new set of hope making its way on his face as he looked back at Jack.

"It's a transmat beam. Not a disintegrator, a secondary transmat system." Jack began talking. "People don't get killed in the games." The Doctor began to smile with Rose together with him. "They get transported across space!" he exclaimed.

"But that's fantastic!" The Doctor looked at him grinning. "Show me those readings."

They rushed inside the TARDIS, the Doctor looking all excited about their new discovery, as he checked the data of the beam together with Jack. Muttering some technical terms and grinning all happily.

Only Rose Tyler was watching the scene in a pained smile. He was getting a false hope. He will not be able to save everyone. She could feel the lump make its way towards her throat. She gulped and felt a soft nudge on her leg.

There stood their little friend, looking at her with wide eyes filled with concern in them. Rose smiled at him, patting him on the head fondly. Then suddenly the TARDIS started to shake violently and an alarm sound broke off.

"What's going on, Doctor?" Rose asked.

"Don't know." The Doctor looked frantically at the screen, searching for the answer. "Everything was fi-" Then his eyes widened in horror.

"Daleks."

to be continued...
The Parting of the Ways

The TARDIS was shaking violently, throwing Rose and Jimbo on the ground as they were not holding onto anything. The whole ship was trembling with great force, as the Doctor and Jack watched the monitor with visible horror in their eyes.

"It can't be," Jack exhaled. "Those ships...they were destroyed!" he yelled out in agony.

"What Daleks got to do with TARDIS' alarm?" Rose shot a question towards the Doctor as she was lost about the whole situation.

"They're teleporting us into space," the Doctor said absentmindedly while working on the console.

"What? But doesn't it take a lot of power to do that...and what for?" With everything constantly changing she really didn't know what to expect anymore.

"Oh they are clever." The Doctor began in a dark mocking voice. "They've decided to strike first, before we could even react. As soon as we hit space, a missile comes flying at us."

Rose's face twisted in worry. They can't just die like that. There's gotta be something they could do...And then she remembered the forcefield.

"Doesn't the TARDIS has some sort of forcefield to protect herself?" Rose asked softly.

"Oh yeh, she does or more like could have." The Doctor grinned at her. "And we're going to create just that!" he exclaimed and suddenly turned to Jack. "Hold that down!" he ordered.

They worked on fusing the tribophysical waveform macro-kinetic extrapolator, which Margaret had left them previously, into the TARDIS. Rose looked at the situation in anticipation together with Jimbo, who seemed to be just as lost of what was going on. They went towards the pillars to hold onto them, as the TARDIS shook fiercely once more.

"The extrapolator's working. We've got a fully functional forcefield," Jack announced proudly. "Try saying that when you're drunk." He joked.

"What was it?" Rose asked, feeling a slight turbulence on the ground.

"The Daleks just launched a few missiles at the Tardis, but the forcefield of the extrapolator protected us," the Doctor answered her all smartly. "However, we were too deep in the teleportation when we created the forcefield." He narrowed his eyes a bit. "We made contact with the base of the Daleks. It's drawing us in."

"What?" Rose's eyes widened. "Well, can't we fight it?"

"Nope," the Doctor said lightly.

"So we're going straight into the Daleks' mother core?" Jack half-joked.

"With full speed," the Doctor finished. And with a big thud, they landed.

There was a moment of silence, echoing inside the console room, before the Doctor broke it.

"No good stood round here chin wagging. Human race, you'd gossip all day. The Daleks have got the answers. Let's go and meet the neighbours," he said nonchalantly while making his way
towards the doors.

"Hold on. Doctor!" Rose tried to catch up with him but he was already outside.

"Exterminate! Exterminate! Exterminate!" The Daleks started to shoot as soon as the Doctor stepped outside. Unlucky for them, the rays were stopped by a forcefield, extending a good three metres out from the TARDIS.

"Is that it?" The Doctor mocked. "Useless! Nul points." He turned back to the doors. "It's all right, come on out. That forcefield can hold back anything."

"Almost anything." Jack corrected him as he stepped out. Rose stood just beside him together with Jimbo. The Doctor pressed his lips together, eyes widening.

"Yes, but I wasn't gonna tell them that. Thanks," the Doctor said through his teeth.

"Sorry."

"Do you know what they call me in the ancient legends of the Dalek Homeworld? The Oncoming Storm," the Doctor said darkly as he went towards the Daleks. "You might've removed all your emotions, but I reckon right down deep in your DNA, there's one little spark left." He paused. "And that's fear." Daleks moved a bit uncomfortably. "Doesn't it just burn when you face me?" He looked straight at them. "So tell me. How did you survive the Time War?"

"They survived through me." A low robotic voice echoed somewhere in the distance as the lights come up to reveal a large apparatus, which on closer inspection looked like an exploded giant Dalek casing, with a blue-skinned one-eyed mutant happy-for-everyone-to-see-it sitting there as if on its throne.

"Rose, Captain, this is the Emperor of the Daleks," the Doctor announced in a soft voice, his eyes locked on the creature in question.

"You destroyed us, Doctor. The Dalek race died in your inferno, but my ship survived, falling through time, crippled but alive."

"I get it." The Doctor nodded simply.

"Do not interrupt. Do not interrupt. Do no interrupt." Daleks started echoing one another.

"I think you're forgetting something," the Doctor began nonchalantly. "I'm the Doctor, and if there's one thing I can do, it's talk. I've got five billion languages, and you haven't got one way of stopping me. So if anybody's going to shut up, it's YOU!" he shouted at them harshly, making the Daleks back away a few meters. "Okey doke. So, where were we?" Now in a more lighter tone.

"We waited here in the dark space, damaged, but rebuilding. Centuries passed, and we quietly infiltrated the systems of Earth, harvesting the waste of humanity. The prisoners, the refugees, the dispossessed. The bodies were filtered, pulped, sifted."

Rose watched him talk with disgust visible on her face. Every nasty alien thing just waits to get their hands on the dead. Jack was taking calming breaths himself. It was disturbing to listen.

"So you created an army of Daleks out of the dead," the Doctor stated.

"That makes them half human," Jack stated.
"Those words are blasphemy."

"Do not blaspheme. Do not blaspheme. Do not blaspheme." Another round of Dalek echo.

"Everything human has been purged. I cultivated pure and blessed Dalek."

"Since when did the Daleks have a concept of blasphemy?" the Doctor asked the emperor in bewilderment.

"I reached into the dirt and made new life. I am the God of all Daleks!" emperor continued on and on.

While watching him, Rose couldn't help but feel the words inside her head. "You are tiny." She didn't fear him. Somewhere deep inside she could feel strength over the emperor.


"They're insane. Hiding in silence for hundreds of years, that's enough to drive anyone mad. But it's worse than that. Driven mad by your own flesh. The stink of humanity." The Doctor shook his head with pity and disgust in his eyes. "You hate your own existence. And that makes them more deadly than ever. We're going," he announced, sparing a look at the emperor.

"You may not leave my presence," Emperor called out to them as the group started making their way back.

"Stay where you are. "Exterminate!"

With everyone inside, the Doctor leaned his forehead on the doors. He could hear another wave of echo coming through.

"Exterminate! Exterminate! Exterminate!"

The TARDIS landed on the floor 500 once again. The Doctor moved outside first just to see Lynda sitting there, patiently waiting for their return.

"Turn everything up. All transmitters full power, wide open. Now! Do it!" the Doctor instructed the crew as he went further inside the room.

"What does this do?" the man of the staff asked.

"Stops the Daleks from transmitting on board. How did you get on? Did you contact Earth?" the Doctor asked in a hurried voice. They had to move fast.

"Well, we tried to warn them, but all they did was suspend our license because we stopped the programmes." The man looked at the Doctor.

"And the planet's just sitting there, defenceless," the Doctor stated. "Lynda, what're you still doing on board?" he asked her softly. "I told you to evacuate everyone." He turned back to the man, accusation clear in his voice.

"She wouldn't go." The man defended himself.

"Didn't want to leave you," Lynda answered softly. Rose looked at the girl with guilty eyes. The poor girl. She was so young. Too young for her life to end here, so cruelly at that too. She closed her eyes.
"There weren't enough shuttles anyway, or I wouldn't be here. We've got about a hundred people stranded on Floor Zero," the staff woman announced.

"Oh, my God. The Fleet is moving. They're on their way," the man announced, gulping at the thought of what it meant to them all.

"Dalek plan. Big mistake, because what have they left me with?" The Doctor was rushing about the room, taking cables outside the consoles. "Anyone? Anyone? Oh, come on, it's obvious." The Doctor looked at everyone expectedly. "A great big transmitter. This station." Jack looked at him shaking his head in disbelief. "If I can change the signal, fold it back, sequence it, anyone?"

"You've got to be kidding."

"Give the man a medal!" the Doctor exclaimed, beaming at everyone.

"A Delta Wave?" Jack asked.

"A Delta Wave!" the Doctor exclaimed with enthusiasm.

A Delta Wave. Rose felt her lips start to quiver. She had to press them together to stop herself from saying anything stupid. So she just clenched her fists tightly until they were already turning white.

"What's a Delta Wave?" Lynda asked.


"And this place can transmit a massive wave. Wipe out the Daleks!" The Doctor talked with energy filling him.

"Well, get started and do it then!" Lynda urged them.

Rose could only thank Lynda for being so active now. The last time she was here, Rose felt annoyed by her presence, as she just had to interrupt Rose's thoughts. But now, she didn't wish to say anything. And Lynda was her saviour.

"Trouble is, wave this size, building this big, brain as clever as mine, should take about, oh, three days? How long till the Fleet arrive? " the Doctor asked the man.

"Twenty two minutes," the man answered, after checking the monitor.

The Doctor worked on a flash speed to get the cables out. And soon they were in his hands. He just grinned at the group.

"We've now got a forcefield so they can't blast us out of the sky, but that doesn't stop the Daleks from physically invading." Jack talked while watching the monitor.

"Do they know about the Delta Wave?" the man asked.

"They'll have worked it out at the same time," Jack answered him. "So, they want to stop the Doctor. That means they've got to get to this level, five hundred. Now, I can concentrate the extrapolator around the top six levels, five hundred to four nine five. So they'll penetrate the station below that at level four nine four and fight their way up."

"Who are they fighting?" the man asked.
"Us," Jack stated simply. "Now, the guards had guns with bastic bullets. That's enough to blow a Dalek wide open."

Rose looked sideways. It was hard for her to watch all this. This was the deadliest battle she had experienced or will be experiencing since the whole timeline reset thing.

"There's five of us," the woman stated sneering.

"Rose, you can help me. I need all these wires stripping bare." The Doctor called out for her from behind, still sitting with his cables.

Now she understood why she was left behind with him. Even if back then the Doctor might have still had some sort of hope left, he wouldn't risk the chance of not reaching her in time of danger. He may have already thought of a way to send her back.

"Right, now there's four of us," the woman stated.

At the same moment Jimbo walked up in the line to stand as a fifth.

"Oh no no, sorry buddy, but you can't come with us. They are way beyond your canines," Jack joked. However, his laughter stopped soon enough, when in a flash of a second Jimbo jumped on top of the console, landing gracefully at that, a pair of sharp nails appeared out of his clutches as he swung them at Jack to take hold of his weapon.

Click.

Seconds later a sound of a weapon being loaded echoed inside the room as Jimbo was holding it firmly in his grip, pointed at Jack. Everyone was stunned for a second, and Jack started to say something, when their little friend turned sideways and blasted the nearest table into dust, tossing the weapon back to Jack moments later.

"Wow," Jack just exhaled, while starting to make a nervous laugh. Jimbo just made a satisfied sound.

"Alright then. I guess we weren't so well informed about each other," the Doctor stated nonchalantly while getting out of the trance, and moving back on the cables.

Rose watched the whole scene in amusement.

"Then let's move it. Into the lift. Isolate the lift controls." Jack instructed the crew.

With the man and his colleague out of the way, Lynda just came up to the Doctor to tell her thanks. They shook hands and the girl began to move away, when Rose caught her into a hug. It seemed to startle Lynda, as she went stiff for a second, but soon eased up and hugged Rose back.

"Thank you," Rose whispered to her faintly, her voice slightly trembling.

Lynda broke off of her embrace and just smiled nervously. Not sure how to react to all this. Seconds later, Jack gestured for Rose to move slightly bit away to the corner of the room.

Rose went up to him with a questioning look.

"This is it, isn't it?" Jack gave out a sad laugh.

"What is?" Rose asked him questioningly.
"We're not gonna win that easily, are we?" Rose began to say something, but Jack interrupted. "I know you were eager to keep this all a secret. But is there any tips you could possibly give me to use while I'm there?" He chuckled a bit.

"Oh, Jack. I don't know... This was the last time I saw you," she said faintly, her face was full of pain.

"Oh." Jack looked up a bit, putting his lips together. "Guess it's my end then." He shrugged.

"NO! Jack, no!" Rose shouted at him in a whisper. "I never saw you again, but the Doctor told me you were busy rebuilding the Earth, so."

"Heh. Like anyone is gonna believe that." Jack snorted. "Neat way of speaking of my honourable death." Jack smiled at her, while Rose was looking frantically at him, scared for her dear friend.

"What are you two up to down there?" The Doctor called out for them.

"Someone is getting impatient," Jack sang and both Rose and him chuckled. "But I'm glad. That means you survive, Rosie." Jack cupped her face. "Remember, you were worth fighting for." As he kissed her quickly and went towards the Doctor.

"It's been fun," Jack joked while looking at the Doctor who just gave him an understanding smile. "But I guess this is goodbye." Rose walked up to the two of them.

"Wish I'd never met you, Doctor." Jack joked. "I was much better off as a coward." He told him sincerely while cupping his face into his both hands and kissing him lightly. Rose gave her last tight hug for Jimbo.

"See you in hell." Was Jack's last words to them as he disappeared out of their sight, with a smaller figure walking right beside him.

Back on the floor 500, the Doctor and Rose were working on stripping the wires bare. She was supposed to work fast but Rose could feel herself move slower and slower by each second.

"Stripping the wires bare, we got one great adventure here." The Doctor joked. Rose made a faint laugh sound.

"I suppose TARDIS would have worked it out faster than me," Rose said, making the Doctor smile at her.

"There's another thing the Tardis could do." He began softly. "It could take us away. We could leave. Let history take its course. We go to Marbella in 1989."

"Yeah, but you'd never do that." Rose could feel a lump make its way towards her throat, her heart began to quicken.

"No, but you could ask." Everyone did. But not you. "Never even occurred to you, did it?" Never you. He looked at her fondly.

"Well, I'm just too good," she said softly, pressing her lips together. And I'll not let you die here alone with the Daleks.

"The Delta Wave's started building." The Doctor dropped the cables and made his way towards the monitor. "How long does it need?"
He looked at the console, pressing the buttons frantically. Seconds later his face shadowed, eyes closed.

Rose had to suppress the sob from coming out. She couldn't watch him like that. All hope lost.

He sighed, and placed his head down. She could tell now - he was gathering his thoughts of what he should do. And seconds later, he made a decision. His head shot up and he turned to face her, his face filled with a huge grin, unseen energy emitting through his body.

*Stab.*

If any other time it was hard to force a smile, then this time it was just humanly impossible. While her Doctor was beaming lively at her on the outside, underneath him he was telling her goodbye.

"Rose Tyler, you're a genius!" He placed a quick, but tender kiss on her forehead, it being his last contact with his beloved human. Rose closed her eyes at the touch, savouring the gesture just as dearly.

"We can do it." He looked at her with excitement, his hands on her shoulders. Rose gave it all to form a smile on her face. "If I use the Tardis to cross my old timeline. Yes!" And with that he ran towards the TARDIS to unlock her.

He dashed about the console, pressing some buttons and switches. "Hold that down and keep position." He instructed her.

*She couldn't move.* She was forcing herself with all her might. But she just couldn't. Her hands were trembling and she just wanted to hug him tightly and tell him to stop. To not send her away.

"Rose! We don't have time. Now hurry up." He shook her thoughts away as the sound of his steps moving away could be felt by her.

She didn't even notice how she extended her one hand and tugged onto his jacket's sleeves. The Doctor came to a stop. It took him a hesitant second, but he turned to face her, with a a big smile on his face.

"Rose." He cupped her face. Rose looked deep into his eyes. "Everything's going to be alright. I've just got to go and power up the Game Station." And he let go of her face. Rose slowly loosened her grip on his jacket. *She had to.* As much as it killed her, she had to let go of him. And she was going to be the one to kill him. Because in this current situation, nobody in the universe could help them - except for *Bad Wolf* herself.

"Hold on!" the Doctor shouted out and dashed towards the doors.

He was nearing them at a fast speed. The Doctor was already one feet outside, when Rose made a decision she thought she would not be making anytime soon.

She will tell him. If that was the last thing she could do for him – she will tell him.

In a flash she slipped her fingers from the button they were holding just seconds back, and ran towards the doors.

*And then, everything started to move in a slow motion.*

Rose's one hand was placed on the TARDIS door's knob, with them already half opened and the Doctor was standing further away in the room with his sonic screwdriver in his hand pointed right
at the TARDIS. Rose had her mouth half open, trying to form a word, and the Doctor's finger was already putting half the pressure on the button to press. He could see from the corner of his eye, that another movement was present in the room. Which was previously not noticed by either of them.

His face twisted in horror when he realized what that was. Before anyone could even form a thought of how to begin to stop the current things from progressing, the Dalek with an already pointed camera eye towards the TARDIS, where Rose now was standing completely unshielded, cried "EXTERMINATE" while shooting the beam right into her chest, making her collapse inside with doors closed shut millisecond later and the TARDIS dematerializing before the Doctor's very eyes.

The Doctor stood there motionless, his mouth half open, expression blank. Everything what just happened, took place for only three seconds max, for human measurements, but the Time Lord could repeat the events over and over again in his head, making it slow down each time as he remembered.

He could remember every slight movement. Every last breath or thought forming its way on her face. He could remember her desperate expression pointed right at him, wanting to tell him something, just before her face twisted into shock and agony.

He extended his hand slowly into the air where he could still feel the energy of the universe present seconds ago. He didn't stand there for long. Quickly enough, his legs gave out and he was kneeling in front of the place where his home and Rose just stood. He placed his hands on the ground, wanting to feel them, trying to convince himself that this is all just a horrible nightmare and he just had to extend his hand to feel the both of them here safe and sound.

But there was nothing.

There was nothing there anymore. Even the last bits of the universe energy were fading away. It was just a cold ground. Everything dear to him just faded away, together with Rose's life.

The Doctor was unmoving. He didn't feel like moving at all. And as he blocked all the background sounds out, whether it was done consciously or not, he just stayed there, kneeling besides thin air.

Somewhere in the deep distance of his mind he could barely grasp something shouting at him, making orders to him. Something like "The-Doctor-Will-Stand-Stand."

It sounded funny. All that buzzing. Who could make such a sound. He didn't respond to any of it. However, he was brought back to life by a nudge on his shoulder. He looked up and then a realisation hit him.

"You killed her." He looked at the Dalek in front of him, at first in disbelief but steadily his expression started to grow more dark.

"I was sending her home and you just killed her!" He didn't even know how or from where, but he felt his legs regain their strength as he stood face to face with the Dalek.

"SHE-WAS-NOT-NECESSARY!" it announced, shaking.

"Don't you dare say that!" His voice deadly. He was burning with fury, the Oncoming Storm, and who knows what he would have done if a hundred more movements wouldn't have disturbed his vision.
The army of Daleks made their way to the Doctor, moving dangerously from all sides, cornering the Doctor in the middle. He could see from the corner of his eyes that the Delta Wave was ready, but somehow he didn't feel like moving. Only Jack's voice coming out of the radio speaker took his attention for a slight moment.

"Doctor? Can you hear me? I am not sure, but I think they may have already moved to floor 500. I'm cornered and it's just about time. But I just wanted to say one last thing." Jack took a deep breath. "Jimbo is gone. He passed away in my arms, Doc. It was already his time. He volunteered to come with me knowing that. He wished to die with honours."

With Jack's words hitting the Doctor's consciousness, he made a hopeless laugh sound.

"YOU-WILL-BE-EXTERMINATED!" the emperor on the screen announced.

"Maybe it is time," the Doctor agreed softly.

"Doctor? What are you saying? What about Rose? Rose, can you hear me?" Jack questioned him in a frantic voice.

"She's gone," the Doctor said faintly, his expression blank again.

"Wh-" Jack began, but he was cut short. "They killed her."

There was a silence of a few seconds before the Doctor continued in a low monotone voice. "I sent her into the TARDIS, to bring her safely home, and instead I'm bringing her family her corpse."

The Doctor could hear Jack's breath hitch after the last sentence, and some cursing going on, growing into violent outrage at the Daleks in front of him, when everything was silenced by a loud - "EXTERMINATE".

The Doctor just closed his eyes and held his hands up to the sides. Awaiting for his fate.

Everything happened in a flash of a second. Rose still couldn't fully understand what was going on. She was dying, wasn't she? She was hit by the Dalek and now just laying still inside the console room, awaiting death.

It was surprising that she was still breathing, even if it was shallow and she couldn't move her body at all. One may count it as sheer luck, but she knew better. It was just one more curse by the universe. To let her feel how her own life fades away. To let her remember the Doctor watching her as she was shot. Now she has really done it. She will be the destroyer of his, in the most cruel way possible.

Her eyelids were getting heaver and heaver. It was hard to keep them open, so she didn't even bother to force herself anymore. She just waited for darkness to consume her. And moments later it did.

Rose felt herself slowly regain consciousness. At first her body was still and unmoving, but by each second she felt her fingers, hands and legs come back to life. Now was the time to open up her eyes to see what situation was she in.

Her eyelids fluttered slightly, as they steadily worked their way to open up. Rose found herself surrounded by some sort of yellow light. She couldn't properly see what it was yet, but she only saw light.
Her vision started to become more and more focused and she could almost identify her surroundings. Or so she thought. But she couldn't, because nothing made sense of what she was seeing. She closed her eyes again. Took a few deep breaths. And shot her eyes open.

Her mouth fell open in bewilderment. "You've got to be kidding me!" she exclaimed. What she saw, that bright yellow light, was none other than the light bulb from her workshop basement. And the creatures making their way towards her, were the same Living Plastic of 2005. Just once more?

She couldn't believe it. Just couldn't. She was dying inside the TARDIS and now what? She is back again in 2005? Is that what was meant to happen? Each time she dies, she just pops up at Henrik's and gets to redo her timeline all over again? Over and over, the never ending cycle.

She wanted to shout at someone. Why must it happen to her? Not being able to tell her Doctor about everything she has experienced was bad enough. But twice? She wasn't sure she could handle that. No. She could, she would do anything if it meant for her to be with the Doctor. But she was not so sure the Doctor himself would keep her. She would surely mess things up this time.

While Rose was deep in her thoughts, the Living Plastic were dangerously moving towards her. Just a few inches and she is going to get strangled by them.

But well, she didn't really care much. At the worst - she dies. And then gets to repeat it once more. So who cares, really? She just wanted to think now. Of course, she would prefer to do that alone, not while being cornered to the cold wall and awaiting her death, but the universe doesn't seem to be that friendly. In fact, it just keeps messing up with her.

And then, happened what had to happen. She felt a familiar hand take hers into his, as the words echoed inside her head. "Run."

And she did run, but she didn't look at the man in front. She had her eyes half closed, locking them on the ground. She couldn't see him. It was just too much. Not now. Not yet.

The man took her into the lift and she placed herself in the corner, with her eyes closed, never making a peek.

She could hear how the plastic hand tried to make its way inside, while being stuck in between.

"Oh, hello there!" the man exclaimed. "Waving, are we? Okay, keep it up." It seemed like he was having a conversation with the hand. "That's interesting, you could probably go for the Olympics! If you think about it, I might even be able to get you there. But no no no. On other hand, that wouldn't be a good idea. You would mess things up, wouldn't you?" he cried.

The hand must have nearly opened the lift, because the man decided to take some action. "Okay, that's about enough. Now come here." He was pulling the hand with all his might. "Just just a bit more... and one and two and bam" He giggled. "There you are. Safely pulled out. Brr. Glad I'm not the one at the receiving end this time. Not a good feeling when your hand gets severed, isn't that right?" He seemed to ask someone.

"Oi. Rose Tyler. Fat lot of good you were. I had to do all the work with the hand by myself. What are you up to with your eyes closed shut?"

Her eyes shot open. Her mouth fell open milliseconds later. "Wha-"

"The hand, see?" He waved it. "Oh, those old memories just come rushing RIGHT at me." He began to talk with enthusiasm, more so than the previous time." My poor little hand." He waved his
fingers. "But this fighting hand is brilliant! Roar! And everyone runs away." He beamed at her.

"Bu-...you-...wha-.." Rose shuttered, pointing at him.


"What the hell are you doing here?" Rose exhaled.

"Oh." His expression twisted to an unhappy one. "Not happy to see me?" He looked at her with puppy eyes. Rose just looked at him with horror.

"Aww. And here I thought I would get a warm welcome. Never gonna happen is it? Okay okay. Don't say anything. You are confused, right? You are. Weeell, obviously, it is kinda strange. But what isn't in this day and time?" He stopped to consider. "Blimey, I talk like an old senile man. But maybe I am!? No no no, I'm not. Young young. Yeh. Good. Okay!" He cleared his throat. "Right then, what do you want to know?"

Rose was stuck into shock. Just when she thought the world couldn't get any weirder it made sure to prove her wrong! The Doctor being in the Henrik's together with her again was wrong enough, but Her Doctor being here? The him looking all foxy and all, as Cassandra stated, in his pinstripes suit and converses? And lets not forget the great hair. He really did have great hair. Oh, boll. She felt her head spin.

"How come you are here?" she asked. "It is 2005, isn't it?" she looked at the Doctor who was just grinning all happily at her.

"Oh it is!" he exclaimed "I would say it is March 26th of 2005 and around 7 pm, 23 minutes and 43, 44 seconds."

"Bu-..." Rose shook her head in disbelief. "But how are you here? I only met you, the this you" She pointed at him with her palm. "At Christmas!"

"You remember," he said in a sweet voice.

"Of course I do!" Rose cried.

"That's great then." He smiled at her tenderly. "You shall meet me very soon," he said in a low soft voice.

"What? But I'm meeting you like about now." She laughed nervously.

"No." His voice firm. "This is not real."

And the next second, the darkness consumed Rose Tyler once again.

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Rose felt power. Great power consuming her and showing her its capabilities. The golden warm light filled her mind. It was burning. Burning like the sun. And she could see and hear everything. Even with her eyes closed.

In a flash she opened her eyes, just at the time when the TARDIS doors opened up for her. She saw how her Doctor watched her in utter disbelief. Millions types of emotions ran through his face - relief, confusion, pride, worry, pain, care. He fell backwards as he watched her. She was like the Goddess in his eyes. She found her way back to him, and now was one with his magnificent ship.
The light surrounding her, flew her a few meters towards the Doctor. Like she didn't weight anything at all.

"What have you done?" The Doctor looked at her wide-eyed.

"I looked into the Tardis, and the Tardis looked into me." Her voice echoed inside the room like it was not of this Universe.

"You looked into the Time Vortex. Rose, no one's meant to see that." His voice and face was filled with worry for his dear human.

"This is the Abomination!" the emperor of the Daleks stated.

"Exterminate!" One of the Daleks shot a beam towards Rose, but the ray was stopped by Rose's single hand. As her eyes started to glow into golden light, she send the beam back to where it came from.

"I am the Bad Wolf. I create myself. I take the words, I scatter them in time and space." She gestured her hand towards the sign of Bad Wolf Corporation, and they flew away "A message to lead myself to you."

"Rose, you've got to stop this. You've got to stop this now." He looked at her frantically. He just got her back, he couldn't lose her again.

"You've got the entire vortex running through your head. You're going to burn." He tried to reason with her. She had to understand. He wouldn't lose her again.

"I want you safe." Rose looked at the man she loved from all her heart, through time and space, with tender eyes as she spoke the words. "My Doctor. Protected from the false god."

"You cannot hurt me. I am immortal," emperor exclaimed.

"You are tiny." Rose's voice was that of the Higher Being. "I can see the whole of time and space. Every single atom of your existence, and I divide them." Her eyes began to glow again as she disintegrated the Dalek gently, making it disappear into the golden dust.

"Everything must come to dust. All things. Everything dies." Little by little every single Dalek started to disintegrate into the golden gentle dust. "The Time War ends."

"I will not die." The emperor tried to resist. "I cannot die!" But the power was too much for him. His spaceship disappeared into dust together with him inside it. Like it never was.

Everything disappeared. The threat, the Daleks, the Time War, even death.

"Rose, you've done it. Now stop. Just let go," the Doctor pleaded her. He wanted her safe.

"How can I let go of this? I bring life."

Somewhere on the other side of the game station, Jack breathed air again.

"But this is wrong! You can't control life and death!"

"But I can." Rose just told him simply. Because life was just one small part of her power. And the Doctor understood it from her eyes. He couldn't say anything back.

"The sun and the moon, the day and night. But why do they hurt?" Her voice sounded faint at the end. It was the second time for her to experience this power, but it still hurt so much.
"The power's going to kill you and it's all my fault." The Doctor couldn't bare the pain he was feeling. He was losing her again. And both times, all because of him.

"You are not at fault. The things that must end, will end, and the new beginnings will start. My Doctor. You are going to live again." She smiled at him gently. Her expression changed a bit, when she felt pain consume her. "My head."

The Doctor stood up to stand next to her. "Come here," he told her gently.

"It's killing me." She smiled at him sadly.

"I think you need a Doctor." With these words the Doctor placed his lips gently on hers, giving her a tender kiss that of a whole time and space, while transferring the deadly power straight to himself. He wouldn't let her perish.

From all that power Rose fainted in his arms. He placed her down on the ground with so much tenderness, like she was made of glass and could shatter any minute. He wanted her safe, and he will make sure of it.

His eyes were shining gold. The one and only God of the universe. The Last of the Time Lords. But he couldn't keep the power. He chose to put it back to its rightful place. He exhaled the energy back into the TARDIS. It slowly flowing inside. When he was done, he only felt free. He didn't have any regrets.

He bent down to his beloved human to stroke her face gently, before taking her into his both hands and returning home - to the TARDIS.

Rose fluttered her eyes open. Which seemed to become a hourly routine to her by now. As she absorbed the view ahead. She was back in the TARDIS. The Doctor has done it again. She killed him again. But there was also a new sensation she felt. Something she didn't feel the previous time. She felt life. She felt a steady heartbeat which was not hers.

She sat up slowly, turning to face the Doctor, who was looking seriously at the controls.

"Doctor," Rose said softly.

"You are awake." He smiled at her, she smiled back at him sadly. He saw how his left arm began to glow. "Rose Tyler." He chuckled. "I was going take you to so many places. Barcelona. Not the city Barcelona, the planet Barcelona. You'd love it. Fantastic place. They've got dogs with no noses." He laughed, Rose just smiled at him fondly. "Imagine how many times a day you end up telling that joke, and it's still funny."

"We will go there," Rose said softly.

"Maybe you will, and maybe I will," he said in a light voice. "But not like this." He smiled sadly at her.

"As long as it's you and me." Rose looked at him with reassurance. And for a moment, the Doctor didn't feel all that scared about what was coming.

"I'm going to change, Rose. I absorbed all the energy of the Time Vortex, and no one's meant to do that," he sang. "Every cell in my body's dying," he said seriously.

"I'm sorry." She couldn't suppress the sob. The Doctor looked at her in bewilderment. "No. Don't
be. I chose this. Except...this process is a bit dodgy. You never know what you're going to end up with. Gah."

The Doctor clutched his stomach as a golden light exploded inside him.

"Doctor!" Rose ran to him.

"Stay away!" he warned her.

"Doctor." Rose could only call out for him with tears falling down her cheeks.

"Time Lords have this little trick, it's sort of a way of cheating death. Except it means I'm not going to see you again. Not like this. Not with this daft old face. And before I go-"

"Don't say that." Rose shook her head. She didn't want it to end like this.

"Rose," he repeated softly. "Before I go, I just want to tell you, you were fantastic." He looked at her proudly. "Absolutely fantastic. And do you know what? So was I." They smiled at each other sadly and this was it. Her last chance. *So she made it.*

She walked over to him, the Doctor looking at her with worry, to not to hurt her. She placed her one hand on his chest, another on his shoulder, as she kissed him on his cheek tenderly, saying it all she could with this one last touch. "Thank you," she whispered, before backing away.

And then, he exploded. His both arms, legs, head - everything disappeared into the golden light. A new face replaced her Doctor. With the one she thought she would never see again. Be it a year ago on that fateful beach or today, just moments ago.

*She was back to him. And he was back to her.*

"Hello." He looked lost. She couldn't help but grin at that. "Okay. Ooo." He stopped mid-sentence. "New teeth," he stated faintly. "That's weird. So, where was I? Oh, that's right. Barcelona." And with that he gave her one of his gorgeous grins, making Rose grin all the more.

*tobe continued...*
Christmas Invasion Part One

Not even a minute after his regeneration, the Doctor was already out and about the console, flicking switches, checking the monitor.

"6 PM... Tuesday..." He began talking while turning a knob.

Rose just chuckled silently.

"October... 5006... " He had his all focus on the monitor. "On the way to Barcelona!" Then he straightened up, moved a bit away from the console and turned to face Rose, grinning as if extremely pleased with himself.

Rose was biting her quivering lip while standing a bit further away from the Doctor, unmoving.

"Now then... what do I look like?" he asked, beaming.

Rose gulped and was about to say something, when he held up a hand to hush her.

"No, no no, no no no no no no no. No. Don't tell me." He was pointing a finger at her. "I'm not bald!" Rose looked at him fondly.

"Oh, Oh! Big hair!" The Doctor was still checking his hair. Indeed, big, gorgeous hair. Then he spotted his sideburns.

"Sideburns, I've got sideburns!" He sounded delighted at that discovery. Rose couldn't help chuckling. "Or really bad skin," he said, disappointed. "Little bit thinner..." He drummed his stomach.

"That's weird. Give me time, I'll get used to it." I'm sure you will.

"I... have got... a mole." He looked at her meaningfully. Rose nodded in understanding. "I can feel it. Between my shoulder blades, there's a mole."

"That's all right," he continued. "Love the mole." Rose shook her head, smiling.

When he was done with his little investigation of his new body, he stood up straight, grinning at her. "Go on then, tell me." Waiting expectedly. "What do you think?"

Rose burst out in tears of happiness. As much as the situation was nowhere near where she wanted it to be, but just by seeing him in front of her again, not in some sort of dream, but the real him, made her heart flutter. She missed him. She finally felt getting closer to the him, with whom she got separated from. She couldn't stop her tears coming out. It was happiness. But the Doctor seemed to notice only tears.

"Oh. That bad, eh?" The Doctor began to worry, picking on his ear. "That's a bit...sad. I guess."
But he didn't have much time to wonder, because soon he found himself in a very tight embrace of Rose Tyler. He stayed as a stone for a few moments. *Certainly didn't expect this reaction.*

"R-Rose?" he sputtered, momentarily beyond words.

"You're here," Rose exhaled softly, while nuzzling into his shoulder. *It felt so right. Being close to him.*

He giggled nervously. "Course I am!" He placed his arms around her, hugging her back and patting slightly on her back.

After a while he broke off the embrace, taking her hand into his and bringing her to the console. "Now then, off to another adventure?" He grinned at her. "Same as always, since the day one in that cellar filled with window dummies." He came to consider. "Oh, such a long time ago." Rose chuckled.

"And we never stopped, did we? All across the universe. Running, running, running... One time we had to hop. Do you remember? Hopping for our lives!" He began walking backwards while having her both hands into his and started hopping.

Rose started laughing out loud. "You are mad."

"Oh, come on. Hop with me. Hop hop." He urged her while grinning madly, making Rose laugh all the more.

He suddenly stopped into his tracks, like he had just realised a grave truth. "You are not gonna leave now, are you?" He looked at her with masked-but-still-worried expression in his eyes.

Rose's expression soon mirrored his. "Do you want me to leave?"

"No!" he said quickly. "But...your choice...if you want to go home.." He looked down at their joined hands.

Rose squeezed his hands slightly. "Yeh, I want to go home," she said softly and the Doctor felt a sharp stab somewhere inside him. He looked at her expecting to see... well, any expression but what he saw. Rose was just grinning at him widely.

"Wha-" he began, taken aback.

"Yeh, I want to go home, but not to leave. Just for a short visit." She laughed.

"Oh. Oh, that's alright then." His voice and face clearly sighing in relief and a grin back on his face.

He gently unwrapped their hands and stood near the console again, flipping switches.

"Cancel Barcelona. Change to... London... the Powell Estate... ah... let's say the 24th of December." He looked back at her, grinning. "Consider it a Christmas present."

"Oh, I love this present." Rose told him softly, beaming.

"Yeh?"

"Yeh."

The console was steadily moving and pumping, waiting for its landing.
"So! Back to your mum... it's all waiting. Fish and chips, sausage and mash, beans on toast..." he said in a hurried voice. "No, Christmas! Turkey!" he exclaimed. "Although..." He considered. "Having met your mother... nut loaf would be more appropriate," he muttered.

"Shut up." She chided him, while slapping him lightly on his arm.

"But it is true!" He defended himself, his smile back on his face seconds later.

"Come to think of it, I was a bit worried about your reaction to the change..." He trailed off. "But as expected! I mean... As always unexpected!" he exclaimed. "Never gain the reaction of Rose Tyler as you expect." They both laughed. "But good thing I only changed, I didn't-wahsh." He twisted his face in pain.

Oh, no.

It seemed to end in a few seconds and he straightened up himself.

"Doctor?" Rose began to move towards him.

"I said- wufsh." Another wave.

"Doctor!" Now she was standing near him, holding him steady.

"Uh ho." A golden piece of Time Vortex issued from the Doctor's mouth.

"Doctor." Rose's voice worried.

"Oh... the change is going a bit wrong and all," he said, before another wave hit him and he nearly fell down on the ground, his head down. Luckily, Rose managed to hold him up.

"Let's go back and find Jack. He could help us," Rose suggested gently.

"Gah, he's busy!" He dismissed her while leaning on the console. "He's got plenty to do rebuilding the Earth!"

Rose let go of him. "Yeh? Alright. Where is Jimbo then?" she asked seriously.

"That fellow is together with Jack."

Rose's face hardened. "I don't believe any of that," she stated, her voice firm.

The Doctor looked up at her like a kicked puppy. "Bu-...they are..." he said faintly. Rose's face not softening up. "Gah." Another wave. He breathed heavily. Suddenly a lever on the console caught his eye.

"I haven't used this one in years." He flicked it and the TARDIS began to shudder violently, both of them were nearly knocked to their feet.

"Don't kill us," Rose exhaled.

"I need a bit of speed! That's it!" He began to turn more knobs on, running about crazily.

Rose tried to maintain a more secure grip on the console, but she was slipping.

"My beautiful ship! Come on, faster!" He turned more knobs. "That's a girl!" he exclaimed proudly.
TARDIS started to shake some more.

"Faster! Want to break the time limit?!” the Doctor suggested.

"Just don't hurt the TARDIS." Rose chided him.

"Ah... let's have a bit of fun! Let's rip through that vortex!” he shouted out madly.

Suddenly he seemed to calm down for a second, looking her in the eyes.

"The regeneration's going wrong. I can't stop myself." He looked at her, apologizing. Soon his face twisted in pain. "Ah, my head..."

"It's alright," Rose told him softly and began inching towards him.

"Faster!" He violently sprang up into a standing position again, his voice back to being crazy. "Let's open those engines!"

A bell started to ring in the console room, announcing the emergency. The TARDIS was shaking horribly and Rose's grip on the console was loosening so she decided to hold onto something more secure.

"We're gonna crash-” He stiffened suddenly. "Wha-what are you doing, Rose?" he stammered, as he felt her arms around his waist.

"Holding onto something more secure!” Rose yelled out through the bell.

"Oh. Oh. Well. Alright then." His voice back to crazy. "Let's crash!” He grinned manically. Rose laughed nervously in his back.

Somewhere outside the Powell Estate Mickey and Jackie were pacing about, after hearing the familiar whooshing sound.

"Well, where is it then?" Jackie started to get anxious.

Before long, TARDIS came out of the vortex in mid air and now was bouncing off one block of flats, a second and a third. Mickey and Jackie had to dodge the TARDIS as she flew over their heads. After avoiding a post office van, finally crashing into a set of waste bins.

The Doctor was first to come out. He peeked his head out the doors and was delighted to see the familiar scenery. "Here we are then, London. Earth. The Solar System. We did it," he exclaimed as he came out of the TARDIS. Then he spotted two shocked faces looking at him.

"Jackie. Mickey. Blimey! No, no, no, no, hold on." He began walking backwards. "Wait there. I've got something to say." He made a circle around them. "There was something I had to tell you, something important.” He was creating a serious atmosphere. "What was it? No, hold on, hold on." He literally was holding on on the two of them, hands on their shoulders. "Hold on, shush, shush, shush, shush. Oh! I know!” he exclaimed, making the two jump in surprise. His face formed into a grin. "Merry Christmas!” he exhaled and fainted.

Rose stepped out the TARDIS moments later, failing to catch him as the Doctor was already on the ground. She ran towards him to cup his face into her hands.

"Who's this one?" Jackie was first to ask.
"That's the Doctor," Rose said nonchalantly.

"What do you mean, that's the Doctor? Doctor who?" Jackie asked in bewilderment.

After joining their hands, the three of them managed to safely transport the Doctor back at Powell Estate, change him into pyjamas and lay him on the bed. Rose was already sitting on the edge of the bed, watching over him, when Jackie came in with a stethoscope.

"Here we go. Tina the cleaner's got this lodger, a medical student, and she was fast asleep, so I just took it. Though I still say we should take him to hospital," Jackie whispered.

"We can't." Rose tried to make her mother understand the seriousness of it all. "They'd lock him up. They'd dissect him. One bottle of his blood could change the future of the human race." Jackie began to say something, but Rose just hushed her.

Rose took the stethoscope in position and began listening to the Doctor's hearts.

"Both working," she said softly, sighing in relief.

"What do you mean, both?" Jackie asked, confused.

"Well, he's got two hearts," Rose stated nonchalantly, grinning at her mother.

"Oh, don't be stupid." Jackie thought she was playing with her.

"He has," Rose confirmed. After placing the stethoscope on the bed table, she started to play with the blanket covering the Doctor, readjusting it and making sure he was comfortable.

"Anything else he's got two of?" Jackie glanced him over, watching her daughter suspiciously at the same time too.

"Just leave him alone, mum." Rose chided her mother. "Can you make some tea though?" she asked gently.

"Alright. Will be back soon." And with that Jackie left the two of them.

Moments later, the Doctor exhaled some more of the TARDIS's golden energy. Rose placed the back of her hand on his cheek and rubbed it tenderly. "You're going to be alright soon," she whispered.

"Rose?" Jackie's voice could be heard from the kitchen. Rose sighed.

_The interrogation time._

She slowly lifted herself up from the bed, making sure to not wake the person laying there up, and left the room to meet Jackie pacing inside the kitchen. After spotting her daughter enter, she pulled her inside and closed the doors.

"How can he go changing his face? Is that a different face or is he a different person?"

"He died, mum. He had to change every cell in his body to stay alive."

"What do you mean he died and now is alive!?" Jackie was clearly confused.

Rose sighed. _Oh, this is gonna be difficult._ "It's some sort of trick, Time Lords use to cheat death,"
Rose began slowly, Jackie narrowing her eyes. "He died. That previous body he was in died. And then he...changed. And now he became this new him." Rose pointed towards the door nonchalantly.

"Is he a different person now then?" Jackie asked.

"No. Well, yeh." Rose considered.

"So which is it?" Jackie was getting impatient.

"His face and personality, habits that sort of thing changed, but underneath he is still the same. He always will be same." Jackie began to protest. "It's like when your habits change from childhood to teenage and so on."

"Are you saying he is a teenager now?"

"No! Mum. That was not the point...ah." Rose was lost, not knowing how to make her understand. "The big question is where'd you get a pair of men's pyjamas from?" she asked lightly.

"Howard's been staying over," Jackie said simply.

"And how long's that been going on?" Rose asked.

"A month or so," Jackie began. "First of all, he starts delivering to the door and I thought, that's odd." Rose spotted Harriet on the telly while Jackie was still on about Howard. "Next thing you know, it's a bag of oranges-"

"Is that Harriet Jones?" Rose walked up to the telly.

Jackie walked up next to her. "She's Prime Minister now. I'm eighteen quid a week better off. They're calling it Britain's Golden Age." Rose watched her with a smile. If the Doctor managed to wake up sooner, maybe Harriet wouldn't have to resort to violence against the Sycorax.

"I keep on saying my Rose has met her," Jackie said softly.

"Did more than that. Stopped World War Three with her. Harriet Jones..." Rose trailed of in nostalgia, when she remembered what she had to do. "Tea!" she exclaimed, looking at her mother.

"Did you make it?"

"Oh, I'm sorry, sweetheart. We don't have any more tea." Jackie began apologizing. Then added, when she saw her daughter's face shadow. "But I could make some coffee," she offered.

"We don't have tea?" Rose asked her in bewilderment.

"Yeh, we don't. Ran out. You know." Jackie shrugged.

"How could we not have tea? We always have tea," Rose said in disbelief.

"Oh, excuse me, but things do tend to run out sometimes," Jackie said, starting to feel a bit annoyed.

Rose was pacing about the room, getting nervous. "Alright then. Just gotta buy more then." She laughed nervously, remembering what was awaiting hers in the street.

"Oh, save it. Is changing his face made his preferences so picky too?" Jackie started in an accusing
voice. "He should be thankful I'm letting him stay here. Coffee will do for him." Jackie began to walk off.

"No. He needs tea," Rose said in a slightly bit raised voice.

"Oh, suit yourselves then. Go fetch Mickey with you," she called out from the kitchen.

"No way out of it I guess then," Rose muttered, before leaving the flat.

It was already dark when Mickey and Rose made their way to the shopping district.

"So what do you need? Twenty quid?" Mickey asked.

"Do you mind? I'll pay you back," Rose said, not fully paying attention, as she was frantically looking around.

Mickey said something like. "Call it a Christmas present." But was left without a response, when Rose heard a familiar music echoing somewhere in the crowd. "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen". Yep, it was definitely that one. Rose felt a cold shiver. They didn't have much time. Once the crowd would start running around, she doubted the shops would be working. They had to move fast.

"Rose?" Mickey waved a hand in front of her face. "You here? Oh, Just let it be ordinary Christmas for once. Can you do that? Just for a bit. You and me and Christmas. No Doctor, no bog monsters, no life or death."

"Sorry, Mickey. Could you, please, buy me some tea from the shop?" she said absentmindedly, slowing down her pace, when she spotted the brass band dressed in Santa robes.

"What? Did you even hear what I said?"

"Not now, sorry, Mickey. We need that tea. And now," she said in a half-whisper but her voice firm, as she looked back at him.

"Okay. What's going on?" Mickey asked, slightly nervous.

Rose looked around frantically, just a few more people and the band will spot them. She dragged Mickey on the side, blending in with the crowd. "That band of Santa are alien. I'll go distract them while you get the tea."

"Wait a minute. What? Them, alien? And if they are, why would I leave you for a tea?" Mickey was asking, confused.

"Please, Mickey. No time for this. The Doctor needs that tea," she pleaded him.

"Again the Doctor," Mickey muttered.

"Mickey!" Rose hissed. "He won't wake up without it, and if he won't, we all gonna die. So hurry up, and run back home fast after you get it." Rose pushed him to go. Mickey still was trying to back down, but after Rose mouthed one more "go", he ran towards the tea shop.

Now being left alone Rose made her way towards the Santa, to let them spot her. After they did, she started moving away, away from the crowd towards the next street, where she knew was a park. At first the band slowly followed her, but moments later they lowered their musical instruments/weapons in disguise and a trombone one started aiming at her to shoot.
"Get down!" Rose shouted out a warning to the people around. A huge blast of fire emitted out of the instrument and Rose started to run. Everyone started to panic and run about. Rose just hoped Mickey made it in time to get the tea as she was nearing the park. She looked behind her shoulder to see two of the Santas following her. *That meant two were missing. Oh, no. Mickey!*

She was running in full speed, making turns and more turns until the park was visible in her eyes. She got her phone out to call Mickey. After a few buzzes he answered.

"Rose? Rose? Where are you? Those Santas started following me, but I'm going back by the taxi now. How are you?"

"Did you get the tea, Mickey?" Rose asked frantically.

"Are you alright though?" Mickey pestered.

"The TEA!" Rose yelled out.

"I got it I got it. So whe-" he began, but Rose interrupted.

"And be careful of the Christmas decorations!" she warned, as she hang up.

She had already reached the park and was now running around the trees. She could see from behind her shoulders that Santas were a slightly bit behind. Just enough time to do this. And the next moment she started climbing on one of the trees. She flung herself up, higher and higher until she was almost at the peak of it, hidden behind the leaves.

Before long, she could spot the two Santas walking about on the ground. She held her breath in. If they spotted her, her tree would be demolished in seconds. She prayed the Doctor would wake up before that.

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Inside the Powell Estate, Jackie was casually walking around the room, talking on the phone. Seconds later Mickey burst out the doors.

"Get off the phone, Jackie."

"It's only Bev. She says hello," Jackie said, but soon her hands were empty, as Mickey turned the phone off.

"What the bloody hell are you doing, Mickey?" She stood facing him, her hands on her hips.

"No time, Jackie. There is alien invasion going on here," he said frantically.

"A what?" Jackie asked, frowning.

"Here." He thrust the tea pockets in her hands. "Make some tea for the Doctor."

"Again with the tea!" Jackie was now shouting. "No bloody hell I'm making him tea now."

"Jackie!" Mickey then spotted the tree. "Jackie, did you have this tree before?"

"Well there was a ring at the door, and there it was! Must be Rose." Jackie shrugged.

"Oh, God." Mickey started to panic.

"What's the big deal about the Christmas tree-" Jackie began, when the lights of the tree lit up by
itself and it started to play Jingle Bells.

"Oh boy." Mickey watched in horror as the tree started to rotate in different directions, creating a strong wind. Jackie started to yell.

"Jackie, take hot water fast, and make tea!" Mickey instructed her as he picked up the chair to fend it off.

"What is wrong with you all and the tea!?"

"Just do it!" Mickey commanded.

The tree was starting to move forwards, chopping through a coffee table. The chair was already half done.

"Mickey!" Jackie called out from the bedroom. "Leave it! Get out! Get out!"

Mickey and Jackie both went inside the room where the Doctor was staying. They pulled the wardrobe across the door.

"What is going on here?" Jackie was asking frantically. "And where is Rose? Didn't you go with her?"

"She's trapped somewhere with Santas," Mickey replied in a hurry while holding onto the wardrobe.

"Trapped? And you just left her there?" Jackie was already preparing for her famous slaps.

They could hear the tree break the glass window doors as it was nearing their room. "She was distracting them while I had to get the tea, Jackie."

"Oh for-" Jackie began, when the tree smashed through the doors.

"I'm going to get killed by a Christmas tree!" Jackie cried. "And who's going to help Rose now?!" she shouted out.

In a split of a second, the Doctor sat up on the bed, his sonic in his hand (for some reason), as he pointed it at the tree - it exploded. Mickey and Jackie sighed in relief.

"Remote control. But who's controlling it?" the Doctor said while getting out of the bed.

Dressing gown on, the Doctor lead the way out. Down on the ground, two Santas were gazing up, one holding a radio controller.

"That's them. What are they?" Mickey asked.

The Doctor aimed the screwdriver at them and the Santa backed away. Then they beamed away in the air.

"They've just gone," Mickey exhaled in disbelief. "What kind of rubbish were they?" He laughed. "I mean, no offence, but they're not much cop if a sonic screwdriver's going to scare them off."

"Pilot fish," the Doctor stated.

"What?" Jackie asked.
"Where's Rose?" the Doctor asked, facing the two of them.

"I don't know," Mickey started. "We got separated at the shopping district. Two more Santas were following us, but she told me to come back to you fast to wake you up-" He was interrupted by another wave of pain of the Doctor's.

"What's wrong?" Jackie asked in a concerned voice, making her way to him to hold him steady.

"You woke me up too soon," the Doctor answered in a shaky, pained voice. "I'm still regenerating. I'm bursting with energy." He exhaled some of the golden energy.

"You see? The pilot fish could smell it a million miles away. So they eliminate the defence, that's you lot, and they carry me off. They could run their batteries on me for a couple of ow!" He was thrown on the other side by the pain.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" Jackie was kneeling beside him.

"My head!" the Doctor exclaimed in pain. "I'm having a neuron implosion," he stated hurriedly through his heavy breathing. "I need -" he began, but Jackie was talking over him.

"What do you need?"

"I need-" he began again.

"Say it. Tell me, tell me, tell me." Jackie never stopping.

"I need -" One more time.

"Painkillers?"

"I need -" And again.

"Do you need aspirin?"

"I need " Over and over.

"Codeine? Paracetamol? Oh, I don't know, Pepto-Bismol?"

"I need -" The Doctor was looking at her with mouth and eyes wide.

"Is it food? Something simple. Bowl of soup. A nice bowl of soup? Soup and a sandwich? Soup and a little ham sandwich?"

"I need you to shut up," finally the Doctor exhaled.

"Oh, he hasn't changed that much, has he?" Jackie said sarcastically. Another wave of pain sent him towards the wall again. Jackie and Mickey holding him steady.

"We haven't got much time. If there's pilot fish, then." He was breathing heavily. "Rose..." He felt something in his pockets. "Why's there an apple in my dressing gown?" He held the green apple out, asking casually about it.

"Oh, that's Howard's. Sorry," Jackie said softly.

"He keeps apples in his dressing gown?" the Doctor asked in disbelief.
"He gets hungry," she said.

"Argh!" Another wave. "Brain collapsing." The Doctor was now on the ground. "Rose. Argh." Another wave.

"Rose said to give you tea, will that help?" Mickey said in a hurried voice.

"Tea!" The Doctor beamed happily as much as his current situation of pain could let him. "Yeh yeh yeh, give me some of that. Argh. huff huff. The pilot fish." He took Jackie's hand. "The pilot fish mean-" He was looking at her frantically. "That something... something, something is coming," he exhaled some more deep breaths. "Rose." Was his last word when he passed out.

Once he was carried back inside the room, Jackie was rushing about, making a whole set of tea mugs placed about the room.

"Are they hot enough?" Mickey asked.

"How should I know?" Jackie shot back. "But let me tell you, if he doesn't wake up any minute now I'm going to shove that bloody tea into his mouth together with the mug itself."


"Oh, dear. What's happened to Rose? Do we even know where she is? Is she safe?" Jackie began to cry. Mickey patted her back.

"She will be alright, Jackie. She travelled with him." He pointed at the Doctor like he was a thing. "Sure she's got some training."

"When my daughter is who knows where, he is just sleeping there!" she shouted out. "Oh, I can't wait anymore. Am gonna go search for her." Jackie began to walk off, but Mickey stopped her.

"You can't. You may just attract more attention. Let's just wait," Mickey suggested lightly.

"Oh you must be kidding me, if you expect me to wait!" And the next moment she walked over the bed table, took a mug into her hand, another picked the Doctor's head up, and before Mickey could utter even one word, she poured the hot tea inside the Doctor's mouth.

Seconds later the Doctor's eyes shot open as he sat up. "HOTph" he exclaimed as he burnt his tongue. "Whad dit ya do thad fo?" He talked with his tongue out.

"Go save my daughter!" Jackie shouted at him.

"Rose!" The Doctor seemed to wake up from his dream. "Time time time time. What time is it?" Mickey began to say something. "No shush shush shush shush." He pointed a finger at him. "12, 1,2,...5! Blimey, it's already 5 in the morning!" He suddenly turned his head to face Mickey. "How long was I out?"

"A-about 3 hours," Mickey shuttered.

"3 hours..." The Doctor's face paled. "Phone phone...I need a phone! Jackie!" He called out for her, making her jump. "Give me the phone!"

Seconds later the Doctor was ringing Rose up. After a few tries she picked up. "Rose? Rose, where are you? I'm coming to get you."
"On the tree," she whispered faintly.

"A what?" the Doctor asked, frowning in confusion.

"A tree!" Rose said in a louder voice. "Uh oh." When she saw the Santas looking at her.

"Rose? What tree? Where is that tree?" the Doctor was asking her frantically.

"Who-ah!" Rose yelled out on the phone as Santas began to shake the tree, starting to aim to fire. "Don't shoot, don't shoot!" Rose called out for them in defence.

"Rose! What's going on!? What tree?"

More shaking of the tree and Rose lost her balance on the phone, it was slowly going down through the leaves. "IN THE PARK!" She yelled out before the signal was cut off, phone scattering in pieces.

"Rose? Hello? ROSE!?" The Doctor was calling for her on the phone.

"What's the matter? Where is she?" Jackie was asking.

"The park the par the park..." The Doctor was muttering. "The park!" he exclaimed. "Where is the nearest park from where you two got separated?" the Doctor asked Mickey with his eyes frantic.

"Uh...I'm not sure."

"Think, Mickey, think!" He was yelling at him, shaking him by his shoulders.

"Can't you just spot her with that machine of yours?" Jackie asked.

"No time. We got no time!" The Doctor was already making his way out the doors and the flat. Jackie and Mickey close behind. They went inside the TARDIS and the Doctor was pressing various buttons, looking at the screen madly, but it didn't seem to show the wanted results. "Come on!" He was shouting at it.

"Oh! Isn't it the Milkey's Park?" Jackie said simply.

"Milkey's?" the Doctor asked in bewilderment. "Are you sure it's the real name? I need the real name, Jackie," he asked with his voice low.

"Yeh yeh, there was that bloke Milkendo, from Australia-" She began to tell her story.

"Shush!" The Doctor shushed her, as he typed the coordinates and the TARDIS flew its way to the park.

Once the TARDIS landed, the Doctor was out first, running around the trees and calling out for Rose. "Rose!" But no answer.

"Rose?" Mickey and Jackie were helping out too. "Where is she?" Jackie cried.

"Can it be we got the place wrong?" Mickey asked.

"No no no. It's the right one. There is just something." The Doctor looked around. "Something about the air here." He walked about, inspecting the place.

"Oh, bloody hell, are you thinking of creating a picnic now!?" Jackie shouted out at him.
"The air, the air! Yes!" the Doctor exclaimed happily. "Teleportation feed. Something teleported from around...just around..." He walked around a few trees. "Ha!" He spotted Rose's phone.

"Oh my, God. Is she dead?" Mickey asked, worried.

"No no no. They took her. That means they wanted to lure me to them." The Doctor began to walk towards the TARDIS, when Jackie and Mickey were near, he turned to face them. "You both, go back home, sorry, no time for dropping you off."

"I'm going with you. Not going to leave my daughter!" Jackie exclaimed.

"Mickey!" The Doctor nodded a pointed look at him. And seconds later was inside, leaving Jackie struggling in Mickey's arms.

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*to be continued...*
Rose felt herself being pulled somewhere with a bright light. *Oh, it's just becoming a habit now, isn't it?* Still eyes closed, she could hear a loud cheer, echoing from all over the place. She fluttered her eyelids and backed down, startled, as the Sycorax leader was standing face to face with her, almost too close.

He started speaking something, but, of course, Rose couldn't understand. TARDIS was kinda out of reach. She narrowed her eyes questioningly and that seemed to be held as a rude gesture, because soon she found herself being dragged by a rough hand.

"Alright alright, I'm coming." She spoke, annoyed. She glanced her surroundings to see Harriet Jones, looking at her with fear and delight.

"Rose. Rose!" She reached out for her to meet her in a hug. "I've got you. My Lord. Oh, my precious thing. The Doctor, is he with you?" she whispered in her ear.

"No. We're on our own," Rose whispered back. "For now."

Harriet pulled away a bit. "Does that mean he is coming?" Still in a low voice.

"Yeh." Rose smiled fondly. "But I don't know when."

Frankly speaking, she had no idea in what situation the Doctor was in. True, he called her. Meaning he *should* be awake now. But was he cured yet? Did the regeneration progress end? Did Mickey deliver the tea? *The tea.* Oh, God. The tea! *She* suggested *the Doctor* to take tea as a cure of synapses. Only now she seemed to understand it. She has finally done it. She slipped up in a way, from where she didn't have a way out.

The leader began speaking something again.

"The tree girl." The man called Alex began reading translations from his device. "She was clever enough to hide from us for 3 human hours, therefore she speaks for your planet."

"The tree girl?" Harriet asked Rose in a half-whisper. Rose laughed nervously at her. "Well, I guess that explains-" Harriet continued, but was cut short by a roar.


"Alright then." Rose stepped forward. "Someone's got to be the Doctor," Rose half-joked.

"But you can't!" Harriet tried to grab Rose. "They'll kill you."

"Never stopped him," Rose muttered, before clearing her voice to speak in an authorized voice."I address the Sycorax." Her voice firm. "I command you to leave this world with all the authority I have gained on behalf of our planet. If you refuse, you'll be stopped." Her voice lower. "Now leave this planet in peace!" she yelled out in a commanding voice.

The Sycorax all burst into laughter.

"You are very, very funny. And now you're going to die," the leader of the Sycorax announced, or more like Alex translated it.

"Leave her alone!" Harriet tried to defend the girl, but soon was held back by another Sycorax, as
the leader walked up to Rose.

"Did you think you were clever with your stolen words?" he began in a proud voice, but soon was interrupted.

"Oh, no, mister. I'm just stating the truth," Rose stated in a mocking voice. "If you don't leave this planet in peace, like." She stopped to count. "Right about now, you'll be stopped," she said lightly. "And then you better not cry as a wailing child for mercy," she finished in a deadly voice.

The leader seemed furious, when he spoke again. "And who would stop us!? Is it you?" he stated and everyone started to laugh again.

"Is it you?" Alex repeated in translation. "Hold on, that's English." Alex grimaced.

"He's talking English," Harriet added.

"You're talking English." Rose sighed in relief.

"I would never dirty my tongue with your primitive bile," the Sycorax leader protested in disgust.

"Oh, that's English." Rose shook her head smiling. "Can you hear English?" she asked Harriet and Alex lightly. They nodded.

"I speak only Sycoraxic!" the leader roared.

"If I can hear English, then it's being translated. Which means...the TARDIS." She turned around to see a blue box materialising. After a short while the whooshing sound ceased and the doors opened, revealing the all too familiar face.

"Did you miss me?" he asked lightly.

"You're late!" Rose chided him, smiling.

The Doctor opened his mouth to reply, but one of the Sycorax cracked his whip towards him, interrupting. The Doctor caught it by the end, pulling it out of the leader's hand like it was the easiest thing to do.

"You could have someone's eye out with that." The Doctor scolded him while walking towards Rose.

"How dare you come here uninvited!" the Sycorax began again.

"Uninvited?" The Doctor frowned in disbelief. "I though I was being expected," he cried.

Another Sycorax tried to get in the Doctor's way with a thick club, but the Doctor once again took it out of his hands and broke it in half across his knee.

"You just can't get the staff," the Doctor muttered, clearly unhappy with his welcoming. "Now, you!" he gave a pointed look at the Sycorax. "Just wait. I'm busy," he shot, as he began to walk off, but suddenly turned around to face him once again. "Better not try to interrupt me again," he said in a dangerous voice.

"Harriet Jones!" he exclaimed happily. "MP for Flydale North. Blimey, it's like This Is Your Life," he said in a hurried voice, his mouth open in a smile. "Tea! That's all I needed, a good cup of tea!" He talked hurriedly, while looking around in all kind of directions. "Superheated infusion of free radicals and tannin." He gestured lightly towards his temple. "Just the thing for healing the
synapses. How did you think of that?” he asked Rose fondly.

Rose began to get nervous. "Um, I done my homework, you know." She shrugged half joking. *Oh, boll. This is not working.*

"That's great, that's great," the Doctor said absentmindedly as if considering the answer. Then his head shot up to meet her eyes.

"Now." His voice serious. He opened his mouth, but then it twitched. Rose looked at him questioningly. The Doctor's mouth quivered some more, before he burst out laughing.

"Wha-?" Rose began in bewilderment. The Doctor was still laughing.

"Stop it." She chided him.

"Ok ok. Sorry." He put his lips together, while gesturing them to be zipped up. Then he cleared his throat. "I was going to ask you how do I look, but I think you should be asking me that instead." The Doctor's mouth quivering again.

"What?" Rose asked, not getting the situation.

"Nice wild look you have here," he continued lightly, gesturing at her. "Gotta say - modern." He paced a circle around her, checking her from head to toe.

Rose was just looking at him with her expression blank. "Love the branch you know," he joked while getting something out of Rose's hair. It was a tree branch, about 30 cm long.

"Oh." Rose looked at the thing in his hand suspiciously.

"Had one wild of an adventure, didn't you?" He mocked her, while patting on her head some more with his other hand, letting leaves fall out. Rose grimaced.

"Okay!" he exclaimed, as he dropped the "wild things" out of his grasp. "First things first." His voice back to serious. "Be honest, how do I look?" he asked while getting a bit nervous himself, locking his gaze to hers.

"The same," Rose answered softly, already forgetting the incident seconds ago, just beaming at him.

"The same?" the Doctor cried in disbelief. "But I got this..hair!" He ran a hand through them. "And sideburns! These are sideburns, and not just a bad skin, right?" Rose began to say something, but he was faster. "And a mole! It is there!" He looked at her slightly hurt.

"No, what I meant..." Rose held out a chuckle. "You look the same, in a different way." She shrugged.

"Oh, okay." He seemed to calm down, but his voice serious, seconds later. "Good different or bad different?" he asked in a low voice.

"Just different." Rose shrugged while smiling at him.

Then the Doctor prepared himself for the most universally important question. As he asked. "*Am I...ginger?*"

Rose snorted, but soon stopped it with her hand. "No, you're just sort of." She gestured. "Brown."
The Doctor was highly disappointed by that remark.

"Aw, I wanted to be ginger." The Doctor walked further away from her, complaining. "I've never been ginger." He was walking with his back on Rose, before abruptly turning. "And you, Rose Tyler." He shouted out while pointing at her. "Fat lot of good you were. You left me there with your mother." He seemed to catch himself. "Oh, that's rude." Rose rolled her eyes. "That's the sort of man I am now, am I?" He was thinking deeply about it in concern. "Rude," he said it, as if trying it out with his tongue. "Rude and not ginger." The conclusion.

"I'm sorry." Harriet stepped in "Who is this?" She gestured to the Doctor.

"I'm the Doctor," the Doctor replied absentmindedly, as if in reflex.

"He's the Doctor," Rose added in confirmation.

"But what happened to my Doctor?" Harriet asked in concern. "Or is it a title that's just passed on?"

"I'm him." The Doctor began to walk towards her haughtily. "I'm literally him. Same man, new face," he stated. "Well, new everything," he joked.

"But you can't be." Harriet didn't budge.

"Harriet Jones, we were trapped in Downing Street and the one thing that scared you wasn't the aliens, it wasn't the war." The Doctor was talking in a simple way. "It was the thought of your mother being on her own," he ended softly.

"Oh, my God," Prime Minister exhaled.

"Did you win the election?" the Doctor asked her proudly, leaning forwards at her.

"Landslide majority." Harriet shrugged, feeling slightly embarrassed.

"If I might interrupt," the Sycorax roared.

"Yes, sorry." The Doctor shook his head, as he seemed to remember him existing there. "Hello, big fellow." His hands behind his back, eagerly waiting to listen what that "Big fellow" has to say.

"Who exactly are you?" Sycorax stated a question.

"Well, that's the question," the Doctor agreed lightly, nodding with a smile.

"I demand to know who you are!" the Sycorax roared at him.

"I don't know!" the Doctor yelled out at him, imitating his roar.


"A great big threatening button." He laughed as he began jumping up the stairs. "A great big
threatening button, which must not be pressed under any circumstances, am I right?" He looked at
the Sycorax teasingly, clearly getting on their nerves. "Let me guess. It's some sort of control
matrix, hmm?" He looked at them with big eyes. "Hold on, what's feeding it?" The Doctor squatted
down to open the base of the pillar, under the button.

"And what've we got here?" He put his finger in the liquid as he licked it. "Blood? Yeah, definitely
blood." Rose rolled her eyes.

"Human blood. A Positive, with just a dash of iron. Ah ah." He shook his hand in disgust as he
grimaced. "But that means" He considered. "Blood control. Blood control!" he exclaimed
enthusiastically. "Oh, I haven't seen blood control for years," he cried. "You're controlling all the A
Positives." He nodded in understanding, the Sycorax growling at him. "Which leaves us with a
great big stinking problem." The Doctor put his lips together sarcastically. "Because I really don't
know who I am. I don't know when to stop." He stopped for a second to look at Rose.

"What do you think about this big threatening button which should never ever be pressed under
any circumstances?" he asked her casually.

"Looks dangerous." Rose nodded sarcastically. Harriet looked her over sceptically.

"It does, doesn't it?" he agreed with her in the same manner. "So that leaves me only to this." As he
hit the button with a force.

"NO!" Harriet yelled out.

"You killed them," Alex exclaimed.

"What do you think, big fellow?" the Doctor asked Sycorax's opinion. "Are they dead?" He looked
at him solemnly.

"We allow them to live." The Sycorax choked under his breath.

"Allow?" The Doctor mocked him. "You've no choice! I mean, that's all blood control is." He
began pacing about, picking on his ear. "A cheap bit of voodoo. Scares the pants off you, but that's
as far as it goes." He began his rambling. "It's like hypnosis. You can hypnotise someone to walk
like a chicken or sing like Elvis. You can't hypnotize them to death." He shrugged nonchalantly.
"Survival instinct's too strong."

"Blood control was just one form of conquest. I can summon the armada and take this world by
force," the Sycorax countered him. Never know when to give up, does he?

"Well, yeah," the Doctor agreed casually. "You could, yeah, you could do that, of course you
could. But why?" he asked in deep concern. "Look at these people." He gestured to the group.
"These human beings. Consider their potential. From the day they arrive on the planet and blinking
step into the sun, there is more to see than can ever be seen. More to do than-" He cut himself
short, as he looked to the side. "No, hold on." Blinking a few times. "Sorry, that's The Lion King." He
apologized sincerely. "But the point still stands. Leave them alone!" He came to stand in front
of the Sycorax.

"Or what?"

"Or-" The Doctor trailed off, as he took a sword from an aide and ran back towards the TARDIS.

"I challenge you," he announced grandly.
"An echo of laughter echoed from the place."

"Oh, that struck a chord." The Doctor looked around. "Am I right that the sanctified rules of combat still apply?" He talked casually while taking off his gown.

"You stand as this world's champion," the Sycorax roared while pulling his own sword out.

"Thank you. I've no idea who I am, but you just summed me up." As he threw his robe at Rose.

"Oh, boll. This's plain wrong. You don't know who you are, while I, on the other hand, know you well enough. At least way beyond your own knowledge. How ridiculous is that?"

Rose frowned while deep in her thoughts. She was too focused on her own world that she didn't even notice how the fight emerged and the Doctor was gradually making his way outside. Just before disappearing out of their sight, the Doctor called out.

"Don't fall asleep there, Madcap-y!" Rose shook in surprise. That sounded way beyond weird. Seconds later, she was outside, looking at the Doctor and the Sycorax in the middle of intense fight.

"Better don't wanna miss the show!" The Doctor called out for her in a grin, when he spotted her.

"Never!" She called out, grinning herself.

After sparing for a few more whiles, the Doctor was driven back to the edge and soon enough, hit on the nose.

Rose instinctively took a step towards him, the Doctor stopping her at once. "Stay back!" He held a hand in defence. "Invalid the challenge and he wins the planet."

Of course, she knew that. But as much as all this was a repetition of the things she had already been part of, she couldn't help feeling protective.

They both - Sycorax leader and the Doctor ran towards at each other with full speed and clashed their swords. Unfortunately, the Sycorax seemed to be a lot stronger as he knocked the Doctor down, slashing his hand seconds later, which fell to Earth.

Rose placed the hand over her mouth.

"You cut my hand off," the Doctor breathed.

"Ya! Sycorax!" The leader began to cheer, but was stopped for a moment, when he spotted Rose's smug face. He seemed to be lost for a second, before the Doctor's voice disturbed him.

"And now I know what sort of man I am." The Doctor stood up. "I'm lucky. Because quite by chance I'm still within the first fifteen hours of my regeneration cycle, which means..." He paused meaningfully. "I've got just enough residual cellular energy to do this." He held his arm up, as his hand slowly regrew, right before their eyes.


"Time Lord," the Doctor stated in a low voice, making no doubts about his identity.

Rose looked at him proudly with a smile, when she remembered that he needed a new sword. She spotted another Sycorax behind her. As she managed to distract him, she took the sword from him.
"Doctor!" She yelled out for him, while tossing the sword at him. The Doctor caught it without any sweat. He grinned at her in gratitude.

"Want to know the best bit? This new hand?" The Doctor directed the question at Rose.

"What is it?" Rose replied with enthusiasm.

"It's a fighting hand!" he replied in a manic grin.

He was now fighting with a whole new power, and soon after they started to fight again, he quickly disarmed the Sycorax and thumped both hilts into his abdomen, twice as that. He fell right on the edge, overlooking London.

"I win." The Doctor put the edge of his sword under the leader of Sycorax throat.

"Then kill me."

"I'll spare your life if you'll take this Champion's command. Leave this planet, and never return." He was speaking in a low authoritative voice. "What do you say?"

"Yes."

"Swear on the blood of your species," the Doctor hissed while dangerously pointing at his throat.

"I... swear," the leader exhaled.

"There we are, then." The Doctor's voice back to casual. "Thanks for that. Cheers, big fellow." As he placed the sword in the ground.

"Bravo!" Harriet was first to applaud proudly.

"That says it all," Rose muttered while skipping her way towards the Doctor. "Bravo!" she exclaimed happily, his gown in her hands, as she helped him to put it back on.

"Did you like the show?" he asked her teasingly.

"Mm, gotta consider this." Rose faked a deep thinking expression.

"Hey!" the Doctor cried, making Rose laugh out loud.

"Yep yep, loved it." She told him while tugging on his arm.

"Ah, I knew it. Not bad for a man in his jim-jams." He looked at her fondly. "Hold on, what have I got in here?" He unwrapped himself from Rose's grip gently while searching his pockets. "A satsuma." He picked it up, holding it and pointing towards Rose. She couldn't help laughing.

"Ah, that friend of your mother's." He tossed it in the air, catching it a few seconds later, while looking at Rose, nodding. "He does like his snacks doesn't he?" They began walking towards the exit. "But doesn't that just sum up Christmas?" He started juggling the satsuma. "You go through all those presents and right at the end, tucked away at the bottom, there's always one stupid old satsuma. Who wants a satsuma?"

Somewhere behind the two of them, the Sycorax leader got up, and after grabbing his sword, was now running straight at the Doctor's back. The Doctor threw the satsuma at a control on the spaceship hull angrily. The same moment a piece of the wing opened up and the leader fell to his death.
"No second chances. I'm that sort of man."

Once back inside the Spaceship, the Doctor stepped ahead of the group.

"By the ancient rites of combat, I forbid you to scavenge here for the rest of time," he began haughtily. "And when you go back to the stars and tell others of this planet, when you tell them of its riches, its people, it's potential. When you talk of the Earth, then make sure that you tell them this." He looked at the Sycorax meaningfully.

"It is defended."

Before long, the TARDIS, Harriet, Alex, Rose and the Doctor were beamed away.

"Where are we?" Alex was first to ask.

"We're just off Bloxom Road. We're just round the corner, we did it!" Rose turned to face the Doctor.

"Wait a minute, wait a minute." The Doctor looked in the sky as the spaceship flew away.

"We did it!" Rose squealed while jumping in her tracks. Seconds later, she ran into the Doctor, squeezing him with happiness. He hugged her back with as much enthusiasm.

Then they broke off the hug, but still holding onto each other, beaming at each other. Only when the Doctor spotted Harriet walk towards them, did he let go of Rose.

"My Doctor," she stated proudly.

"Prime Minister." The Doctor just as proudly, as they hugged.

"Absolutely the same man. Are there... many more out there?" She turned to look at the sky.

"Oh, not just Sycorax," the Doctor began softly. "Hundreds of species. Thousands of them. And the human race is drawing attention to itself. Every day you're sending out probes and messages and signals. This planet's so noisy. You're getting noticed more and more." Then he looked back at Rose.

"And they seem to always pick on you!" He pointed a sceptical look at her. "What's so special about you really?" He began to seriously think it over. "You are all just sort of...pink and yellow." He gestured. Then he saw Rose's dangerous look. "Oh no no no, I don't say you are not special, well, at least to me you are." He began to defend himself, while looking way.

"Hold on." He stopped for a second. "That was a bit too forward," he muttered. "But the point is-" He was left with his mouth half open, when Jackie yelled out, running towards the group, together with Mickey.

"Rose!" She was running with her hands opened.

"Mum!" Rose met her in a hug.

"Oh, talking of trouble," the Doctor muttered. "And why everyone is always interrupting me?" he complained to...nobody in particular.

"Oh, my God! You did it! And you were alive!" Jackie hugged her daughter from happiness and relief. Then Rose came to hug Mickey.
"Good to see you," Rose whispered softly.

"You too!" He had her in his arms, looking at her. "I thought I would never see you again after going home with that stupid tea." Rose chuckled.

"That was all I needed," the Doctor said, smiling at the group. "Cup of tea."

"Oh, I better buy a few extra pockets then," Jackie muttered. Rose tugged on her mother's arm happily.

"Oh, my God, it's the bleeding Prime Minister!" Jackie gaped, when she spotted Harriet.

"Come here, you." The Doctor urged the group for the group hug, as he extended his arms, waiting.

And then there it was. Jackie gently in the Doctor's arms, Rose and Mickey clinging on each of the Doctor's sides. One big family.

"Are you better?" Jackie asked the Doctor softly.

"I am, yeah." He looked at her fondly. Rose was so glad to see them all together. She just smiled at the picture in front of her. But then, from the corner of her eyes she saw Alex and Harriet speaking of some important matters. "Uh oh," Rose muttered under her breath, as she broke free from the group hug, running towards the Prime Minister.

"Tell them-" Harriet began, when Rose's hand flew on top of her mouth. "Mghf." She tried to end the sentence, looking at Rose with wide eyes.

"No," Rose said firmly. "You don't have to do this. The Doctor and I, will protect the Earth." She put her hand down. Harriet tried to talk again, but once again Rose held out her hand. Just this time not covering her mouth, as Harriet shushed even before it came to that, pressing her lips together, while watching Rose's hand warily.

"These species are leaving," Rose continued. "Earth is not a murderous planet, Harriet. I'm sorry, but you were not elected for that. We defend our planet, and make others respect us."

"I'm sorry, Rose," Harriet began softly. "But as much as I adore you, and think highly of the Doctor, you are not the ones with authority here. It's my word."

"No, it's not," Rose stated with her voice cold, making Harriet a bit uncomfortable. "You may be one of the rulers of the planet, but you certainly have no experience with Foreign affairs." Harriet opened her mouth. "Much less with alien stuff...You may have seen a few Slitheen and now a spaceship full of Sycorax, but you are not the one fighting them. So if anyone has the right to maintain the relationships with aliens here, it's the Doctor."

"Couldn't have put it better myself." The Doctor' voice came from behind them.

"Doctor." Rose called out for him in instinct, holding her head backwards to look at him.

"Hello." The Doctor grinned at her.

"Hello." Rose beamed right back at him.

"Excuse me," Harriet began again.

"Yeh, right." The Doctor's attention back to Harriet. "What Rose said is true." He looked at Rose
proudly, as he said that. "We'll be here to protect the Earth, as we always are. And you!" He pointed at her. "Better not try to commit genocide while I'm not aware. Oh, pointing is rude isn't it?" The Doctor looked at Rose for an answer, she nodded.

"Prime Minister." Alex butted in. "The spaceship, it's flying further away. If we strike, it's now or never."

Harriet glanced over from Rose to the Doctor, who were looking at her with serious expressions. They knew that they can't stop her word, but they can try to change her mind about it.

"Tell them..." she began. "To cease the attack," she ended, eyes closed.

"YES!" Rose exclaimed in happiness, jumping into the Doctor's embrace. "We did it!" They both laughed.

"I hope you won't make me regret this decision." Harriet sighed. The Doctor broke the hug gently, as he looked at Harriet Jones.

"I'm proud of you. Prime Minister. Britain at its Golden Age, and you right at the front lines of it." He looked at her, being as proud as he could ever be of this woman.

"You coming?" Jackie called out for the two of them, as she began walking away.

"Yeh!" Rose yelled back, still grinning.

"Come on." Rose tugged her arm on the Doctor's, urging for him to go. The Doctor didn't protest, as he began walking with her.

"So, Turkey?" he teased her. "Or nut leaf?" As he grinned all the more.

"Just gotta try out yourself," Rose teased him back.

"Yeh? Do I have to?" he asked casually.

"You bet." Rose's face dangerous.

"Alright alright, no arguments." They both laughed, when the Doctor suddenly sprang up to face Harriet once more.

"Oh, and by the way!" he called out for her. Harriet lifted her head to look at him. "Merry Christmas!" he exclaimed with enthusiasm, while going back to walking with Rose Tyler.

"Merry Christmas to you too," Harriet whispered to their backs.

"Oh, I gotta get the table ready!" Jackie began her blab once they reached the Powell Estate. "With you both disappearing all my preparations were stopped." Rose tried to say something, but Jackie gave no room. "Mickey you're coming over, right?"

Mickey looked at Rose, asking. "Course he is." Rose pushed Mickey gently towards the entrance of the Estate.

"And you, Doctor with the new face." Jackie glanced him over, making the Doctor look at her like he was offended but in truth was laughing, as he glanced her over in the same manner. "Come on in you too," Jackie ended in a soft voice.
"Ah, I..." the Doctor began, pointing behind his back. "Got to change..." He trailed off, with his mouth half open, teeth showing. "And stuff..."

"Okay, then. Change and come back here," Rose said simply. The Doctor opened his mouth.

"I'll be waiting." Rose gave him a meaningful look while slowly going backwards from him.

The Doctor closed his mouth. "Right."

At the Powell Estate Mickey together with Jackie and Rose were rushing about the table, making their last preparations - Mickey cutting the Turkey (it's Turkey after all), Rose already half eating, while joking around with the both of them.

And not many moments later, the door closed down with a thud. Rose meeting her Doctor looking same as always, just as she remembered - in his long brown coat, pinstripes suit and converses, grinning at her.

All she did was smile at him fondly. *Good to see him again*. It was just so good to see him.

Rose urged him to sit down under the table, as he soon found himself with the red paper crown. "Am I the king now?" he asked expectedly.

"Sure you are," Rose joked around, as she sat down under the table herself.

The Doctor shot the Christmas cracker in the air, when he found another crown inside. "Oh, that's yours." As he handed it over to Rose, placing his hands on the table.

"Yay," Rose exclaimed happily. "It's pink! Mum, it should be yours." She looked at Jackie together with the Doctor, smiling at her. "Look, it's Harriet Jones." Then she spotted the Prime Minister on the telly. She glanced over at the Doctor to see him grinning at the telly.

*She did it!*

He slowly stood up from the table, grabbing a cookie in his mouth.

"That that-" Rose began standing up herself, but was soon shut when the Doctor placed the cookie in her mouth, laughing and taking another one. Then he finally walked off to the living room and saw Harriet Jones, at her best. Calming down the Earth after the big alien invasion.

Then telephone rang and Jackie came to answer it.

"It's Beth. She says go and look outside."

"Why?" Rose began to get nervous. It couldn't be snowing with ash. *They stopped it, didn't they?*

"I don't know, just go outside and look. Come on, shift!" Jackie urged them.

Once outside they saw everything in white. Even Rose's face. *It couldn't be."

"Wha-what is this?" she shuttered, looking worriedly at the Doctor.

"Oh come on. Like you never saw it before." The Doctor mocked her. "It's snow, of course! Great big snow on Christmas!" he exclaimed happily, like waiting for something.

There was a moment of pause, before Rose turned her head to face him.
"No." She looked at him in bewilderment. "No way."

"Yes way." The Doctor nodded haughtily.

"Seriously? You did this?" She beamed at him, too lost of words.

"Ah, well. I guess I did a bit of jiggery pockery with TARDIS and all that. Change of weather. Basic stuff." He shrugged nonchalantly, picking on his ear.

"Oh, you!" She flung herself in his embrace once again. "I keep hugging you." She laughed.

"Not complaining." The Doctor grinned at her, squeezing her.

"Oh, look at those two," Mickey stated.

"Two of the same kind," Jackie added.

"We certainly are," the Doctor agreed, as he looked down to face Rose. "I think my character was highly influenced by your mad outburst."

Rose shook her head, smiling. *Who influenced whom.*

"So you're leaving again?" Mickey said in a slightly disappointed voice.

Rose broke free from the Doctor's embrace, while looking from him to Mickey frantically. "Am I?" she asked the Doctor faintly.

"You don't want to come?" the Doctor asked, slightly scared. *Okay, not fooling anyone.* Quite a bit scared.

"I do, but I thought, maybe you didn't want me after all..." she said nervously.

"Oh, I would love you to come," he said gently.

"Yeh?"

"Yeh." He looked at her fondly. "I thought we already went past that."

"Yeh, but." She shrugged. "That was you not in your full mind, so-"

"Oh, I think I would want you to come with me even with my head split in two," he told her softly.

Rose gave him a nervous look. "Okay. That was a bit weird." The Doctor caught himself, making Rose laugh.

"Come on, then." He held his hand, waving his fingers in invitation.

Rose looked at the hand, as it was her whole universe. Well, it was. It's how everything started, and she never wanted to let go of his hand again. So she took it.

"Always fits," she said softly. The Doctor smiling at her. "So, where're we gonna go first?" she asked, tugging on his arm.

"Er." The Doctor looked at the sky. "That way." He pointed at one direction. "No, hold on. That way." To slightly bit different one.

Rose chuckled. "Just everywhere in order." She squeezed his arm.
'That's the spirit.' The Doctor smiled at her approvingly. Then back to pointing. "That way for now."

"That way?" Rose pointed too.

"Hmm?" The Doctor asked her opinion.

"Yeah, that way."

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*to be continued...*
New Earth Part One

The Doctor was starting to power up the TARDIS, while outside Jackie and Mickey were saying their goodbyes to Rose.

"Okay, I'm going now. I love you!" Rose hugged her mother tightly, both conveying their loves and best of wishes to each other, when the time came to say goodbye to Mickey.

"So," Mickey began.

"Yeh." Rose just nodded.

"This is becoming a routine," Mickey joked sadly, Rose joined him, laughing nervously.

"Just you and him, across the world," Mickey added a bit bitterly.

Rose would have said something more comforting, but the Doctor was already starting up the TARDIS, and there was just no time. Or at least that was what she told herself in excuse.

"Love you, take care of yourself, Mickey." As she hugged him.

"Yeh." A faint agreement was the last thing she heard, as she entered her home TARDIS.

Once the Doctor saw her come inside, it seemed like another wave of enthusiasm filled him whole. He gave her one of his magnificent grins, which Rose didn't fail to return.

She dropped her rucksack and quickly joined him near the console.

"So, where're we going?" she teased him.

"Further than we've ever gone before." He smiled at her meaningfully.

And just before the TARDIS dematerialised, with Jackie and Mickey being already quite far away from the ship, neither of them noticed how a big dark shadow stuck on the TARDIS, vanishing together with the pair inside.

The TARDIS landed with a bit of a bump, but the Doctor either didn't pay too much attention to it or hid it well. Rose never mentioned anything about it either. Clearly too used to the bumps of their beautiful ship. Although, it nagged her consciousness to ask, as this landing was not how she remembered it to be.

All those disturbing thoughts disappeared when Rose stepped out of the TARDIS and found herself across the river from a massive city. Flying cars zooming over their heads.

New Earth. Their very first date after the Doctor's regeneration. And well, Cassandra. But she could worry about that some time later.

"It's the year five billion and twenty three. We're in the galaxy M87, and this?" The Doctor looked around. "This is New Earth," he exhaled, breathing the view same way as Rose. It was his first trip after regeneration. The first experience with his brand new eyes.

"That's just-... That's just-" Rose breathed, when she started laughing from happiness.
"Not bad. Not bad at all." The Doctor nodded in agreement, beaming at his surroundings.

"I'll never get used to this," she said, smiling.

"Really?" The Doctor turned to face her. "I thought you were already too much used to all of this," he teased her.

"Okay, you." She tugged on his coat, pushing him playfully on the side.

"You're right. Maybe I'm used to this." She let go of his coat and walked a bit further. And then sprung over to face him, beaming. "But I'll never get tired of this adventure." She gestured to her surroundings, when she started to spin around laughing.

The Doctor watched her with amusement and happiness. The life she was radiating was so beautiful.

Rose stopped for a second to face him. "This is truly the life which I needed. And can I just say..." She glanced on the ground, then back to him, grinning. "I love this. Travelling with you, I love it," she ended fondly. And she meant every second being with him. And him. She loved their life together.

"Me too," the Doctor added quickly, as they both just grinned at each other.

"Come on." The Doctor urged her, as he extended his hand to take into his. And the running began, running running running - all across the field, until they found a spot to lay down.

The Doctor placed his coat down on the ground with them on top of it. As Rose twirled her fingers into the grass, she picked some out.

"It smells like..." She trailed off in effort to look like smelling it.

"Apple." The Doctor grinned at her.

"Apple grass," Rose sang.

"Yeh," the Doctor agreed all happy. Then he turned away to face the city.

"So, the year five billion, the sun expands, the Earth gets roasted," he stated lightly.

"That was our first date," Rose teased him in reminder, facing him downwards.

"We had chips." The Doctor looked up at her, smiling. Both of them laughing at the memory. It felt nice. To finally be able to talk about something of the past, both of them were aware of. To finally be not the only one with the nostalgic feelings.

"So anyway." The Doctor turned away to face the city again. He would just not be able to continue looking at her. "Planet gone, all rocks and dust, but the human race lives on, spread out across the stars." He gestured. "Soon as the Earth burns up, oh yeah." He stopped his pace, as if remembering something else. "They get all nostalgic, big revival movement, but then find this place." He sat up, with his arms supporting him. "Same size as the Earth, same air, same orbit. Lovely," he ended lightly. "Call goes out, the humans move in."

"What's the city called?" Rose asked while stifling the chuckle.

"New New York," he answered seriously.
"Oh, come on." Rose looked at him, mocking.

"It is!" he cried, looking at her. "It's the city of New New York," he said in a high voice, laughing in between. "Strictly speaking." His voice back to normal as he was once again facing away from Rose Tyler. "It's the fifteenth New York since the original." He nodded to himself with self understanding.

What he didn't see was how Rose began to shake already from what is to come next.


"No no, nothing-" Rose put her hand ahead of her, as she continued to laugh.

"What is it?" the Doctor asked again, confused.

It made Rose laugh even more. Reminded her of the time with Sarah Jane. She rolled on her side on the coat.

"If you won't speak, I'll just have to make you," the Doctor sang.

"What?" Rose exhaled faintly between laughs and soon found herself attacked by the Doctor's tickling.

"Ya-h!" she squealed, as she tried to get away from the "attack".

"Speak up." The Doctor urged her, laughing himself from amusement.

"Never!" Rose yelled out as she rolled outside the "coat zone." She soon found her breath again. Before long, she noticed that nobody was trying to make a move on her again. She glanced to the side just to see the Doctor casually laying on the coat, looking at her with satisfied grin.

"Oh no." Rose was starting to stand up. "You've done it on purpose!" She cried while laughing.

"Did I?" The Doctor tried to play innocence. However, just before Rose could get her revenge, he abruptly stood up and began to take his coat back on.

Rose watched him struggle for a while to find his other "coat arm", before she decided to come up and help him.

"Truce?" the Doctor teased her.

"You wish." She slapped on his arm lightly.

"Ow." The Doctor gestured, rubbing his arm. "What've you got against arms?" he cried. "Ever since the day one. Always pulling, chopping, slapping it off. What've they ever done to you?" he asked in wonder. "It's not like they're living things on their own, they don't have the mind itself. Just attached to the body. Weeell," he considered. "That arm at Henrick's did come back to life on it's own, but! That was an exception! One in a million-y, billion! Exception," he cried. Rose didn't say anything back to him, even if she did hear him. Her whole attention was focused on something laying by the side of the TARDIS.

"Doctor." She tried to call him.

"And what do you do with it?" he continued on, ignoring, or not hearing Rose's call. "You just pull
it out! Like it is the most reasonable thing to do in the world. And watch it struggling under your grasp—" he continued with disbelief in his voice.

"Doctor." Rose tugged on his arm.

"Those arms could be dangerous. On some planets..." he trailed off. "Oh oh, and not to mention the time with The Adherents of the Repeated Meme--"

"Doctor!" she yelled out, harshly this time.

"What?" He looked at her innocently.

"There is something laying out there, next to the TARDIS," she stated seriously while pointing at the direction.

"Oh." The Doctor looked at it nonchalantly. "Doesn't matter, let's just move on." He pulled out his psychic paper. "Look, someone's expecting me at that hospital over there." He pointed at the horizon.

Rose looked at him in disbelief. When she saw no cooperation coming from him, she stormed her way out to the TARDIS.

"Oi! Where're you going?!” the Doctor called out, but more annoyed than worried.

Something was off.

When she finally reached the TARDIS she saw that the thing laying there appeared to be a living person. And no less, the distinctive WW2 greatcoat just gave it all away.

"Jack!?” Rose exhaled as she leaned over to him. She could hear footsteps make their way on the apple grass just a few meters away from her.

"Oh, my God, Jack, how-" She turned him around to feel his pulse and there was none.

"He's not breathing," Rose exhaled in horror.

"Well, yeh, since he's dead," the Doctor stated nonchalantly, his hands in his pockets.

Rose turned around to face him. She gave him a look and turned her face back again to Jack.

"We've got to help him. Help me move him to the TARDIS," Rose said faintly in desperation.

When no response was heard, she turned around once more to see the Doctor casually walk off.

"Doctor!" she called out, him just waving his arm.

She couldn't believe it. Jack was their friend. And now he was...no no, he was not dead dead. There must be something she could do. Even if without the Doctor's help. She looked down to him.

"Maybe CPR would help," she muttered, as she began to lean over, when a pair of hands stopped her.

"No no no no, you don't need to do that." The Doctor shook his head, laughing nervously. "Just leave him."

"If you're not gonna save his life, then I'll!" she hissed, as she began to lean again, just to be stopped with even more strength.
She looked at him in disbelief and hurt. What got into him?

He sighed.

"If you want to wake him up, you gotta do it this way," he said nonchalantly, as he opened the TARDIS doors, taking a wooden stick, out of who knows where, and hitting it into Jack's abdomen.


"You just had to come and ruin everything," the Doctor muttered under his breath.

When Jack got his breathing even, he turned to face Rose. "Hey, Rosie. Good to see you!" He smiled at her. Rose's mouth just twitched in a half-fake smile.

"So, what are you two doing here?" Jack began, while standing up and looking around. "Oh, New Earth. Great choice." Then he straightened up to face the Doctor.

"Doctor."

"Captain."

"Good to see you," Jack said with a blame in his voice.

"And you," the Doctor stated coldly. "Same as ever. Although," he furrowed his brows in question. "Have you had work done?"

"You can talk," Jack shot back.

The Doctor looked at him innocently, confused. "Oh yes." Then it hit him. "The face. Regeneration. How did you know this was me?"

"The police box kind of gives it away. I've been following you for a long time," Jack stated. "You abandoned me," he accused.

"Did I?" the Doctor asked in a voice like you should know why. "Busy life. Moving on," he ended quickly.

Rose was still pretty much confused, but those last few sentences seemed to wake her up from her daze.

"Hold on." Rose came to stand between the two men. "You did what?" She turned to face the Doctor in disbelief.

The Doctor just shrugged nonchalantly.

"What happened to rebuilding the Earth?" she persisted.

"Don't know. Guess he did have some work to do. Didn't you?" the Doctor asked Jack casually.

"So much of rebuilding the Earth," Jack muttered.

Rose looked from one man to another in disbelief. Is this what she has done? By changing things? It couldn't be that this was the truth all along. Could it?
"Moving on!" the Doctor interrupted her thoughts, as he began to walk off. "Don't know about you lot, but I'm busy. Got a call to take." He waved his psychic paper. "You coming or staying?" he called out, his coat flipping to the sides from the speed his steps were getting.

"Coming," both Jack and Rose called out in reply, unhappy.

All the way to the hospital Jack and Rose were quite a bit behind the Doctor. He didn't seem to find it necessary to wait up for them.

"So how are you two doing?" Jack asked casually. "The Lord still doesn't know anything?" He gestured.

"No," Rose answered softly. Her head turned to the side, watching the flying cars passing in the air. "But he suspects," she breathed.

"Well, it's a given," Jack said.

"It's not that, Jack. He began-" Rose bit her lip, facing him. "Investigating me," she breathed.

"What again?" Jack raised an eyebrow.

"Just before we landed, back in the TARDIS," Rose began. "He began to casually ask me about food I like or places I want to visit, that kinda stuff." She waved her hands in gesture. "And then we began to play this game - answering in a split of a second. It's sort of funny, when you get really into it. Mind you, he slipped up one time or two himself." She grinned in a secret memory.

"Sharing's healthy. I'm listening," Jack urged her with a tease. That made Rose chuckle.

"Nah, I think I'll just..." She nodded. "Let's just, keep it at that." Jack tried to say something more but Rose cut him off. "And then, he just sort of asked..." She shrugged. "This question, it was out of nowhere...I wasn't prepared for that." She laughed nervously.

"What did he ask?"

Rose took a moment to herself, before answering. "He asked "When was the first time you encountered aliens?". I just couldn't think of anything that fast." She shook her head. "So I answered that at the Henrick's with him," she breathed.

"Wait." Jack stopped in his tracks. "That mind game should invoke you telling the truth. That's the point of the second-for-an-answer system...So how did you answer that?"

"Well, I wasn't lying." Rose shrugged nonchalantly.

"But you said you are crossing your time-" He stopped with his mouth half open. "Repeating the timeline," he exhaled.

A grin spread across Rose's face. "Smart one," she teased, pushing him on the side playfully.

"Oh God." Jack covered his mouth, as they began walking again. "Wait." His hand down. "Does that mean...me?" He gestured to himself.

"Yep." Rose nodded. "I knew you even before I met you," she sang.

"And by barrage balloon?" he asked half-joking.
"Always with the barrage balloon."

"Are you serious?" Jack was now amused.

"Always am, yeh." She beamed at him.

"Oh, you are wonderful, Rosie," Jack exclaimed, so proud of his dear friend and soon wrapped his arms around her shoulders, giving a side-hug. Both of them laughing.

Once the two entered the hospital, they saw the Doctor casually looking around in the hallway, waiting for them. When he spotted them, he greeted them with a smile. His previously shown temper nowhere to be seen.

"Finally caught up, eh?" he teased them, walking towards them. "I guess that's understandable, superior Time Lords biology." He shook his head, mocking.

"Well, I'm immortal, so it says something else," Jack added in a proud voice.

"You are?" Rose asked in disbelief.

"The immortal Captain Jack Harkness at your service." Jack gave her a salute.

"That's not something to be proud of," the Doctor countered him.

"Then you can tell me what's going on," Jack shot back.

"There are no... shops here," the Doctor stated, looking around in concentration.

"What do shops got to do with it?" Rose asked.

"Oh, you two don't expect me to pour my heart out." He gestured. "Not that I have any will to dwell on this subject at all..." He considered. "Anyway, right here and now in the hallway talking about someone's-" He pointed at Jack. "life problem?" he cried in disbelief.

"Maybe not," Jack agreed.

"Right," the Doctor added, turning his back to them. "That's where I'd put the shop. Right there." He pointed to the side, as he walked off, stepping into the lift.

"Ward 26, thanks," he said, when doors began to close. Jack noticing it, rushed to the lift, but it closed down under his nose.

"Oh, too late. I'm going up," the Doctor said in a bit of an "aw" voice.

"Just gotta take another lift then. Rose?" Jack turned to face her, as she casually walked inside the next one.

"And watch out for the disinfectant," the Doctor warned them.

"Watch out for what?" Jack asked.

"A disinfectant."

"A what?" Jack asked once more.

"A-" the Doctor began. "Oh, you will find out." He rolled his eyes, giving up.
"A disinfectant," Rose stated, as Jack entered her lift, just to find her all tensed up.

"What's up with you?" he joked.

And seconds later, he found out what disinfectant is. He clearly enjoyed it, Rose was still a bit tensed.

"This is great!" Jack exclaimed. "Come on, Rosie, relax!" He nudged her.

"It's not about the disinfectant," she muttered.

"Then?" he persisted, as they were already at the "drying up" step.

"Someone's been expecting us." She looked up to face the camera.

Jack became serious at those words too. When they stepped out inside the basement, he stated.

"Okay." He trailed off. "This, doesn't exactly seem like a ward." He looked around.

"No, it's a basement," Rose stated blankly.

"This too?" Jack asked her softly.

"Yep." She pointed the p.

"The human child is clean," Chip announced, as he came to view from the shadows.

"Captain Jack Harkness." Jack came over to shake Chip's hand, who didn't make effort to shake it back.

"Jack!" Rose chided him.

"What?" he asked innocently. "I'm just saying hello." As he faced Chip again. "We're looking for Ward 26."

"This way, Rose Tyler." There was a small pause. "And the friend," Chip ended, as he ran further inside.

"Ouch, that was cold." Jack sneered, as he began following Chip.

"Jack, what're you doing?" Rose hissed at him.

"Just want to enjoy the adventure you've already had." He told her while walking backwards and laughing.

"Jack!" Rose began to run towards him, following.

Once inside, they saw a reel to reel projector showing a film of a party. Cassandra as the main guest.

"Hello hello," Jack watched the video with a grin. "Shame I can't meet you alive."

Rose just rolled her eyes.

"Peekaboo!" Cassandra's flat skin appeared in the corner of the room.
"Here you go, the living film." Rose gestured with pity and disgust in her voice.

"Oh." Jack considered. "Gotta tell you, was expecting some kind of...a body," he joked. "This could make things a slightly bit difficult," he mumbled.

"Oh, charming boy, I am sorry to say...oh, who I'm kidding." Cassandra rolled her eyes. "I'm not sorry at all. I'm just refusing you, considering I've got bigger plans," she ended, muttering.

"Always got to try." Jack bowed elegantly.

"Now now, Rose Tyler. Aren't you popular. Firstly that, hypocrite, Doctor, was he called-"

"Don't you talk like that about him!" Rose warned her dangerously.

Cassandra just rolled her eyes. "Whatever. And now, this, King of the Flirt. Tsk tsk tsk." She tsk'ed her in disapproval.

"I don't need your opinion, Cassandra," Rose shot back, frowning.

"Who's this fellow over there?" Jack gestured to Chip.

"Oh that's just Chip. He's my pet," Cassandra stated solemnly.

"I worship the mistress," he said, while stepping forward to make his point.

"Moisturise me, moisturise me." Chip sprayed Cassandra. "He's not even a proper life form. He's a force grown clone. I modelled him on my favourite pattern. But he's so faithful. Chip sees to my physical needs."

"You always survive, don't you?" Rose mocked her.

"After you murdered me," Cassandra accused, frowning darkly.

"That was your own fault." Rose pointed at her.

"The brain of my mistress survived. And her pretty blue eyes were salvaged from the bin." Chip butted in.

"Guess am not the only one with the endless lifespan," Jack whispered to Rose.

"She is no-" Rose began, when an energy force surrounded her, startling her. "What've you done, Cassandra!?"

"Release her!" Jack warned Cassandra, pointing a blaster at her.

"Oh, so scary. What're you going to do to me, Flirt boy?"

"I think it's obvious." Jack smiled darkly.

"If you want to shoot me, then, sorry. Too late." She moved her face into a shrug. And the next moment a blast came to her, just to be stuck into another forcefield.

"When did yo-" Jack began.

"I've been busy," Cassandra stated in a low harsh voice. "Not just staying still here, as you two may think," she spat. "I've gathered my weapons to get what I need to get into the hospital." She
chuckled. "This body." Was her last words before her consciousness left her skin and went inside Rose. Jack still tried to shoot her in between, but failed.

"Mistress?" Chip came over to Rose's body, which was laying on the ground.

"Moisturise me," Cassandra breathed.


Cassandra slowly stood up. "Arms! Legs!" She was still admiring her body, when she found a blaster pointed at her head. "You're not going to shoot me, boy."

"And why not?" Jack placed the gun more firmly at her.

"Because I'm in this body," she stated slyly.

"Okay. Fair point." Jack lowered the blaster.

"So then. What have you got to stop me?" She laughed in his face.

"Arms." Jack gestured.

"Oh, I don't think so." And the next moment Jack felt a needle in his neck. His body crumbled to the floor.

"Finally the hindrance down. Put him into the cell cabin." She ordered Chip. As he began to move Jack's limp body, she added. "Naked. He seems to be armed." She glanced him over.

Then she spotted the mirror. "Oh my God. I'm a chav!" she cried in a hysterical voice. "Look at me. From class to brass. Although." She considered. "Oh, curves." She looked herself over, as she pulled the zipper of her jumper down. "Oh, baby, it's like living inside a bouncy castle!" She began jumping on her heels.

"The mistress is beautiful," Chip added, bouncing himself.

"Absolumo!" Cassandra stated in a solemn voice. The sight of her original skin, all fried, made her face harden for a moment. She didn't let it eat her thoughts for much longer, though.

"Oh, the brain lead expired. My old mistress is gone," Chip mourned. All those moments they had together...

"But safe and sound in here." She gestured to her head. As long as she got what she needed, the temporal body would do.

"But what of the Rose child's mind?" Chip asked in concern.

"Oh, tucked away." She shrugged twirling her fingers with her hair. "I can just about access the surface memory." Then her face shadowed. "Can't!" she cried out.

"What's the matter, mistress?"

"I can't access her memory! All is... blank!" she yelled out hysterically. "What's going on!?" She began to breathe unevenly.

"Mistress, please breathe, it's not healthy for you to get nervous."
"Huff huff." She evened her breathing. "You're right." She regained her composure. "I just... I've just got to play along, right?" she yelled out to Chip.

"Of course, mistress. You're the best."

"Right." And the next moment Rose's phone buzzed. "Oh, it seems to be ringing. Is it meant to ring?" she asked slyly.

"A primitive communications device." Chip informed her.

"Rose, where are you?" The Doctor's voice could be heard from the phone.

"How does she speak?" Cassandra whispered to Chip.

"Old Earth Cockney," Chip whispered back.

"Er, wotcha," she said in a sly voice.

"Where've you been? How long does it take to get to Ward 26?" the Doctor asked in a hurried voice.

"I'm on my way, governor," Cassandra continued in the same manner as before. "I shall proceed." She talked while twirling her hair. "Up the apples and pears."

"You'll never guess," the Doctor interrupted her, missing her weird way of speaking. Maybe, because she was always weird to begin with. "I'm with the Face of Boe," he announced out of sheer joy. "Remember him?"


"I'd better go." The Doctor told her absentmindedly, his attention already elsewhere. "See you in a minute." As he hang up.

"This Doctor man is dangerous," Chip looked at his Mistress worriedly.

"Dangerous and clever. I need a mind like his." She talked while readjusting her image in front of the mirror. "The Sisterhood is up to something. Remember that Old Earth saying?" She looked at Chip. "Never trust a Nun. Never trust a Nurse. And never trust a cat. Perfume?" She walked over to Chip, as she took the perfume and tucked the vial down her décolletage.

Inside the darkness, Captain Jack Harkness woke up just to find himself. Well. Not fully clothed at all.

"Oh, someone seems to have had their fun." Jack laughed, when seconds later, he took the blaster out from somewhere from his behind and pointed at the doors.

"Good ol' tricks." As he blasted the holding cell's doors.

When he gathered his clothes and walked around the room, he found nobody present, meaning that Rose, or Cassandra, as of now, was walking free.

Jack rushed down the corridors in the search of the Doctor.
At the ward 26, the Doctor was going round all the cubicles, when he spotted Rose.

"There you are. Come and look at this patient." He lead the way with his hand on her back. "Marconi's Disease," he announced in a half-whisper. "Should take years to recover. Two days! I've never seen anything like it." He looked at the patient in amazement and disbelief. "They've invented a cell washing cascade. It's amazing. Their medical science is way advanced." He looked at her meaningfully. There was a pause, when he asked. "Hold on. Where's Jack? Wasn't he with you?"

Cassandra had a flashback of a limp body laying there. "Oh, he's..." She shook her head. "Busy," she stated meaningfully.

"Oh, don't tell me. This is the hospital for Rasillion's sake!" the Doctor cried out.

Cassandra just shrugged, faking a smile.

"Anyway. Look, this one." He was back to showing around the patients. This time was the one as white as a sheet of paper.

"Pallidome Pancrosis. Kills you in ten minutes, and he's fine." The Doctor gestured at the patient lightly, as he waved towards him. "I need to find a terminal. I've got to see how they do this," the Doctor said in a hurried voice; his eyes popped out with a mad determination and curiosity. "Because if they've got the best medicine in the world," the Doctor continued to talk, wondering, while both of them were exiting the ward.

"Then why is it such a secret?" he whispered.

"I can't Adam and Eve it," Cassandra stated in an arrogant voice.

"What's, what's, what's with the voice?" the Doctor stuttered, blinking. "If this is another you being all weird..." He shook his head. "Then it doesn't suit you." He laughed lightly, locking their gazes.

"Mmm, aren't you just-" she began in a seductive voice.

At the same moment Jack caught up to them and was already starting to call out for the Doctor, but decided to stay for the show. In a split of a second Cassandra grabbed the Doctor's face into her both hands, running her fingers around his hair, as she kissed him for life. The Doctor not pushing her away at all. In fact, even closing his eyes.

"Muah." She pulled back loudly, leaving the Doctor completely speechless, with mouth half-open. She put her hair under her ear, still looking at him, as she exhaled. "Terminal's this way." She pointed her finger.

"Phew," she exhaled hard, stepping away from the scene. Only the Doctor's speechless and quite a bit dazed gaze following her retreating body.

"Yep," he squealed a few octaves higher than normal. "Still got it," he stated, brushing his hair back and making his way to follow in her steps.

"Nice goin', Doc." Jack's voice shook him at his feet. He sprung to the side to face the source of the voice. Jack was standing only a few meters further inside the room, and could have been clearly spotted by the Doctor, if his mind wouldn't have been. Well, slightly bit occupied.

The Doctor cleared his throat, clearly not very comfortable with the situation. "I heard you had your fun yourself," he shot back.
"Oh, so you're saying you did yours here?" Jack laughed.

"I wasn't saying-" The Doctor tried to make excuses.

"But sorry, Doc. I have to be the responsible adult here." Jack forced a fake tone. "And shatter your illusion of finally snogging Rose." He shook his head in pity.

"Excuse me, do you mind?." The Doctor chided him, as he was starting to walk away.

"She's not our Rose, Doctor," Jack stated seriously, making the alien himself stop and turn around.

"What's your point?" The Doctor raised an eyebrow.

"Didn't you notice how weird she was?" Jack countered him.

"Isn't she always," the Doctor muttered. *What, was it so hard to think that she could ki...um...maybe she wanted to experiment? New new Doctor. Of course, new experiences and all...* 

"That's Cassandra inside her body," Jack stated darkly, interrupting the Time Lord's scattered thoughts.

"Cassandra?" the Doctor asked in disbelief. "What Cassandra?"

"Does flap piece of skin mean anything to you?" Jack suggested meaningfully.

"What?" the Doctor asked again. Jack began to open his mouth again. "No, shush shush." He put a finger before him, not looking at Captain. "If Cassandra's inside her head..." He trailed off.

"She's going to destroy Rose's mind," Jack stated worriedly.

"Not with me alive," the Doctor said in a low Time Lord's voice. "Come on!" he called out for Jack to follow.

*to be continued...*
Both the Doctor and Jack cautiously entered ward's 26 waiting room, where the terminal was located. They found Rose, or in the current state, Cassandra, pacing impatiently, her arms folded.

"Thought would never see you again," she shot in her arrogant voice.

"Yeh. Well," the Doctor began nonchalantly. "Was a bit surprised." The Doctor went further into the room, rubbing the back of his neck. "By some unasked for gesture."

Cassandra rolled her eyes. "I thought you liked it," she said in a mock.

"You're not exactly my taste, Cassandra." The Doctor shook his head blithely.

"Not your taste..." she murmured, when she froze backing away in defence.

"Game over, Cassandra." Jack stepped from behind the Doctor.

"You again!" she hissed. "How did you get out so fast?"

"I have my ways." He smirked at her meaningfully.

"I don't even want to know," she muttered under her teeth.

"Get out of Rose's body, Cassandra," the Doctor ordered her darkly. "Before I get really serious," he added with dark eyes.

"Can't I just...stay?" Cassandra asked slyly.

"No," the Doctor cut her sharply. "Now get out." He pointed the sonic at her. "Brain is a delicate thing, and you're compressing her to death."

"Don't worry, I don't see a thing as it is." She made a frustrated face.

"Move! Before you try to pull out one more trick of yours." The Doctor raised his voice at her.

"Oh, don't blame me for that." She defended herself. "That was not my own doing." She paused to look into the Doctor's eyes.

"It was this body that acted upon." She gestured and it was enough to stun the Doctor for a moment, processing the meaning of her words, as Cassandra pulled the perfume out of her decolletage. The Time Lord down on the floor.

"All good," she breathed in satisfaction, as she put the bottle back to its rightful place.

"Forgetting something?" Jack's voice startled her, as his figure was now clearly visible before her eyes with the Doctor down.

"Oh. Hehe." Cassandra laughed nervously. "You, you still can't hurt me though, remember?" she squealed, as Jack was steadily moving forwards, blaster pointed at her.
Jack smirked at her, making Cassandra dread the man. She glanced at him warily and as he was just a step away from her, he tossed the blaster in her grasp, confusion filling Cassandra and a hard side of the palm striking her on the neck - resulting in her losing consciousness herself.

"Sorry, Rosie." Jack leaned over to Rose's body. A gasp from behind made Jack stand up again.

"Wha-" Novice Hame began.

"Captain Jack Harkness." Jack made his way to the nurse, offering his hand. "We've got a little situation here." He gestured. "I need this one woken up." He pointed at the Doctor's still form. "And that one, restrained. Can you do that for me?" Jack pleaded with a tease.

"We," nurse began, a bit uncomfortable with the man. "We've no more available space in the ward 26, but I can direct you to ward 100."

"Just what we need. Thank you!" Jack beamed, shaking her hand fiercely.

The Doctor was first to wake up. He was still a bit dazed, when Jack's face came into view.

"Done sleeping?" Jack teased him.

"Don't start," the Doctor chided him. He sat up on his bed as his awareness came back to him. "Rose," he breathed and briskly got out of the bed.

"All under control." Jack's voice reached his ears. "Had to restrain her a little bit, though."

The Doctor glanced to the bed beside his to find Rose's body wrapped in restraining belts. His eyes narrowed darkly at the sight of her still unconscious form.

"Look, I had no choice." Jack began to defend himself, as he saw the Time Lord's rage making its way to the surface.

"There's always a choice," the Doctor shot back sharply, making Jack shiver slightly.

"I want her safe same as you," Jack said cautiously not to provoke him.

"What can I say?" The Doctor shrugged nonchalantly. "Not good enough." His brows furrowed even more at the sight of restraining belts pressing tightly into Rose's flesh. He could stand it no more. Before Jack could even form a thought of protest, he stormed towards Rose, pulling his sonic screwdriver out, as he adjusted the setting to set Rose's body free.

Jack stifled the sharp retort he was going to express. He breathed out to talk in a calmer voice. "She can take care of herself."

"Yeh, she can," the Doctor agreed faintly. "But not when she has no free will over her body, as someone is compressing her mind." He pointed the last word. "And certainly not while staying restrained in sharp belts on the hospital bed laying unconscious," he ended in a half-whisper.

Jack didn't say more. What could he say? Telling him the truth about Rose was out of the question and even if she was already past this experience, he just wasn't aware of how much. Was this even part of the events? Seeming as his appearance was not expected this time round, it certainly didn't seem to be the case. So Jack just sighed.

Cassandra stirred from her sleep and started slowly opening her eyes. Besides the still blurry vision
ahead of her, she found herself with yet another unpleasant sensation.

"Oh, my God. The migraine!" she cried hysterically, clenching at her temple. The Doctor's body stiffened at the words.

She sat up ungainly, frowning. "Time for you to go, Cassandra." The Doctor's ice cold voice made her shiver. She glanced upwards to see him standing besides the bed.

"But I've nowhere to go!" she cried, trying out pity. "My skin fried up."

"Not my problem. You can float as atoms in the air," he said blithely, looking down at her. "Now, get out." He pointed the sonic at her once more. "Give her back to me." Uttering each word meaningfully.

"Something is going on in this hospital, you said so yourself. But I need this body and your mind to find it out," Cassandra stated.

"You're not staying the-" the Doctor began darkly, when Cassandra yelled out.

"Her head!" she leaned forward. "Something is freaking wrong with it!" she breathed sharply. "Oh, I hate her. Can't even access her memories." She frowned in pain.

"Seems like someone doesn't want you there," the Doctor joked lightly, pride in his voice of the human in thought.

"Doesn't matter. You can't hurt me anyway." She straightened up. "The Flirt boy already tried," she spat, looking at Jack, who gave her a warning look. "At worst I'll just let her mind whither just before I move on to the next," she sang.

"Don't even dream about it." The Doctor's voice was very low.

"Then you better cooperate with me," she suggested, her voice back to fake high.

"We're not cooperating with you," Jack shot back.

"I think you have no choice. Either lead me to the Intensive Care department or she burns out," Cassandra threatened.

The Doctor hitched a breath. "You're aware of what's awaiting of you once you're back in the open, right?" The Doctor's voice without remorse.

"I'm good at vanishing." She smiled in a fake way.

"Better be. Or you will come to face just why I am known as the Oncoming Storm among the stars," he said lightly, but it made her dread him even more. She gulped.

"Right." She laughed nervously. "Now, back to the terminal."

The weird newly formed trio made their way back to the terminal and with a bit of Cassandra's assistance and the Doctor's sonic'ing, they quickly found their way into the Intensive Care.

The whole place was lined with the cells, thousands of them, a bit like the Tomb of the Cybermen. The Doctor opened one at random. It contained a very sick looking man.

"That's disgusting." Cassandra frowned in disgust. "What's wrong with him?"
"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry," the Doctor said faintly in an apology to the man, not paying attention to her.

The Doctor closed the door and moved on to the next. It contained a young woman.

"What disease is that?" Cassandra asked cautiously.

"All of them. Every single disease in the galaxy. They've been infected with everything." The Doctor talked, his eyes wide with rage making its way up.

"This is wrong," Jack breathed.

"What about us? Are we safe?" Cassandra asked the Doctor warily.

"The air's sterile. Just don't touch them." Then he closed the door. He walked over at the railing, as he rested his hands against it, watching towards the distance at thousands of cells.

"How many patients are there?" Cassandra asked, walking over to him.

"They're not patients," the Doctor replied harshly. "They were born sick. They're meant to be sick. They exist to be sick. Lab rats," he said in disgust and anger at the source responsible for all of this. "No wonder the Sisters have got a cure for everything," he said sarcastically. "They've built the ultimate research laboratory. A human farm," he spat.

"Why don't they just die?" Cassandra asked, gaining a sharp glare from the Doctor.

"It's for the greater cause." Hame spoke up, coming from the shadows. She seemed to have followed them.

"Did you agree to this?" Jack asked her, clearly disappointed in her.

"The Sisterhood has sworn to help." She answered softly.

"What, by KILLING?" the Doctor shouted at her.

"Mankind needed us. They came to this planet with so many illnesses," she started in a sorrowful voice. "We couldn't cope. We tried everything." The Doctor looked at her in disbelief of her inhumanity. "But the results were too slow, so the Sisterhood grew its own flesh. That's all they are," she breathed, smiling softly.

"Flesh."

"These people are alive!" The Doctor gestured at the cells, blame in his voice clearly visible.

"But think of those Humans out there, healthy and happy, because of us."

"If they live because of this, then life is worthless," the Doctor continued.

"But who are you to decide that?" Hame asked him faintly.

"I'm the Doctor," he whispered, storming his way to stand in front of her. "And if you don't like it, if you want to take it to a higher authority." He raised a warning eyebrow at her. "Then there isn't one. It stops with me."

"Just to confirm." Cassandra butted in slyly, the Doctor taking calming breaths, as he turned to face her and back to Hame, moments later. "None of the humans in the city actually know about this?"
"We thought it best not," Hame said.

"Hmm-" Cassandra trailed off, when a sharp gasp escaped her mouth, her eyes wide as she staggered, nearly falling on the ground, but managed to catch on the metal bar of the railing to keep herself on foot.

"Do you need help?" Hame asked in concern, the Doctor didn't pay attention to her as he moved briskly towards Rose, or her body.

"I'll get some help" With that, Hame left the department.

The Doctor looked at Rose's uneven body in great concern and anger. He held her up, to steady her. "Don't try my patience, Cassandra," he warned her.

"Sorry," she breathed. "Have to disappoint you." A soft voice came from her mouth. The Doctor looked at her in disbelief.

"Rose?" he exhaled in awe.

A weak smile formed on her face in assurance. The Doctor smiled at her at that moment, relief starting to fill him up. It didn't last long, as another wave hit her, making her gasp. Cassandra was back once again.

"Yuck, that was weird. Can't she just stay put!?" she complained. The Doctor frowning at once, as he loosened his grip on her.

"Don't play games with me," he warned.

"Anything we can do to help?" Two, previously unseen, nurses came to face the trio. "We've heard about the disturbance."

"What happened to getting help to the unwell?" Jack asked.

"You're not allowed to be here." One of the cats spoke.

"Straight to the point, Whiskers." Cassandra came forward. "I want money," she stated arrogantly.

The Doctor rolled his eyes, as he shook his head.

"The Sisterhood is a charity. We don't give money." The nurse laughed. "We only accept."

"The humans across the water pay you a fortune, and that's exactly what I need. A one-off payment," Cassandra sang. "That's all I want. Oh, and perhaps a yacht," she added. "In return for which, I shall tell the city nothing of your institutional murder." She glanced at the nurses meaningfully. "Is that a deal?"

"I'm afraid not," nurse countered.

"No need to worry about this one." The Doctor stepped beside Rose's body, giving her a warning look.

"I am certainly certain of that," nurse stated.

"I'd really advise you to think about this," Cassandra warned.

"Oh, there's no need." The cat-nurse shrugged lightly. "I have to decline."
"I'll tell them," Cassandra yelled out hysterically. "You're not exactly Nuns with Guns. You can't stop me."

"Oh, come on-:" the Doctor began, but was interrupted by a nurse.

"Who needs arms when we have claws?" As Matron unsheathed her claws.


"Where did that fellow come from?" Jack asked in disbelief.

"I'm always in the shadows, looking after my Mistress," Chip stated, as he pulled the lever, all doors on that level opening. Nurses backing away cautiously.

"What've you done!?" the Doctor yelled at Cassandra, watching the scene in horror.

"Gave the system a shot of adrenaline, just to wake them up," she spilled quickly.

"Don't know about you, but I get a hell of a nasty deja vu," Jack said lightly, laughing nervously. "Almost like with the masked people at the Blitz of London, just neither calling for their mummies," Jack ended in a mutter.

"Yeh, and just this time there's no "mother" to save them," the Doctor agreed in a low voice.

"See you!" Cassandra's voice could be heard, as she turned to run along the corridor.

"Don't touch them! Whatever you do, don't touch!" the Doctor warned everyone frantically. "Jack, inform the hospital!" He gave him one last look before running after Cassandra and Chip, Jack dashing in the opposite direction, maneuvering between the flesh.

One of the men of the flesh put his hand into a socket and as he got electrocuted, the locks on all the cell doors blew, freeing the people inside. It was advancing to every cell fast, quickly catching up to the running Doctor and Cassandra, her yelling loudly.

They stopped for a moment to see every cell of the department, every one of those thousands, opening up.

"Oh, my God" she breathed.

"What the hell have you done?" the Doctor shot at her.

"It wasn't me!" She defended herself.

"One touch and you get every disease in the world," he began frantically. "And I want that body safe, Cassandra." He told her sharply. "We've got to go down."

"But there's thousands of them!" she cried.

"Run!" he yelled at her. "Down! Down! Go down!" As they began descending the stairs. Her first, followed by Chip and lastly the Doctor.

"Keep going!" the Doctor yelled out for them.

As they entered the basement, Cassandra tried to call the lift but soon found it not working because of the quarantine, making them run further inside, passing the group of flesh. Unfortunately, Chip
was a bit slow and got trapped.

"Someone will touch him." The Doctor began to move towards Chip.

"Leave him! He's just a clone thing. He's only got a half life." Cassandra grabbed the Doctor's arm, urging him. "Come on!"

"Mistress!" Chip cried.

"I'm sorry, I can't let her escape." The Doctor looked at him frantically, apologizing, as he dashed after her.

Cassandra ran to the back door, but there were people there, too. She slammed the doors shut.

"We're trapped!" she cried. "What am I going to do?"

"Well, for starters." The Doctor tilted his head, his eyes wide. "You're going to leave that body." As he began walking. "That psychograft is banned on every civilised planet." He pointed at the object in question. "Now. You've learnt about the Intensive Care. Our deal is over," he warned her.

"You asked for it," she said slyly, as an energy ball came out of her mouth to rest inside the Doctor. Rose staggered a bit. After taking a few breaths she glanced over at the Doctor, who was now...not.

"Oh, my." Cassandra walked weirdly in the Doctor's body. "This is...different." she said, amused.

"Get out of him," Rose warned.

"Goodness me, I'm a man. Yum. So many parts. And hardly used." Rose eyed her, or him. "Oh, oh, two hearts!" she gasped, as she shook his body. "Oh, baby, I'm beating out a samba!"

"Cassandra, get out!" Rose yelled.

"Oo, he's slim." She placed Doctor's hand down his torso, inspecting. "And a little bit foxy." Cassandra shot her head up to face Rose, lifting his eyebrows suggestively at her. "You like it." She began to move towards her. "You may have hidden your thoughts, but your body moved at him on its own," she ended in the Doctor's voice, leaning forward to Rose. Rose ducking her eyes to not face him.

As the doors burst open to reveal the flesh making their way in, Doctor-Cassandra began to panic again.

"What do we do? What would he do?" She was poking Rose's arm frantically. "The Doctor, what the hell would he do?"

"We've got to get up," Rose said. "Ladder." She turned to face one behind them.

"Out of the way, blondie!" Cassandra-Doctor pushed her harshly aside to climb first.

"Please, help us. Help," the flesh woman pleaded.

"If you get out of the Doctor's body, he can think of something," Rose said from behind the Cassandra-Doctor, as they climbed upwards. Even if Rose could think of something, it was still wiser to let the Doctor look after Rose's body with Cassandra's mind than other way around.

"Yap, yap, yap." Cassandra began mumbling. "God, your both heads are so boring. Both hiding
your thoughts."

As they reached the doors on the next level, it wouldn't open.

"Help us." A flesh man's voice came from behind them.

"Now what do we do?" Cassandra-Doctor cried.

"Use the sonic screwdriver," Rose stated.

"You mean this thing?" As Cassandra pulled it out of the Doctor's suit.

"Yes, I mean that thing," Rose said, annoyed. "Now, go back to me. The Doctor can open it."

"Hold on tight." As she breathed the energy ball back to Rose.

"Oh, chavtastic again," she complained. "Open it!" she yelled at him.

"Not till you get out of her," the Doctor threatened her.

"We need the Doctor," Cassandra-Rose countered.

"I ORDER YOU TO LEAVE HER!" he shouted at her.

"Don't shout at me!" she cried. "I'll fall down, making this body crumble, if you keep
complaining," she warned.

"You're asking for it." The Doctor gritted his teeth, as he turned to face the controls to open the lift
doors. Both the Doctor and Cassandra-Rose inside.

After passing a hallway, they found themselves back at ward 26, Frau Clovis lunging at them with
a metal stand.

The Doctor shoot his hands ahead in defence. "We're safe! We're safe! We're safe! We're clean!
We're clean! Look, look."

"Show me your skin," Clovis ordered.

"Look, clean. Look." Both him and Cassandra-Rose circled their wrist around. "If we'd been
touched, we'd be dead." That seemed to be enough for Clovis.

"So how's it going up here? What's the status?" the Doctor asked while placing his screwdriver
back inside his suit.

"There's nothing but silence from the other wards. I think we're the only ones left," she stated. The
Doctor furrowed his brows at that. What the hell was Jack doing? "And I've been trying to override
the quarantine," Clovis continued. "If I can trip a signal over to New New York, they can send a
private executive squad."

"You can't do that." The Doctor dismissed it at once. "If they forced entry, they'd break quarantine.
Now turn that off!"

"Not if it gets me out," she spat.

"All right, fine," the Doctor said faintly, nodding. "So I have to stop you lot as well. Suits me," he
said lightly. "Rose, novice Hame, everyone!" he called out for them. "Excuse me, your Grace. Get
me intravenous solutions for every single disease. Move it!” he instructed everyone.

Everyone grabbed drip bags, while the Doctor collected a long piece of heavy silk rope and started hanging the bags on his body.

"How's that? Will that do?” the Doctor asked Cassandra-Rose's opinion.

"It better will." She grinned at him while sticking the bags on him.

"Rose?” The Doctor blinked at her.

"Hello," she said, beaming.

"Good to have you back again.” The Doctor looked at her happily. And suddenly the situation seemed to be not so severe. Even if for another second. "Come on.” He grabbed her hand, as he went towards the lift, sonic'ing it open.

"What're you planning?” Rose asked him expectedly.

"Oh, just a little trick." He shrugged nonchalantly at her. He then ran back inside the room, placing his sonic between his teeth, as he dashed back towards the lift, jumping on the cable.

Rose gasped a bit at the sight, but soon eased up, leaning forwards inside the lift, measuring the height.

"Looks high," she calculated.

"No problem." The Doctor attached a round piece of equipment to the cable sonic'ing it. "Fancy a trip down?” The Doctor looked at her suggestively.

"Any time.” Rose beamed at him, jumping towards him and wrapping her arms and legs around him.


"Don't you even dare," she warned him.

"To the cable!” He excused himself. Rose pinched him.

"Going down!” The Doctor informed her, as the improvised wheel he had attached to the cable took them down the shaft. After a short sequence of screaming and laughing, the Doctor put on the brake and they came to a gentle stop on top of the lift.

"Huff,” she breathed. "You're completely mad. I can see why she likes you,” she ended.

The Doctor turned around abruptly. "Peekaboo,” Cassandra-Rose sang. The Doctor lowered his head, glaring at her from bellow.

"When I say so, take hold of that lever," he instructed her coldly.

"There's still a quarantine down there, we can't-” she began to reason.

"Hold that lever!” the Doctor shot back at her, making her jump.

"I'm cooking up a cocktail. I know a bit about medicine myself.” The Doctor poured the contents of the drip bags into the lift's disinfectant tank.
"Now, that lever's going to resist. But keep it in position. Hold onto it with everything you've got." He told her while opening the ceiling of the lift.

"What about you?" Cassandra-Rose asked, concerned whether he was trying to abandon her.

"I've got an appointment. The Doctor is in," he told her cheesily, as he dropped down into the lift itself.

He opened the doors with his sonic screwdriver. The diseased people, sitting inside the hallway, turned to look.

"I'm in here! Come on!" The Doctor urged them.

"Don't tell them," Cassandra-Rose shot at him.

"Pull that lever!" the Doctor instructed her.

"Come and get me. Come on!" The Doctor kept urging the crowd as they started to shuffle towards the lift.

"Commence stage one disinfection," the lift announced, the contents of the disinfectant tank poured onto him.

"Come on, come on." The first of the humans joined him, then another and another. After getting sprayed as well - leaving.

"All they want to do is pass it on. Pass it on!" the Doctor told them, jumping around.

"Pass on what?" Cassandra was yelling from above.

"Pass it on!" The Doctor jumped in a light of hope.

As the disinfected and wet humans touched their diseased comrades their skin started to emit a steam, which gradually cleared the skin clean of the infections. The Doctor looked at them with sheer joy on his face.

Once the Doctor helped Cassandra down, she was fast to ask.

"What did they pass on?" she whispered. "Did you kill them? All of them?"

"No." The Doctor shook his head. "That's your way of doing things." As he walked out of the lift grandly.

"I'm the Doctor, and I cured them," he announced walking further inside the hall, smiling at the crowd.

A woman came over to hug the Doctor. "Oh, that's right." The Doctor laughed, hugging her back tenderly. "Hey, there we go, sweetheart." He looked at her like a proud father. "Go to him. Go on, that's it," he whispered faintly, pushing her slightly to pass on the cure.

"It's a new sub-species, Cassandra." He placed his both hands on another man looking at him, beaming. "A brand new form of life. New humans! Look at them. Look!" he exclaimed. "Grown by cats, kept in the dark, fed by tubes, but completely, completely ALIVE!" he exclaimed with so much joy and happiness that it was contagious.

"You can't deny them." He turned at Cassandra, pointing at her. "Because you helped create them."
Cassandra just had her lips pressed together. "The human race just keeps on going, keeps on changing. Life will out! HA!" He jumped in happiness.

Cassandra smirked at the sight. *Oh, she just knew what her new plan was.* The Doctor was too immersed in this new human life form to take notice of that, when he heard a sharp gasp come out of Rose's mouth, her almost fainting. The Doctor's face quickly shadowed, as he ran towards her to catch her.

"Ca-" he began, when she interrupted him.

"She left me," Rose breathed faintly, before her legs gave out, and she was literally inches from the ground, the Doctor almost going down with her too, as he grabbed her close to him to steady her on her foot.

"Woah." As he placed her back. "You okay?" he whispered to her, her head resting on his shoulder.

"Yeh," she breathed a few deep breaths, and lifted her head to face him, smiling at him.

"Welcome back." He beamed at her fondly, still holding her firmly against his body.

"Doctor!" Jack's voice made them turn to face the source, as the man made his way through the crowd.

"Jack! Where have you been? They all thought you were dead." The Doctor had to let go of Rose now as he walked towards their friend.

"I kept quite a few visitors inside the ward 100, we once were *held at.*" He uttered the last words meaningfully.

"Held at?" the Doctor asked him, confused.

"Apparently, it's like a holding cell. So, no wonder if you heard no word about me. It's completely sound-sealed," Jack said, when he spotted Rose. "What about her?" He pointed.

"Oh, Rose's back," the Doctor announced all happily, walking back to Rose and placing his hands around her shoulders to move her forward to Jack.

"Oh, Rosie!" Jack laughed while flinging himself at her, the Doctor stirring a wee bit uncomfortably, as he slowly retreated his hands.

"Hey, Jack." Rose smiled in his embrace.

"Good to see you finally in your right mind," Jack joked, making Rose laugh at his remark. Then he pulled away suddenly. "But where's Cassandra then?" He looked around.

"Oh." The Doctor came to a realisation. He sprung around to filter the room. It was filled with newly made human life forms.

"Where's she?" Rose asked faintly.

"She ran," the Doctor said darkly. "Took the body of another living and ran."

Rose frowned at that. Now *that* was not what she had expected of this trip.

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It got already dark, when after making a few trips there and there to check on people and newly
made humans, they came back to ward's 26 entrance just to see Hame being taken away by the police. The Doctor glanced her with twisted emotions.

He looked around the room, when it hit him.

"The Face of Boe!" he breathed, as he dashed inside the ward.

"Well, hello," Jack joked, the Doctor already leaving them. Rose raised an eyebrow at him.

"Let's go after him?" Jack suggested. Rose smiled, as both of them ran inside after the Doctor.

They found the Doctor already standing near the container of the big face.

"You were supposed to be dying." The Doctor smiled at him suggestively.

"There are better things to do today. Dying can wait," Face told him, when he spotted the two other people behind him. "Oh, this is not good." He chuckled.

The Doctor sprung around to face Jack and Rose watching him.

"Oh, I know he's not good. I can constantly feel the timeline being in a mess with him near," the Doctor joked, turning to the Face of Boe again.

"Oi!" Jack shot back. "Better than a giant face in a container," Jack joked, when moments later, his face fell, mouth open slack.

"No!" he gasped. The Doctor turned around to face Jack's pale face. The Doctor raised an eyebrow.

"Oh, this is just so so..." Jack shook his head and hands as he backed away. Before long, he ran out of the room.

The Doctor chuckled. "What did you tell him?" he asked the Face proudly. "Could never take that type of reaction out of him.'

The Face of Boe chuckled inside their heads. "There are just some things."

Rose walked up to the Face. "Hello." As she placed a hand on the container.

"Hello, my dear." The Face spoke in her head. "I see you had a big journey yourself."

"You know?" Rose thought in her mind.

"The timeline is quite a bit tangled up. There're many things happening that weren't supposed to happen. Everything is new and still not settled. You shall heal that wound of time yourself."

"Me? But how?" she asked him, confused.

"You'll know," he finished faintly, as he continued their talk with the Doctor.

"I have grown tired with the universe, Doctor, but you have taught me to look at it anew."

"There are legends, you know." The Doctor approached him, looking at him expectedly. "Saying that you're millions of years old." As he squatted down next to Rose, facing the Face.

"There are? That would be impossible." Face chuckled.

"Wouldn't it just." The Doctor grinned, amused. "I got the impression there was something you
wanted to tell me." He looked at him with big expectant eyes.

"A great secret," the Face whispered.

"So the legend says," the Doctor agreed.

"It can wait." The Face dismissed it with ease.

"Oh, does it have to?" The Doctor complained, lightly.

"We shall meet again, Doctor, for the third time, for the last time, and the truth shall be told. Until that day." As he beamed away.

"That is enigmatic. That, that is, that is textbook enigmatic." The Doctor nodded at the sight. Rose chuckled as she stood up together with the Doctor.

He beamed at her meaningfully. "Off we go then?" He gestured towards the doors with his head.

"Off we go." Rose replied, taking the Doctor's offered hand, as they left the ward together, grinning.

They found Jack leaning on the TARDIS doors, face without any colour.

"I've got to take the recipe from the Face of Boe," the Doctor joked, shaking his head. "What did he do to him?" he cried.

"I've no idea." Rose joined him.

"Got a bit of a scare, eh?" the Doctor teased Jack, as they reached the TARDIS, the Doctor unlocking it. "You better not provoke the legendary creature or you'll get its wrath!" The Doctor and Rose both laughed at that.

"I used to be a poster boy, when I was a kid living on the Boeshane Peninsula," Jack began, his voice blank. "Tiny little place." He stopped in nostalgia. "I was the first one ever to be signed up for the Time Agency. They were so proud of me." He laughed. Rose and the Doctor smiling at him.

"The Face of Boe, they called me." Jack shrugged blithely, as he walked up into the TARDIS, leaving Rose and the Doctor gaping at his back.

"No." The Doctor shook his head in disbelief.

"It can't be," Rose breathed.

"No. Definitely not. No. No." The Doctor began denying it until a snort escaped his mouth, Rose soon following him.

"Impossible," he cried. "How brilliant is that," the Doctor cried through laughter.

"I can't believe it!" Rose squealed, laughing herself.

"Oi! Enough! Come on in!" Jack's voice could be heard from inside the TARDIS.

As the Doctor and Rose walked inside, they came to a stop near the doors. Turned to face each other, their faces calm. When they twitched.
"Stop it." Rose chided him in the whisper, her lips twitching.

"You stop it," he countered her, his lips quivering too. When they turned from each other, laughing until their stomach hurt.

"Good you're having fun," Jack said sarcastically. "But could you please now tell me how in the world am I going to became that?"

The Doctor cleared his throat, calming down, as he pressed his lips together, his brows furrowed.

"Doctor," Jack called out for him.

"Rose," the Doctor said faintly.

"Yeh?" Rose looked at the Doctor.

"It was Rose," the Doctor repeated, as he walked over the console.

"What?" both Jack and Rose said in unison.

"When she opened the heart of the Tardis and absorbed the time vortex itself," the Doctor stated.

Rose began to remember her time as the Bad Wolf. She could feel some kind of life energy after she just woken up. Was it Jack all along?

"What does that mean, exactly?" Jack countered him.

"No one's ever mean to have that power," the Doctor said softly. "If a Time Lord did that, he'd become a god. A vengeful god." He turned to face Rose, who was now standing besides him. "But you were human."

Jack had a flashback of his own. He remembered his first coming back to life at Satellite 5.

"Everything you did was so human." He squeezed her hands into his, calming her down, as he felt her tense up, understanding the meaning of all of this. Then his hands released its grip, as he turned to face Jack again.

"She brought you back to life, but she couldn't control it. She brought you back forever," the Doctor said softly. "That's something, I suppose." He trailed off. "The final act of the Time War was life," he ended softly.

Jack tried to grasp the truth. "Do you think she could change me back?" he breathed.

"I took the power out of her," the Doctor said apologetically.

"I'm sorry," Rose whispered, her face filled with guilt. Jack moved towards her at once, cupping her face. "None of that." Jack smiled at her. "I should be thankful instead. You wanted me alive. And forever. That's something nobody had done for me before," he joked, Rose half-smiled.

"But you want to die, no?" Rose asked softly. Jack looked at her sadly.

"I thought I did." Jack considered, as his palms left her face. "I don't know." He shrugged. "But this lot. You see them out here surviving, and that's fantastic." He smiled at her.

"That's...lonely life," Rose whispered faintly.
"Won't be lonely forever." The Doctor patted on Jack's shoulder.

And with the last pat, the Doctor jumped over to work on the console. "So, joining us for a trip?" he called out to Jack.

"Ah. No. Next time." He smiled at them. "I got a bit of things to do first."

"Well, we certainly have no need to worry about meeting you again," the Doctor sang, stifling his laughter.

"Right, right." Jack nodded, smiling himself.

"Where do you request to be escorted to?" The Doctor grinned at him.

"Cardiff would be sweet." Jack smiled back.

"Cardiff is it, then." The Doctor beamed, as he came to rush about the console, pressing various kinds of buttons.

"Rose," he called out for her and she immediately came over to assist him. Before long, they set the coordinates and now only had to wait a little bit to land.

"How about a cup of tea before you depart?" Rose suggested. "Could tell us your story." She smirked at Jack.

"Sure, why not." Jack beamed at her and the trio disappeared inside the TARDIS hallway.

_to be continued..._

Chapter End Notes

And that's how Jack's secret got out. What about Rose's? Well, you'll have to wait a bit longer for that.
Tooth and Claw Part One

Chapter Notes

DT on "Tooth and Claw": "I love the Doctor and Rose's relationship in that because they start to fall in love with each other again, as Rose begins to trust the new bloke, and I love the way that Russell pushes that so that they're almost enjoying themselves too much."

An even pumping sound of the TARDIS echoed inside the console room as the Doctor was walking casually around, Rose taking care of her rucksack as she had just changed into denim mini-dungarees.

"What do you think of this? Will it do?" she asked him with all seriousness. Rose considered putting on a more suitable wear for 1879, but quickly dismissed the thought. It would certainly look weird for the supposedly planned trip to Sheffield and would just be in the way of the running from the werewolf.

"In the late 1970s? You'd be better off in a bin bag," he spilled in a blithely voice. "Hold on, listen to this." As he put a CD into the Tardis player. And from the very first accord his face lip up in a huge smile.

"Ian Dury and the Blockheads. Number One in 1979." Both him and Rose were walking or half dancing in circles around the console.

"You're a punk," Rose teased him with a grin.

"It's good to be a lunatic," he sang, uttering each word.

"That's what you are. A big old punk with a bit of-" Rose gestured with her hand. "Rockabilly thrown in." The Doctor grinning, as he was watching something on the console.

"Would you like to see him?" he suggested, looking at her.

"A concert?" Rose asked him with a soft smile. She sighed inwardly. They never got to that concert in the end. Shame.

"What else is a Tardis for?" the Doctor asked like it was the obvious while continuing to rush around the console in rhythm to the music, Rose skipping around the same way.

"I can take you to the Battle of Trafalgar, the first anti-gravity Olympics." He started boasting. "Caesar crossing the Rubicon or Ian Dury at the Top Rank, Sheffield, England, Earth, 21st November, 1979. What do you think?" he asked her suggestively, already knowing the answer.

"Sheffield it is." She beamed at him, with both of them stopping in their tracks, locking their gazes across the console.

"Hold on tight." As the Doctor pressed the last lever, making the two passengers stagger from the shuddering inside. But the Doctor thought it needed more impact. And soon enough, he was beating the rhythm of the song on the console, madly at that, yelling out like a tarzan.
Rose was laughing the entire time, as she watched him. And with the last beat they were thrown on the floor, both rolling on the floor, laughing hysterically. _Oh, that was happiness._

"1979," the Doctor exclaimed as he briskly stood up. "Hell of a year." He offered Rose his hand to help her out, making her stand in a split of a second. She always wondered how did he do that. But now, she could answer it. They were just so much in synchrony. She was always drawn into his energy. And after all those years, she was now just as bad as him.

"China invades Vietnam." He skipped towards a coral to take his coat. "The Muppet Movie. Love that film." He told her fondly while walking backwards, towards the exit. "Margaret Thatcher. Urgh." He grimaced with one hand in the coat. "Skylab falls to Earth-" He turned to face the doors. "With a little help from me," he said innocently, as he turned back to Rose, who was just grinning at him. "Nearly took off my thumb," he stated nonchalantly as he opened the doors.

"And I like my thumb. I need my thumb." He was talking seriously. "I'm very attached to my thumb."

Rose stopped right in her tracks, her mouth and eyes wide as she followed him outside.

"Now, that's, that's-" The Doctor began to chuckle. "That's a good reaction." He pointed a finger at her playfully.

"I can't believe it!" she exclaimed. "We are in Sheffield. Blimey." She breathed the sight in. The huge crowd dancing and singing along with Ian Dury right on the spotlight.

"We're here." Rose giggled, covering her mouth.

"Told you." The Doctor bumped her shoulder playfully, grinning at her. "Come on." As he took her hand to draw them closer to the scene. Rose skipped along, as she was still in utter shock. _They actually made it this time round._

"Didn't they hear the TARDIS?" she asked him, leaning to his ear.

"With this genius music going around? No chance." He grinned at her, while moving in rhythm urging her too.

_Ian Dury and the Blockheads - Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll_ playing on.

They played around; dancing there for quite a while, when Rose got thirsty and offered to go get something.

"Don't bump into trouble." The Doctor bumped into her playfully.

"You're enough trouble yourself." She poked at him meaningfully, while walking backwards and with the last smile she turned around to skip to the bar.

As she ordered their drinks, she leaned with her arms on the bar, facing the crowd. This was really a bliss. They never had a chance to really go somewhere like that without some kind of alien invasion going around in the background. She grinned when she spotted the Doctor looking at her suggestively, urging her to come back.

"Stop it," she mouthed, chuckling, as she turned her head, not being able to watch him any longer. The song was ending at the same time, the lights getting dimmer and dimmer until the new song's
accords were heard faintly, lights getting back. And they were getting brighter at a relatively high speed, almost making it too bright, Rose noted. Her face was starting to lose the grin. She felt something coming.

And with that, light blinded her completely, making her to close her eyes.

She felt shivers go through her body and her slowly backing away. She heard cries of a person and something being torn apart. She would have done anything but to open her eyes right now, but she felt like her life kinda depended on it. So she did open them.

Her eyes shot up wide at the sight. She let out a strangled yell, her eyes fixed on the beast devouring the man.

"Rose?" A familiar voice was heard from inside the room. She couldn't move, she was standing still as a statue, as she felt two firm arms wrapping around her, pulling her inside the room.

"Barricade the door." Another familiar voice could be heard. Rose was breathing heavily, still being unable to move properly as she saw a group of people work on barricading the doors.

"Wait a minute. Shush, shush, wait a minute," the man whispered and then Rose knew who he was for sure. She shot a glance at him to see the Doctor cautiously listening to the lonely howl of a wolf.

Rose exhaled. A wolf. A werewolf. But how? Weren't they just at the Ian Dury concert? In Sheffield. She grimaced. What the hell was going on?

"It's stopped," the Doctor whispered, one ear on the door. With one gentle movement he lifted himself up to listen to the wolf sniffing at the door, leaving just after that.

"It's gone," the Doctor stated, looking at Rose.

She looked at him nervously. What was gone? The wolf? But more importantly, where was she gone?

They heard the footsteps of the creature echoing around the room. "Listen," Rose breathed.

"Is this the only door?" the Doctor whispered faintly, as he stepped from the chair to the ground.

"Yes," Robert exhaled. "No!" he exclaimed and the group rushed towards the next door to barricade them too.

The noises continued outside the walls, the Queen shivering with horror filled eyes.

"I don't understand," Rose breathed.

"Something inside this room is stopping it. What is it? Why can't it get in?" The Doctor looked confused, as he was pacing around the room.

Rose took a deep breath. To hell with that.

"I'll tell you what, though," Rose stated, walking towards him.

"What?" the Doctor turned around to face her urgently.

"Werewolf," Rose said meaningfully.
"I know," the Doctor sang, beaming at her, as they drew themselves into a hug. "You all right?" he asked her while still holding onto her.

"I'm okay, yeah," she breathed, shutting her eyes. "Just that, somehow my head is a bit of a blur after the Ian Dury concert."

"Yeh, I know." The Doctor grimaced. "It's a pity we didn't get to be there."

"Yeh..." Rose trailed off. Then her eyes shot up at him. "What did you say?" she asked faintly.

"Maybe next time." He smiled at her innocently. Rose eyed him suspiciously. Did she dream it? The concert?

No.

There was something else different. There was something there. 

And then it clicked her.

It was his eyes. They were not the same. As they watched her, there were no doubt in them. Rose held her breath, as she exhaled the question.

"Do you know Madcap-y?"

The Doctor looked at her with interest, when after a few blinks he stated. "That's the word for slightly bit crazy people, isn't it?" He looked at her, waiting for an answer. She just stared at him. Blinking herself.

What?

"What?" he asked her a bit confused. "It isn't?"

"N-no. It is. Yeh," Rose stammered, ducking her gaze.

"Rose, you sure you're alright?" The Doctor looked at her in concern.

No. She was sure she was not.

She swayed a bit to the side, closing her eyes shut.

"Rose?" A voice could be heard.

She felt her head spin. She clenched on her temple.

"Rose!" The voice became more frantic.

She did not answer and she felt arms shaking her. "Rose! Wake up."

And with that, her eyes shot open.

She was panting heavily, as she looked at the man holding her shoulders. His face with concern, it slowly changing into a grin. "There you go."

Rose formed a faint smile. "Yeh, sorry. Must be the wo-" she began, when her eyes spotted something brown. She grabbed onto it.
"Your coat!" she exclaimed. "When did you put it back on?" she asked him. The Doctor looking at her questioningly.

"Okay. You sit here, while I look what's going on in here." He told her as he picked himself up to walk over the console.

*The console?*

Rose took her surroundings and, indeed, she was inside the TARDIS. "Oh, I'm so loosing it," she muttered, making a nervous laugh.

"Don't worry. You're still sane. Weeell. Mostly. Not that you've ever been, really," he spilled.

"Rude," Rose said, laughing.

"Just stating the truth," he exclaimed, as he was rushing about the console.

"So what's going on?" Rose asked. She then made her way towards the console, sitting on the jump seat.

"Not sure. Something's wrong with the timelines. I can feel it!" he exclaimed, while making one step away from the console to make his point. Rose felt shivers down her spine.

*Was the cat finally out of the bag?*

"There is something something wrong," he muttered. "It's like we're messing with the fixed point in time." He furrowed his brows. "But that can't be possible. There must be something else." He was talking while working frantically on the readings of the monitor.

"Doctor?" Rose called softly.

"Mm?" he answered absentmindedly.

"How did we leave the..." Rose breathed. Maybe for once she would get it right. "The concert?" She tried cautiously.

"Oh, that's when it all started!" he exclaimed, walking around the console. "A rush of energy pulled us inside the TARDIS with a huge force and threw us back into the Time Vortex. And now!" He looked at her. "We're going to crash somewhere." He grinned at her. Rose laughing nervously.

With a big thud they landed, making Rose lean backwards in her seat and the Doctor gripping on the console. When everything became steady his face fell into a grin. "Let's check where we should have been." Offering her his hand to drag her along.

They found themselves... in a closet. And filled with clothes, it was very cramped in there.

"Always closets with you," Rose joked.

"Not my fault." He defended himself, pushing the doors open.

They found themselves in a candle lit room, with a standing mirror on one side and a double bed filling half the room.

"Hold on. That's-" Rose began, but cut herself short. *She recognised the room.*
"1879," the Doctor stated. "Same difference." He shrugged.

"So what's the plan now?" she asked, while taking in her surroundings.

"Let's go and find out." He started walking towards the doors.

A bit slow to catch up with him, Rose had to run forwards to get to him.

"This place looks quite a bit well off." She turned in turns to get a better look around. "D'you think someone important lives here?" she asked innocently.

The Doctor pressed his lips together casually. "Could be. But you might want to lower your voice. Just in case," he whispered to her.

"What for?" Rose asked lightly.

"There could be guards," he sang.

"Like that has ever stopped you." She giggled, as she tugged on his arm, the Doctor just shaking his head while smiling.

They came to a stop near a huge window at the end of the corridor. Outside it, they could see a carriage stop with the woman in a black dress stepping out of it, greeted by a man with his staff.

*Queen Victoria.* Rose's breath hitched.

"Hmm..." The Doctor peered out the window. "That lot seems to have just arrived. Hold on..." He narrowed his eyes, staring deeply at their muted conversation. "What're they saying?"

"Torchwood," she exhaled, gaining a look from the Doctor.

"I... read their lips?" She weakly pointed out towards the group gathered bellow.

The Doctor continued on with his stare for a minute longer but then gave up on the intensity of it. "Okey doke. Let's go and meet the lords and masters of the Torchwood Estate, then," he clipped cheerily. A moment later he began walking downstairs.

"Meet the neighbours," she sighed. "But hold on. Aren't we supposed to bring gifts. When going to meet new neighbours?"

"Oh, right." Realisation downing on his face. "Well, but I could always offer them a fair share of air of my lungs. Superior Respiratory bypass, that could shower half the city with gifts."

Rose chuckled. "They're not exactly made of wood," she sang.

"You'd be surprised how close scientists stretch the trees and a human life."

"What, seriously?" she asked in disbelief.

"Oh, well. We'll just tell them we've thrown our manners out of the window," he spilled in defeat. "And I have...one certain why to not get thrown out for that." He waved his psychic paper with a grin on his face. And with that, he opened the Estate doors with his both hands, grandly. Like he owned the place, really.

It made everyone outside stop talking for a moment, as they took in the two strangers, who were steadily making their way forwards.
"Your staff?" The Queen gestured.

"No, I have never seen them before," Robert breathed.

At once Victoria's guards surrounded the pair, pointing guns at them. Both the Doctor and Rose stopped in their tracks, hands held up in defence.

"You will explain your presence. And the nakedness of this girl," one commanded.

"Are we in Scotland?" the Doctor exclaimed all happy, now in Scottish accent.

"How can you be ignorant of that?" The guard pointed his gun more dangerously at them.

"Oh, I'm, I'm dazed and confused. I've been chasing this, this wee naked child over hill and over dale. Isn't that right, ya timorous beastie?" He looked at Rose.

"Och, aye! I've been oot and aboot." Rose played along.

"No, don't do that." The Doctor chided her in a lower voice, shaking his head.

"Hoots mon." Rose tried some more.

"No, really don't. Really." He looked at her seriously. Rose had to suppress a giggle.

"Will you identify yourself, sir?" the guard asked again, more demanding.

"I'm Doctor James McCrimmon, from thee-" He trailed of, thinking of a city. "Township of Balamory. I have my credentials." He waved his psychic paper and the guard just nodded.

"As you can see, a Doctorate from the University of Edinburgh." He showed the paper around, in all kind of sides, as they were surrounded. "I trained under Doctor Bell himself."

"How did you get inside?" Robert asked.

"We came through the back door," the Doctor stated like it was the obvious.

"Apologies." Rose bowed, trying to fix the rude behaviour of the Doctor.

"Make way." The Queen commanded to the men in front of her, blocking the pair inside.

"I don't think that's wise, ma'am," the guard warned Her Majesty.

"Make way," Victoria repeated, and with that, the men scattered to the sides, making way for the Queen to look at the pair.

"You will approach the Queen, and show all due deference," the guard stated. The Doctor making an "understood" gesture, as they approached her.


"Rose Tyler, Ma'am." She bowed slightly. "And my apologies for being so naked." She chuckled.

"I've had five daughters. It's nothing to me. But you, Doctor. How did you come into presence of her?" She eyed him suspiciously. "Show me these credentials." As she was extending her hand.

"She's a-" the Doctor began, already handing her the psychic paper.
"His cousin," Rose stated, smiling slightly. She only caught a moment of the Queen's expression when she heard the Doctor speak up once more.

"My cousin's wife," he said with an ease. Rose sprung her head in his direction, clearly taken by surprise. "Good ol' Frankie, trusts me like his own limb. Even if it was an arranged marriage. It was her or an Elephant Man, so." By the end of his speech Rose could only gape at him, but not before catching his subtle wink in her direction.

"Why didn't you say so immediately?" Victoria's face lip up at once. "It states clearly here that you have been appointed by the Lord Provost as my Protector. With your cousin's wife as your greatest right hand."

"Does it?" He looked at Rose, who was just coming out of her shock, then at the psychic paper. "Yes, it does. Good. Good." He nodded in understanding.

"I may have been delayed a bit. There was a tree on the train line."

"An accident?" he asked in a calm voice.

"I'm quite used to staring down the barrel of a gun," she half-joked. "Now, shall we go inside?" Victoria was eager to get inside. "And please excuse the naked girl."

"Sorry." Rose smiled in an apology.

"She got herself into a wee bit of trouble with one of the patients," the Doctor stated nonchalantly, Rose raising an eyebrow at him. "It's all she tends to do really." He shook his head lightly, smiling.

"Thinks he's funny but I'm so not amused. What do you think, Ma'am?" Rose asked softly.

"It hardly matters. Shall we proceed?" Victoria dismissed them lightly.

"What're you doing?" the Doctor asked her with half of his mouth, still facing the crowd.

"What do you think?" Rose looked at him seriously.

The Doctor looked at her for a second then he seemed to get it. "Oh. You're trying to get her to say her famous phrase," he exclaimed all happily.

"Caught on, didn't you?" She smiled at him with her tongue. "I bet you 5 quid I can make her say that."

"Well, if I gambled on that, it'd be an abuse of my privileges of traveller in time." The Doctor looked around nonchalantly.

"Ten quid?" Rose suggested.

"Done," the Doctor agreed at once, as everyone stepped inside the Estate.

"This, I take it, is the famous Endeavour." The Queen breathed the sight of a massive bronze telescope, once the group reached the observatory.

"All my father's work. Built by hand in his final years. Became something of an obsession. He spent his money on this rather than caring for the house or himself," Robert explained.

"I wish I'd met him. I like him," the Doctor said beaming. "That thing's beautiful. Can I?" he
gestured to the object in question.

"Help yourself," Robert replied softly.

"What did he... model it on?" the Doctor asked while already inspecting the telescope, Rose standing near the angle adjuster. Should she adjust it some in advance? No. She couldn't. Those bald men were standing right there. She would get into trouble like that.

"I know nothing about it. To be honest, most of us thought him a little, shall we say, eccentric. I wish now I'd spent more time with him and listened to his stories," Robert stated with regret.

"It's a bit rubbish," the Doctor stated, furrowing his brows, as he was watching inside it. Rose already grinning. "How many prisms has it got? Way too many," he continued while standing up straight and walking around it. "The magnification's gone right over the top. That's stupid kind of-" he nearly said something stupid, when just before that, he turned to Rose.

"Am I being rude again?" he whispered to her.

"Yep." She nodded, grinning.

"But it's pretty," the Doctor announced at once, facing the group. "It's very... pretty." He was nodding to make his point across or more like to get away with his rude remarks. Rose tapped his arm, smiling in understanding.

"And the imagination of it should be applauded." Victoria stepped in.

"Mm," Rose began. "Thought you might disapprove, Your Majesty. Stargazing." She uttered the word meaningfully. "Isn't that a bit fanciful?" she asked lightly, feeling the Doctor's gaze on her. "You could easily not be amused, or something?" she asked with a hope in her voice, even though she knew what Her Majesty's answer would be like. But it all goes according to her plan.

Each step is important.

"No?" she ended lightly, facing the Doctor, who was rubbing on his eye while shaking his head with a smile, as he put his lips together to stifle the laugh.

"This device surveys the infinite work of God. What could be finer?" Victoria stated solemnly. "Sir Robert's father was an example to us all. A polymath, steeped in astronomy and sciences, yet equally well versed in folklore and fairytales," she ended proudly.

"Stars and magic. I like him more and more," the Doctor said in an amused voice.

"Oh, my late husband enjoyed his company. Prince Albert himself was acquainted with many rural superstitions." Victoria stepped forward to face Rose. "Coming as he did from Saxe Coburg."

"That's Bavaria," the Doctor whispered in Rose's ear.

"When Albert was told about your local wolf, he was transported." Now the Queen was facing Robert.

"What's this wolf?" the Doctor asked, intrigued, standing just behind Rose, his hands behind his back.

"It's just a story." Robert shrugged.

"Then tell it." The Doctor urged him.
"It's said that-" he began, but was interrupted by one of the bald men. *Clearly they didn't want their plan destroyed at this point, did they?*

"Excuse me, *sir,*" he called out. Rose shot him a glare. "Perhaps her Majesty's party could repair to their rooms. It's almost dark."

Robert shifted on his feet, but then put on a smile. "Of course. Yes, of course." He walked up to face the Queen.

"And then supper." Victoria seemed too oblivious to the situation. "And could we find some clothes for Miss Tyler?" she ended while turning her head to face Rose.

"I'm tired of nakedness." Rose moved a bit uncomfortably. That woman really could make a person feel bad. Not like she was naked in any, sane-person-understanding way.

"It's not amusing, is it?" she mocked, getting a half-glare from the Queen.

"Stop it," the Doctor mouthed to Rose, her slapping on his chest playfully, grinning.

"Sir Robert, your wife must have left some clothes. See to it. We shall dine at seven, and talk some more of this wolf," Victoria announced, the Doctor looking all excited to hear the story while Rose getting ready for the fight. She moved her shoulders a bit, trying to make her tension go away.

"After all, there is a full moon tonight."

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"The room is upstairs, 3rd on the left." Robert gestured for Rose.

Rose hesitated a bit. Should she stay? Not like she would get clothed either way. She frowned.

"Go on." The Doctor urged her, pushing her slightly.

No. She couldn't. Or everyone down there would be devoured. She had to get caught. With the last resolve she formed a reassuring smile at the Doctor, as she turned towards the stairs. Towards her fate.

Once inside the room, she came to a pause. She just stood there, collecting her thoughts. She glanced towards the wardrobe where she knew Flora would be at. Wardrobe.

*Thump*

TARDIS! Wasn't it where it was parked? She started to panic. And with that, her time for a planned strategy ceased to exist.

She opened the doors of the wardrobe, revealing Flora, looking frantically at her. Rose furrowed her brows even more. Panic taking her whole. There was no TARDIS there. It was certainly the same room, but there was no TARDIS. *Or did she get it wrong again?* Wouldn't be a surprise, really. With everything that's going on around her, and her mind playing tricks from time to time. She still didn't know how she got to that wolf just after the concert. And the Doctor being from her original timeline.

Her face hardened at that.

She would have stood there for ages with her hand on the door knob, looking at the distance, if a whimper wouldn't have distracted her.
"Please, please don't hurt me," Flora whispered faintly.

Rose shot a glance at the young girl. *Hurt her?* "Why?" she asked, confused. And she didn't notice how wrong that sounded.

"I-I won't tell... anyone. Just let me go. Please." She was shaking. Rose blinked at her.

"No no." Rose shook her hands before her, making Flora sweat some more at the words. "I'm not gonna hurt you. I'm here to help. Really." Rose smiled at the girl in reassurance, offering her hand to stand up. She hesitated, but gradually took it.

As Flora told Rose the story, she tried to reassure the girl that they're going to be alright. Although, she couldn't tell her that she was going to let them get caught now and get a hell of a scare along the way.

They walked towards the door, Rose's hand on the knob, when it clicked her. She turned to the girl.

"Can you get unnoticed to the dinner room?" she asked the housemaid softly.

"Bu-but there are those men out there, posing as the staff..." the girl stammered.

Rose looked at the girl's pleading eyes. She wanted to make it more simple, and she would just have gotten along with everything as it was the previous time if it was a week ago or before that. But now. She couldn't have that anymore. Not since Cassandra managed to upgrade her Psychograft and trap her in the air. Those people could have an advanced plan all the same. For once she was feeling like she was losing charge of the situation. So she had to turn to the man, to whose hands she always put her life into.

"You managed to hid in the cupboard. Surely you could tip toe there, somehow, no?" Rose asked the girl with hopeful eyes.

"I'll try, miss." With that, Rose walked towards the candle, pricking her finger on the sharp edge of it, a bit of blood coming through it. She heard a gasp come out of the girl's mouth.

"I'm gonna need to borrow this," Rose half-joked, as she picked the girl's apron. She turned it around and wrote on the inside of it. "Show this to the man in pinstripes suit. He'll know what to do," Rose said and went out of the room.

Flora could hear some muffling sounds and of someone being dragged. She could only place her hands on her mouth to stifle the yell.

"Your companion begs an apology, Doctor." The bald man came inside the dinning room. Flora was already watching everything from the side doors. "Her clothing has somewhat delayed her," he announced.

The Doctor licked his finger of something he was just eating. "Oh, that's all right. Save her a wee bit of ham," the Doctor joked.

"Your cousin's wife is a very wild child," Victoria stated. "She almost looks like someone to eat it raw."

"Oh, that she could. Frankie is a bit of wild man himself," the Doctor teased with a wink. An unsettled feeling passed right through him at the thought of Rose and another man but he quickly shrugged it off.
He cleared his throat. "Besides, we're all waiting on Sir Robert." The Doctor dropped his napkin on the table in anticipation. "Come, sir. You promised us a tale of nightmares," he whispered meaningfully.

"Indeed. Since my husband's death, I find myself with more of a taste for supernatural fiction," Victoria said a bit sadly.

"You must miss him," the Doctor stated.

"Very much," Victoria agreed softly. "And that's the charm of a ghost story, isn't it? Not the scares and chills, that's just for children, but the hope of some contact with the great beyond... Come," She urged. "Begin your tale, Sir Robert. There's a chill in the air. The wind is howling through the leaves. Tell us of monsters."

"The story goes back three hundred years. Every full moon, the howling rings through the valley." Sir Robert began his story. "The next morning, livestock is found ripped apart and devoured." He paused. "But sometimes a child goes missing. Once in a generation, a boy will vanish from his homestead."

"Are there descriptions of the creature?" the Doctor asked.

"Oh, yes, Doctor," Robert breathed. "Drawings and woodcarvings. And it's not merely a wolf. It's more than that. This is a man who becomes an animal," he announced shakily.

The Doctor leaned in on the table. "A werewolf?" An intrigued smile crossing his face.

"The Wolf. There is something of the Wolf about you," the werewolf stated.

"I don't know what you mean." Rose tried to play innocence.

"You burn like the sun, but all I require is the moon," he spat dangerously.

Flora saw how a bald man left his rightful place and was walking towards the window, like a hypnotised being. She decided it was her chance. She tip-toed from the side doors, crawling on the floor, as she reached the table with pinstriped man sitting on the chair.

"My father didn't treat it as a story. He said it was fact," Robert continued.

Flora tugged on the Doctor's suit, making him briefly turn his face to see a housemaid under the table. He didn't say anything, as he saw the girl placing a finger on her lips, so he just casually turned his face to watch Sir Robert again.

"He even claimed to have communed with the beast, to have learned its purpose. I should have listened." Robert was talking. "His work was hindered. He made enemies. There's a monastery in the Glen of Saint Catherine. The Brethren opposed my father's investigations."

Angelo, the bald man, started chanting lupus deus est just then.

"Perhaps they thought his work ungodly," Victoria added. And it took the men's on the table attention, except the Doctor's, who glanced downwards, under the table to see the housemaid hold her apron with red words painted on it.

"That's what I thought-" Robert was still talking but the Doctor heard nothing more of that. His
heart-rate quickened, as he took in the words written. Not only the fact that it was written in blood. But the meaning of them.

"What if they turned from God and worshipped the wolf?" Robert asked them urgently, trying to make his point.

"And what if they were with us right now?" the Doctor stated darkly. The words echoing in his mind.

*Bad Wolf at cellar.*

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*to be continued...*
Tooth and Claw Part Two

The dungeon was dark, only with a few candles lighting the room, failing nonetheless. It was cold. Would make anyone shiver in there, if they could feel the cold. Because none really could. They were too scared of the creature in the cage, hidden behind the cold metal bars.

But they were in an undeniable advantage of the situation. Even if they weren't aware of it. Only one pink and yellow human knew. True enough, the bald men did not have an advanced weaponry or anything of that sort, but the strategy was certainly here. And it was what was trapping Rose away from so desired escape.

She was closer to the creature, werewolf, as they came to know it, than any other human, held captive. Why was she the one to be in such an unfair situation, must have been just her luck. Rose chuckled sadly at the thought. Even with such miserable situation ahead of her, she was still glad that she at least sent Flora away. It may have very well have been her - at the claws of death.

The room was changed. Not the interior, but the purpose of it was changed considerably. It was divined into two. A huge, strong, or at least supposedly strong, wooden fence across it, barricading the cage and the prisoners near the wall. However, the fence didn't stand alone. It had a human figure leaning up against it, as the wooden chains were restraining her freedom. It must have been purposely made wooden. To let the prisoner try the escape plan, prolonging the chase.

"You will be the first," the man in the cage hissed like an animal.

Rose tilted her head with a gulp. Yeh, she could see the trouble she got herself into now, clearly. Not only the obvious fact of her dangerously small proximity between her and the cage, but also the fact that the chains were attached to the wooden fence. While the wooden fence was nothing to the likes of the creature just ahead, it was not a battle she could win to Rose. And what made her shiver more, was that it was not even the battle to win for the Doctor.

It was wood. Wood was their downfall.

The dining room was in turmoil. Everyone was on their feet; shouting at each other, asking for answers.

"What is the meaning of this?" the Queen demanded to know.

"Explain yourself, Sir Robert!" one of Her Majesty's guards countered the man.

"What's happening?" Victoria persisted.

"I'm sorry, Your Majesty, they've got my wife." Robert was apologizing with regret.

"Where's the cellar, Robert!?" the Doctor asked fiercely.

"Why the cellar, my Lord," Flora asked the Doctor cautiously. "The message said that's where the wolf resided at. Shouldn't we go help Miss Rose instead?" she asked with undoubtful care in her voice.

"And that's where she is," the Doctor stated in a low voice. "Robert!" He practically shouted at him to take his attention.
"It's Sir Robert to you, Doctor," one of the guards corrected him.

"I don't have time for this!" he shot back at him, making the poor man shiver.

"I'll lead the way. My wife must be there too," Sir Robert said in a shaky voice, as he lead the running group out of the room. Flora was running just a bit behind them, with her skirt in her hands.

"I don't understand, Sir. It said the bad wolf was there. Why you must go to death?" Her voice was filled with worry.

"It's a double meaning." The Doctor told her, slightly moving his head to her direction to answer, while not stopping his pace. "If only the wolf was held there, it would be simply Wolf at cellar message, but it was Bad Wolf. It's a message only two of us know," he spilled in one breath and quickened his speed.

"I said pull! Stop your whining and listen to me!" Rose was shouting at the group behind the wooden fence. "All of you!" she added sharply. "And that means you, your Ladyship." She directed it at Robert's wife. "Now come on, pull!"

"Moonlight." The creature looked at the moon, smiling in contentment, as the light reached its cage.

Rose could feel her blood drain and cold sweat down her spine. This was so not looking good.

She turned her head to the group, struggling with the chain.

"Don't slack! Pull!" She urged them with all of her strength. She was not sure how much time she would buy for them with her sacrifice. And if they didn't take the chain off the wall before it started its attack on Rose, she was certain they would be too frozen in place to finish the job.

The creature was standing up, taking his gown off, as he started to yell in an inhumane way, all his bones snapping sharply. The transformation was starting.

"Pull!" she cried once more, her face twisting at the sight ahead.

The Doctor was running with all his might. From one corner to another, finally seeing his target in sight. The double wooden door just ahead of them, at the end of the hallway.

He reached the end of it in another few moments. He kicked the doors open with a force, revealing the group of prisoners escaping the chain of the wall with one last pull. He searched the group in a second, just to be proven wrong about Rose being there.

He snapped his head to the other side of the room to see the hideous beast nearly out of its imprisonment, stopping only for a second to admire the werewolf, let's note too, until he spotted Rose sitting on the ground. To his surprise, she looked at the beast with determination, rather than fear.

"Even if I die here today. I'm not going down without fighting," she snarled at the werewolf, making the Doctor's mouth quiver in a smile. May not that surprising.

Just as the creature was about to bounce his pink and yellow human, he whistled to get its attention. And that done it. Its head snapped to see the source of the whistle, sniffing the air around
"Out of the room!" the Doctor commanded the group, not breaking the eye contact with the werewolf, as he began walking a half circle on the other side of the fence. Sir Robert was frantically urging the group to leave the place.

"Doctor," Rose breathed.

"Tell you what, Rose Tyler." The Doctor smiled while saying her name.

"What?" she answered faintly.

"You are not going to die today. Not with me still standing." As he pulled out his sonic to point at the beast.

"Then I have to tell you something else," she half-joked.

"What?" He was still smiling despite the situation: the beast was now preparing itself for a jump on the other side of the fence.

"My chains are made of wood," she whispered.

That made the Doctor's head snap at her and his face twist in worry. That's all it took for the beast to make his jump. But by some kind of luck, maybe because the beast was just newly transformed, it didn't quite make a jump that graceful as it planned. It crashed the fence half open, breaking one of the chains on Rose.

The Doctor chuckled a bit nervously. "Guess 'am still lucky," he exclaimed, as he began pacing around the room in circles with the creature staggering a bit, and shaking its head of the wooden bits. It was a ring of the bullfighting.

"Get yourself out of that one!" he shouted in her direction.

"'Am trying," she cried while pulling the chain with her both hands. That clearly being an advantage now.

"Hurry!" he shot at her, making her roll her eyes, as she was fighting with the chain.

"One. Two. Pull." She was muttering, when she heard a loud bang, being reminded of the duel on the other side.

One more, two more pulls and there, she got it! She was out. She exhaled with a laugh at her achievement.

"Doctor!" she called for him, as she ran towards the doors, extending her hand to take into his. The Doctor dashed towards the doors too, while ducking the beast attack. As it was nearing them, the Doctor turned around to face it, and bleeped the sonic into his eyes. It was enough to trick it for a second, while they went through the doors, locking them with the sonic screwdriver.

"That's not gonna hold him!" Rose cried, while still running.

"It makes him disoriented," he replied, grasping her hand more tightly, as they dashed further inside the hallway.

The last thing they heard was a howl of a wolf.
Everyone in the gun room were preparing themselves for the fight. The men were arming themselves, while sending the women out.

"It could be any form of light modulated species triggered by specific wavelengths. Did it say what it wanted?" the Doctor asked Rose, as he was hitting on the chain of Rose's with a metal side of a gun. She could see his face twist in disgust that he had to use the gun, even if it was not of its main purpose.

"The Queen, the Crown, the throne - you name it," Rose said, frowning a bit. She was still a bit taken aback by the fact that she escaped her death just moments ago. The Doctor was right about one thing for sure.

_They were in luck._

There was a crash of something bursting through a wooden door, which took everyone's attention. The Doctor went out to investigate with Rose close behind, just to see the werewolf at the other end of the passageway, walking on its two feet. The Doctor looked at it in awe, before the growl out of the creature's mouth snapped him back to reality. He grabbed Rose's hand, now out of any chains, running back into the gun room.

"Fire! Fire!" one of the elderly men commanded the men. Momentary the bullets startled the target, making it leave the room.

But Rose knew how temporarily it was. And the fate of this poor stupid man. Who was too proud to see the truth in front.

"All right, you men. We should retreat upstairs. Come with me." The Doctor urged them in the mist left by all the shooting.

"I'll not retreat. The battle's done," the man replied with all-knowing voice. "There's no creature on God's Earth that could survive such an assault." As he turned to walk further inside the hallway, towards where the creature once stood.

"I'm telling you, come upstairs!" The Doctor took a few steps forward. He was yelling at the man to come to his senses, his own face desperate.

"And I'm telling you," the man shot back. "Sir, I will sleep well tonight with that thing's hide upon my wall." He tried to turn, but was stopped by Rose.

_SMACK_

The man's mouth opened slack, with his eyes wide in confusion of what had just happened. The Doctor exhaling a breath of relief, that someone decided to smack some sense into this man. Soon, the man's expression darkened, as he shot a glare at Rose.

"How dare you, woman!" he began, raising a hand to hit her back. Rose flinched. She was not expecting this reaction. Not that it was _that_ unexpected, considering the times, and this man's personality, but as she acted before giving it a thought, it startled her. She closed her eyes in anticipation of a slap, but felt none. She opened one to see the elderly man's hand hanging in the air, in another one's tight grip.

"Now. You'll not proceed further into this, and follow us upstairs without a word. Is that clear?" The Doctor's grip tightened with his eyes making shivers in the man's body.

As much as the man would have wanted to argue back, he was certain that he deserved more
authority than the Doctor, but he didn't dare to utter a word. As he came to a realisation of how true a statement of *one's eyes could kill* was.

They heard a snarl coming from the ceiling and soon enough, they saw the wolf's head poking out, grinning its teeth at them.

"Run!" the Doctor yelled out, while releasing the grip on the man's arm, nudging him to move, while taking Rose's hand into his as they started to run.

The sound of guns echoed inside the room. "Everyone!" The Doctor tried to urge the men, but they were too stunned by the sight and were not able to move away, meeting their miserable fate at the beast's dinner plate. Only the proud man's footsteps could be heard, somewhere further inside the manor. The Doctor gritted his teeth in anger of the man's stupidity. Even at coming face to face with death he could not bother to trust the group and rather act as he saw fit himself.

"Come on!" Rose urged him and they ran.

"Your Majesty? Your Majesty!" Sir Robert was calling out frantically, as the group found themselves near the staircase, the Doctor sonic'ing the doors shut.

"Sir Robert? What's happening?" Victoria came down the stairs. "I heard such terrible noises."

"Your Majesty, we've got to get out," Robert told her with all honesty. "But what of Father Angelo? Is he still here?" he asked, concerned.

"Captain Reynolds disposed of him," the Queen breathed, looking at the side uncomfortably, Rose noted. *Must have been her.*

"The front door's no good, it's been boarded shut," the Doctor announced. "Pardon me, Your Majesty. You'll have to leg it out of a window." He gestured to his side, while pressing his lips together, slightly nodding to make the point.

As soon as they entered the room, Sir Robert wasted no time. "Excuse my manners, Ma'am, but I shall go first." As he moved forward next to the window.

"A noble sentiment, my Sir Walter Raleigh," Victoria commented.

"Yeah, any chance you could hurry up?" the Doctor said, frustrated by such useless speech exchanges.

At that moment, Rose had a flashback of the bald men in orange clothing, just outside, shooting at the window. She opened her mouth, making a step forward in reflex, just as Robert flung the window open with the monks outside opening fire right at them. Everyone had to duck the attacks.

"I reckon the monkey boys want us to stay inside," the Doctor calculated, speaking in a half-whisper.

"Do they know who I am?" Victoria asked breathlessly, rubbing her collarbone to soothe herself.

"Yeah, that's why they want you," Rose breathed. "The wolf's lined you up for a-" She paused. "A biting." *Which she actually would get.* Rose considered. *Why all the fuss now, if the Empire of the wolf would still take place?*

"Stop this talk." The Queen chided her like a child. *"There can't be an actual wolf."*
Suddenly, the howling sound startled them all, making everyone sprung around. *Okay, maybe not that pointless after all. If that was gonna keep them all alive.*

The group ran into the corridor to see the door being ripped open from the other side by the beast's claws.

"What do we do?" Rose asked in reflex. *Must be the adrenalin,* she excused herself. Not like she didn't know what they were going to do.

"Weee-run," the Doctor sang lightly.

"Is that all you got to offer?" Victoria asked in concern.

"Your Majesty got any silver bullets on herself?" he asked her in sarcasm.

"That I do not," she answered with her head high.

"There we are then, we run," the Doctor exclaimed. "Your Majesty, as a Doctor, I recommend a vigourous jog." He showed an example, running in place. "Good for the health. Come on!"

They were running up the dark staircase, barely seeing where to step, only the cursed moonlight emitting a slight path for them. They could hear the snap of the doors being opened and the growls getting nearer and nearer. They were running desperately for their lives, Rose already forgetting that she lived it all once before and she knew the path ahead. Because with running, there was no logic. You just run. Run for your life. And that's what they were doing at the moment.

"Fast! Come on!" The Doctor urged them frantically, pushing them further into the hallway, Queen ahead of everyone, panting heavily with her eyes popped out. The Doctor the last, and as he saw the beast leap on the railing of the stairs, snarling at them, he quickened his pace to catch up with others.

Everyone were running with their last breaths and the Doctor was now side by side with Rose. The hot breathing of the creature just inches away from the pair. And as the last time, Rose failed to notice a damaged wooden board on the floor, making her trip, the Doctor leaning to her side.

*BANG*

The Queen's guard saved them both with a shot at the target, making it back away a few meters. Everyone was breathing heavily from all the running. Rose tried to pull herself together. *Everything's going to be alright.* She tried to soothe herself. They survived this, just like everything else. No need for her adrenalin to take over.

"I'll take this position and hold it. You keep moving for God's sake!" The guard choked the words out. "Your Majesty, I went to look for the property and it was taken. The chest was empty." He looked at the woman in question with alarm.

"I have it. It's safe," Victoria exhaled.


"Bullets can't stop it!" the Doctor exclaimed frantically. For God's sake, couldn't anyone listen for once?
"They'll buy you time. Now run!" The guard didn't budge, as he pointed his gun towards the hallway.

The group ran inside towards the room, with Rose stopping in her tracks. This was it. The scene she had lived three times now. It was wrong. She felt her fear change into desperate need to protect the man. She could not watch this scene over and over again, while being given so many chances to change it. The guard started to shoot at it and with just a few leaps it would have reached its goal.

And then, in a spur of a moment, Rose launched herself right before the beast. It made its final leap, but then threw itself on the wall, making a backwards jump. The man stopped shooting, too stunned, and the creature gritted its teeth at the human behind the man.

The wolf wanted to rip her guts apart, but something was preventing it. That bright golden light emitting from the girl's eyes were making it weak at his feet. There was so much life in them. The wolf wanted death of her, but she was broadcasting life, that she would not be dying here, at this moment. It moved uncomfortably, pacing about, he couldn't understand, what exactly was she or what was happening to itself.

"Rose!" The Doctor's frantic voice reached her ears. She could also hear footsteps nearing. She flung her head to the side, her eyes now back to normal. She was a bit shaken, not sure how it started and much less how it ended, as she felt her hand into the Doctor's.

"Come with us." Was Rose's last words, when the man in question and the Doctor together with Rose joined the group inside the room.

"Barricade the door," Robert instructed and everyone helped him do so.

"Wait a minute. Shush, shush, wait a minute." The Doctor shushed everyone, as a lonely howl reached their ears.

"It's stopped," the Doctor whispered, looking at Rose.

"Just like with you." He wrinkled his forehead, feeling that unsettled question about Rose making its way to the surface. Rose looked at him with pained expression. She hated to see him look at her like that.

They heard the wolf step away from the door. "It's gone," the Doctor uttered, glancing towards the door.

"Listen." The guard spoke.

The footsteps and growls from outside the walls were heard as it walked around the room.

"Is this the only door?" the Doctor asked barely audible.

"Yes," Robert breathed and then he paused for more than Rose felt necessary.

"No!" she yelled, making her way towards the other door. Everyone dashing to block it too.

The noises continued outside the walls.

"I don't understand. What's stopping it? Why didn't it attack me?" The guard spoke frantically.

"Something inside this room. What is it? Why can't it get in?" The Doctor paced about the room,
asking nobody in particular, but clearly seeking for an answer. At the same time ignoring the last question of the guard on purpose.

Rose made a step forward to the Doctor, but as she felt him stiffen, and purposely keeping his back on her, she retreated. Feeling a stab in her heart. She messed up. She was naive to think that maybe the Doctor ceased to doubt her. It was always there. Never leaving his eyes. The doubt. The doubt directed at her.

It was killing her.

"I'm sorry, Ma'am. It's all my fault. I should have sent you away," Robert started with regret filling his insides. "I tried to suggest something was wrong. I thought you might notice. Did you think there was nothing strange about my household staff?" he asked lightly.

"Well, they were bald, athletic." The Doctor shrugged nonchalantly, avoiding to look at Rose directly.

Avoiding her.

She looked sideways, stifling the tears, which were starting to make its way.

"Your wife's away, I just thought you were happy," the Doctor ended blithely. Then he got a glimpse of Rose's unsteadiness. He sighed, rubbing on the back of his neck, as he walked over her.

"Rose." He approached her softly. Rose shot up her glance at him, startled. She saw his face twist, as he saw her pained expression.

"I don't know," Rose whispered. The Doctor looked a bit confused at her words. "I don't know why it stopped," Rose repeated with all honesty, which she meant, since she truly didn't know the origin of anything of this happening.

The Doctor sighed audibly, as his shoulders seemed to relax a bit, Rose noted. He held his hand up to cup her one cheek as he uttered faintly.

"I'm sorry."

Rose exhaled a breath she didn't know she was even holding and soon found herself in the warm embrace of the Doctor, soothing her. "I'm sorry." Whispering in her ear. She shook her head in his shoulders. She was the one sorry. For not telling him anything. For making him feel this way.

"What, exactly, I pray tell me, someone, please." The Queen's voice startled them, making them break apart. "What exactly is that creature?" she stammered, her breath heavy as she uttered the words.

"You'd call it a werewolf." The Doctor nodded, starting his smart talk, while rubbing with his hand on the back of his neck. "But technically it's a more of a lupine wavelength haemovariform," he ended in a quick pace, his gaze falling upon the room.

The Queen opened her mouth, but then was interrupted by the Doctor's exclamation. "Mistletoe!" As he rushed towards the cravings on the door, Rose following him. "Sir Robert, did you father put that there?" he asked with curiosity.

"I don't know. I suppose." Robert shrugged, sitting on the chair on the other side of the room.

"On the other door, too," the Doctor wondered.
"I'll tell you what, though." The guard took his attention.

"What?" The Doctor turned to face him.

"Mistletoe," he noted.

"Yes, I just said that," the Doctor agreed, a bit lost. The guard pointed upwards with his head. The Doctor lifted his gaze to see at the pointed thing.

"Oh," the Doctor exhaled.

Rose faced upwards too, just to see the ball of mistletoe hanging on the door. Rose blinked a few times, not yet catching on. When she lowered her head to face the Doctor, she could barely note what was happening. She felt a brush of another pair of soft lips on her own, followed by a pair of hands cupping her face.

She blinked a few times. Not daring to close her eyes. And just like how it miraculously started, she felt the sensation drift apart in a split of a second. The Doctor turning his attention back on the doors, leaving Rose stand there completely speechless, with her mouth half open.

"No, a carving wouldn't be enough," he wondered in all seriousness, like nothing really had happened just a second ago. "I wonder." And with that, he lifted himself up on the chair to lick the woodwork.

"Viscum album, the oil of the mistletoe. It's been worked into the wood like a varnish," he spilled it in one breath. "How clever was your dad?" he exclaimed all happily, jumping off the chair. "I love him!" he announced, making Rose jump out of her trance, and make a nervous smile. "Powerful stuff, mistletoe. Bursting with lectins and viscotoxins." The Doctor moved towards Rose to tell her that.

"A-and the wolf's allergic to it?" Rose stammered, forcing a calm face.

"Well, it thinks it is." The Doctor seemed to not notice it in the least. "The monkey monk monks need a way of controlling the wolf, maybe they trained it to react against certain things," he said in one breath.

"And should I trust you, sir? You who change your voice so easily? What happened to your accent?" the Queen stated a question.

"Oh right, sorry, that's-" The Doctor seemed to notice only now.

"And your actions just beside the door?" She shook her body slightly, her eyes wide. Rose tensed at the words. feeling her face flush a bit.

"That's a tradition!" the Doctor cried in defence.

Tradition. Of course.

"With a married woman!" the Queen shot at him, eyes wide from barely suppressed anger. "What would your cousin say to this? Or is his existence yet another falsehood?"

"Well, that's another-" he began, tugging on his ear.

"I'll not have it. No, sir. Not you, not that thing, none of it. This is not my world," she ended in a voice of authority, her head held high.
Nevertheless, we've got to stop that creature Ma'am," Robert countered her. "It won't give up, Doctor, and we still don't possess an actual weapon."

"Oh, your father got all the brains, didn't he?" the Doctor muttered in sarcasm, shaking his head.

"Being rude again." Rose informed him with a smile.

*Forget the mistletoe.*

"Good. I meant that one," he told her as he went forward to the bookcase. "You want weapons? We're in a library," he announced with an ease in his voice. "Books!" He held his hands up in the air to make his point. "Best weapons in the world." He sprung around to face them, putting his glasses on. "This room's the greatest arsenal we could have," he half-whispered, as he took some books, throwing them to Rose.

"Arm yourself."

"What are we searching for again?" the guard asked, flipping pages of the book.

"Something on wolves in here," Rose answered absentmindedly, while making herself look busy, reading a random book.

She knew which book was the right one. But she done just about enough for the day. She better stay low.

"Uh!" The Doctor looked intrigued by what he had just read, as he leapt off the chair, placing the book on the table. "Look what your old dad found. Something fell to Earth."

"A spaceship?" Rose spoke in reflex. Blimey, she was so accustomed to this now, that everything coming to Earth seemed to be spaceship now.

"A shooting star," Robert read the description about it.

"But that's over three hundred years ago. What's it been waiting for?" Rose asked, making a hint.

"Maybe just a single cell survived," the Doctor half-whispered. "Adapting slowly down the generations, it survived through the humans, host after host after host." He spoke, looking at her.

"But why does it want the throne?" the guard asked.

"Imagine it. The Victorian Age accelerated." The Doctor was creating one of those serious and important atmospheres. "Starships and missiles fuelled by coal and driven by steam, leaving history devastated in its wake," he ended in a meaningful whisper.

"Sir Robert. If I am to die here-" Victoria stood up to face Robert.

"Don't say that, Your Majesty," he pleaded her.

"I would destroy myself rather than let that creature infect me. But that's no matter. I ask only that you find some place of safekeeping for something far older and more precious than myself." She placed her hand in her purse.

"Hardly the time to worry about your valuables," the Doctor remarked.

"Thank you for your opinion," Victoria said, a bit offended. "But there is nothing more valuable
A finest white 105.6 carat diamond shined in her palm, making the Doctor's mouth slack open in awe. Rose smiled at the sight. She was sure, no matter how many times she would see it, the affect it took on people, would never fade.

"Is that the Koh-I-Noor?" the guard breathed, just as mesmerised.

"Oh, yes," the Doctor exhaled, moving towards it. "The greatest diamond in the world." He smiled at the object in the Queen's hand.

"Given to me as the spoils of war. Perhaps its legend is now coming true. It is said that whoever owns it must surely die," Victoria told them.

"Well, that's true of anything if you own it long enough," the Doctor muttered, before extending his hand towards it. "Can I?"

The Queen hesitated for a moment, before she handed it to him. The Doctor examined the diamond with great care.

"That is so beautiful," he uttered softly.

"It is." Rose breathed the sight just the same as him.

"Where is the wolf?" Robert started pacing worriedly around the room. "I don't trust this silence."

"Why do you travel with it?" The Doctor ignored Robert, his attention full at the Queen.

"My annual pilgrimage. I'm taking it to the Royal Jewellers at Hazelhead. The stone needs recutting," she announced.

"It looks perfect enough," Rose stated.

"My late husband never thought so," Victoria said.

"Now, there's a fact." The Doctor took his glasses off. "Prince Albert kept on having the Koh-I-Noor cut down. It used to be forty percent bigger than this. But he was never happy. Kept on cutting and cutting."

"He always said the shine was not quite right." Victoria spoke with nostalgia. "But he died with it still unfinished."

The Doctor looked at her for a moment. Then it clicked him. "Unfinished," he exhaled, making Rose grin. He looked from her to the stone as he collected his thoughts. "Oh, yes," he whispered, throwing the stone back to Victoria.

That might have been a little careless.

"There's a lot of unfinished business in this house," the Doctor spilled in a quick speed, walking backwards, his manic eyes making their way to the surface. "His father's research," he said to nobody in particular, then leaning towards the Queen. "And your husband, Ma'am, he came here and he sought the perfect diamond." He was pointing a finger at her, before turning to walk inside the room frantically. "Hold on, hold on." He had his face in his hands. "All these separate things." He began to tug on his hair madly. "They're not separate at all, they're connected!" he exclaimed, spinning around in a circle, in a speed of his thoughts. "Oh, my head, my head." He was having a
mad expression on his face, just like he was after the regeneration.

What did he say about not being able to control himself because of the wrong turn in regeneration? That certainly was not the case now. Rose chuckled slightly, but thankfully was left unnoticed, everyone watching the mad man with caution.

"What if this house-" He took a huge step forward to the Queen, making her stiffen. "It's a trap for you. Is that right, Ma'am?" He was adding the speed to the conversation.

"Obviously."

"At least, that's what the wolf intended," he spilled. "But, what if there's a trap inside the trap?" He looked at her with wide eyes.

"Explain yourself, Doctor," the Queen answered, not daring to move.

"What if his father-" He was wandering with his eyes from one person in the room to another. "And your husband weren't just telling each other stories." He made a gesture of dismissal. "They dared to imagine all this was true," he ended with his mouth still slightly parted and eyes wide. "And they planned against it, laying the real trap not for you-" He shook his head slightly. "But for the wolf."

The plaster dust falling from the ceiling adding impact on his last sentence. They looked up to the domes skylight to hear the growling sound.

"That wolf there," the Doctor breathed, looking at it.

With the glass in the skylight cracking, it made him snap out of it.

"Out! Out! Out!" The Doctor began running and yelling manically. Everyone were working on unbarricading the doors, resuming their running, moments later.

And there they were again, dashing through the corridor. It was catching up to them at high speed, almost grasping them, when a hot pot of boiled water with mistletoe was poured at its face.

"Good shot." The Doctor praised the woman.

"Isobel!" Robert drew his wife in a kiss. Rose ducked her gaze, as it made her remember some things.

Robert urged his wife to go back downstairs with the girls and they were back at where they left on.

"Come on." The Doctor urged everyone, dashing further inside the hallway, Robert showing the way to the observatory.

They carried on their running up the staircase, just like before, as the werewolf was slowly recovering, making a run to catch up with its prey.

"No mistletoe in these doors," the Doctor began, once the group made it to the observatory. "Because your father wanted the wolf to get inside. I just need time. Is there any way of barricading this?" the Doctor asked in an urgent voice.

"Just do your work and I'll defend it," Robert stated.
"No. I'll do the work." The guard stepped in.

"I've betrayed the throne. Let me at least die in honour." Robert looked at the man's eyes, pleading.

"You've still got a family ahead of you. I've got none." The guard formed a sad smile. "Repay your debt with your loyalty. Now, go!" As he stood there to block the doors.

"Good man," the Doctor said, before turning to the Queen. Rose looked taken aback by it. It was just not fair. How many times could a man get killed?

"Your Majesty, the diamond." The Doctor extended his hand.

"For what purpose?" Victoria exhaled.

"The purpose it was designed for," the Doctor said urgently.

With one last reassuring look to Rose, the guard closed the doors shut under her nose, locking them as he took a sword from a display on the wall and stood ready with the werewolf coming up the stairs.

As soon as Victoria handed over the diamond, the Doctor rushed to the control wheel of the telescope.

"Rose," he called out for her and she didn't waste time to join him.

"Lift it. Come on." He began working on the wheel. It was hard to do so, just as the last time.

"Is this necessary?" Robert asked impatiently.

"Yes it is," the Doctor said under his breath.

"Then I'll join you," Robert said firmly, as he joined on Rose's side.

The Doctor beamed at him. Must have forgotten he existed, Rose thought. As he didn't ask him to help them out.

Rose closed her eyes, when she heard the screams of a man being ripped apart. Victoria was already holding up her jet cross and started praying. The Doctor and Robert were lifting the adjuster with desperation.

"You said the telescope is of no use, Doctor," Robert breathed.

"It doesn't work as a telescope because that's not what it is. It's a light chamber. It magnifies the light rays like a weapon. We've just got to power it up." The Doctor told him, as he was still lifting the wheel.

"Power up how exactly?" Robert persisted, feeling lost of whether he was not mad, lifting up the telescope with the wolf right outside the doors.

"Moonlight," Rose said under her breath. The Doctor grinned at her, as she formed a smile on her own lips.

"Come on!" The Doctor urged them.

They watched the moon starting to shine down into the telescope lens and bouncing between the prisms, magnifying as it went. At the same time the werewolf broke in, making the trio turn
around, watching it going for Queen Victoria.

"Your Majesty!" Robert tried to reach her, but he didn't have to, as the Doctor slid the diamond over to where the light hit the floor. It refracted upwards, catching the werewolf in its beam and lifting it up off the floor. The wolf turned back into a young man, hanging as if crucified in mid air, taking everyone's breath away. Queen Victoria watching it in awe.

"Make it brighter. Let me go," the man pleaded.

The Doctor blinked a few times to compose himself, as he went to adjust the magnification on the eyepiece. The man turned back into a wolf shape, howling and vanishing in thin air.

Everyone exhaled the breath. Only Victoria was looking at a small scratch on her wrist.

"Your Majesty?" The Doctor slowly approached her, looking back at Rose just before asking. "Did it bite you?"

Robert stormed his way to the Queen, now feeling nervous. "Your Majesty-

"No, it's, it's a cut, that's all." She dismissed them, looking somehow intrigued by the cut.

Where had the rather die than let herself be infected gone to?

"If that thing bit you?" The Doctor cautiously made his way to Victoria.

"It was a splinter of wood when the door came apart. It's nothing." She held her gaze on the cut.

The Doctor was not buying it. "Let me see?" He tried for her hand, but was slapped back.

"It is nothing." She backed away a bit. "Escort me back, Sir Robert."

"Right away, Ma'am."

It was already early in the morning, when the distress ceased in the manor and everyone were informed to be present at the drawing room at 6 am. Her and the Time Lord decided for a cup of tea just before the meeting. They had a small chat along with it, and Rose felt herself easy up as the Doctor stopped shooting her doubtful glances. Laughing and some happy yells could be heard outside the room.

At least for the moment.

They didn't see a suspicious glare coming from the Queen herself as she passed the room. But nobody had too much of a chance to dwell on it, as the appointed time reached its existence.

In the presence of the whole household, the Doctor and Rose knelt before Queen Victoria, who was armed with a sword. The pair sharing a glance, smiling.

"By the power invested in me by the Church and the State, I dub thee Sir Doctor of Tardis," She put the sword on the Doctor's right shoulder, then left. "By the power invested in me by the Church and the State, I dub thee Dame Rose of the Powell Estate." She did same for Rose. The Doctor looked at her being knighted in amusement.

"You may stand."

"Many thanks, Ma'am." The Doctor thanked her with all honesty.
"Thank you." Rose bowed slightly. Her smile was a bit forced, though. She knew what was coming next.

"Your Majesty, you said last night about receiving no message from the great beyond. I think your husband cut that diamond to save your life." The Doctor spoke fondly. "He's protecting you even now, Ma'am, from beyond the grave," he ended softly.

"Indeed." The Queen trailed off. "Then you may think on this also." She paused a bit. Rose could barely hold a snort. "That I am not amused." She shot a glare at Rose.

The Doctor mouthed an "Oh", grimacing at his loss. Rose just grinned happily.

_Well, she may have cheated a little bit, but oh well. No real harm done._

"Not remotely amused," Victoria exclaimed in an attempt to take their attention back. Rose pressed her lips together.

"And henceforth, I banish you," Victoria stated.

"I'm sorry?" The Doctor was taken aback.

"I rewarded you, Sir Doctor, and now you are exiled from this empire, never to return." The Doctor looked at her with dumbfounded expression. Rose taking it in calmly.

"I don't know what you are, the two of you," Victoria continued in a whisper, stepping closer to them. "Or where you're from, but I know that you consort with stars and magic and think it fun. And your relationship with your cousin's wife brings shame in my kingdom." The Doctor tried to open his mouth to correct her but she cut him off with a sharp look. "Whether or not he may be of this world."

"Your world is steeped in terror and blasphemy and death." She was staring into the Doctor's eyes, his face solemn now. "And I will not allow it," she said in a threatening voice. "You will leave this shores and you will reflect, I hope, on how you came to stray so far from all that is good, and how much longer you will survive this terrible life." Rose gulped at that.

This woman really knew how to make the person uncomfortable. It made Rose itch to launch herself at her to demand her to take back her words. They will survive. With this Estate being their greatest challenge. Rose glared at the woman, declaring a mental war at her. Victoria moved a bit, frowning even, but she quickly composed herself.

"Now leave my world, and never return." She stepped back, her giving the both of them a dangerous look.

There was a pause of some sort, when Rose leaned in to whisper to the Doctor's ear. "What 'bout the TARDIS?" The Doctor grinned at her, making her puzzled.

"Very well, Ma'am." The Doctor made a graceful bow. "We shall leave your presence at once." And before the guards could make their way to escort the pair, the Doctor took Rose's hand into his and uttered only one word.

"Run."

Once back inside the TARDIS, panting heavily from their running upstairs to where the TARDIS was _held at_ and while still trying to avoid the guns shooting at them, Rose dropped herself into the
jump seat.

"That's just not fair," Rose exhaled. "All that running, and we still had to run for our lives to reach the TARDIS." They both chuckled at that.

"I know!" he sang. "But had to get inside the wardrobe at some cost. And I still think we got banished 'cos of your "cousin" thing." He shot her a look.

"Well, nobody told you to make me your cousin's wife," Rose mumbled under her breath.

"You started it!" The Doctor pointed playfully at her.

"Only because you were going to make me some sort of cheap runaway feral child you bought for a few pence in London!" she cried in defense.

His eyes widened in recognition. "How d'you know that?"

Rose just rolled her eyes. "Wouldn't be the first now, would it?"

The Doctor sniffed, choosing to ignore the obvious.

Rose sighed. "Having a husband that devoted to stars you'd think she tolerated it more than this... but guess it was just a bit too much for her."

"Naah," he insisted. "She must have thought our actions were too inappropriate for her to watch."

The Doctor saw how a sly grin started to appear on her face. "Are you saying we're having an inappropriate relationship?" Rose teased him, the Doctor looking at her in utter disbelief.

"Wha-. No! No, that's-" he faltered, but Rose saved him with a laugh.

"I still can't believe the TARDIS was there all the time. And how did it even fit?" Rose shook her head in disbelief while smiling. The Doctor took a breath, as he collected his thoughts.

"That was the perception filter, and TARDIS used the Time Lord's technology, making the cupboard bigger on the inside," the Doctor exclaimed all happily. "And I'll tell you what." He looked at her meaningfully, grinning.

"What?" she breathed.

"Queen Victoria the werewolf!" he sang.

"You truly believe that she is?" she teased him.

"Could be," the Doctor said lightly.

"The Royal Family of the werewolves." Rose chuckled.

"Could be." The Doctor grinned at her. "No, but really, the funny thing is, Queen Victoria did actually suffer a mutation of the blood. It's historical record. They used to call it the Royal Disease." He started his story while pressing buttons on the console. "Aaand her children had the Royal Disease. Maybe she gave them a quick nip." They both chuckled at that.

"Although." He came to consider. "A single wolf cell could take a hundred years to mature." He backed away from the console, thinking deeply. "Might be ready by..." He trailed off. "Oh," he exclaimed. "Early 21st century?" he sang, looking at her.
"Nah, that's just ridiculous!" She laughed. "Mind you, Princess Anne," she said in all seriousness.

"I'll say no more," the Doctor joked, getting back on the console.

"And if you think about it, they're very private." Rose chuckled, slapping slightly on the Doctor's back, making him turn around. "They plan everything in advance. They could schedule themselves around the moon. We'd never know!" she sang, making him giggle. "And they like hunting! They love blood sports." Now the Doctor was laughing out loud, his head pulled back as he turned to face the console again.

"Oh my God, they're werewolves!" she exclaimed, jumping of the jump seat to swirl in a circle.

Laughter could be heard outside the TARDIS doors, followed by eager wolf howls. *This was theirs every day life.*

*to be continued...*
School Reunion Part One

It was lunchtime, and the dinner ladies were spooning food onto people's plates. The Doctor was moving along the line with his tray. Rose, who was undercover as a dinner lady, spooned smashed potato onto his plate and gave him a filthy look simultaneously.

_Bloody dinner lady again._

She could have been just about anyone. But no. Again with _if you want to know what's going on, work in the kitchens._ Well, he could have worked there himself then.

He just smirked at her, as he watched her.

_You gonna hear no end about it._ Rose thought, still giving him a hateful look, as he headed towards the tables shortly after, just to turn around and smirk at her some more.

Rose bit her lip in frustration.

"Enjoying, huh?" she muttered under her breath.

At his table, some time later, the Doctor had a chip speared on his fork, nibbling it, and staring at it distastefully. Rose came over with a dishcloth to wipe his table down.

"Two days," Rose shot at him in a blaming voice. Not that she was that concerned about dates. Mind you, she knew about them better than anyone here, but she was too frustrated to be sent as a dinner lady. _Again!_

"Sorry, could you just-" He completely ignored her tone and was pointing with his fork. "There's a bit of gravy." He jumped a bit inwardly, when Rose slammed the cloth at the place he was pointing at.

"No, no." He tried again. "Just there." Rose gave him a look, to which he responded with an innocent smile.

"Two days, we've been here," Rose muttered under her teeth, while slamming the cloth again. The Doctor wondered whether a cloth could kill someone. He pondered about it for some time. If it was longer then-

"Excuse me." Rose's voice, shook him of his thoughts.

"Ah, yeh. Blame your boyfriend-" he began nonchalantly.

"He's not my boyfriend for a long time," Rose added.

"Right. Then ex-boyfriend. He's the one who put us onto this," he ended lightly. "And he was right," he said in a voice, asking for attention and Rose had to put her cloth away to listen. "Boy in class this morning got a knowledge way beyond planet Earth," he ended meaningfully, looking at Rose, who seemed to consider his story, but apparently wasn't.

"You eating those chips?" She pointed at them.

"Yeah, they're a bit..." He grimaced. "Different."

_Tell me about it. Poison._
"Don't eat them." She furrowed her brows and was about to go away with his chips.

"But I paid for them!" he cried.

"Not you. Your sonic did," she sang in a whisper.

"My sonic is like me. Like my soul. Whenever I go, it goes with me. So if it paid. So did I," he ended, looking all nostalgic at the memory of his sonic screwdriver, as he couldn't pull it out in the cafeteria.

"Right." Rose nodded.

Should I let him be alone with his Sonic Screwdriver from now on too?

Nah, I guess it was always like that to begin with. Good ol' screwdriver. She rolled her eyes and was about to walk away with the chips, when a dinner lady approached them.

"You are not permitted to leave your station during a sitting," she announced with an unpleasant face.

"I was just talking to this teacher." Rose pointed at him with one hand, another still holding the chips.

"Hello!" The Doctor greeted the dinner lady, beaming.

"He doesn't like the chips. So, I'm getting rid of them-" Rose added with a fake smile.

The Doctor opened his mouth to protest, but Rose interrupted. "For him." She glanced at him, narrowing her eyes, making his mouth shut.

"The menu has been specifically designed by the headmaster to improve concentration and performance," the dinner lady announced, like reading from the newspaper. "Now, get back to work," she hissed.

Calm down you Krilitane. Blimey, when did she start working in the kitchen with hostile aliens? She glanced at the Doctor who was smiling all happily. Good for you, don't even know where I'm going.

With the dinner lady gone, Rose began to walk from the table.

"See?" Rose gestured to herself. "This is me. The dinner lady," she ended with a fake, forced smile.

"I'll have the crumble then!" he called out for her.

"I'm so gonna kill you," she muttered, but the Doctor seemed to hear her, as he left his gaze wander after her, grinning all happily.

Rose was in the kitchens, drying a tray when she spotted a few dinner ladies very very carefully wheeling in a barrel of oil. They had masks, goggles and gloves on.

"Careful... keep it steady... don't spill a drop," one of them said.

Rose frowned. Should she go help them? No. She didn't even have the equipment. Warn them? No, yet again. It might as well make them spill everything from the shock. And well, it was the way every one of them died anyway. So why be concerned now?

"I said keep it steady. Careful... that's it... easy now... steady..." The dinner lady was chanting like a mantra.
As Rose's phone rang, she pulled it out to see Mickey calling.

"What you got?" she whispered, not to get anyone's attention.

"Confirmation. I just got into army records. Three months ago, massive UFO activity. They logged over forty sightings. I can't get any photos, 'cause then it gets all classified and secret. Some Torchwood keeps locking me out," Mickey complained.

"Torchwood?" Rose squalled.

The dinner ladies turned their head to look at her questioningly. Not exactly hearing the word, but the sound coming from her mouth.

"Achoo." Rose faked it, rubbing her nose, as she hid her phone in one of her pockets.

"Rose?" Mickey's voice could be heard from the other line, but not audible enough for others.

"You. New one. Don't cause bacteria to pass on the food." One of them chided Rose.

"Sorry." Rose gave a small smile with a salute. They turned back to their barrel.

"Rose? You there?" Mickey was speaking on the phone, as Rose put it back to her ear.

"Yeh, yeh. I'm here. I was just about to tell you that it was three months ago, when all the kitchen staff were replaced." She spoke in a low voice, not showing her inner turmoil. It was Torchwood again. Always Torchwood.

She watched the group wheel another barrel of oil into the kitchen.

"And this lot are weird. Very weird." Rose spoke, trying to hint something was wrong out here.

"See, there's definitely something going on. I was right to call you home," Mickey pouted.

"Yeh, it seems you've become a big help to us." Rose spoke fondly.

"O-of course!" Mickey shuttered, shouting into a phone, maybe a bit too enthusiastically. Not often was he praised. And he could be so much more. Rose had to take note of that.

"Watch it!" someone from the group yelled, taking Rose's attention. Just then she saw the barrel of oil toppling over and spilling onto one of the dinner ladies, her screaming in agony and starting to smoke.

"I've gotta go," Rose whispered into her phone, as she hang up, watching the scene cautiously.

"Get her up, get her up!" The dinner lady was hoisted to her feet and into an office, still wailing with pain.

Rose tried to see through the partition, but the blinds were swiftly drawn once again, not letting to see through.

Rose just stood there for a while, waiting for the unpleasant dinner lady to show up. She didn't have to wait long, as the one she wanted opened the door to reveal herself.

"What're you doing?" she asked, pulling her mask off.

"Nothing." Rose shrugged, biting her lip. "Is she..." She took a breath. "Is she gonna be all right?"
she asked the dinner lady.

She seemed a bit confused by the girl's reaction. "Yes," she just answered, before the sound of something bursting into flames, followed by the sound of something smashing and screaming and a billow of smoke from the office came through the doors.

"It's fine. She does that," the dinner lady just said, not flinching.

Rose gave a weak smile. As much as ridiculous those words there, they managed to soothe her. Just for a bit. She had to keep reminding herself that those were not real people. Just Krillitanes.

"Excuse me, colleagues...A moment of your time." Mr. Finch's voice caught the Doctor's ears, as he was sitting in the staff room.

When he turned, he saw someone he thought to never be able to see again.

"May I introduce Miss Sarah Jane Smith," Finch continued in his sweet voice, while the Doctor just stared. Eyes wide, mouth slightly open, stunned to the ground. "Miss Smith is a journalist, who's writing a profile about me for the Sunday Times." The woman in question smiled gently, while looking around at them all.

The Doctor was gradually coming to his senses of what he was seeing, with the corners of his mouth beginning to turn upwards in a smile.

"I thought it might be useful-" Finch was still talking something, but the Doctor heard him no more. When he finally left, Sarah Jane caught the Doctor's eye, watching her, and she slowly approached him.

"Hello!" she said in a gentle voice, beaming even, such a warm smile.

"Oh, I should think so." The Doctor smiled at her with a tender and happy smile. She was really here.

"And, you are... ?" she asked him.

It took a moment for the Doctor to get himself off the mesmerising sight. He couldn't take his eyes off her.

"Hm? Uh, Smith." His lips quivered a bit at the word. He didn't have enough time to think whether he wanted to tell her who he was, hint it to her or keep it a secret altogether. "John Smith."

"John Smith?" Sarah beamed at the name. He knew who she was remembering. "I used to have a friend who sometimes went by that name." She shrugged slightly, wandering a bit in her memories.

"Well, it's a very common name." The Doctor shrugged, feeling a bit nervous himself.

"He was a very uncommon man," she said the words all too fondly, reminiscing. But shortly after, she lifted her head, holding out her hand.

"Nice to meet you."

"Nice to meet you!" He shook it with enthusiasm. "Yes! Very nice! More than nice!" He shook his head in disbelief of his bliss. "Brilliant." Beaming at her.

"Um... so, um," Sarah Jane looked around, not sure how to prolong the conversation as the man
himself seemed to be eager to continue it. Even if not exactly making sense. "Have you worked here long?"

"No! Um." He looked around blithely. "It's only my second day," he said honestly.

"Oh, you're new, then?" she breathed. "So, what do you think of the school?" She looked around, the Doctor's eyes not leaving her moving figure by a millisecond. "I mean, this new curriculum?" she asked him in an innocent hint, as she approached him.

"So many children getting ill." She began talking and Doctor just kept smiling at her. "Doesn't that strike you as odd?" she whispered.

"You don't sound like someone just doing a profile." He grinned at her.

"Well, no harm in a little investigation while I'm here," she ended nonchalantly.

"No. Good for you." He assured her with a smile, keeping his eyes on her, as she walked away to meet some of the other teachers.

"Good for you. Oh, good for you, Sarah Jane Smith." He looked at her with pride filled eyes.

Oh, how proud he was of her. She was still doing what she did best. He thought he lost them all once. That he would never see anyone of his past again, but now when he saw her, he was just once more reminded of how many brilliant people he had actually met. And he didn't even affect her life in a wrong way. She was just like how he remembered her.

He stood there in the hallway, students rushing about, and him just smiling to himself in awe.

With dark already consuming the school, the trio - the Doctor, Mickey and Rose decided it was about time for a little investigation. The Doctor opened a fire door, as he came through it into a dark corridor, followed by Rose and Mickey.

"Oh, it's weird seeing school at night," Mickey uttered, shaking slightly.

"Are you scared Mickey boy?" the Doctor asked him lightly, glancing him over.

"Of course not!" Mickey replied with a bit loud voice. "Me? Please. Infiltration and investigation? I'm an expert at this."

"You could keep your voice down. For once." The Doctor chided him.

Rose rolled her eyes. "When I was a kid, I used to think all the teachers slept in school." She told her story blithely, trying to break the fight. Oh, the teachers did sleep at school. Just fortunately not hers.

"All right, team." The Doctor stopped in his tracks, facing them. "Oh, I hate people who say 'team'." He grimaced at that. "Um..." Rose raised an eyebrow at him. "Gang." He tried, making Rose jump a bit from the impact the word had. "Um... 'comrades'." Once more.

"Uh..." He tried, but decided that whatever.

Rose forgot about this episode of their lives. He surely didn't know what they were to him, huh? Well, I'm no assistant to him.

"Anyway, Rose, go to the kitchen and get a sample of that oil." He was back to his usual
adventurous self. "Mickey, the new staff are all Maths teachers, go and check out the Maths
department. I'm gonna look in Finch's office," he announced, as he began going up the stairs. "Be
back here in ten minutes!"

"What about not raising my voice?" Mickey complained.

"Oh, that's just..." Rose was now the one trying to find the right word. "The Doctor." There.
Mickey didn't seem to feel the same though. "So he can, but I don't?" he complained.
Rose shook her head. "Not now, Mickey." She chuckled. "Down there, turn left, through the fire
doors, on the right."

"What?" Mickey asked in confusion.

"The Maths department." She made a pointed nod.

"Okay. Thank you." And he strode away.

After hearing the sounds of something living in the dark, Sarah Jane backed into a room and
slammed the door behind her. She turned slowly and there, looming in front of her, was the
TARDIS. Her eyes widened in shock and she backed out of the room, not believing it...

Sarah Jane stared at the closed door, walking backwards, until she slowly turned around. The
Doctor was already standing there in the darkness, only the moonlight illuminating him, as he
watched her.

"Hello, Sarah Jane," he said it almost in a whisper. It had been so long for him.

"It's you," she whispered in recognition. "Oh... Doctor..." She breathed a smile, edging towards
him.

"Oh, my God, it's you, it's..." She gestured. "You've regenerated," she stated calmly.

"Half a dozen times since we last met," he joked with a warm smile.

"You look..." She smiled, then put her lips together to find the words, but then a smile spread
across her face again. "Incredible," she exhaled.

"So do you." He told her tenderly. She was still with so much life.

She shrugged. "Hmph, I got old." As she edged around him, staring at him. The Doctor gave her a
look that he would not battle with her over that last sentence.

"What're you doing here?" Her blunt question with a straight expression shook him a bit, but he
answered it lightly.

"Well..." He trailed off. "UFO sightings." He looked somewhere in the distance, blithely. "School
gets record results. I couldn't resist." He looked at her seriously, but with a hidden inside joke.
"What about you?" he asked her expectedly, a smile breaking on its way.

"Same." She nodded, making both of them grin at each other. But before long, her smile faltered,
and she sounded close to tears, when she spoke again.

"I thought you'd died." The Doctor's smile fading slowly too. "I waited for you and you didn't
come back, and I thought you must've died."


"What do you mean?" She furrowed her eyebrows in question.

"Everyone died, Sarah," he said in a quiet pain, gulping.

Sarah Jane shook her head in disbelief, whispering. "I can't believe it's you."

The moment was broken by the sound of Mickey wailing. Sarah Jane's and the Doctor's heads turned to the direction of the sound.

"Oh. Okay!" she breathed with eyes wide. "Now I can!" Both of them grinning and running from the gym to find the source of the scream.

Rose was just walking her way to the corridor, as she saw the Doctor and Sarah Jane run, nearly missing her completely, as she was still on the side corridor.

"Doctor!" she yelled out, as he stumbled to stop in his tracks, smiling all happily. Rose smiled at him too, although, she knew that the smile was not for her. She turned her head to see Sarah Jane looking at her questioningly, as Rose beamed at her warmly.

"Rose, Sarah Jane!" He gestured to her. "Sarah Jane, Rose." Back to Rose.

"Hello." Rose beamed at her, maybe not the same as when the Doctor saw her again after such a long time, but just as warmly in her own way. The Doctor grinned at the sight, exhaling a breath he was holding. He didn't even know that he would feel a bit nervous about them meeting each other.

Sarah Jane looked a bit uncomfortable. Rose could feel she was expecting a different reaction and this one made her chide her own self.

They shook hands. "Hello." She turned to the Doctor. "You can tell you're getting older. Your assistants are getting younger," she muttered. The Doctor began rubbing the back of his neck, getting uncomfortable with the situation.

Rose raised an eyebrow. Don't complicate this Sarah Jane. I'm not not the temperamental one here now.

"I'm not his assistant," Rose snapped, maybe a bit more than she meant. But the Doctor's earlier remarks about team, gang, comrade and now adding assistant, made her a bit unsettled.

"No? I get you, tiger," Sarah Jane breathed, making Rose roll her eyes. The Doctor sped off, gesturing further in the hallway. At least that was an amusing sight. The Doctor getting all... Rose snorted, making him spin around.

"What?"

"Caught a cold, maybe." Rose shrugged, covering her nose. The Doctor just eyed her, moving his neck questioningly, before he took off again.

They found Mickey in one of the classrooms, surrounded by a load of vacuum-packed rats. Oh dear Mickey.

"Sorry! Sorry, it was only me." Mickey spoke breathless. "You told me to investigate, so I- " He gestured to the ground, the Doctor bended down to pick one of the rats. "I started looking through
some of these cupboards and all of these fell out of them."

"And you decided to scream." The Doctor stood up, still having one rat in his hands.

"It took me by surprise!" Mickey defended himself.

"Like a little girl?" the Doctor sang, grimacing in a mock.

"It was dark! I was covered in rats!" Mickey continued.

"Nine, maybe ten years old. I'm seeing pigtails, frilly skirt," the Doctor continued to mock him, gesturing at his head.

Rose stifled a chuckle, as she had a part to play. "Hello, can we focus? Does anyone notice anything strange about this?" She looked them all over. "Rats in school?" She tried to hint.

"Well, obviously they use them in Biology lessons. They dissect them," Sarah Jane muttered. "Or maybe you haven't reached that bit yet." She glanced her over. "How old are you?"

Snap

The Doctor and Mickey looked shiftly between them.

Rose inhaled a breath. Almost there. She would certainly snap. Or so Mickey thought. But to everyone's surprise Rose exhaled, her shoulders relaxing.

"Rats are not dissected in school anymore. They haven't done that for years, and as far as I know." She shrugged nonchalantly, biting her lip. "Didn't resume to do it."

Mickey stood there, mouth open. That was not the reaction he was expecting. The Doctor was beginning to show a smile on his face.

"So!" the Doctor exclaimed, taking everyone's attention. Rose raised an eyebrow at him.

"Everything started when Mr Finch arrived. We should go and check his office." He threw the rat at Mickey, who failed to catch it.

They followed the Doctor down the corridor, as Rose decided it was time to break a small conversation. There was just too much of dead-awkward silence in there.

"Um. So, you used to travel with the Doctor?" Rose asked softly.

"Yes, I have." Sarah Jane glanced the girl over. She was a strange one. The looks she was giving her were so warm, but she couldn't believe it was really true.

"Has he mentioned me to you?" she nearly whispered.

Rose grimaced a bit, biting her lip. She inhaled, almost said something she didn't mean to, and then exhaled. "Not really..." She trailed off.

"Oh, I must've done! Sarah Jane! Mention her all the time." The Doctor tried to defend himself, when he saw uneasy Sarah Jane's look.

Rose gave the woman an apologetic smile, while shooting the Time Lord a look.
Sarah Jane inhaled, a bit disturbed by the thought that her long lost friend didn't bother to mention her even once. Was she so insignificant?

"I was preparing myself to laugh at you for making the missus meet the ex, but Rose's taking it a bit well." Mickey trailed off, thinking.

"Way too well," the Doctor muttered. He was getting more and more disturbed by the thoughts swirling in his mind. It should have been a good news that Rose took Sarah Jane so well, but it bothered him. He frowned at the thought. It was...unnatural. Too unnatural. He read Rose's expression over and over again, and when he found no fakeness it was disturbing him even more. He was expecting something to happen. A duel of some sort. No no no no no. He was not the type to enjoy his two dear friends fight over him, it was just something he was expecting of Rose. But how? Rose never acted that way. She was always...besides always being all too weird, she was quite composed. So where does the idea of catfight come from?

They found Krilitanes sleeping in the Headmaster's office, the Doctor not failing to point- "Rose... you know you used to think all the teachers slept in the school... ? Well... they do." Just before they went outside, and now were standing in front of Sarah Jane's car.

When Sarah Jane opened the boot of her car, everyone were revealed with a covered K9.

"K9!" the Doctor cried, delighted, once the blanket was off. "Rose Tyler, Mickey Smith, allow me to introduce K9," he said in all happy voice. Mickey grimaced, not getting what was the purpose of that thing, Rose smiled at it. "Well, K9 Mark III to be precise." The Doctor shrugged.

Mickey glanced at Rose with an 'it's a tin dog' sort of expression. Rose nodded at him approvingly.

Mickey was kinda lost.

"Why does he look so old?" Mickey spoke up first.

"You mean disco," Rose corrected him, half-chuckling, that clearly being misunderstood as an insult to the K9.

"Oi!" The Doctor turned to look at her. "Listen, in the year five thousand, this was cutting edge!"

Back to K9.

"I'm no-" Rose began, but didn't get to finish.

"What's happened to him?" The Doctor looked concerned.

Mickey glanced at Rose, still with half-parted mouth. He was almost giving her I told you so expression, when Rose moved her shoulders, and put an unreadable expression.

Do people purposely get on her nerves? For once she thought she would handle the situation like a mature adult. But guess what? You can't be, when you realise that you're surrounded by children yourself. Rose sighed.

The Doctor and Sarah Jane were talking about K9 for some time, before deciding to stop by the chip shop.

The Doctor and Sarah Jane were sitting at a table by the window, chatting and laughing whilst the Doctor tried to fix K9, who was placed on the table-top. Mickey and Rose stood by the counter.
"You see, what's impressive is that it's been nearly an hour since we met her and I still haven't said 'I told you so'.” Mickey was clearly enjoying himself.

Rose's face was blank, as she watched the pair. They were laughing and giggling. Nothing new with the Doctor really. Except. He was relaxed with her. So at ease Rose didn't see him in a long time. As much as they were so close to each other at one times, on another they were worse than strangers. That haunting doubt was gone when he was talking with Sarah Jane. He was back to how he used to be in her original timeline.

It pained Rose to see the view. No, she was not jealous, mad or anything of that sort. She was sad, that she was keeping such emotions from him. She was supposed to be his pillar, his support, but now she was starting to think that she was a burden. A heavy psychological burden.

Mickey was telling her something in the background, but Rose heard nothing. She just watched them. Watched him smile, which made her make a small smile herself.

"Come, sit down." Rose felt herself being pulled by Mickey to sit near the table. She was a bit taken aback, too suddenly disturbed from her thoughts, but soon relaxed.

They got some chips on the table, and Rose soon found herself start mechanically eating them. Not that habit again.

"You really love him, huh?" Mickey sighed. Rose shot her eyes up to look at his face, her own expression confused. "I don't think she'll get back together with him. It looks like they haven't seen each other for ages. She must have had a life of her own," Mickey continued on. Rose just blinked at him. What was he doing? Can't be. Was he actually comforting her?

Rose leaned back on her seat, eyes fixed on Mickey, who was still babbling something. Did she really look that miserable?

"I'm all right, Mickey." Her own voice came out more steady than she thought it would.

Mickey looked at her concerned, not believing. "I know that look." He pointed at her.

"'s not like that," Rose muttered. Then sighed. "She's important to him. That I know. I just..." She shrugged. "I thought I was making his life better, you know? But now..." She shook her head slightly. "With her... now he's so at peace. With me he's like..."

"Now that is a lot of bull," Mickey joked, leaning in his seat himself. After getting a raised eyebrow from Rose, he rested his arms on the table. "I don't know how should a happy alien look like, but when I see him, I-" Mickey frowned, he was battling with himself whether to even try to help that poor man out. But when seeing Rose's expectant eyes, he just decided to drop his second thoughts away. "He looks happy with you. If that's what you worry about," he ended seriously.

"Really?" Rose asked absentmindedly, her gaze trailing off to the pair. "He looks like he's trying to understand a universal problem, which is giving him a headache and he better off drop it to me," she ended faintly.

"You've really spent too much time with him." Mickey shrank in his seat.

"What?" Rose gazed back at him.

"You're even picking his miserabilities."

"A what?" Rose frowned.
"Everyone has secrets, you know? Even I have!" Mickey exclaimed. Rose gave a sceptical look.

"I do! Like..." He was thinking hard. "You don't know how I found the Doctor after you were gone for a year." He smiled all proud of himself.

"You watched the neighbourhood with your telescope and then saw his TARDIS," Rose said in one gulp.

"How did you know?" Mickey asked in bewilderment. "Okay okay, next one." He was back to thinking. "You don't know what I would have been doing today if not on this mission." He pointed at her, head held high.

Rose sighed. Couldn't he get more predictable. "You would have been watching the match on the telly."

"How did you know?" He furrowed his brows.

"Which you're watching now," she sang, while taking a chip into her mouth.

"Oh." Mickey blinked. "Maybe that was not the best example-"

"It's alright. Enough. Really."

"I thought of you on Christmas Day." Sarah Jane was talking softly. "This Christmas just gone? Great big spaceship overhead. I thought, 'Oh, yeah. Bet he's up there'."

"Right on top of it, yeah," the Doctor agreed with her while tinkering K9.

"And Rose?" She glanced him over while asking.

"She was there too," the Doctor replied absentmindedly.

"She looks at you like..." Sarah was trying to find the right words. "Like she wants to say something but she doesn't."

"She's always like that," the Doctor answered, his eyes focused on K9 wires, but his mouth now stoic.

"Just like someone I know," Sarah whispered, but the Doctor caught the double meaning in her words, as he turned his head.

"Why don't you ask her?" she said faintly.

The Doctor glanced down, in thought. "She would probably not tell me anyway."

"But did you even try? To ask what's wrong?" she persisted.

"Oh, she just gives excuses and makes everything a coincidence." He shrugged, brushing it off, although failing to fool Sarah Jane.

"You're the Doctor. You can get the answer to anything you want," she said firmly, his hands stopping to fiddle with the wires for a moment.

"You fear what you going to hear, don't you?"
He looked up at her.

"I had so many things to ask you, Doctor." She shook her head slightly. "Why did you leave me behind like that? Did you know how difficult it was to adjust with the life after everything we've been through..." The Doctor opened his mouth, but got no chance to reply. "But I see why now. You were always just running and running. Not only into the adventure, but from it too. Maybe a bit different one, but still." She smiled a bit. The Doctor was looking guilty and pain was visible in his eyes.

"You're different with her," she uttered each word in a whisper, but with so much feelings.

"You barely saw us interact-" the Doctor began to brush it off with a joke.

"That's the whole point!" She leaned in to his side. "You barely spoke, but your body language never left her side. You're observing her every move - how she reacted to that boy, Mickey, to the new adventure, to meeting me!" She had an understanding smile on her face.

The Doctor looked away, putting his lips together and gulping, as he continued to work on K9.

"You've to face the things that bother you." She rested her hand on his arm, making him look her way.

"It can end not well," the Doctor said it in a low, sad voice.

"Then you'll just have to accept it. It's part of what life is. Everything has the beginning as everything has an end. But don't let the middle be clouded." They looked at each other for a while, intense gaze full of different emotions, until the moment was interrupted by K9 coming back to life.

"Oh, hey!" he exclaimed, drumming on the table, as he stood up. "Now we're in business!"

Sarah Jane smiled warmly.

"Master" K9 nodded at the Doctor.

"He recognizes me!" he exclaimed in absolute bliss.

"Affirmative."

"It wasn't Croydon, by the way." Sarah Jane spoke, while looking at K9. The Doctor looked at her questioningly. "Where you dropped me off, it wasn't Croydon!"

"Where was it?" he asked curious.

"Aberdeen," she said irritated.

Realisation dawning into his face. "Right."

Pause.

"That's next to Croydon, isn't it?" he asked hopeful. Sarah just shook her head, smiling, as Rose approached the table.

"Rose, give me-" He extended his hand.

"The oil is here." As she handed it to him. He half-turned to face her. She only gave him a pointed
look at the K9.

"Okay!" he exclaimed while turning to face the tin dog to examine the liquid.

"Oil. Ex- ex- ex- extract ana- an- analysing..."

"Listen to it, man! That's a voice!" Mickey was grinning in amusement.

"Careful! That's my dog!" Sarah chided him. The Doctor gave him a warning look too.

"Confirmation of analysis - substance is Krillitane Oil."

"They're Krillitanes," the Doctor whispered, shocked.

After explaining his team, no matter if he hated that word, about the suitcase of bad things that could come from the Krillitanes and realising that the children were somehow involved, the group scattered. Sarah Jane somehow managed to get Mickey to help her with the K9, while leaving Rose and the Doctor a bit behind.

"Um..." Rose thought how best to approach it. Ended not that well the last time. "Did you travel with her for long?" she asked softly.

"Who?" the Doctor replied absentmindedly while walking out of the cafe in a hurry.

"Sarah Jane."

"Does it matter?" He brushed her off.

"Well no, maybe, yeh, not exactly..." Rose began to shutter. The Doctor came to a stop to look at her. "It doesn't really, just wanted to know more about you..." She shrugged.

"It was a long time ago. It doesn't matter," he told her, trying to avoid her gaze.

"Look." Rose took a calming breath. "I get it that you had to leave her one way or another, sooner or later it would have happened. I get it. I really do." Rose was looking into his eyes. "But people need to know that you didn't just drop them off. That you cared for them." They looked at each other for a moment.

"Does it need saying?" His expression pleaded not to go further into this. He didn't want to have this conversation. It hurt and he was starting to get impatiently angry.

"Yes, it does." She looked at him with pleading, honest eyes. She didn't notice when and where did their conversation turn to this direction, but she knew that it passed Sarah Jane long ago.

"Is it so much to ask?"

"You can't ask of me that," he said faintly.

"Why not?" Rose asked in a soft whisper.

"Not you. Not you, who has so many secrets around you," he said it in a bit angry and hurt voice, looking at her with watery eyes.

His words took her by surprise, that Rose thought maybe she didn't hear him right. But once she looked into his eyes, she saw all. This was it. It's as long as they could keep this going. This was
the end she feared.

The moment those words left his mouth he cursed himself silently for even letting them escape. He didn't want to hear it. And he certainly didn't want to sound so harsh. Now there was no going back.

He ran from the world, from the people and the relationships humans establish with others. But mostly of all, he ran from himself. And from Rose. He could've just came out straight and asked her *Who was she? Why did she know so much?* Sarah Jane was right - he was scared. He feared the day everything would come out to the open and everything would change between them. He feared the things he would find, once he got his answer.

For all he knew, she was the most compassionate, loyal, more than it was needed for her own good, someone who brought light in his life, after he saw the darkest bit. Her smile always making him smile himself. And the only thing shadowing her, was that *secret.* The one she was keeping from everyone around her. But even in his deepest guesses, he couldn't find anything what would cause harm to anyone. Whatever her secret was, she could keep it to herself, right? Because she was not a threat. She was a gift. And the only way he could keep her by his side for a bit longer, even if for just a bit, was if he let it slide.

*But he couldn't.*

Of course he couldn't. Because it was the curse of the Time Lords. He was doomed to be left alone one day, and he was someone to always get his answers to the question. So why would it be any different now? He had only one answer.

"*Rose.*"

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*to be continued...*
He felt like his whole soul was coming bare before him. She touched his broken hearts in a way he didn't even dream anyone would be able to. He was an ancient being, a Time Lord, the Oncoming Storm, but he felt so small besides her. And so big the other times. She gave him life, reason to fight and live again, to show compassion to others. And she was slipping away.

He hated her secret. And he hated himself for not being able to let go, for his mind not being able to let him live in peace and not question it. She knew too much. She felt non human. But she was far more human than anyone else.

_Don't look at me like I'm the whole world to you._ It was too much for him. Such intense eyes, filled with devotion and desperation. She was not saying anything, but her eyes were shouting at him. Just like that time at Game Station. Before she was... He closed his eyes in memory.

Rose watched his every move, cautiously. When he closed his eyes and gulped, she felt worry fill her whole. What was wrong? What will he tell her? Will she finally have to leave him? No. Anything but that. Not after everything she had been through. Not after crossing dimensions just to be able to live her life with him again. He was too much important. They were too much important, even if he didn't know it yet.

Oh, but he knew. And the moment he opened his eyes Rose could see it all. Pain, anger, desperation, need, gratitude, even love. Yes, it was there. It was always there. She may have refused to believe it was actually there the previous time, but it was there for sure. He loved her as she did love him.

Rose leaned her head to the side as she bit her lip from trembling more. She watched the man she loved from all her heart battle with himself. He couldn't accept his feeling yet. That she knew. The feeling of watching her age - whither and die was too strong as of yet.

Well, it was not so much of a surprise, really. Her Doctor could fully relax and give in to live for the day only after Krop Tor. It was one of the scariest things they had experienced. The first time they were losing hope to see each other again, to see home. The second being final, as she let go of that lever. But now she could only see one thing.

_He didn't want to lose her._

And that was enough. "I don't want to lose you," she whispered almost not audible, her voice wavering and eyes so sad.

It made the Doctor blink in surprise, lips slightly parted. His precious pink and yellow human was actually scared of losing him. _Him._ Whatever the thoughts he had had before, quickly passed away. His mouth began to quiver in a smile as he exhaled a relief filled breath.

"You're not losing me any time soon, Rose Tyler." He told her in a confident voice, as his one hand lingered on her cheek, caressing it a little.

Rose smiled at him slightly as she savoured the touch. They were alright. There will always be her and him.
Mickey and Sarah Jane were sitting on her car's booth, talking and Mickey realising his place in
their team.

"Oh my God. I'm a tin dog." He sat there, completely devastated, as the realisation hit him. Sarah
Jane just patted his back, comforting.

"I can't believe it. Is that all I am?" He shook his head in disbelief. Then he suddenly stood up to
see the pair talking intensely to each other. Or they should have been talking. Mickey frowned.
They were not. They were just staring at each other.

"What're they doing there?" Mickey asked.

"I think you should leave it for them to work it out," Sarah said gently.

"But they've stopped. They're not doing anything!" Mickey gestured to them.

"Let them have their moment..." Sarah Jane tried to hint him, but failed completely.

"If they just wanna stand there, doing nothing, I might as well come out and ask." He began to
march towards the pair. Only a simple gesture of the Doctor caressing Rose's cheek, stopped
Mickey a bit in his tracks. It seemed affectionate. Such a simple thing could have made anyone
shy, but Mickey was completely oblivious to it.

"Oi, Time Lord!" he called out for the Doctor. "How-" he began, as the pair backed away from
each other.

A sudden, faraway voice startled the group.

"Time Lord," Mr. Finch exhaled, standing on the roof himself. It took everyone's attention, as the
Krillitane screeched and swooped down towards them. They had to duck its flying attack above
their heads. But to everyone's surprise, the alien did not even try to reach its prey, just flying
through the air.

The Doctor looked at it in concern, Rose still holding onto the Doctor's coat sleeve as she tugged
on it just moments ago instinctively.

"Was that a Krillitane?" Sarah was first to ask.

The Doctor watched it fly away, measuring its intentions. It was weird.

"What was that all about?" Mickey added. The same thing was on the Time Lord's mind, but... first
thing's first.

"Broadcast it next time, would you?" the Doctor shot at him, annoyed.

"What did I do?" Mickey cried in defence.

The Doctor just gave him the find out yourself look.

The next morning, with the school bell going off and the children flocking towards the building,
the group gone out of Sarah Jane's car and were now striding towards the school. The determined
atmosphere surrounding them. The Doctor paused only for a moment to give instructions.
"Rose and Sarah, you go to the Maths room," he began, watching the school building intensively, as he pulled out his sonic. "Crack open those computers, I need to see the hardware inside. Here, you might need this." Handing it to Rose.

The moment she saw the sonic extended towards her, it took her by surprise. Was he really giving it to her? As if answering her silent question or maybe just by urging her, the Doctor waved it a bit to make his point to take it. And she took it. Carefully, like it was the biggest treasure. And it was. But there was so much more to it. He trusted it to her this time. Why?

"Mickey. Surveillance. I want you outside," the Doctor said firmly, as he began walking forwards.

"Just stand outside?" Mickey complained.

"Here, take these." Sarah Jane chucked him her car keys. "You can keep K9 company."

"Don't forget to leave the window open a crack!" the Doctor added.

"But he's metal!" Mickey extended his hands in the air.

"I didn't mean for him!" he shouted back at him, not stopping his pace.

"What're you gonna do?" Rose asked, as she caught up with him. He had really long legs. Too long.

"It's time I had a word with Mr Finch." He spoke of his name in a bit of disgust.

Back in computer lab, Rose was crouched beneath one of the computer desks and bleeping the sonic screwdriver.

"Rose?" Sarah Jane's voice startled her and she accidently hit her head on the desk.

"Ouch." She sat up on the ground, rubbing her head.

"Oh dear. You alright?" Sarah squatted down to look at her. "Didn't mean to scare you." She looked concerned and a bit guilty, checking her head with her hand.

"It's alright." Rose smiled at her warmly.

Sarah sighed at that, as she lowered her hand from Rose's head.

"I really am," Rose confirmed, thinking that she did no believe her.

"It's not that," Sarah began, as she stood up to lean on one of the desks. "Did you... properly talk with him?" she asked, her voice cracking slightly. She felt a bit uncomfortable to ask.

Rose looked at the woman questioningly.

"Doctor," Sarah Jane added meaningfully.

Rose bit her lip, unsure what to tell her, as she stood up. "We did..." she began slowly, her head lowered. "But not everything I can tell him..." She trailed off.

"Why not?" Sarah asked softly.

"There are some things, Sarah, things that cannot be revealed yet. It's too soon," Rose whispered.
"Who are you?" Sarah stated her question blankly.

It shook Rose a bit. This woman could really be straightforward sometimes. "Just the Doctor's companion." Rose shrugged, smiling slightly.

Sarah shook her head. "You eyes are ancient. They feel like his. They have witnessed lost of something important, which couldn't compare even to any adventure." She spoke her words wisely that it made Rose's mouth fall open. She always looked up to her. Well, not always, but from the moment Rose came to really know her, she understood that if there was someone she could take advice from, it was her.

Sarah just smiled in understanding. "I might not be as old as him, but I have seen life with him and without. I know that longing look." She paused a bit. "What are you not telling him?" she asked.

Rose was not sure where this woman had her confidence come from. Rose was not even telling the Doctor but now she expected her to tell.

"I'm repeating my timeline," Rose stated, with a bit of a smile on her face. Sarah could only put a confused look. Well, it was understandable.

"I don't..." She shook her head.

"I have travelled with him for a year and half," Rose began. "When something happened...something..." she stopped, considering her words, and calming herself down.

"Something which separated us," she finally said faintly.

"I thought I would never see him again, you know?" She looked at the woman with pained expression. Sarah just let her continue. "But somehow, and I'm not sure how, as I still don't know anything about it. Somehow my consciousness was sent back to the moment I first met him."

Sarah Jane frowned at that.

"I've met you before too, Sarah, that's why I see you as a friend already." Rose spoke fondly. She felt that she was not very convincing, that there was something amiss. She inhaled, continuing to speak. Let's come clean then, shall we?

"I have never heard anything about you from the Doctor. And I'm sorry to say that. I really am." She looked at the hurt Sarah's expression. "But I know you have met mummies, robots, daleks, dinosaurs and even The Loch Ness Monster!" she exclaimed with enthusiasm at the end.

"Oh my..." Sarah looked at her in disbelief. "How did you..." She covered her mouth. "Is it...Is it really true, what you say?" She edged closer, looking at her.

"Yeh." Rose nodded softly.

"And he doesn't know?"

"No. I can't tell him," Rose whispered.

"No, of course not. It would disturb the whole timeline." Sarah drifted away, looking at the ground.

"Can I... trust you?" Rose asked in a pleading voice. At that, the woman was a bit shaken, not sure what she meant, but seeing the girl's look she formed a gentle smile.

"Of course. I'll keep it to myself. Until the day you think he's ready."
"Thank you," Rose mouthed the words, as she found tears filling her eyes.

"Oh, dear. Everything is going to work out." She embraced Rose, soothing her, rubbing her back.

"I just- I fear to lose him again." Rose sobbed silently, her voice cracking, as she hugged her.

"You will not," Sarah Jane stated in a confident voice, holding Rose at her arms length now. "If the universe sent you back to him at such lengths, it will not rip you apart again. Just fight for it."

"Yeh. I will. Always." Rose brushed her tears away, smiling at her friend.

"Feeling better now?" Sarah asked her gently.

"Yep." Rose nodded, laughing a bit. Sarah Jane smiled back at her in contentment.

"So..." She trailed off. "Did we-" She gestured.

"What?" Rose asked, feeling a bit lost.

"Did we get along well the first time?" the woman asked, curiosity taking over.

Rose snorted at the memory. "No." She shook her head, smiling. "We had a nasty row with each other, before finally coming to terms with one another."

"Oh my." Sarah placed her hands on her lips, as she began to laugh again. "The Loch Ness Monster?" she asked faintly.

Rose nodded, laughing. Sarah joining too. After a few moments she asked again. "Does he still stroke bits of the TARDIS?" She looked around, making a disturbed face at the memory.

"Yeah!" Rose exhaled, laughing. "Yeah! He does!" Sarah was now laughing out loud. "I'm like, do you two wanna be alone?" Rose played the part, making Sarah laugh all the more.

"And he does that with his sonic screwdriver too!" Rose cried between laughs. "And I didn't even notice until yesterday, as he moped over it, not being able to hold it in the cafeteria."

Both women were laughing madly, when the Doctor came rushing in the room.

"How's it going?" he asked, concerned.

The sight of him made the pair laugh even harder. Sarah bending over slightly, Rose clenching on the sonic, both mouths open.

"What?" the Doctor asked, completely oblivious to the situation. "Listen." He looked sideways. "I need to find out what's programmed inside these." All serious.

It never ceased to amuse them. Rose was pointing the sonic screwdriver at him, while laughing hysterically, Sarah doing her own fair share herself.

"What?" the Doctor asked, genuinely confused.

More laughs.

"Stop it." He frowned, feeling uncomfortable.

After the pair calmed down, the trio was back to work. The Doctor, sonic screwdriver clenched
between his teeth, ripping a handful of wires out of a computer and hanging them around his neck, as he ran the sonic screwdriver along the back of the computer. Sarah Jane watched him the whole time, looking slightly anxious herself.

"I can't shift it." The Doctor shook his head, anxious, looking at the wires frantically. Rose could only look at his side from the doorway, as she was put on the lookout.

"I thought the sonic screwdriver could open anything!" Sarah said, worried.

"Anything except a deadlock seal. There's gotta be something inside here," he spilled. "What're they teaching those kids?" he muttered between his teeth.

Sarah turned around to face Rose, who smiled at her sadly and shook her head slightly. Sarah sighed. It must have been too difficult for Rose to hint it for the Doctor.

After a few moments, every computer in the class lit up, glowing green with the code and cube swirling around in a high speed.

"You wanted the program - there it is," Sarah exclaimed.

The Doctor was staring at the wide screen on the wall. "Some sort of code..." he whispered, totally mesmerised by the sight, as he slowly approached the wall.

"How bad it is?" Sarah whispered to Rose.

"Very," Rose just mouthed, making the woman gulp and squeeze Rose's hand, as if assuring her but maybe taking it for herself.

They must have gone out safely from this one. That's all she could think of to calm herself down with.

The Doctor still staring at the code, eyes wide and mouth slightly open. "No... no, they can't be..." He looked at it in horror. "The Skasis Paradigm. They're trying to crack the Skasis Paradigm." He looked at the screen with wide eyes.

"The Skasis what?" Sarah whispered, confused.

"The... " He stopped for a millisecond to find the word. "God-maker. The universal theory." He lowered his head, his eyes hardening at the sight. "Crack that equation and you've got control of the building blocks of the universe." He was once again looking frantically at the writing, his voice slightly shaking. "Time and space and matter, yours to control."

"And the kids are like a giant computer?" Rose whispered.

"Yes," the Doctor breathed. And the next moment began pacing around the room, as he tried to work it out.

"And their learning power is being accelerated by the oil!" he exclaimed. "That oil from the kitchens, it works as a- as a..." He gestured with his hands, searching for the word. "Conducting agent. Makes the kids cleverer," he ended, leaning his hands on the table.

"But why use children? Can't they use adults?" Sarah asked.

"No, it's gotta be children." The Doctor shook his head in a whisper. "The God-maker needs imagination to crack it." He smiled sarcastically. "They're not just using the children's brains to
"break the code..." he exhaled helplessly, walking away. "They're using their souls," he said painfully, looking back at them.

"Let the lesson begin." Mr. Flinch walked into the room. The Doctor turned to face him.

"Think of it, Doctor," he began meaningfully. "With the Paradigm solved, reality becomes clay in our hands. We can shape the universe and improve it." He was approaching the trio slowly. Rose gave him a dangerous look.

"Oh yeah? The whole of creation with the face of Mr Finch," the Doctor said sarcastically. "Call me old fashioned." He grimaced a bit. "But I like things as they are."

"You act like such a radical, and yet all you want to do is preserve the old order. Think of the changes that could be made if this power was used for good." Mr. Finch was speaking in his sweet voice.

"What, by someone like you?" the Doctor asked him sceptically, as he laughed a bit.

"No..." the Krillittane whispered. "Someone like you," he said in a luring voice.

The Doctor kept silent. It was not the answer he was expecting.

"The Paradigm gives us power," Mr. Flinch continued, happy to get the wanted attention. "But you could give us wisdom. Become a God. At my side. Imagine what you could do." He took one step forward. "Think of the civilizations you could save." Locking the Doctor's gaze to his. "Your own people, Doctor. Standing tall. The Time Lords... reborn."

The Doctor said nothing, just gulped at the words.

"Doctor, don't listen to him." Sarah tried to make sense to him.

"And you could be with him throughout eternity." Mr. Finch walked at both Rose and Sarah. "Young... fresh... never wither, never age... never die."

"Their lives are so fleeting. So many goodbyes." Looking back at the Doctor. "How lonely you must be, Doctor. Join us."

The Doctor was looking at the distance. He was so terribly tempted. His people... his home planet... his... she could stay with him forever... His mouth was quivering, not daring to say anything yet, but having no will to deny the fact either.

Rose couldn't watch it anymore. She took a step forward, before the Doctor could even begin to say the words, which would torture him later on, for even being said by him.

"You may have taken the form of humans, but you certainly don't know us." She spoke calmly, taking Mr. Finch attention. The Doctor looked at her too, surprised.

"Don't you want to stay forever with him?" Mr. Finch spoke again, making Rose tilt her head, as she gulped, but not enough to waver her. Of course she wanted! She even promised him! And... she knew it was not forever forever... just her forever, which was obviously not enough. But even so! How dare he?

"That's not for you to choose. And not for some code," she spat the last words, getting anger ahead of her. "You can't even imagine what a person can done alone, once determined." She held her gaze strong.
"I'll create my forever myself." As her gaze travelled sideways to meet the Doctor's totally stunned face. She gave him a reassuring smile and that was enough for him to recover.

It gave Sarah enough time to think of a plan to run out of the room. She took one of the chairs and crashed it into the wide screen, making every computer shut off.

"Out!" the Doctor cried, taking Rose's hand to drag her out, together with Sarah, leaving frustrated Krillitane alone in the broken room.

Kenny, the boy whom Mickey found banging on the glass door, just before he crashed inside with Sarah's car, and Mickey himself met the Doctor, Rose and Sarah Jane at the bottom of the stairs.

"What's going on?" Mickey asked, looking frantic.

The Doctor looked wide eyed at the approaching Krillitanes from the sideway corridor. The three Krillitanes were half flying, half groping their way along the corridor to them. The Doctor and the others turned on their heels and now were running in the opposite direction. The Krillitanes were flying at high speed. Almost there, but never quite reaching them.

They found themselves at the canteen, but all the doors were locked. The Doctor still tried to reach inside his coat for his sonic, but just at the same moment Mr. Finch burst through the doors, followed by several Krillitanes, shrieking dangerously at them.

"Leave the Doctor alive," Mr. Finch instructed his mates. "As for the others... you can feast," he spat.

At the same moment Krillitanes swooped down on them. The Doctor tried to beat them off with a chair, Rose was doing the same on the other side, while others were screaming and ducking out of the way. Rose soon found her chair in the grasp of Krillitane, she backed away, startled.

It snarled at her, the chair flying at her with the light's speed, seconds later. She fell down from the impact at her head.

"Rose!" the Doctor called out for her in worry, as he saw her down.

"'Am fine!" She assured him, while slowly standing up. Well, her head was spinning a bit, though. She held her head in her hands, shaking it a bit to get her focus back.

The Doctor gazed back at the Krillitanes, anger forming its way, as he hit one of the Krillitanes right at the head, making it fly off backwards, hitting the ground, moments later.

Before long, K9 was there too, beaming the red light at them, making them drop dead on the floor. Mr. Finch roared furious with rage at the sight.

"K9!" Sarah exclaimed in delight of seeing her friend.

"Suggest you engage running mode, mistress."

"Come on!" the Doctor urged everyone to run after him, leaving K9 shooting at the Krillitanes again and again.

"K9, hold them back!" the Doctor yelled out for him just before leaving the room.

"Affirmative, master. Maximum defence mode!"
With everyone out, the Doctor slammed the doors shut, locking them with his sonic screwdriver. After running through few corners, they found themselves in one of the classrooms, the Doctor leaning against the teacher table, deep in thoughts.

"It's the oil!" A sudden brainwave hit him. "Krillitane life forms can't handle the oil! That's it!" He was looking at everyone with his manic eyes. "They've changed the physiology so often, even their own oil is toxic to them. How much was there in the kitchens?" He looked at Rose frantically.

"Barrels of it."

They jumped, as the Krillitanes started pounding on the locked door, their claws ripping holes in it.

Sarah was looking genuinely scared, Mickey was trying to look tough, Rose was shaking her head, trying to make her view focused, but failing miserably. Everything was a bit of a blur. But she couldn't let others be aware of that now. They had more important things at hands than some head spinning.

"Okay, we need to get to the kitchens. Mickey-" the Doctor began, looking at the claws, ripping through the doors.

"What now, hold the coats?" Mickey sighed helplessly.

"Get all the children unplugged and out of the school." He instructed Mickey, looking at him only for a moment before turning his attention at the door. "Now then, bats, bats, bats, how do we fight bats?" The Doctor was muttering to himself.

Mickey and Rose watched as Kenny strided over to a fire alarm, breaking the glass with his elbow and setting it off. The Krillitanes immediately winced and quailed at the shrill sound. The Doctor beamed at the effect it gave, as he flung the door open, running past the Krillitanes, who were too much distressed to hurt the running group. Well, running group plus one stumbling at the walls.

Finch, gritted his teeth as he glared at Rose, resting for a moment on the wall. Clearly not the best moment. He began to move at her, but with the last effort she kicked him in the stomach, making him snarl at her, as she half ran towards the group.

After a few moments the sound of the alarm stopped and Rose knew they would soon catch up to her. She was too slow. Her head was pounding, she could only hide herself somewhere safe. Running was not the option anymore. She rubbed her temple with her palm and saw it painted red, once she withdrew it. She chuckled sadly.

"Really jeopardly-friendly." She stumbled upon the walls, supporting herself. As she heard the hissing sounds nearing, she hid herself on the side hallway. She could only pray they would be too focused to follow them to notice her. Or she was finished.

Once the Doctor, Sarah Jane, K9 and Kenny had reached the kitchens, the Doctor immediately held his sonic screwdriver to one of the oil barrels.

"They've been deadlock sealed!" he exclaimed, clearly unhappy with the results. Then he tried another in desperation. Not working again. "Finch must've done that - I can't open them."

"Where's Rose?" Sarah Jane's voice caught the Doctor's ears. He turned to face her, searching the room.

"Where's she?" he whispered, feeling a bit scared.
"She did not come with us," Mickey exhaled, as the realisation hit him.

"What do you mean she didn't?" the Doctor yelled at him. "I saw her running just as we got K9!"
he cried, looking frantically at him.

"No. She was not present at that time." Sarah shook her head too.

"What are you talking about!?" the Doctor cried. "I sa-" he started, when he began to go through his memories of the past couple of minutes and it didn't make sense to him. One time he was sure that he ran the last with K9, Rose just ahead of him, the next, she was nowhere present.

He closed his eyes as if shaking the memory to fall into pieces. But he did not have time to dwell on it.

"You lot, out the back door. K9, stay with me." He instructed.

Sarah Jane, Mickey and Kenny ran to the backdoor, leaving the Doctor crouched before K9.

*Where was she?* There was no time to waste. He looked at K9 like he would give him the answer.

At the same moment Rose was sitting on the cold school ground, leaning on the wall. She could hear the ripping sounds of the flesh being torn apart. She winced at the thought. She had to get away. They had no time to spare for her search. She had to move on her own.

She pulled herself together, still staggering a bit, but after a short rest, should have been possible to move. There were shadows of the Krillitanes, somewhere on the other side of the corridor.

Rose slowly peeked over the edge of her wall, to see the group occupied. It's now or never. And with that, she dashed further into the corridor, trying to not make a sound as much as possible.

She ran further and further until finally she reached her destination - the kitchen. He should still be there.

*Where had she gone?* He had to find her. The Doctor was moving the vats of oil within easy shot of K9. He gritted his teeth at the thought that he had to choose the priority now. Any minute now the Krillitanes would come running at this very place, if the trap was not set yet, everything would be for nothing.

The thoughts of abandoning the barrels were swirling around his mind. Was she even alive? Did she meet her fate while he was busy moving barrels here? He abandoned her.

*No.*

He would find her, no matter what. As he continued his work with desperation.

"*Capacity for only one shot, Master. For maximum impact, I must be placed directly beside the vat.*"

"But you'll be trapped inside." The Doctor rushed to his side.

"*That is correct.*"

"I can't let you do that." He looked at him worriedly.
"No alternative possible, Master. You must find mistress."

The Doctor looked at him in disbelief. She was already recognised by K9.

"No need finding me. 'Am here." Rose's breathless voice echoed inside the room.

The Doctor sprung around at once. "Rose!" He ran towards her to hug her briefly, as he exhaled a breath of relief, smiling in contentment.

As he let go of her, only then he noticed a blood stain on her temple. His face twisted at once, horrified.

"No time." Rose chided him. And soon a sound of the screeching Krilitannes in the background reached them. He glanced at her frantically before running of to K9, for one last goodbye.

"Goodbye, old friend," he whispered.

"Goodbye Master."

"You good dog," he told him fondly, in a soft voice.

"Affirmative." He waggled his ears and tail. The Doctor patted him once more and rushed out of the room, taking Rose with him.

Just as the Doctor emerged outside with a very unsteady Rose and slammed the door behind him, locking it with the sonic screwdriver, Sarah met them there.

"Rose!" she called in relief, but soon her face twisted in worry. "Where's K9?" she asked urgently.

"We need to run," the Doctor said urgently, urging her. "Can you do that?" He looked at Rose.

"Yeh. Don't worry about me." She confirmed him with a nod. He wasn't very convinced, but he let go. They had to get away after all.

"Where is he?! What've you done!?" Sarah cried, losing hope. The Doctor had to grab her to pull her away.

The Doctor grabbed hers and Rose's hand and the trio started to run for their lives. Just like always.

And then, the school exploded. The children assembled outside, all burst into cheer and applause.

Everyone were cheering and chanting 'Kenny! Kenny! Kenny!', patting him on the back. Only the Doctor and Sarah Jane stood separately from the merriment. Sarah Jane looking distraught. Rose backed away to the side, letting them have their moment.

She walked towards Mickey, who was yelling happily at the sight. Only when he witnessed Rose's state did his smile drop.

"Oh, my God, Rose." He rushed to her side. "Do-" he began to shout for help, but she placed a palm on his mouth.

"Don't."

"But you're all bloody and-" he began, but seconds later found Rose's arms wrapped up against him.
"Just let me rest. And leave them be," she whispered. "Please." And with that Mickey just held her in surrender. He took one last glance at the Doctor as he held Sarah's sobbing form. Mickey frowned at that. He was furious at the Doctor. What bloody Doctor was he, if he left injured person be, and instead was busy snuggling with another woman.

_Just what did Rose see in him?_

"Don't." Rose's voice reached him.

"Don't what?" Mickey asked, confused.

"Don't blame him."

_Great. She was still defending him._

"It's nothing. It's just a graze. I'm not that fragile." She didn't want him to see her like that. She could take care of herself. She had to, if she wanted to survive the final battle. She had to be strong enough by herself.

After everything calmed down, Rose snuck out to the TARDIS bathroom, just before everyone else came inside it and took care of her wound.

It was not that deep really. Well, TARDIS might have helped her a bit by bringing a gel to her side, but overall, everything was fine. Really. Only that...headache. Was a bit off...

"Cuppa tea?" The Doctor gestured to the TARDIS, as he stood there, outside with Sarah.

She was very surprised to see the newly decorated TARDIS, but she found it nice. While Sarah Jane was looking around, taking her new surroundings, Rose approached them in the console room. All her clothes changed, and her body free of any redness.

"Oh, Rose." Sarah was first to notice her as she met her in a hug. Rose responded just as warmly.

"Are you alright?" the woman asked seriously. Rose chuckled at that. "Yeh. Good as new," she joked. Sarah smiled a bit at that. The Doctor was watching the two cautiously. He wanted to say something, but it felt like he didn't have place in there to butt in, so he found himself busy with the console.

"Don't disappear on him like that," Sarah whispered to Rose, as both of them walked further away from the console.

"Eh?" Rose asked, a bit lost.

"He was a great mess when he found that you were not in the room." Sarah smiled at her gently.

"He was?" Rose grimaced a bit.

"Oh yeh."

"I should apologize then," Rose whispered.

"You can do that later." She smiled warmly at Rose. "It's time for me to go now, but if you need me for anything - find me." Sarah squeezed Rose's hands tightly. "I'm on your side."
"I'll." Rose gave her a reassuring smile. "And thank you."

Somewhere in the middle, Mickey decided that he wanted to travel with them. Maybe feeling overprotective of Rose from the last scene he had witnessed, Sarah Jane already left at her home, with a newly restored K9, and now only Rose and the Doctor were present in the console room. Mickey exploring the width of the TARDIS.

As the Doctor was fiddling with the console buttons, Rose just sat there on the jump seat. Her head was still a bit spinning, but now not from the bump. Her mid was uneasy, and she wanted desperately to let go of that feeling.

"Doctor?" she called out for him in almost a whisper.

"Mm?" he answered her absentmindedly.

"Can we talk?" she asked softly.

"About?" Still not turning.

"Me," she ended flatly. That made him turn around to face her.

"What about-" he began, then his face twisted. "Your head!" he exclaimed. "How's it? Does it hurt? Did you hit it hard? No, you couldn't know, I need to bring you to the med bay-" he began his blab, which just made Rose chuckle.

The Doctor glanced at her with horror filled eyes. "Did you hit it hard?"

"Forget the head." Rose dismissed him. "I don't want to talk about that."

"We don't need to talk! If you don't want...But I need to check you out." As he grabbed her hand, ready to drag her out. Rose was still chuckling at his reaction, when a sudden fear wave hit her.

He would scan her. NO. She couldn't let that happen.

She let herself lose of his grip, as she sat there in the jump seat. Her face unreadable. The Doctor looked at her like she gone mad.

"Let's just talk, yeh?" she pleaded him with her eyes. The Doctor just rubbed the back of his neck, as he sighed, leaning on the console while looking at her, his hands in his pockets.

"Fine."

"I lied to you." Was her first words, making the Doctor shiver inwardly at once.

What did she lie to him about? All kind of horrible thoughts swirling in his head. But it didn't take long, because soon Rose continued.

"I think it's fair, that you know it."

"Know what?" he whispered. Quite a bit scared to hear the rest.

"I lost someone," Rose began faintly, playing with her fingers, fidgeting. The Doctor narrowed his eyes, letting her continue, but unsure where was this coming from.

"He was my..." Rose struggled with the words. Friend? Comrade? Gang member? Teammate? Oh,
She's catching his flu of the lack of words. "Partner," she finally exhaled.

The Doctor raising an eyebrow at her. "We used to travel together," she continued, the Doctor just nodded slowly.

"He...He showed me how much more there was to the world. He showed me the universe!" She smiled at him with her watery eyes, the Doctor just nodded in understanding. Taking her words as metaphor.

After a short pause she continued. "He was the one who introduced me to aliens," she stated calmly.

Pause.

The Doctor just stared at her like she had grown a second head. What? Did he hear her right? Did she just-

"Yes," Rose answered to his thoughts. "I'm not new to alien life." She shook her head slightly, smiling. "And a year ago wasn't the first time I saw them." She looked at him apologetically.

The Doctor was showing unreadable expression. His gaze somewhere in the distance. It was quite blank. It looked like it needed more information, because now, this one, just made him stay stunned to the floor.

"I've been travelling in time for 2 and a half years, Doctor." His name, coming from her mouth shook him. He gazed at her and saw all her words play out in her eyes. Such deep emotions and all that knowledge. It was it. The answer he wanted. The answer he feared just came out of her mouth when he least expected.

He truly didn't know how he felt about it, though. He was glad, of some sorts. That it was not some kind of, UNIT or another governor organisation out there to hunt him and sent this pink and yellow human at him.

Not that he really was against UNIT. He worked for them and with them for a time... But they all were gone now, everyone he knew. Now new faces occupied their seats and judging from his encounter with them in 10 Downing Street, didn't have that much trust in him.

So it could have been them sending Rose at him...And that was only a guess on his part. One of the possibilities he thought would have been possible. No matter how unfit Rose would have looked working for UNIT. Or wasn't she?

Rose Tyler, Defender of the Earth

Where did that thought come from? He shook his head, closing his eyes to shake the thoughts away. Then he started to pace around the console room, walking in circles and triangles, his hands free off his pockets. Suddenly coming to a stop to stare in the distance.

So he should have been glad. But what was that other emotion? Something in his stomach. Something in his head was working out the facts. He frowned at the thought that he was not the first to show her the universe. So he was not so special to her after all? His gaze darkened even more at that.

"Doctor?" Rose asked cautiously.

Oh, no. This wasn't a good sign, right? He didn't like that she had witnessed aliens before. Will he
tells her to go home now? Was he disappointed? Rose frowned, being unable to read his expression. And just when she was edging to press her hand on his arm, he abruptly turned to face her, his eyes wide, mouth eager to ask the question.

"You said aliens and time travel," he stated, looking at her frantically, pointing at her direction. Rose was too startled to process things so she just nodded.

"How?" He frowned, as he asked.

"W-what?" She shook her head, missing the point.

"How were you able to travel through time?" he asked her in a serious, impatient voice. "If I hadn't met your family, I could have thought that maybe you were not from this century, but now that clearly being not the case and as there are no time travel in this time yet, weell..." He came to a stop to consider, looking upwards. "There's always me, right?" Asking nobody in particular.

"Anyway! Now that it's not me-" He trailed off.

"How in the world were you able to travel through time!?!" ended the last sentence with a raised eyebrow, a bit of curiosity added.

Rose chuckled slightly, making the Doctor stare at her intensely. Oh, the irony of that. It has always been you! She wanted to shout at him.

"Well," she started slowly, locking his gaze to hers. "He was not from...here," she ended a bit mysteriously. The Doctor was giving her the look that it was not enough. Rose gulped, glancing sideways.

"He had a ship, of some sort." She shrugged, trying to play innocent.

"A ship," the Doctor repeated flatly.

"Yep," Rose ended with a p.

"So what's that ship called?" he persisted. Now that was the hard part. Couldn't he just let her go?

"I'm not sure..." She glanced to her shoes. "He always..." She bit her lip, looking sideways. "There was just a lot of things I didn't know about him, yeh?" She looked at him, pleading that he would drop it.

But he didn't. Or not entirely. "And you were alright with that?" he asked in disbelief. "Not knowing where you're going, how you're going, just trusting a complete stranger and swooning off?" he raised his voice in concern at the end of the sentence.

"Sounds hell of a lot like someone I know," Rose sang in a whisper. The Doctor frowned at that. Then the realisation hit him.

"Rose! Do you do this all the time!?!" he half-shouted at her, making her jump a bit, as her head shot up to face him.

"Doing what?" she snapped.

"Running off with strangers!" he cried. "Like there is nothing to be-..." He turned his head sideways. "Hold on. Hold on." He placed his hands before himself, like trying to still the movements around. "Hm...No wonder." He nodded in his self understanding manner. "Oh, no wonder...that explains...yeh..."
"Um, Doctor?" Rose waved a hand before his face.

"Mm?" He turned absentmindedly. "Oh, right, right. We were talking..." He trailed off again.

"Yes, we were!" Rose laughed. "Until you gone off to your own world and I haven't seen you since." She beamed at him.

"No, I was just...processing...things...certain things...important things." He looked at her. "Facts. Like-" He was starting to gesture with his hands. "Like tying the knots together and see if they fit." He frowned. "No, that doesn't necessary have to fit. Wait a moment. Hold on. Hold on." He had his face in his palms, walking in circles. "Ah!" he exclaimed, stopping in his tracks, making Rose step backwards a bit. She just made his head a mess. That much she knew.

"Like a puzzle!" he exclaimed in a total bliss that he found the word he was searching for, Rose was laughing nervously, unsure where did their conversation stood at the moment.

"Oh, I love puzzle!" The Doctor beamed at her. "I used to play it all the time when I was a kid! But always the white one, completely white one, can you imagine?" He looked at her expectedly. "Just one blank white picture, gathered together from millions of pieces." He gestured a rainbow with his hand. "Although." He grimaced. "It's a bit boring, don't you think? Not that I thought-" He was interrupted still half mouth open by Rose's sudden outburst.

"Doctor!" she yelled at him, eyes filled with rage. Rage? Why would there be rage?

"What?" he asked in complete dense tone.

"We. were. talking. Remember?" She looked at him with furrowed brows. "Before the whole puzzle thing, the whole tying knots and sorts. Remember?"

"Oh, yeh." Realisation on his face. "Right. Right. We were. Where did we left of?" He was like asking her, but the minute she opened her mouth, she was shushed. "No no no no, shush. I remember. Yeh. Right. Strangers. Running. Strangers. Running with strangers!" He was back to his previous worried and hyper mood.

Rose sighed.

"What were you thinking!?" he asked her like she had just told him she had her hand placed in the lion's mouth. Well, their travels could have been considered as that...

"You don't even know half of it!" But she decided to snap.

"Because you're not telling!" he snapped back.

"I've already told you enough!" she cried.

The Doctor just stared at her. "You wanted to know, what was the big secret about me, yeh?" she began casually. "Well, there it is! I have been travelling around aliens for a year and a half before you-" She gestured to him. "That's why I was looking strange to you. That's where the whole Madcap-y came from!" She was panting heavily at her last words. She didn't mean to snap. Not really. And she told him some truths about herself, which she frankly speaking, was beginning to scare her now.

*What had she done?*

She glanced at him worriedly, but what she saw made her blink. The Doctor was just shaking his
head at her. A smile was making its way on his face. He suddenly felt a dash of happiness. *It was just that!*

"Madcap-y doesn't come from your knowledge of the aliens. It's from your behaviour!" He gestured at her, his face composed.

Rose just gulped. "Okay..." She trailed off, looking at him.

"Now then. Where to now?" He dashed to the console, clasping his hands.

"W-what?" Rose just stood there in bewilderment. "Is that it?" she asked of his back.

"Is that it of what?" he asked her nonchalantly.

"You not gonna ask more? Just like that?"

"What more to ask?" He turned to face her, as he continued to walk backwards, his hands held up to his sides. "You told me about your travels, now let me show you ours." He grinned at her one of his best smiles.

Rose swallowed her tears from the sight. Was it so simple? Just that tiny bit of information made him relax so much? Was it really enough? And before she knew it, she flung herself at him, wrapping her hands around his neck.

"Rose, what is it?" he asked her worriedly, wrapping his own arms around her back. "Hey." As she snuggled herself into his shoulders.

"I thought you wouldn't want me anymore," she whispered, that making the Doctor chuckle.

"Why wouldn't I want you?" He told her gently, as he held her more tightly, smiling to himself. Sure he knew she didn't tell him everything, but this was more than enough. Gradually she could tell him more.

Feeling the need to lift up the mood, he decided to literally lift Rose up, as her legs left the ground for a moment and with a gentle thud reaching it again. Then he let go of her just to start to rush about the console madly. A sudden wave of energy filling him inside.

"What's the commotion?" Mickey's voice echoed from their backs.

The Doctor made little effort to glance at Mickey, as he locked his gaze to Rose, grinning at her, before reaching the last button.

"Allons-y!"

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*to be continued...*

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Chapter End Notes

Any thoughts? No?
Somewhere in the starry sky, three thousand years in Rose's future, with a bit of a thud, TARDIS materialised in the spaceship. The Doctor was first to come out, followed by Mickey and then Rose. Both of the men taking their surroundings with wonder. Soon enough, the Doctor informed both of them it being fifty first's century's spaceship and Mickey couldn't suppress his absolute excitement. The smell of the barbecued crew almost made Rose gag, but she forced herself to stay composed.

Rose grimaced a bit. Definitely not the spaceship she would have chosen for herself. She thought she got over it, but it still made her heart hurt a bit. All the memories rushing from this trip...Frankly speaking, she had no idea how would the Doctor react this time. If they hadn't had that talk about Rose's travels, she would have been sure that she would have been abandoned five hours and more. If he would have ever really came back to her... But now. It felt like they have settled some problems. No?

Rose shook her head. No more feeling sorry for oneself. What she regretted the most, after this trip the last time, was that the Doctor was basically in charge of everything. He went out there, met people, saved them, while Rose with Mickey just stayed there on the spaceship, awaiting their fates. Now times were different.

If he could go explore, so could she. Here is nothing to explore. But 1727 France! That's another story.

And there they stood. Facing the fireplace, connecting the two worlds - standing tall. The Doctor was, obviously, first to rush towards it.

"Well, there's something you don't see in your average spaceship. Eighteenth century! French! Nice mantel." He pulled out the sonic screwdriver, pointing it at the fireplace.

"Not a hologram," he announced.

"Not even a reproduction, this actually is an eighteenth century French fireplace. Double-sided, there's another room through there." He bended down, examining it more closely. Rose was leaning on one side of it, watching him. Mickey was just...somewhere there.

"Hello." The Doctor's sudden voice, startled her. She squatted down, next to him, to see a young girl with long blonde hair, dressed in a nightgown, looking back at the Doctor.

"Hello?" the girl answered, a bit confused.

"What's your name?" the Doctor asked her casually.

"Reinette," she answered like it was obvious.

"Reinette, that's a lovely name," the Doctor said encouragingly. "Can you tell me where you are at the moment, Reinette?" Curiosity taking over him.

"In my bedroom." The girl already feeling suspicious, but still answered.
The Doctor nodded, before continuing. "And where's your bedroom? Where do you live, Reinette?"

"Paris, of course." She laughed at the oblivious man.

"Paris, right!" The Doctor laughed himself.

"Monsieur, what are you doing..." She glanced him over. "In my fireplace?"

"Oh, it's just a routine..." The Doctor shook his head nonchalantly. "Fire check." Rose smiled at his silly excuses. "Can you tell me what year it is?" he continued.

"Of course I can! Seventeen hundred and twenty seven."

"Right, lovely!" The Doctor nodded smiling, a bit silly. "One of my favourites..." He stopped to consider. "August is rubbish though. Stay indoors." Back to his cheerful self. "Okay, that's all for now. Thanks for your help. Hope you enjoy the rest of the fire. Night night!" As he stood up.

"Goodnight Monsieur." Was the girl's last words.

"You said this was the fifty-first century," Mickey said at once.

"I also said this ship was generating enough power to punch a hole in the universe. I think we just found the hole," he began blithely. "Must be a spatio-temporal hyperlink," he muttered.

"What's that?" Mickey asked with his eyes wide. Rose just shook her head.

"No idea. Just made it up. Didn't wanna say 'magic door',' the Doctor answered him simply, leaving Mickey pouting. Rose snorted at the sight.

"What?" The Doctor looked at her innocently.

"Oh, nothing. Just you being..." She gestured. "You." Her hand at her mouth.

The Doctor raised an eyebrow at her, but as he was not saying anything, Rose continued.

"So..." she began. "On the other side of this..." In a deeper voice. "Magic door."

The Doctor held his gaze to Rose's for a moment, before abruptly turning his head sideways, tucking on his ear as he tried to sound nonchalant.

"Well... she was speaking French. Right period French, too." He nodded, purposely not meeting Rose's eyes. Rose pressed her lips together, to suppress the smile, breaking on its way at his reaction.

"She was speaking English, I heard her!" Mickey butted in, when the Doctor walked off in the room to drop his coat, coming back to the fireplace, moments later.

"That's the TARDIS - translates for ya." Rose told Mickey absentmindedly as she followed the Doctor to the fireplace. Not letting you escape now.

The Doctor was already searching for the way to go through and just as he pressed the right switch, the wall began to rotate, taking the Doctor together with Rose on the other side of the fireplace.

"Rose! Doctor!" Mickey's shouts were the last things heard when the pair found themselves in
Reinette's bedroom.

"What did you do that for?" The Doctor looked at her puzzled.

"Can't let you go have fun by yourself." Rose gave him a serious look.

"So decided to join me?" He grinned at her teasingly.

"Oh, you love my company," she teased him back.

"Yes, I do." Both of them looking at each other intensely with wide smiles.

"Anyway." Rose suddenly turned her gaze away. "I'm not letting you enjoy France all by yourself." She gave him a pointed look. "I always wanted to go there," she continued, while stepping away from the fireplace, further inside the room, taking in her surroundings.

"Why didn't you say so?" The Doctor quickly by her side. "I could always get you there with the TARDIS."

"And where's the fun in that?" she teased him, looking at him with a smile on her face. "Things like that-" She gestured to the room. "Is what adventure is all about." Ending with tongue between her teeth.

"I surrender." The Doctor chuckled faintly, putting his hands in defence mode.

"Who's there?" A girl's voice, made both of them sprung around, as they saw Reinette, sitting on her bed, watching them cautiously.

"It's okay! Don't scream! It's me, it's the fireplace man. Look-" The Doctor lit up the fireplace with his sonic.

"Hello." Rose waved slightly. "I'm his right hand." She smiled warmly at the girl.

"How can you be his right hand?" The girl looked Rose up suspiciously.

_Tick tock. Tick tock._

Rose glanced at the Doctor, who didn't seem to mind the last sentence. "I thought the kings and emperors all had their right hands," she whispered, leaning to the Doctor's side.

"Well." He shrugged. "She's young-"

"I heard that!" Reinette frowned, clearly unhappy. "And I know what it means. I'm seven already. You can't be his right hand though."

"And why not?" Rose didn't want to budge. Even as a little girl, so cheeky.

"You're a woman!" Reinette announced.

"I am, yeh," Rose agreed with head held high. "It's not a crime being one in 1727, is it?"

"Early eighteenth century," the Doctor whispered in her ear. "They have no women working with the fireplaces.

"Oh. Right." Rose seemed to realise that. The Doctor just shook his head, smiling in amusement.
"Anyway!" he exclaimed. "Oh, look at that!" As he walked out towards the window. "It's winter!" Smiling in total bliss. "White piles of snow, covering the streets of Paris. What more to ask?"

Rose rolled her eyes and turned around to face the fireplace. Then she froze.

"Doctor," she whispered, her voice shaky.

"Mm?" The Doctor walked over her casually. Then he spotted what Rose just saw. The broken clock.

"Are you a Doctor?" Reinette asked. "I thought you said you were the fireplace man."

Instead of answering, the Doctor continued to stare at the clock on the mantel with his mouth open, looking slightly fearful.

"Okay, that's scary..." he breathed, slightly backing away, grasping Rose's hand, pulling her away too.

"You're scared of a broken clock?" Reinette asked him sceptically.

"Just a bit scared, yeah. Just a little tiny bit," the Doctor began, releasing a hold of Rose. "'Cause you see, if this clock's broken."

"And it's the only clock in the room...Then what's that?" he whispered, as the sound grew louder.

"Now. Let's think." He walked to check the curtains, but found nothing there. Rose moved to check the other pair. Still nothing.

"'Cause you see that's not a clock." The Doctor looked around. "You can tell by the resonance." He started moving slowly. "Too big. Six feet, I'd say." Reinette was taking calming breaths. "Size of a man," the Doctor ended.

"What is it?" Reinette asked softly. Scared to the bone.

"If you were a thing that ticks and you were hiding in someone's bedroom," he spilled fast. "First thing you do : break the clock. No one notices the sound of one clock ticking, but two?" He paused.

"You might start to wonder if you're really alone," he said in a low voice, steadily moving towards
the girl's bed. Rose tried to approach it too, but the Doctor stilled her to stay there with his hand.

"Stay on the bed. Right in the middle." He instructed Reinette, crouching down on the floor. "Don't put your hands or feet over the edge." As he pulled his sonic screwdriver out.

As he peered underneath the bed before turning on the sonic screwdriver to scan, suddenly something smacked the Doctor backwards, knocking the screwdriver out of his hand. Reinette and Rose both gasped at that. Rose for different reasons than Reinette though.

The Doctor was still scrambling on the floor, looking underneath, while Rose stood there, face to face, only the child's bed separating her and the being whose feet the Doctor spotted standing there from under the bed. She gulped at the sight. As the Doctor slowly started to stand up, looking at Reinette with wide eyes, Rose whispered, not breaking her gaze.

"Reinette...Don't look around," she whispered.

A figure was standing on the other side of the bed, wearing a creepy clown-like mask and leering down at Reinette, who was looking terrified.

"You stay exactly where you are." The Doctor instructed to Reinette then glancing to the figure, back at Reinette, again at the figure, then back at Reinette.

"Hold still, let me look..." The Doctor bended down and grasped Reinette's head between his hands, staring intently into her eyes with a disturbed expression, before looking back at the figure.

"You've been scanning her brain!" he announced, shocked.

*With only a touch he knew that.* Rose could only be glad that she managed to avoid being scanned by the Doctor for the time being. Otherwise, she was not sure what he would find.

"What, you've crossed two galaxies and thousands of years just to scan a child's brain?" The Doctor looked at the figure with horrified and incredulous expression. "What could there be in a little girl's mind worth blowing a hole in the universe?"

Hmm. Still don't know how important she is to them. To you. No! Let's not think that. Rose shook her head.

"I don't understand... it wants me?!" Renette asked, clearly scared, but the moment she turned around to look at the figure, she didn't even flinch at the sight. "You want me?"

The figure's head twitched to one side as it spoke in a distinctly mechanical voice.

"Not yet. You are incomplete."

"Incomplete?" the Doctor asked sarcastically. "What's that mean, 'incomplete'?" He grimaced.

The droid did not answer, just stared at Reinette for a few moments, but then it caught sight of Rose. Before the Doctor could react, as he was once again watching Reinette, the droid held his arm at Rose, giving her a chance only to blink when some sort of light lit her head. Probably a scan.

"What did you do!?" The Doctor stood up, pointing his sonic screwdriver threateningly at it, glancing with the corner of his eye at Rose.

"You all right?" he asked her, still holding his gaze at the droid.

"Yeh..." Rose breathed. "I think."
And then the words, which gave her shivers, escaped the droid's mouth.

"You're compatible. Temporarily."

"What do you mean she's compatible!?!" The Doctor's voice sounded dark now. "You can answer her. You can answer me."

The droid again did not answer, instead it began walking in jerky movements around the bed and now stood facing the Doctor. When it extended an arm, a menacing looking blade slid out near the Doctor's face. He just tilted his head away, pushing Rose behind him.

"Monsieur, be careful!" Reinette's voice echoed inside the room.

"Just a nightmare, Reinette, don't worry about it." He glanced at her, then back at the figure. "Everyone has nightmares." He began backing away, droid pursuing.

"Rose. Portal!" He instructed, as the droid swipe at him, making him duck the attack and walk in circles with the monster. Rose rushed at the fireplace to get a hold of the switch to move it.

"Ready!" she yelled back to him.

"Even monsters from under the bed have nightmares, don't you, monster?" he teased the droid, backing away to the fireplace now once more.

The droid slashed at the Doctor again, but he managed to evade the attack, by jumping to the side and now the droid's blade was stuck in the mantel.

"What do monsters have nightmares about?" Reinette asked suspiciously.

"Me! HA!" the Doctor exclaimed as Rose hit the switch, taking the trio to the other side.

"Doctor, Rose!" Mickey's delighted voice greeted them.

As the fireplace finished turning, the Doctor ran to grab a gun-like object from the wall, using it to spray ice at the droid. Rose was already at Mickey's side. After a bit of a struggle, the droid convulsed in a last, vain attempt to free itself before freezing completely.

"Excellent, ice gun!" Mickey smiled in approval.

The Doctor turned around to face them both and calmly threw the gun at Rose, who caught it.

"Fire extinguisher," the Doctor corrected him.

"Where did it come from?" Mickey asked.

"Here," the Doctor stated.

Before Mickey could add more, the Doctor suddenly turned to face Rose.

"Now you!" He pointed at her, making her blink. "You're staying here. No more trips to France. We don't know what it wants from you, but it can not be good," he muttered before facing the droid again. Soon enough, he dropped its wig down, to reveal its actual head - an ornate clockwork mechanism, covered with a clear plastic egg shape. The Doctor couldn't help but admire it.

"Oh." His mouth fell open. "You're beautiful!" he exclaimed.
"It wants you?" Mickey asked Rose, surprised.

"It wants Reinette. I was just...how did you call it..." She trailed off in thoughts. "In the way!" she exclaimed.

"And it wants you too," the Doctor added in a low voice, still staring at the head. "You're gorgeous! Look at that!" he cried.

"That's not gonna stop me..." Rose muttered under her breath, the Doctor was oblivious to that, too immersed into the sight ahead.

"It would be a crime, it would be an act of vandalism to disassemble you," he continued. He took one last wistful look at the droid, before holding up the sonic screwdriver, preparing to point it at the clock.

"But that won't stop me," he said sadly. However, before the Doctor could do anything, the droid teleported itself out.

"Short range teleport, can't have got far. Could still be on board..." The Doctor trailed off and went towards the monitor.

"Just need..." He pressed a few buttons. "Hmm." Looking at it. Rose smiled at the sight. Now was her opportunity. She tossed the gun at Mickey, him barely catching it, as she walked towards the Doctor.

"Eighteenth century France," Rose began in a luring voice, leaning slightly on the table.

"Yeh. We just learnt that," the Doctor replied her absentmindedly. He hummed in silent self understanding and after a few backward leaps, ran off to the TARDIS. Rose was tailing behind him, but the Doctor was fast as wind. Not long after she stepped inside the ship, she spotted the Doctor already hovering above the console.

"I just need..." He was focusing on the readings on the monitor. Rose joined him near the console, not letting her plan go.

"France. Parties...Dancing..." Rose tried to hint him. It seemed to snap the Time Lord out of his musings for a slight moment.

"What, you want to go dancing now?" The Doctor looked at her incredulously, as he just bent his head to the side in puzzlement. His random moments of catching the phrases... But he quickly turned back, facing the monitor again.

"I'm sure we could find some dancing floors down there." Rose nodded, speaking in a low voice.

"We're currently helping a little girl not to be used for Clock Droids' with carnival masks purposes," he sang in reminder.

A somewhat awkward silence followed his words. It managed to disturb his work a bit, his thoughts trailing off to thoughts of what wrong had he said. He frowned, not being able to grasp it. And then it clicked him. He turned to face her and when he saw her grinning, his own face lit up.

"You know whose house is that," he noted.

"Well." She shrugged nonchalantly. "I might recognise the fireplace."
"Not hiding anymore, are you?" He giggled, beaming at her. Rose gave him her tongue between her teeth smile. "So, who's it?" he asked her, totally eager to know.

"Oh, where's the fun in that." She backed away from him, when she sensed the Doctor getting closer to her. She was walking backwards, towards the doors, still grinning. "I have a proposal for you," she said, stopping just at the doors.

"Oh?" The Doctor raised an eyebrow at her. "And what might that be?" he asked, looking in her eyes with expectation.

"I bet you five quid who can get the first dance with The Royals," she said seriously, but with a playful tease thrown in between.


"That. I won't say." She laughed.

"Oh. Come on," he groaned.

"Find out yourself, Time Lord," she teased him, poking him in the chest.

"Five quid for the first dance?" He looked at her incredulously. "That's a bit cheap."

"Ten quid?" she asked softly.

"Deal." They both grinned at each other and Rose flew the doors open, running back to the spaceship.

To nobody's surprise, really, she found Mickey standing near the fireplace, completely lost as to what was going on, the gun still in his hands.

"Mickey!" Rose ran to him and hugged him briefly.

"Y-yeah?" he stammered a bit.

"Hold that gun, no matter what. Be careful. Got that?" She looked at him seriously.

"Why? Is there danger?"

"Not unless you ask for it." The Doctor's voice caught their ears, as he walked into the room, getting close to the fireplace. "Don't go looking for them!" He pointed a finger at Rose and Mickey, pressing the switch, as the fireplace started to rotate.

"Can't promise that!" Rose yelled out for him.

"Don't!" He pointed one last time at her.

"Will be back in a sec!" His voice echoing in the room.

When the Doctor seemed successfully gone, Rose began to walk away, further inside the spaceship.

"He said not to look for it!" Mickey called out for her.

"Yes, he did!" she said seriously, facing him. Mickey glanced at her suspiciously, when he saw her face lit up in a wide grin. "Stay there. Wait till he comes back. I'll be back in a sec myself." She
waved at him and with one last grin disappeared from Mickey's sight.

"Oh, just great," Mickey muttered. "At least before they would go in one direction. Now in two opposites."

"Reinette?" the Doctor called out for her as soon as he entered her bedroom. "Reinette?" He tried again and soon enough a young beautiful woman walked inside the room.

"Oh. Hello. I'm just looking for Reinette." The Doctor looked around. "This is... still her room, right?" he asked cautiously. "I've been away, not sure for how long..." he muttered.

"Reinette! We're ready to go!" a voice from downstairs called.

"Go to the carriage, mother, I will join you there," the woman called back, holding her gaze to the Doctor's.

A grin of realisation spread across the Doctor's face.

"It is customary, I think," Reinette began teasingly. "To have an imaginary friend only during one's childhood. You are to be congratulated on your persistence."

"Reinette...!" the Doctor exhaled in amazement. Reinette smiled back at him.

"Well." The Doctor looked her up and down. "Goodness, how you've grown." He nodded.

"And you do not appear to have aged a single day," she said, approaching him. "That is tremendously impolite of you. Although, I must note that you're missing your right hand with you this time round." She chuckled.

"Eh?" He looked at her confused. "Oh. Right." As he realised. "Only one hand now." He waggled his fingers at her. "She tends to run off somewhere." He shrugged, laughing nervously.

"Should I be concerned of her ever reaching you back?" she asked sheepishly.

"She always finds her way back home," the Doctor replied smiling warmly at her.

"So she is home... to you," Reinette whispered softly, lowering her gaze. The Doctor completely oblivious to that.

"Or!" he exclaimed. "I just have to find her." He shrugged, smiling. Reinette smiled back at him. She then approached him to touch his cheek, examining him. The Doctor's eyes widened.

"Well, you seem to be flesh and blood, at any rate, but this is absurd." She looked troubled. "Reason tells me you cannot be real."

"Oh, pfft... You never want to listen to reason..." he joked.

"Mademoiselle! Your mother grows impatient," a voice, sounding a bit familiar to the Doctor's ear, called out in the distance. The Doctor grimaced at that in thought. Weird.

"A moment!" Reinette called back. She could see the Doctor's attention was drifting away.

"So many questions. So little time," she said in a soft, urgent voice, and in a second the Doctor found himself pulled towards her, her lips passionately attacking his.
The Doctor was stunned by that reaction, not exactly making effort to move. His eyes were still open wide as they registered blonde hair. Instinctively he reached out to cup the woman's head in his hands, his eyes closing down, even kissing back.

"Oh, don't blame me for that. Her body moved on its own."

A sudden memory filling his thoughts.

"Rose," he whispered, as he grazed his lips with the woman kissing him. Then in a flash, both of them stumbled backwards. Each of them at the opposite sides. Both watching each other with wide confused eyes, breathing a bit laboured.

"Well, that's a cruel way to reject a woman." Reinette laughed slightly, feeling uncomfortable.

"What? Oh, no no. Sorry. I'm so sorry!" The Doctor began to apologize with all sincerity. He couldn't really understand himself what just happened, even less explain someone that, or in this case, apologize. Which! He thought was necessary.

A laugh made the pair jump at their feet.

"Ain't this our routine of meeting each other?" A cheeky voice caught the Doctor's attention. He stepped away from Reinette to see who was talking.

"Jack?" he exclaimed in disbelief.

"Hey, Doc." He saluted then glanced back at Reinette. "Reinette." As he winked at her.

"Jean, what are you doing here? I told you not to enter my bedroom as you please." She chided Jack. A smile breaking its way on her face.

"Jean?" The Doctor eyed him sceptically.

"My French name." Jack bowed gracefully.

"You two actually know each other," Reinette noted, gesturing to them both. "I guess it's to be expected that two mysteries of my life just happened to be acquaintances."


"Oh, he has a handsome face," Reinette agreed.

"I bet he does," the Doctor sang, chuckling. Jack gave him a dangerous look.

"Reinette?" A voice from downstairs could be heard.

"Coming!" she called out. "It's time for me to go." She spared one last glance at the Doctor and Jack and walked out of the room. Both men's gazes following her as she left.

Then Jack suddenly got serious. "I knew you had problems with Rosie, but not to such depth."

"We don't have problems." The Doctor just shook his head. Then he tilted his head, his eyes narrowing. "She told me about him."

"Told you what?" Jack asked, just to be sure.
"I know you are aware of it, Jack," the Doctor said in a low voice.

A pause.

"Oh. So you know," Jack breathed. How much did he know? Certainly couldn't know everything, right? "What exactly did she tell you?" he asked faintly.

"Weeell." The Doctor began to pace around the room, tugging on his ear. "That she had lost her partner with whom she travelled among the stars, and all that."

"So she did not tell you that I knew," Jack stated.

"Yeeh, but I figured as much." The Doctor came to a stop, his hands in his pockets, staring at Jack for a moment.

"Ok-ay," Jack began slowly. "And you're unhappy about it." He looked into the Doctor's eyes, trying to gauge his reaction.

"About what?" The Doctor shook his head, confused.

"That she told me before you."

That kinda hit the sore spot. But the Doctor didn't let it show. "Nah, 'course not!" he exclaimed blithely. "She's free to tell whoever she feels most comfortable with." He pulled out his sonic to fiddle with it.

Jack snorted at that. The jealous Time Lord. The Doctor raised an eyebrow at him.

"What?" he asked.

Jack only shook his head at him. "But really, she told me first only because I knew him."

"You knew him?" The Doctor stopped to tinker his sonic and was steadily edging towards Jack. "Personally?"

"It was more like I was aware of his existence." Jack trailed off. Maybe should have stayed silent.

"What does that mean?" the Doctor persisted. Those words games were getting on his nerves.

"Not my place to tell, Doc." Jack pulled his hands in defence. "But wait a moment." After a short pause he continued. "Did you just say she told you he was her partner?"

"Yeh. Why?" the Doctor asked in bewilderment.

Jack smirked inwardly. "Oh God." He faked a concerned and shocked look. "She didn't mention that bit to me."

"What do you mean?" the Doctor asked, not sure where this was going. "You said you knew about her travels."

"About travels. Yeh." Jack nodded, face serious. "But I didn't know it was so serious." He faked an apologetic smile at the Doctor, which just made him more confused.

"What is?" He frowned in confusion.

"Well, partner. You know." Jack shrugged.
"Yeh, so?" The Doctor shook his head questioningly.

"Partner," Jack uttered it meaningfully, gazing at him intensely.

The Doctor just stared at him for a moment, before he tilted his head, rolling his eyes. "Should have known. Everything comes to that for you," he muttered, as he turned to go towards the fireplace.

"All I do is say hello. Usually. But that's how it all starts! It's just a simple truth of life." Jack shrugged. The Doctor just gave him a look.

"You said yourself. Partner. There's only one explanation, even by 21st century's morals. Partner equals mate," he continued on lightly. "And I don't mean a British 'mate-'," he laughed.


"And where're you going?" he asked, still giving him a filthy look, as Jack approached the fireplace.

"Going with you," Jack just stated simply.

"What about your life here? Your position?"

"I got this." With that, Jack pulled out a letter from his pocket and placed it on Reinette's bed-table. The Doctor just rolled his eyes as the pair rotated back into spaceship.

Back at the spaceship, Jack and the Doctor found only Mickey standing there, waiting impatiently.

"Doctor! Finally you show up," he complained. Then his eyes focused on the american. "And where did you pick the cheesy one from?" He frowned.

"Been missing you too, Mickey Mouse." Jack grinned at him

"Where's Rose?" the Doctor asked with concern.

"She just ran off." Mickey shrugged. "Same time as you, just in the opposite direction."

"And you just let her?" The Doctor looked at him in disbelief.

"What was I supposed to do?" Mickey said indignantly.

The Doctor just shook his head. Giving up on Mickey. "Every time. Every time. Rule number one. Don't wander off. For once, can't she listen when I tell her not to wander off?" he muttered to himself, walking in circles, looking upwards and shaking his head.

"You clearly were wandering off yourself." Jack glanced him up and down, hinting something, which Mickey couldn't catch.

"Don't even start." The Doctor gave him a warning look and went towards the monitor in the room.

"So, what. you snogged Rosie, two times now? One with Cassandra another with her image in Reinette?" Jack teased him. "Or does this one doesn't count? Not being her lips and all?" He winked.

"What?" Mickey asked, feeling like he was just slapped.
"Three times, if you want to be exact. And those each times were not *snogging.*" The Doctor made a meaningful look, as he turned to face Jack, ignoring Mickey and the last part about the very recent events.

"Sure sure." Jack nodded, stifling his chuckle.

"It is!" the Doctor cried. "The first time round, it was to get the Time Vortex out of her, I was still in my ninth body and then regenerated into this." He gestured to himself casually. "It was life and death situation." He gave a serious look at them.

Jack pressed his lips together. Nodding. *Couldn't have used your sonic for that.* Sure. Mickey was listening to all that in confusion and horror.

"The second time, it was not even her! It was Cassandra possessing her body and launching herself at me. I had no way out!” He was desperately trying to defend himself. "And the third time it was with Queen Victoria." He looked sideways. "We both got knighted and banished in the same day. Blimey." Then he shook his head sideways. "Anyway! We were in hiding from this lupine wavelength haemovariform, werewolf, in your language." He made a pointed look at them. "And we just so happened to stand under the mistletoe, so I had to. It was the tradition!" he cried, now leaving Mickey completely mouth-open, eyes unfocused and Jack laughing hysterically.

"What?" the Doctor countered him.

"So, so what you're saying..." Jack tried to calm himself down. "Is basically, that women just keep attacking you?" Jack tried to stay calm and serious, saying that, but was failing miserably.

"I'll say no more." As the Doctor walked away.

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*to be continued...*

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Chapter End Notes

Any comments in regards of the chapter would be much appreciated!
Having just left Mickey standing there, waiting for the Doctor to come back, Rose decided to go for a stroll herself. She passed a few corridors, going past the glass mirror, which she knew was not important as of yet, and then found herself standing in front of a set of white, French double doors. A grin broke on her face.

"That's more like it." As she opened them.

What was beyond those doors, took her breath away. As she stepped out onto a grassy courtyard she came to learn just how beautiful Versailles was. And the Doctor had the fun all for himself back then. She couldn't help but scowl at that. She stood there, near the low pillar, and could see Reinette casually walking with another woman, laughing and chatting about. Rose smiled, watching them. Everything here looked like a picture. Anyone could get lost in here, even the Doctor, or more like, especially him, who wanted to believe in something that was not there. He had lost too much in his life, he desperately wanted to believe in this fairytale.

Rose sighed at those thoughts. This time things were different. Maybe everything will come out right. And as she let her eyes wander through the spectacular view, she spotted a tree branch moving unevenly. She frowned. There didn't seem to be any wind, but that branch was moving. The moment was not left unnoticed. It soon caught Reinette's attention and she sprung around.

Rose had to duck under the wall pillar.

And then she saw it. From the lower glance she could see a figure, a man, definitely a man, hanging on the branch, slightly shaky himself and watching the pair of the women. A stalker? Rose raised an eyebrow. Well, whoever he was - Rose would find out. And with that, she slowly started to move along the wall pillar, until she had to jump over it. Thankfully she was graceful and as she hid herself in the shadows, nobody spotted her, yet.

She then watched the habitats of Versailles until they turned their backs on her and it was safe for Rose to dash towards the tree of her goal. Moments later she was leaning against the same tree, hiding herself out of sight. Nobody saw her. Then she looked up to get a better glance at the man. And she gasped.

"King of France?" She looked at him with wide eyes.

The man in question nearly fell out of the tree, when he looked down to see the source of the voice calling him. He looked at her with horror filled eyes. He was sure nobody would notice him here, and now, there she was. Or was it really a she? Her clothing was way beyond odd.

Not letting his thoughts wander much longer, Rose, after getting a few glances around herself to make sure nobody was watching, flung herself on the same tree branch as the King himself. Some honour.

"What is this? Is it some sort of joke?" the King whispered, clearly scandalised, and embarrassed.

"You can talk." Rose chuckled and in the same moment Reinette turned around once more, making the man stiffen while still looking frantically at Rose.

Rose just put her finger on her lips. Luckily enough, after a moment Madame, or future Madame for that matter, went back to her stroll.

A pair on the branch sighed a relief filled breath. Then at once the King's eyes shot up to look at
"Who are you? What are you doing up here? And what's with your clothing, it's highly improper for a lady. If you are even a lady." He looked her up and down.

"Oi. Eyes off." Rose chided him, it seemed to make the King a bit uncomfortable. "You nearly fell down from this branch, I just came to take a look what was going on," she began blithely.

The King just eyed her suspiciously. "I won't tell Reinette about this. Don't worry." Rose gave him a reassuring smile.

"And why should I believe you?" he asked.

"I have no interest in your personal life," Rose told him seriously, crossing her arms around her chest. "But a piece of advice. If you want to court someone or get to know at least, do that face to face. This act of yours-" She gestured to him. "Is highly inappropriate," she ended in a low voice, making the King fidget.

"Who's there!?" a voice echoed in the garden.

"Uh oh." Rose and the King glanced at each other, as they noticed an attendant walking in circles, searching for the source of the noise.

"We've been caught," the King mumbled, looking downwards with frantic eyes.

"Or not necessarily," Rose whispered barely audible, the King looking at her puzzled. She may have just found the way out.

Then Rose glanced up at the King and beamed at him, making the man perplexed. "I'll save you of this one," she told him, grinning and soon got ready to get down the tree.

"What are you doing? You will get caught!" The King looked frantic.

"I won't, I just found a friend of mine, who might just help me get out," she told him, as she began to slide downwards. Then she looked up to meet the King's gaze. "And don't you ever tell me that my clothing's inappropriate, because if I wore those bouncy dresses as there-" She pointed nonchalantly. "I would never be able to do this." And with that, she whistled. Taking attention of the attendant and one more living being.

"Arthur!" she yelled out. In a flash, a white horse approached from the bushes, leaving the King dumbfounded. Rose ran faster than the attendant already so it didn't take long for her to reach the horse. With one graceful move, she flung herself on him and was ready to make her way towards the exit.

"Who are you? Where are you taking the horse?" the attendant still tried to shout, when seeing the girl urging the horse on. Rose just half turned to grin at the attendant and winked at the King, now hiding behind the bushes (as he had enough time now to come down the tree), looking at her in astonishment.

And with one last hop Rose disappeared inside the fifty-first century spaceship.

On the other side of the spaceship, the newly reformed trio were walking around, looking for a certain someone. The Doctor coming first, then Jack and Mickey. After making a few turns there and there, the Doctor abruptly stopped, making Mickey crash into his back.
"Ouch." Mickey rubbed his nose. The Doctor completely ignored him and faced Jack.

"What were you doing in eighteenth century France anyway?" He raised a questioning eyebrow at him.


"Yeh yeh." He dismissed him with a hand. "But why eighteenth century?"

Jack shrugged nonchalantly. "Had to meet one of the most famous women in France history."

"Who?" The Doctor shook his head, confused.

"Reinette." Jack looked at the Doctor in disbelief.

"And how's she famous?" the Doctor persisted, not yet getting it.

"Reinette Poisson?" Jack raised an eyebrow at him.

"Who's that?" Mickey was completely oblivious.

"Reinette Poisson?!" The Doctor seemed to be getting it now. His mouth began to twitch in a smile. "Later Madame Etoiles? Later still mistress of Louis the Fifteenth, uncrowned Queen of France?"

The Doctor was now beaming in excitement. "Actress, artist, musician, dancer, courtesan? Fantastic gardener!" he exclaimed. "Brilliant! No wonder Rose was talking about the dancing floors. They were in Versailles!"

"I only chose the best." Jack bowed gracefully.

"Oh, don't even start that." The Doctor grimaced at him. "You take everything and everyone living."

"With a rule to not miss the very best." Jack smirked.

"So, hold on. Who's this gardener?" Mickey frowned.

Jack laughed at that, the Doctor just rolled his eyes. "Time you get more history lessons, Mickey dipery boy," he mocked and began to walk further inside. "Come on!" He urged them both with his hands.

They didn't have to walk long before they spotted a glass window on their left.

"It's France again. We can see France," Mickey announced.

"Weell." The Doctor trailed off. "If you consider an eighteenth century fireplace a time window, which obviously has no glass in it. Fireplaces were not made of glass back then. And honestly, glass was not exactly a trend for eighteenth century. And a window is not really a fireplace. Or other way around. A fireplace is not exactly a window. You would really have to stretch the term to get there..." He grimaced in thought. "Blimey. What a muddle." He cleared his throat. "Anyway. If you think like thaaaaat, then... I guess." He nodded nonchalantly. "That's how we've met."

"But this is amazing!" Jack breathed the sight. "You could have spied on me my whole life there and I wouldn't have even known." He shook his head, smiling.
"Believe me, it's the last thing on my schedule." The Doctor gave him a look. And before Jack could comment on that, he added. "Now, no time to waste. We've still got one passenger missing," he exclaimed blithely and turned around just to freeze in his tracks.

Before him, face to face, he found himself staring at the mouth of a certain white being, which his Time Lord's senses identified as a horse, who whinnied in his face, bouncing his head. Jack couldn't stop snickering at that.

When Rose hopped back inside the spaceship, she was grateful how two worlds worked there. As soon as they stepped inside, the white double doors shut itself off, erasing themselves of their existence.

"Convenient." Rose grinned at the sight. And then turned to face forwards. "Come on, Arthur, let's find our designated driver." She grinned to herself and they resumed their jouurney through the spaceship.

They passed a few corridors, which were empty. Good. No droids in the horizon. Until she heard a couple of voices echoing from somewhere on her right. She smiled at the sounds and moved with the horse along the way.

Before long, she spotted three all too familiar faces, bickering with each other. Men. Rose chuckled silently. She saw how the trio stopped to look at the time window and Rose thought it was an opportunity for her to make an entrance. She led the horse the way and stopped just a bit ahead of the trio. What she didn't expect was that the Doctor would be so completely oblivious to his surroundings, that he nearly mouth-crashed with Arthur.

The Doctor stood there, blinking at the white one in front of him, Mickey was looking all puzzled about what was the horse doing in spaceship, and Jack wouldn't stop laughing. Rewind that. Jack? Where did Jack come from?

"Jack!" Rose squealed in happiness, as she jumped off the horse, making the Doctor flinch and blink at her some more, Mickey coming to senses that not only horse was on spaceship but that Rose came on top of it. Only Jack was beaming at her, as she flung herself in his embrace.

"Rosie! Uh, good to see you." He wrapped his arms around her tightly. Both of them laughed in a bliss.

"You're here! How comes you're here?" Rose beamed at her friend, when they parted from their hug.

"Came to have a chat with Madame de Pompadour." He smirked at her meaningfully.

"You didn't..." Rose gapped at him with eyes wide. Jack just laughed, shrugging.

"You are kidding, aren't you?" The Doctor came forward now with furrowed brows.

"As much as I would love to tease you some more-" Jack began. "I have to say that...no. I only had a good time becoming her friend."


"Blimey, look at this guy," Mickey muttered, looking at the glass window. "Who does he think he is?" He frowned.
"The King of France." Rose spoke softly, beaming at the sight.

"How do you know?" The Doctor looked at her questioningly.

"Oh, I might have gone on a stroll to meet The King of France." Rose shrugged nonchalantly, but a smile tugging on her lips.

"You did what?" the Doctor asked in bewilderment.

"That's where I fetched Arthur," she continued.

"Arthur?" Mickey and Jack asked in unison, later glancing at each other uncomfortably.

"The horse there." She gestured to him, who only whinnied, nodding his head.

"Good name for a horse." The Doctor looked approvingly at her. *Considering it was you who named him, but oh well.*

"So, what've you been up to?" Rose asked him, grinning.

"Oh, this and that," he began blithely, watching the king as he stood before the mirror. "Met the adult version of Reinette, who was in fact a future aristocrat of France, but I guess you knew that already," he muttered. "Oh, and picked this one up." He gestured to Jack, who just winked at them.

"See these?" The Doctor pointed at the glass. "They're all over the place. On every deck. Gateways to history. But not just any old history..." He placed a finger on the glass, as Reinette entered the room, the King turning around to face her. *Hers.*

"Time window..." He wandered in his thoughts. "Deliberately arranged along the life of one particular woman." In a more casual voice. "A spaceship from the fifty-first century stalking a woman from the eighteenth." In a non-understanding voice. "Why?" he whispered, looking confused. Then he narrowed his eyes. "Although..." He turned to Rose. "You said you've met the King?" Rose just nodded. "Then maybe it's not her, but the whole family..." He turned to face the window again.

"No, it's her," Rose corrected him. The Doctor raised an eyebrow at her.

"When I met him..." Rose locked her gaze to the Doctor. *The King,* she said in a low voice, a smile making its way. The Doctor tilted his head, making it look like he was not impressed at all. "Anyway," Rose continued. "When I met him... Reinette was there too."

"What, so you've already met an adult version of her?" The Doctor sounded a bit disappointed.

"No no, not yet." Rose shook her head, chuckling. "I just saw her. Didn't talk to her. But that still makes the windows following her." 

"You saw her but didn't talk." The Doctor looked at her puzzled.

"I can't tell. I promised." Rose laughed. The Doctor just raised an eyebrow at her.

"How long have you been standing there?"

Reinette's voice caught their attention. "Show yourself," she demanded, and with that, the group saw how the figure, standing in the corner of the room, turned suddenly and revealed itself to be one of the clockwork droids. It didn't take long, before it started to advance.
On the instant, the Doctor grabbed the fire extinguisher from Mickey and swung the mirror around, stepping back into Reinette's world, followed by Rose, Mickey and Jack.

"Hello, Reinette. Hasn't time flown?" the Doctor greeted her casually while walking past her, towards the droid.

"Fireplace man!" Reinette exhaled, as she then spotted the others. "The right hand and Jean? I thought I would never see you again." She smiled at Jack.

"I'm terribly sorry for my sudden departure." Jack came forward to give her a kiss on the hand.

"You told me you could disappear that way one day. I don't blame you," she said softly.

"No time for flirting. Matters at hand," the Doctor called out for their attention, as he sprayed the droid with the fire extinguisher until it became immobile. He then threw the extinguisher back to Mickey. The droid started to click and whirr loudly.

"What's it doing?" Mickey asked, looking wide-eyed at the droid.

"Switching back on." The Doctor took a step forward, closer to the droid. "Melting the ice."

"And then what?" Mickey asked again, concerned.

"Then it kills everyone in the room," the Doctor announced, looking at the droid.

In a second, the clockwork droid's arm shot out towards the Doctor's throat. Luckily he jumped back and backed away.

"Focuses the mind, doesn't it?" He spoke lightly, addressing the clockwork woman. "Who are you? Identify yourself," he commanded, his hands in his pockets.

The droid bent its head, but did not answer.

"Order it to answer me," the Doctor told Reinette, feeling a bit annoyed to be ignored.

"Why should it listen to me?" she asked, confused.

"I don't know," the Doctor began blithely, walking towards Reinette. "It did when you were a child." He leaned towards her ear to whisper. "Let's see if you've still got it."

Rose grimaced at that gesture and as the Doctor caught her eyes, he moved his head slightly to the sides in a mocking manner. Rose frowned at him. *Clearly going all out for the game.*

"Answer his question." Reinette spoke to the droid. "Answer any and all questions put to you," she ordered in a firm voice, feeling the backup at her side. All her life mysteries gathered in one room.

With that, the droid lowered its arm and began speaking. They learnt that it was the repair droid seven and that they haven't moved because they did not have the parts.

"Always comes down to that, doesn't it?" Mickey laughed. "The parts."

"What's happened to the crew, where are they?" the Doctor continued asking.

"*We did not have the parts,*" the droid repeated.

"There should have been over fifty people on your ship," the Doctor persisted. "Where did
"they go?" he asked with wide eyes.

"I think I have a vague idea..." Jack muttered, as the droid repeated once more.

"We did not have the parts."

"Fifty people don't just disappear!" the Doctor countered the droid, moving forward. "Where-" When it dawned on him. "Oh," he exhaled. "You didn't have the parts, so you used the crew," he said faintly.

"The crew?" Mickey asked, not understanding.

"I found a camera with an eye in it..." Rose spoke, making the Doctor turn to face her. "And there was a heart... wired in to machinery." Okay, she did not see them this time, but it was clear it was the same situation.

"It was just what it was programmed to. Repairing the ship any way it can, with whatever it could find." The Doctor spoke, as he glanced the droid over. "No-one told it the crew weren't on the menu." He spoke with his mouth still parted, and teeth clenched, his gaze on the droid. "What did you say the flight deck smelt of?" The Doctor titled his head to Mickey's side.

"Someone cooking," Mickey answered, lowering his gaze.

"Flesh plus heat," the Doctor said faintly. "Barbeque," he uttered the word with a stronger meaning.

Just hearing that, Reinette was already starting to look sick. As she swayed slightly to the side, Jack came over to hug her shoulders to still her.

"But what are you doing here? You've opened up time windows, that takes colossal energy. Why come here," the Doctor considered. "You could have gone to your repair yard. Instead you come to eighteenth century France?" Again looking at the droid. "Why?"

"One more part is required," it announced, its head jerking towards Reinette. The Doctor, Mickey and Jack just stared at her, while Rose held her gaze firm at the droid.

"Then why haven't you taken it?" the Doctor asked faintly, looking back at the clockwork.

"She is incomplete," it announced, as its head tilted towards Rose now. "We'll take the spare part." Just as the words echoed inside the room, its arm shot up and it started to march towards Rose.

"Not a mere inch further," the Doctor warned it in a low voice, pointing a sonic screwdriver directly at him, covering Rose. Jack tightened his grip on Reinette.

Rose didn't know what to think. They were after her too. Even before all this timeline reset thing, they told her she was compatible. Compatible as what? The brain? Spare brain for them to use until Reinette?

"Why them?" Jack suddenly asked, making everyone turn to face him.

"We are the same."

"We are not the same," Reinette was now getting angry. "We are in no sense the same!"

"We are the same."
"Get out of here!" She advanced, commanding him, as she let herself loose of Jack's grip. "Get out of here this instance!"

"Reinette, no." The Doctor tried to reason with her, but in the same instant the droid teleported out.

"It's back on the ship." The Doctor dashed towards the window, looking frantic. "Rose, take Mickey and Arthur, get after it. Follow it, don't approach it." He pointed at them. "Just watch what it does."

"Mickey and Jack can take Arthur, I have other plans," Rose said nonchalantly and gone further inside the room. The Doctor looked at her with horrified eyes.

"Where are you going? Come back here!" he tried to call out for her, but Rose already left the room. The Doctor began to pace in place; one time stepping outside the time window, another back inside the room, then again inside the time window and back forth. *Forget wandering off when he was gone, now she became so bold as to disappearing in front of his eyes.*

"Doctor!" Jack's voice startled him. "We're going after it, you take care of things here." And with that, both men with the horse left, Jack saluting just before disappearing on the other side.

The Doctor shook his head, looking all nervous and worried. With one last glance, he decided to advance towards Reinette.

"Reinette, you're going to have to trust me. I need to find out what they're looking for, there's only one way I can do that." He looked at her intensely. "Won't hurt a bit," he whispered, and after a small nod of Reinette, he placed his fingers on her temples. Both of them closing their eyes.

"Fireplace man..." she breathed. "You are inside my mind." She talked in disbelief.

"Oh dear, Reinette," the Doctor exhaled. "You've had some cowboys in here."

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Seconds after Rose dashed out of the room, Rose gasped once again at the spectacular view before her. The great big mansion, the palace looked nothing like in the movies. It was so much more. The gigantic swirling staircase lead the way to the enormous hallway. Rose sprung around herself, breathing the view.

"It's you!" a voice shook her. "It is really you."

She then saw the King approaching her with a big smile on his face.

"The King of France!" Rose beamed at him, as she marched her way forwards. The King raised an eyebrow at her. Only then Rose realised how bold she must had looked like.

"Oh. I'm... sorry, is this the time where I have to bow?" she asked shyly, slightly laughing, making the King laugh himself.

"No. That's quite alright. I don't expect my Lucky Guardian to bow to me." He smiled at her warmly.

"Lucky Guardian?" Rose raised an eyebrow at him.

"That time you really helped me out. I even thought of a possibility it all being a dream. Now, that I see you before my eyes, it's hard to believe what I see." He smiled and extended his hand, tugging a loose string of Rose's hair under her ear. Rose started to look nervous. That was *not* how she
wanted things to progress.

Feeling her distress, the King retreated immediately. "I'm terribly sorry. It was not my place to do this to the higher being." He spoke faintly.

*Higher being?*

"W-what?" Rose stammered, blinking.

"You're not from this world I hear," he answered her. "I didn't want to believe. The stories I heard from Reinette were so unbelievable. Visitors from another world!" He laughed in disbelief. "But now I see it all true."

Rose began smiling at that. "Reinette talked about us?"

"Just with some close friends. I must thank you that I could become someone like that to her." He bowed to her grace fully.

"Oh no no." Rose shook her hands in front of her, feeling alarmed by that gesture. "Don't... don't do that. Really. That's just too weird." She laughed slightly.

The King just smiled at her and straightened himself up. "As a King of France I never had to bow to anyone. And I'm not planning to do so in the future. I bow to a being of another world."

"Okay..." Rose trailed off, chuckling nervously.

"Whom do I have to thank for such a pleasant surprise?" The King asked with enthusiasm.

"Oh..." She shrugged. *Was battling with clockwork droids, which want Reinette's brain and for some reason mine too, then decided to visit the king. Right. Like that could be the answer. *Got a bit lost... on one of my missions.*" Was all she said, but it seemed to be enough to gain even more respect from the King.

"Oh, do you need a tour then?" He gestured gracefully towards the corridor.

"Oh no. I thank you, but I think it's time I go." Rose gave him an apologetic smile.

"So soon." He seemed sad. Then his face lit up like he had just thought of a brilliant idea. "Would you like to come to a ball this month?" He looked expectantly at her.

Rose's eyes widened at the offer she had just heard, her mouth slightly parted. *Just like that? *"Oh, um, ah..." She laughed slightly, the King watching her with adoration. "I think I'll not make it in time... In a month..."

"That's no problem at all. I'll wait for you to come," he reassured her, Rose smiled at him nervously.

"No, I mean..." Rose bit her lip. "I can't promise you the date really..." She trailed off. "I really just come and go. Don't know when I end up here again... You know what, let's just forget it." She tried to dismiss him.

"No no. That's alright," the King cut her off. "If you say four months - be it four months. If you say a year - be it a year. I shall wait for your return. Be it our future promise." He bowed slightly, taking her hand into his and placing a soft kiss.

Rose blushed slightly. "Alright... I will-" She gestured to the side with her head. "Go, then." As she
started to depart. Then she suddenly stopped, making the man look at her questioningly, as she advanced towards him.

"I'm Rose, by the way," she announced, looking in the confused man's eyes. "My name," she added. "I prefer called that, rather than the being of another world." She smirked at him and with that, turned around to dash upstairs, towards the room, where her world was located at.

"If there is anything you don't want me to see, just imagine a door and close it," the Doctor instructed Reinette, as he began walking among her memories. "I won't look." After a short pause. "Ooh.. actually... there's a door just there."

Reinette opened her eyes for a moment, grinning slyly.

"You might want to clo- ooh." The Doctor still with eyes closed. "Actually, several."

"To walk among the memories of another living soul..." Reinette spoke softly, her eyes closed once more. "Do you ever get used to this?"

"I don't make a habit of it," he whispered. "What age are you?" the Doctor suddenly asked, grimacing questioningly.

"So impertinent a question so early in the conversation." She opened her eyes to look at him once more. "How promising." She winked at him, although, he didn't see it.

"No, not my question - theirs." The Doctor oblivious to that. "You're twenty-three and for some reason, that means you're not old enough."

Suddenly Reinette flinched. The Doctor was quick to feel it, as he began apologizing.

"Sorry, you might find old memories reawakening. Side effect."

"Oh, such a lonely childhood..." she breathed.

"It'll pass. Stay with me." He tried to soothe her.

"Such a lonely life..." She spoke softly again. "But that light..."

"You have not been lonely in your life. And what light?" The Doctor frowned at that.

Then Reinette gasped. "Oh Doctor, that golden light in your life. The Bad Wolf," she exhaled, making the Doctor jump back from her, looking at her with frantic eyes.

"How did you do that?"

"A door, once opened, can be stepped through in either direction..." she explained to him. The Doctor just stared at her, all vulnerable.

"I might have wanted something more from you before," she began softly. "But now I see that it was never my place to take." She smiled warmly at him, the Doctor just stared at her in disbelief.

"It's everyone's dream to have someone, who brings so much light in one's life. Treasure it, my Doctor." She cupped his face, caressing it slightly.

"I can't," the Doctor whispered, closing his eyes.
"I have never seen anything like it," she whispered, fondly. "It may have been my first time to see someone's mind, but what I saw was beyond any dream. Such loneliness, such sadness, and such hope." She forced him to look at her, as she felt him bury the light under the steel doors. "Don't be scared of it. Don't hide it. It's your chance." She shook his head a bit to make her point.

Everything was alright. He was just going to live on, leaving Rose's secret behind him, just to stay closer with her for some more. But then Sarah Jane saw his inner turmoil, shaking him - making him snap at Rose in a way he didn't ever meant to and thus, triggering her to tell him about her travels. And that made him feel better. He felt like a heavy burden left his shoulders, he could stay with her for some more.

And just when he was starting to simply enjoy himself, he had to confuse Reinette with her and kis--No no no. He didn't harbour such feelings. *Not him.* He wouldn't have let himself. That was a mistake. Rose was everywhere in his life, so he accidently slipped up. It was nothing more. *Or so he thought.* Because *then,* Reinette done something, which left him bare to the core. She looked inside his soul and saw *her* there. Something he deliberately tried to brush away, was there, embracing his very soul.

And when he saw *her* standing there, in the doorway, looking at him with clear concern in her eyes, he couldn't help but tremble slightly.

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to be continued...
When Rose finally found her way back to the room, what she witnessed made her stop in place. No matter what she would have expected to see, this was not it. Just ahead of her, two figures were standing, facing each other. One smiling at the other, another looking completely terrified. All would be understandable, if the roles had been reversed.

There stood the Oncoming Storm, looking with wide eyes at the aristocrat woman of eighteenth century like she had his whole existence in her hands. And then his gaze slowly wandered to Rose near the doorway.

Rose gasped at what she saw.

Her Doctor not only did he not ease up at all, but his expression became even more terrified, if that was even possible. He looked like a deer in the woods, waiting for the time to run. And Rose was the wolf. Well, in a way that was very true, her part, that is.

"I'll leave to my dance now," Reinette told them softly, making a graceful bow and disappearing through the doors. The room was left with a confused pair, looking at each other. One with concerned eyes, another horrified. Rose was so lost by this situation that she didn't even know what to think. Just what did that woman do to him?

She took a step forward, her hand reaching out for him, when he did what could be called as The Doctor shutting off. In a second, he took a step backwards, his mouth closed, eyes unfocused, looking somewhere in the distance, hands thrown in his pockets.

"Doctor," Rose began softly. "You all right?" she asked cautiously.

"Mm?" He turned his head towards her. "Oh. Me? 'Course." He laughed a bit, the smile not reaching his eyes, though. "I'm alway alright."

Rose felt a stab in her heart. That phrase. And he was using it now. Why? Just what in the world happened?

"Do-" Rose tried again, but was cut short.

"Come on. Let's see what mess those two got themselves into," he said in a nonchalent voice and made his way towards the glass window, swinging it open and going back inside the spaceship.

Rose watched him leave, her gaze on his back. She just couldn't understand any of this. What went wrong? What happened so bad to make him fall into such state?

Once back inside the spaceship, the Doctor almost literally flew through corridors. His pace caught light speed in seconds time. Mind you, he was still walking, but no normal walking was that. That was running in a mask of walking. Rose had a hard time catching up to him.

"Doctor? Wait up! Where're you going?!" Her calling him.

But he didn't stop. He just couldn't. His both hearts were hurting, beating at a high speed, more than ever was normal. He had to get away. What Reinette said...He knew that he cared for this pink and yellow human, but to this extent? No, it was not even possible. It was fair enough to think that he wanted her safe and happy, and that she may have been a flicker of light in his life, but to
embrace his very soul? It was impossible. Highly utterly impossibly impossible. He couldn't be feeling that. Not so strongly yet, anyway. Yet? Where did that come from? He could never give in to his feelings, so there was no yet's there.

"Blimey, you can run," someone muttered.

He did not stop. He just kept going and going, corridor after corridor, until finally they reached their destination. Jack and Mickey.

"What have you got here?" Was the Doctor's first words.

"What have you got here. Rose's completely out of her breath," Jack joked. "Were you so worried about us? Aw, didn't have to. There's always me, you know." He winked to them. Rose just gave him a nervous look, making him puzzled.

"Long legs there, doesn't even bother to wait for others," Mickey muttered, accusingly.

"Used the fire extinguisher, I see." The Doctor eyed the frozen droids.

"That was actually me!" Mickey butted in, trying to act tough. "Those tried to kill us! But I saw the fire extinguisher laying there, so I grabbed it and aimed at them-" he exclaimed.

"And then you were nearly killed by them, as you forgot to press the switch," Jack continued. "So in the end I had to freeze them myself."

"Hmm." The Doctor managed only that, as he was looking at the readings of the monitor. "Time we got the rest of the ship turned off," he announced.

"I could always smash them, you know. I just figured you might need them for something." Jack still tried to get the Doctor's attention.

"Yeh. Right. I might need...them..." the Doctor muttered under his breath, not really paying much attention to anybody in the room.

Jack glanced at Rose, who just shook her head helplessly, then back again at the Doctor. "So." Jack came to stand next to where the Doctor was making himself busy. "Did you learn why they needed them?"

"Yeh," the Doctor breathed, looking at the monitor. "This ship is of age thirty seven. And they think that once Reinette's thirty seven, she will be complete." He uttered the word sarcastically. "So they could take the last part they need," he exhaled.

"Okay..." Jack trailed off. "What about Rose, then?" he asked cautiously.

At that moment, the Doctor froze for a second. Nobody took notice of that, except for Jack, who was watching the Time Lord's every move from the moment both of his friends joined them back in the room. Jack could sense the building stiffness in the Doctor's shoulders, but he didn't have time to comment on that, because soon enough, the man in question spoke.

"She's a spare part," the Doctor exclaimed nonchalantly, making the trio jump a bit. "Something to use until Reinette's ready. She's complete now, they won't need her anymore."

"You sure about that?" Jack asked, feeling a bit suspicious.

"Yep," the Doctor answered blithely. When in fact, he was not sure at all. It was all just guesses.
And for once he decided to rely on them as facts. Well, usually he was right anyway. Often was he right. Rarely not right. From time to time right or wrong...either way, it was his only way out of this.

"Why don't you check her...I don't know...mind or something?" Jack shrugged, but as soon as he spotted Rose's horrified face, his expression showed something like an *opps*.

And then there was the Time Lord. If before he was barely frozen, now his back certainly reached the highest tension level. His heartbeat quickening. He had to take a few deep breaths to answer as normally as he could.

"There's no need," he began. "Already checked Reinette."

*Stab.*

Those words hurt Rose more than she thought they would. Of course, if they were needed for the same reason, then rechecking may not be necessary, but this was not anyone, this was the Doctor. He surely wouldn't reject an additional amount of information. He *would* recheck. Even if he knew everything was ready, he could look at it again for amusement. But now - he refused. It was more than that, though. It felt like he flat out refused her mind. Rose could feel hurt and anger makings its way to the surface. She was already starting to take calming breaths.

What was so good about Madame? Why could he look into her mind, but when it came to her, he simply refuses. She though they were becoming closer to each other, but was it all just her imagination?

And before she could think about the consequences she spat. "So you can look inside Madame's de Pompadour mind but not into mine?"

The Doctor gulped. "I told you, they won't come after you anymore," he whispered, still looking at the monitor.

"Or is there a different reason for you to refuse me?" she continued, barely holding her temper.

*That done it.*

"What do you want me to say!?" he shot back harshly, as he turned to look at her.

They stood there, holding each other's gazes, them full of anger and desperation. Rose wrinkled her forehead, swallowing the upcoming tears, but not breaking the eye contact. There was so much tension going on between them, that Jack and Mickey literally froze to their spots and were forcefully slowing down their breaths, to not make any sound. They were sure, they wouldn't want to get in the middle of what was going on there.

"I thought me and you were..." she half-whispered, her voice wavering. She could hear herself saying those same words after encountering Sarah Jane. Him telling her that he would not abandon her...how happy she felt to not having to say those words this time round. Who knew that history always seemed to repeat itself.

"Well I obviously got it wrong..." She smiled sadly, biting her lip. The Doctor turned his gaze sideways, as he gulped.

"So so wrong..." she whispered, then laughed a bit sadly, making the Doctor turn back. *Why did she even bother?* She purposely made excuses for him, that he ran after the Madame because he was shaken by the meeting with Sarah Jane, by human's fleeting life, but maybe it was not it at
all. *Maybe it was because it was Madame de Pompadour all along.* Rose just refused to believe the cruel truth. And she came such a long way.

"Rose..." the Doctor began in a low voice. "It's not..." He tried, but cut himself short. He wrinkled his brows, as he was battling with himself.

"What, Doctor?" Rose asked softly, looking him in the eyes. "What did Reinette tell you?"

"Don't bring her in this," he said in a low voice.

"But it's about her, isn't it?" She raised her voice. "Ever since you came back from that room with her, you have been acting all..." She gestured at him, shaking her head. "I don't even know how to name this. What happened with her?"

"Nothing happened." He tried to brush her off, already looking sideways.

"Something did! What was it!?" she persisted, more than was necessary at the moment. And then he snapped.

"She told me that you-" he shot, his intense, watery gaze turned to hers. But he couldn't finish the sentence. How could he even begin to tell her what she saw? It was already scaring him to the bone, to drop such...heavy feelings on her... He could never look into her mind. It would be too much of a temptation. *It was scaring him... He was scaring himself... He was afraid of his own feelings.*

"Me?" Rose shook her head slightly, looking at him questioningly. "What about me?" she asked softly.

The Doctor just closed his eyes, swallowing the intense emotions away.

"I get it." Her voice made his eyes snap open. "You won't say." Rose smiled sadly, nodding her head and biting her lip.

"Rose..." He tried to approach her, but failed.

"No. I get it." She lowered her gaze and made a step backwards.

"Rose..." He tried again, lifting his hand to her without thinking. *What was he even trying to tell her now? What was this sentence supposed to be?* He didn't have to dwell for long on this, though.

Another step backwards.

"I need some time alone." Her voice cracked at the end. And then she turned, walking away in the faraway corridor.

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There was a dead silence of sorts. Nobody dared to move.

"Rose? Rose!" Jack tried to call her, finally coming back to life.

"Leave her," the Doctor whispered, pleading.

Jack still looked frantically between the Time Lord and the space, where Rose just disappeared to.
Mickey was coming back to life around the same time too, but nobody gave him the chance to say anything.

"What the hell was that?" Jack was quick to ask.

The Doctor didn't answer, he just walked his way to the monitor, looking at it blankly, pressing some unnecessary buttons until Jack interrupted his trance.

"I think it's about time you get going after her," he said in a low and firm voice. "Or should I go?"

The Time Lord could feel frustration going on its way to the surface. He ran a hand through his hair and exhaled harshly. Moments later, he was out, dashing in the search of his pink and yellow human.

She walked and walked, corridor after corridor. Now was her turn to run. She was surprised how quickly her emotions changed. She was running not from being hurt, but from anger, and directed at her herself. Why did she not listen? The Doctor was clearly looking at her like he wanted to say something, but couldn't. Why did she have to snap at him? Her temper going off in the worst timings.

She sighed and slowed down her pace, soon stopping completely.

They didn't have time for such nonsense. Reaching Canary Wharf didn't exactly mean everything fixing itself. She may as well be trapped inside the parallel universe once more, making it feel like the hope was never there. She closed her eyes, as she cupped her face in her hands. Why was she so stupid to suggest the bet? Really? She had no right to be mad at him, considering that she played the matchmaker for them herself.

She let her hands fall to her sides helplessly.

How much time they had left together? Clearly not enough. It would never be enough, no matter how long they would have. She chuckled sadly, when she realised that she could already count the remaining adventures on her hands.

*Time and Relative Dimension in Space.*

*Time Ship.*

*Time Lord.*

*Reset Timeline.*

*Time.*

Everything was about time. Time was everywhere. But they always ran short of it. She could already hear the minutes ticking away, passing by so so quickly.

Tick tock. It going like that. Disappearing in a flash.

*Wait.*

She felt a cold shiver go down her spine, when her mind realised what was happening.

It was not the ticking sound in her brain. Oh, no. It was not the inside thought. It was going in the surface.
Tick tock. Tick tock.

She gulped at the sound. *It was near, so very near, almost as near as...* She turned to her right to see her nightmare coming true.

The Doctor was running through the massive space in the spaceship, searching blindly. He was starting to get nervous, when he couldn't find her anywhere.

"Rose!" No answer.

He quickened his pace. It was bad idea to let her go alone. Especially when they were not done with shutting off the ship. He started to blame himself.

"Rose!" He tried again in desperation, but nothing.

He ran further and further, sometimes going back to places he had already been before, in case Rose was on the move. *But there was just no trace of her.* He started to curse himself once again. There was the monitor, for detecting humans, back at where Jack with Mickey were. Or Jack's manipulator. There were devices all around him for that sort of thing! Sigh. He ran off in such a hurry that he completely forgot about that. Always distracted when it comes to Rose Tyler. He chuckled at the thought. Oh boll, he was really doomed. One way or another.

Just as he was about to go back, he saw it.

It, because it was the view, the view which will haunt him for days, even if he would never tell anyone.

There stood his pink and yellow human, leaning against the wall, with her eyes wide, full of shock and fear. Because just to her right side, stood their enemy. The clockwork droid, pointing his arm threateningly at her.

The Doctor felt his blood drain cold, when he saw the two together. And just when he was reaching out for his sonic, preparing to damage the droid to no way of resurrection, something happened, which nobody predicted would.

The droid tilted its head to the running Time Lord's side, spotting him, making Rose notice him too.

"Doctor!" Rose called out, her horrified expression slowly turning into a relieved smile, the Doctor himself starting to smile nervously.

*But it didn't last long.*

At the same moment, the Doctor already so so near the pair, an imaginary door, *or so The Doctor called it at that moment, because he didn't spot it to be there before,* opened. Rose feeling the rush of air coming from just behind her, half-turned to see what was happening, when she felt a harsh push on her, making her unbalance and stumble inside whatever was behind those doors.

"Rose!" the Doctor yelled out for her, as soon as he saw what was happening. He reached his destination in a second, getting ready to press the button, but was too late.

*Too late...*

The doors shut close in a flash with the droid pressing his teleportation button.
The Doctor literally crashed in the wall. There was nothing else to grab onto. The droid vanished in the air, and Rose... she was nowhere to be seen.

No...
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No.
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No. No.

"No no no, this can't be happening." Rose started muttering, but her voice rising from desperation. Can't.

"You can't do this to me again." She was caressing the wall blindly, searching for something to be there.

"No no. There was a knob...A door." Her voice cracking.

Where is it?

"Let me out...Let me out." She started to slightly bang on the wall.

Nothingness.

"This's not fair. It can't be over yet." Tears were spilling from her eyes now freely. She felt her heart being ripen in two.

"Let me out!" she screamed, while banging harshly on the wall.

Bang.

"TAKE ME BACK!"

On the spaceship side of the wall, the Doctor stood there emotionless, his hands placed on the cold wall. He couldn't fully describe what he was feeling at the moment. But he felt like an old scar was just reopened, and now was eating him alive. He was pretty sure that none of this had ever happened before, but he was feeling an absolute repetitiveness of the events.

There was something wrong here.

No, in fact, there were a lot of wrong things there. For one thing, there was a door there, just seconds ago - now it was just an empty wall. For another, Rose was not definitely on the other side of the wall, trapped in a different world.

He released a frustrated sigh, forehead leaning on the wall.

"No no...this's not it. This's not it." He was muttering like a mantra.

"Not the end. Not like this again," he continued his mantra, fully giving in to his inner soul's feelings, failing to notice what he was muttering himself.
"Doctor? Rose?"

Jack's voice could be heard somewhere in the distance.

"Rose?" Mickey's too.

"Doctor? Doctor!" Now just somewhere on his right side.

What they saw, was an empty shell of a man, leaning on the wall with his back and head, eyes unfocused.

"Doctor!" Jack rushed to his side, looking at him with worried and confused expression.

"Doctor, did you find her? The droids came back to life, we managed to destroy one, but another teleported out."

The Doctor just snorted sarcastically, as he pushed himself from the wall and started walking his way back to where they came from, not saying anything to the two confused men.

Both Mickey and Jack just glanced at each other and rushed to follow the Time Lord.

Back near the monitor, the Doctor was rushing about, pressing various buttons, searching for the way through. But everything gave the same results.

"Okay. This's not funny anymore. Why's Rose not with you?" Jack continued to interrogate the Doctor. "Didn't you find her?"

*Is finding and losing in the same moment even considered finding?*

"I saw her." The Doctor finally spoke, in his hollow voice.

"Okay. That's good." Jack said in a half-casual voice.

"And I lost her," the Doctor finished.

"What do you mean you lost her!?" Mickey butted in, his temper going off.

The Doctor just sighed, stopping to fiddle with the buttons. "The droid opened the portal and took her to another side. They didn't have enough power, so it was only one way portal," he explained in a low, tired voice.

He just wanted it to finally stop. The loss to finally leave him. Couldn't the monitor for *once*, show the results he wanted?

"So she's back in Reinette's world..." Jack breathed, his worry for their friend rising.

Mickey tried to digest everything, when he finally spoke.

"Can't we just take her back? With the TARDIS?" Mickey suggested.

"We can't. We're already part of the events," the Doctor half-snapped at him.

Jack fell silent, the Doctor too, but Mickey suddenly felt like a rush of information went to his head - and it clicked him.

"Wait. You always said that those portals were all around that Madame's life, in different periods
of time. Doesn't that mean even if we reach Rose, it would be years later?" he asked, finally showing some of his brain abilities, just choosing a very wrong timing.

The Doctor gulped at the words. "Yes," he whispered.

"Are you kidding me!?” Mickey shot at him. "We can't just leave Rose there like that, for God knows how many years."


"What?" Mickey asked.

"I checked the readings on the monitor," Jack began. "It had the whole spaceship divided in time portals of Reinette's life. If Rose disappeared in that spot, it would be when Reinette's thirty two. And the only portal left to open is when she finally reaches completion." He spoke the last words in a whisper.

The Doctor just closed his eyes at that, and started to search for the way to open the portal. He couldn't let himself dwell on the thoughts. They were already eating him enough as it was. He had to find the way to get through. Mickey looked completely horrified at the revelation.

"What, so you just leave her there for whole five years? Live your life like you want?" Mickey spat sarcastically.

"It's better than forever!" the Doctor shot back, his eyes full of pain and rage. He was angry. So angry at the world, at the clockwork droids, at this spaceship, at Mickey for his stupid remarks, Jack - not sure why yet, but he could surely find something, if he wanted. But mostly of all - at himself. It was his fault.

If only he didn't let her wander off alone that time.

Everything went silent in the room. There was no comrade, gangmate, teammate, friend or even the Doctor there. Only the Oncoming Storm, filled with rage and determination, most of it directed right at him himself, making him more fearsome than ever.

Rose was sitting on the floor, near the wall, which just trapped her from the Doctor once again.

Those bloody walls.

How far away was she from Reinette's thirty seventh? A year, two, five? Where was she? It felt dark in there.

"Heh." She laughed sarcastically at that. They just keep trying to split them up, and no matter how hard she fights against it, they succeed, once in a while.

No.

But that's wrong.

They haven't succeeded. Not even once. Rose suddenly turned to face the wall, watching it sceptically.

"You haven't succeeded..." she whispered, caressing it, her mouth twitching into a smile.

"Because I came back!" She was smiling widely now. "I came back to him!"
However impossibly that was, she did come back. And she would do it again, any day. And it required another heartbreaking separation for her to remember that. Just why was she here in the first place. How could she had ever doubted him? Them?

They will find the way back to each other. If not her first, he will find her.

*He will come back for her.*

And with that, she briskly stood up, taking in her surroundings. Well, first of all, she could identify that she was in some sort of cellar. It was briefly lit up, enough to see the objects and your steps, but not the details. Soon enough, she made her way to the door, and fortunately it was left unlocked.

Once outside the cellar, she found herself in the brightly lit hallway. The one who looked fairly familiar to her. She was still in Versailles!

*That was good.*

She smiled at that discovery. Now was time to find her companions on this hard journey. Always go for the best - the King and aristocrat woman.

She was grinning the whole time, while running through corridors.

"*Your words mean nothing. You are nothing.*" She heard an angry woman's voice, somewhere in the distance, followed by screams of a crowd.

"Reinette!" Rose exclaimed, as she ran towards the source of the voice.

Soon enough, she was nearly swept away by the running people in their carnival wears, screaming and running for their dear lives.

She managed to hide in between the crowd unnoticed, as everyone were too much scared and all attention was drawn to the clockwork droids.

Everyone were screaming, backing away in the corners, when those creepy monsters threatened them with their blades. There seemed to be no end of the cries, when one person decided to take control of the situation.

"Can everyone just *calm down*?" the woman commanded, breaking the screams.

"Please. Such a commotion. Such distressing noise." She spoke, glancing at everyone. "Kindly remember that this is Versailles. This is the Royal Court. And we are French," she announced, as seemingly everyone had forgotten that for the moment.

Rose smiled, watching the woman. She really gave her less credit than she was worth. Such panic, such distress, her own head was at hand, but she chose to step in. And it seemed she managed to calm everyone down.

Well, Rose managed to speak for her planet on Sycorax invasion too, but she had practise before. This woman did not.

She was a charming woman. Everyone saw that. It shouldn't be such a surprise to fancy her. Rose was starting to feel close to this woman. She was even forgetting why was she annoyed with her in the first place? It was not her fault, really. If it's anyone's, then it's theirs - the Doctor's and hers, that they don't manage to communicate well. The Doctor being all closed off. Well, it was true that
his sudden change in attitude frustrated her to the core, but there was always an explanation for that.

"She told me that you-"

"Imagine that happen to someone you-"

"And I suppose if it's one last chance to say it. Rose Tyler-"

Rose frowned at her memories. He seemed to make a habit of his unfinished sentences. Will she ever hear him say it?

Rose was once again too immersed in her own thoughts, that she missed half of the show. So she failed to notice that the droids spotted her and now were standing face to face with her.

Rose just laughed nervously at them. "Sorry, I don't feel like saying hello to you. Not after you forcefully dragged me here." She spoke in an accusing voice, but was left completely ignored. She found herself being dragged to the centre of the ballroom, knelt down on the floor, with Reinette right by her side.

The Doctor was working in full speed. Pressing every last button he saw - determined to open that bloody portal. And just when the last hope was starting to fade away, suddenly a wide glass window, just right under their noses, lit up, showing the wide ballroom with a terrified crowd.

"There it is!" the Doctor exclaimed, but not in a blissful voice.

"Hey, what's that?" Mickey asked.

"What's where?" the Doctor retorted.

"That. In the middle. Surrounded by the those things."

"They're called people, Mickey," the Doctor muttered under his breath, as he was once again plugging some cables in, not watching the screen.

"Wait a moment." Jack was now the one interested. "Is it what I see?"

"So am not the only one who sees it," Mickey complained.

"Sees what!?" the Doctor snapped.

"That!" Jack pointed at the screen.

And then the Doctor finally saw what they were on about. Right in the middle of the crowd, knelt two figures. One aristocrat woman, another his pink and yellow girl.

"Rose," he breathed at the screen, as he released a relief filled breath. "But..." His eyes were looking her up and down. "But that's..." A smile spreading on his face.

"Oh. Oh, that's-" He was pointing at the screen, while walking backwards. "That's brilliant!" he exclaimed with energy, making the other two jump.

"Rose is ready to get her head chopped up, and he says it's brilliant?" Mickey started.

"Oh yeh, it is, Mickey dipery boy." The Doctor watched the screen in awe. "Because you don't see
"what I see!" he exclaimed, grinning at them now. "Her clothes remind you of something?" he sang, a silly smile on his face.

"Well, it's her clothes, I suppose..." Mickey trailed off.

"OH!" Jack finally noticing. "Is it...?" He looked questioningly at the Doctor.

"Oh yeh," he breathed, beaming at Jack.

"But I thought you said she was five years behind?" Mickey asked, not understanding.

"Oh, Mickey Mickery Mick." The Doctor laughed a bit, a smile tugging on his lips. "It was not readings."

"What?"

"It was not readings on the monitor. It was notes. Notes! A future plan!" he exclaimed, walking backwards towards the monitor. "It was notes left by the crew, when it was still alive, before they were used for the ship. It's years old!" he exclaimed with enthusiasm, gesturing with his hands. Then he gazed at Jack, who was working everything out in his own head and Mickey to find him completely lost.

"Don't you see?" He looked at them expectedly. "Those notes are as old as this ship has been left abandoned. They were not updated. What was right back then, is not right, now."

"And since we've destroyed a substantial amount of droids, which were needed for the original plan--" Jack calculated.

"They used the last energy bit to bring Rose to their final stage--" the Doctor sang, beaming at both of his friends.

"So we can get Rosie back, not even letting her miss a day!" Jack finally announced, as both the Doctor and him hugged each other in utter joy. "Ha!"

Mickey just eyed the pair suspiciously. "Wait. So what happened again?"

Both Jack and the Doctor just laughed at hearing him say that, and shook their heads.

"So, Doc. Do they need Rosie so they can open the portal back to this side?" he guessed.

"Could be." The Doctor shrugged nonchalantly. "But they're not getting that." He pointed a finger at Jack, making his point clear. "We're getting her out of there." He grinned.

"Hey." Rose's voice from the screen.

They saw her beaming at Reinette.

"Is this really the time for greetings? Mickey complained, watching the scene.

"Never miss your chance to say hello." Jack patted him on the shoulders with a wink. Mickey just rolled his eyes.

"You're complete." The metallic voice reached their ears, as it was directed to Reinette.

"You will help us open the portal." Another directed at Rose.
"Dream on," Rose mocked him, laughing even. It pointed its blade right by her neck.

"Oh boll," Mickey breathed. "So what's the plan?" he asked urgently.

"How's your vortex manipulator?" the Doctor asked Jack, fiddling with the cables some more. "Come on." He was muttering in desperation.

"Not working." Jack cursed silently. "Can't pass through. Must have blocked the signal. Damn."

"Your useless piece of trash," the Doctor sighed.

"What now then!?" Mickey yelled.

"I don't know!" the Doctor shouted back at him harshly. "We need a tru-" he began, then stopped. Somewhere in the back on his mind he managed to see the fireplace as an option. He smiled in contentment at that thought.

"But of course!" he exclaimed in utter delight. "The fire-" he was cut short by a sudden voice coming from the screen.

"Lucky Guardian!" The King's surprised voice echoed from somewhere inside the crowd.

"The King of France!" Rose's voice.

The Doctor turned his head towards the screen.

"Lucky Guardian?" Jack asked, interested. "Now that's a story I would like to hear," he joked.

"Who does he think he is. The King of France. Who cares about him?" Mickey argued with the screen.

"Maybe not the fireplace..." the Doctor muttered, as he began walking to the side of the room.

And before Jack or Mickey could react, a whinnying sound reached their ears. They sprang around just in time to see the Doctor mounting Arthur and jumping right at the window.

"You think I fear you." Reinette was talking bravely to the droids. "But I do not fear you, even now. You are merely the nightmare of my childhood," she spat. "The monster from under my bed. And if my nightmare can return to plague me, then rest assured-" She lowered her voice to a whisper. "So will yours."

The sound of a horse whinnying could be heard somewhere in the distance. Reinette, the droids, and the guests, all started to look around for the source of the sound. Only Rose was watching the glass of a large mirror expectedly to see the familiar face. And she didn't have to wait long. Before long, the sound gone louder, followed by galloping hooves. After a few moments, the horse leapt through the glass of a large mirror on the wall, the Doctor on his back.

The guests started to shriek and Reinette's mouth literally dropped open. Rose was shaking her head in disbelief, smiling. The scene was nothing like in her dreams. The Doctor winked, as he trotted past her, making Rose grin at him. With a few circles around on the horse, it came to a halt and the Doctor dropped down.

"Hello." The Doctor grinned, momentary locking his gaze to Rose.

"Hi." She grinned back at him, making him giggle a bit. Then he turned his gaze sideways, to look
at Reinette.

"Madame de Pompadour," he exhaled. "You look younger every day." He smiled at her.

"What the hell is going on?" The King was looking at Reinette and Rose questioningly, as he saw one grinning all happily, another smiling.

"Oh, this's the King of France." Rose gestured to the man. "As you have already known." In a lower voice, looking at the Doctor.

"Yeah?" The Doctor glanced him over distastefully. "Well, I'm the Lord of Time," he announced, as he approached the chief droid. "And I'm here to fix the clock."

He removed the mask of the droid, revealing the clockwork underneath, which elicited a gasp from the crowd. The droid pointed it's weapon at the Doctor at once.

"Forget it." The Doctor just tilted his head casually. "It's over." He glanced at the broken window, making the droid follow his gaze.

Back at the spaceship, Mickey and Jack were staring at the shards of glass and the interior of the spaceship, where the time window into the ballroom used to be.

"What happened?" Mickey asked, confused. "Where did the time window go? How are they gonna get back?" He was starting to get nervous.

"Hmm..." Jack hummed. "Good question, Mickey." He patted his shoulder. "Good one." Nodding blithely at the window.

"What're you playing at, patting me like some sort of dog. I'm not a tin dog!" Mickey complained.

"A tin dog?" Jack looked at him puzzled.

"Nevermind." Mickey lowered his glance, muttering. "But what did he do that for? Going all out on the horse like a prince charming in his shiny armor."

"I pretty much get the part why on the horse," Jack joked. "But why crash the window... Either way." In a more casual voice. "They will come back."

"How can you be so sure?" Mickey grimaced at him.

"He wouldn't have done that otherwise." Jack tried to convince him, even if he was not so sure himself. "They always come back. Come on, let's get something to drink back at the TARDIS." He nudged him to walk away from the window.

Mickey walked back inside first, Jack just behind him, and with one last look at the faraway window, he spoke in a whisper.

"If not, at least they have each other."

As he closed the TARDIS doors.

"The link with the ship is broken. No way back. You don't have the parts." The Doctor looked at the chief droid meaningfully. "How many ticks left in that clockwork heart?" He leaned back, looking at it in a mocking manner. "A day? An hour?" he suggested, whispering.
"It's over." Now in a strong voice. "Accept that. I'm not winding you up."

And finally, the clockwork wind down and the droid went dead. The other droids followed suit and slumped forwards, seconds later. One of them fell backwards, causing the clockwork to smash over the floor. The guests whispering amongst one another.

Finally happy to have the work done, the Doctor held out his both hands for the two girls.

"You both all right?" he asked them casually, smiling even.

"Yeh," Rose breathed.

Reinette just nodded, taking his hand, still too much shocked.

As he pulled both of them to their feet, Reinette asked.

"What's happened to them?" Looking at the destruction-filled scene warily.


Reinette stood there, glancing from one droid to another, not yet believing it was finally all over. The Doctor just smiled, watching her, when his gaze fell upon another human being. Someone he thought he lost just a while ago.

He titled his head, as he looked inside her eyes, filled with wonder and insecurity. He just watched her, a warm smile on his face, provoking one from her too.

And then, not taking account of any destruction, the crowd or even the world, he just marched his way towards her, catching her in one tight hug, embracing her with everything he had got.

Rose gasped at the gesture at first, as it was a sudden movement of his, but it didn't take her long to bury her head in his shoulder and wrap her arms around his waist, holding him for her dear life.

They stood there it seemed ages, neither letting go. Rose was actually sure he would soon let her go, but he didn't make any reference to that. He just held her close to him, breathing her scent, her life being near him, and caressing her hair with his hand.

The double heartbeat, which was beating crazily at the start of the touch, was slowly steadying itself to its normal rhythm. His breathing was starting to even too.

He poured all his worrying, despair and lost in that single gesture, savouring it as peace greeted him.

A sudden graceful dance music shook the pair to come back of their own little world. They slowly broke from their tight embrace, although, still staying at arms length. They let their gazes travel around the room, just to make both of them blink, not believing what they were seeing.

What looked like a ruined room just moments ago, was now shining at its highest colours, crowds of people talking about there and there, some of them even dancing. The floor, as they noted, was free of any remains of the droids.

Except...

the area where both of them stood. They had a piece of droid just between their feet.
Both of them snorted at the sight, but still trying to stifle it. As they looked at each other, all serious and all, they couldn't suppress it anymore.

They started sniggering and laughing about hystercially. Rose slapped his arm playfully, as she tried to mouth him "stop it", but failed miserably and the laughing just increased.

After a great while of laughs and happy yells, the Doctor just shook his head, smiling, and rubbing his eye, Rose clenching her stomach. It was already hurting from too much exercise.

"Huf," she exhaled, trying to settle her laughs. "It only can happen with you," she told him with a playful accusation in her voice.

"I'm honoured." He beamed at her, grinning all silly.

"Oh, shut it." She cupped her face in her hands, laughing. She brushed her palms from her face, moments later, biting her lip to calm down, while looking sideways.

"Lucky Guardian!" A voice from the crowd.

"Here comes uninvited trouble," the Doctor muttered, trying to look all nonchalant.

"Rude," Rose whispered to him, leaning to his side, but watching ahead of her, as the King approached them.

"Good to see you finally..." The man glanced at the Doctor for a moment, who just looked at him expectedly. "Accessible," he ended, beaming at Rose.

It made Rose flush at once. The alien himself cleared his throat and just pretended to look somewhere else, anywhere but at Rose.

The King didn't comment on that. He just continued with what he started. "I've waited twelve years for this dance. It would be my honour if you would please...?" He gestured to her, as he bowed to her, extending his hand.

Rose blinked and gulped at the sight, smiling at the man a bit nervously. "I would be honoured myself, but..."

"But?" The King looked sadly at her. The Doctor was already expecting her to refuse him.

"But I think my clothing would not be appropriate for that." She gestured to herself.

"Oh. I came to terms with that long time ago," the King assured her.

"Yeh...but..." Rose still felt uncomfortable around all those bouncing dresses.

"I think I could help with that." A woman's voice caught their ears.

"Reinette!" the Doctor exclaimed, as she came into view. She just bowed to them gracefully and grinned.

"Come with me, I'll show you." She gestured to Rose to follow.

Rose glanced at the Doctor for a moment and after he pointed with his head towards Reinette, she gave him a smile and disappeared with her in the long corridors.
While waiting for Rose, the Doctor and the King were having a little chat. The Doctor deliberately tried to brush the man off, how to say in the softer way, but he was one of a kind. He didn't want to budge. Of course, our Time Lord didn't even try to hide his upper knowledge and influence on the world as he talked with him, but nothing seemed to work on him. And frankly speaking it was starting to get on his nerves.

And just when he was at the break of snapping, he saw her. If in 1869 he thought she looked beautiful, then this time she was...there was not even a word to describe her.

Besides the shape of the dress which fit her so well, and made her not only blend in with the locals but even gain an air of difference, making her radiate light. It was also the colours. The TARDIS blue which shone so beautifully on her that at that moment he thought nobody else could go so well with his magnificent ship as her.

It was like she was made for him, to be part of The TARDIS, to be part of his life.

He was so stunned by the sight, that only after a few warnings did he hear what was being said to him.

"The wine!" someone told him.

"W-What?" He turned his head to look at the man.

"The wine." He gestured to his side.

"What wi-" the Doctor began. He stopped short, when he saw half of the liquid from his glass poured on the floor, as his hold on it was loosened. "Oh." He gulped and stilled the glass, making a step forwards, to leave the redness on the floor behind him, acting like it never was.

The King would have commented something, but he had to agree. If he was the one holding the glass, it would certainly had met the same fate or even worse - shards of the glass.

And that's where he made his mistake. Too much lost in the thoughts, he didn't notice when a glass of wine was given to him and a man, who just stood there, next to him seconds ago, was already halfway in the room, marching towards his goal.

Rose was still having a small talk with Reinette, so she didn't notice when or how the Doctor came to stand before her. The first thing she saw was an extended hand towards her. She was already expecting it to be the King's, but as she looked it over in those few seconds, she felt like it was way too familiar.

When she looked up, her mouth formed into a huge grin, as she saw the face of her Lord.

"Dame Rose," he asked her, smiling himself.

"Sir Doctor." She bowed slightly, placing her hand into his.

"Fancy a dance?" He grinned at her.

"You've got the moves?" she teased him, grinning herself.

"Oh, I wouldn't want to boast," he answered her nonchalantly, both of them chuckling seconds later, as he led the way towards the centre of the ballroom.

After a while of just dancing and laughing they started a small conversation of their own, thus
making their moves a bit sloppy, missing a move there or there, or going in one place together, when it was supposed to be only the women or the men, but overall they put up with the speed.

Rose was enjoying herself to the core, when puzzled thoughts came rushing at her. He was taking this awfully well. Wasn't he supposed to worry about not being able to get back to the spaceship, to the TARDIS?

"What is it?" he asked her casually, looking at her.

"Mm? What?" She was a bit startled, too much thinking again.

"You seem like you want to ask me something."

"Well, actually, yeh." She wrinkled her forehead a bit, but still with a smile on her face. The Doctor just moved his eyebrows at her, encouraging.

"You seem not distressed at all." She finally spoke.


"Okay, you." She laughed at him. "But I mean..." She looked a bit cautiously at him, making him stop, or both of them stop in the middle of somewhere of the dance. The others, already used to their sudden moves, just made a circle around them.

"What?" the Doctor asked her, looking at her.

"We're trapped here... without the TARDIS," she whispered. She expected to see a realisation come to his face, but found none of that.

"Oh, we're not trapped, Rose." He beamed at her. "Did I forget to tell you?"

"What?" She shook her head, narrowing her eyes.

"We got a way back." He nodded at her.

"But the droids..." Rose frowned. "You told them it's over."

"Well, for them, that surely was," he exclaimed half-laughing. When finding Rose's puzzled look pointed at him, he continued. "I might have had to..." He trailed off. "Wind them up a little tiny bit on that," he ended with still slightly parted mouth.

Rose just exhaled a breath at that.

"Tell me when you wanna go, we will." He leaned to whisper to her ear, grinning afterwards.

"You're impossible. You are." She hit his chest playfully.

"Same as you," he said in a low voice.

After a great while of a few rounds of dancing, they finally stood there, right besides the fireplace.

"You knew about it." Rose spoke in disbelief. "How?"

"Well, that is a question." He tugged on his ear. "I'm not sure myself. Just before coming here, I had like a vision, of some sort, that I could use the fireplace." He placed a hand on it casually.
"Nice mantel. After so many years, still as good as new," he cried in adoration. "Who would ever have the heart to discard such a fine piece of work," he continued. Rose just smiled, watching him. "More than fine! Brilliant!" he exclaimed, grinning at the sight.

"Are you going?" A voice from the doorway shook them to turn around.

There stood Reinette accompanied by the King.

"It's time," the Doctor said in a low voice, hands in his pockets.

Reinette just smiled sadly at them. "My guess is I won't see the two of you anymore? It sounds like a goodbye."

The Doctor just gave her a small, apologizing smile. Rose went towards the King, as she bowed to him. "It was a pleasure to meet you." She smiled at him.

"Oh no, it was my pleasure. If not for you, who knows where would I be now." He just smiled at her warmly.

"And I have to thank you both. Doctor," Reinette began, as the alien came to stand beside Rose. "And...Rose, I suppose I should call you, instead of the right hand." The group chuckled at that.

"I'll miss you, Doctor." Reinette smiled at him warmly.

"So will I," the Doctor replied with a smile, but not a pained one.

"Alright then." He clasped his hands, back to his cheerful mood. "Off we go. Rose. And...wish us luck." He beamed at them, taking Rose's hand and walking towards the fireplace.

After a few moments, the Doctor found the required switch. "Aha!" he exclaimed, all happy. "Rose, we found the way home," he sang in utter joy, smiling all silly. Rose grinning at him with her tongue.

"Twelve years..." the King muttered.

"What?" Rose titled her head to his side.

But he just shook his head, smiling. "Farewell." Aand with that, the the pair rotated back to their world.

Back on the spaceship, they noticed two things.

"Where's Mickey and Jack?" Rose asked, confused.

_Nobody was waiting for them._

"Tell you what," the Doctor said, all serious.

"Mm?" Rose looked at him.

"We've met King Louis IV and Madame de Pompadour!" he sang.

"I know," Rose sang too, tugging on his arm, and leaning her head to it. The Doctor leaning to her side himself, as they marched their way to the TARDIS.
After a few leaps, they finally reached their destination and swung the doors open, entering in all grand way.

"We're back!" both of them announced in the console room, laughter following.

_Doors slammed shut._

"Why do I get the feeling we forgot something?" Rose's voice from inside could still be heard.

"Really? Hmm, I get that feeling too," the Doctor added.

_Pause._

"THE FIRST DANCE!"

________

_to be continued..._
The Doctor, Rose, and Mickey were hanging out in the TARDIS. The Doctor and Rose both slumped in chairs next to each other (with the Doctor's hand casually dropped on the edge, behind Rose, legs on the console). Jack was out, having a shower in the TARDIS and Mickey standing by the console.

"And that weird munchkin lady, with the big eyes? Do you remember?" The Doctor was talking enthusiastically, looking at Rose. "The way she looked at you!" he cried, while Rose was laughing out loud. "And then she opens her mouth and fire comes out!" He was gesturing with his hand.

"I thought I was gonna get frazzled!" Rose cried between laughs.

"Yeah! One minute she's standing there, and the next minute - rawwwh!" He and Rose mimicing fire coming of their mouths, followed by fits of laughter. Mickey was just nodding and smiling, not really following.

"Yeah... where-" Mickey tried to get attention. "Where was that, then? What happened?" Trying to keep a smile on his face.

"Oh, it was on this um..." the Doctor began casually, searching for the right words, Rose leaning to his side, grinning. "Uh, this uh... planet thing, asteroid." He shook his head, Mickey was starting to look not so amused. "It's a long story, you had to be there." The Doctor decided to drop the subject.

"Oh, I missed the TARDIS shower!" An american voice echoed in the console. The trio already there, chuckled at him.

"Had a good massage, Jack?" Rose sang to him, teasingly.

"The best." Jack grinning at her.

"Course he had," the Doctor added. "Way better than that pleasure planet of yours."

Rose shook her head, smiling. *If not his ego then gotta prove his ships' superiority.*

"So, what have I missed?" Jack asked them, as he launched himself near the pair.

"Oi, it's already cramped in here!" the Doctor complained.

"M gonna fall!" Rose cried, laughing, as she felt herself slipping from the edge.

"See what you did," the Doctor chided Jack, playfully, as he now had his arm around Rose, holding her in place.

"If you would just let Rosie sit on your lap, there would be plenty of room here." Jack winked at them.

"Where would I place my legs then?" he cried.

Rose looked sideways at those words, starting to feel the presence of the arm around her more intensely now. The Doctor was oblivious to that, though.

"Where would I place my legs then?" he cried.

Jack just chuckled at that. "So what were you saying before I came and made the place *more cramped,*" Jack said meaningfully.
"Oh, just a story." The Doctor shook his head nonchalantly. Then his gaze fell upon Mickey. "Um...What're you doing that for?" he asked him casually.

Mickey had his finger on a button on the console. "Cos you told me to..." he simply replied.

The Doctor blinked at that. "...When was that...?" he asked a bit lost. Rose bit her lip, as she remembered how long ago was that.

"About half an hour ago..." Mickey replied, blinking.

The Doctor opened his mouth, looking at the button. "Um." He managed to say, as he closed his mouth, his lips slightly quivering. "You can let go now." His gaze at Mickey, lips pressed together.

As Mickey let go of the button, Rose started sniggering.

"Well, how long's it been since I could've stopped?" Mickey asked, concerned.


"You just forgot me!" Mickey exclaimed indignantly. Jack was now laughing out loud.

"No, no, no!" The Doctor tried to defend himself. "I was just-" He tried to think of an answer. "I was just... I was calibrating." He looked at Mickey. "I was just... no, I know exactly what I'm doing." As he nodded his head, trying to convince everyone and himself the most.

And the next moment, the TARDIS console exploded, throwing the passengers on the chair to one side, Mickey on the other. Sparks and flames flying everywhere, console room shaking violently.

The Doctor scrambling to his knees, was now frantically trying to operate the console. Rose by his side.

"You really should check your driving, Doc," Jack joked, as he grabbed on the console to hold on.

"The time vortex is gone!" the Doctor breathed. "That's impossible - it's just gone!" He looked at the monitor in disbelief.

"What?" Jack asked in total disbelief himself, but was left unanswered when the TARDIS began to shake crazily.

"Brace yourself! We're gonna crash!" the Doctor yelled through the noise.

And then they crashed. The Doctor, Rose, Jack and Mickey thrown backwards, reaching the ground with a sharp thud. Gas masks fell from the ceiling, moments later, followed by the blackout in the TARDIS. Only some cracking sounds could be heard.

"Everyone all right?" The Doctor was first to pull himself up from the laying position, but still on his knees beside Rose. "Rose." As he checked her. "Mickey?" he yelled to the other side.

"I'm fine. I'm okay, sorry," Mickey answered.

"I'm okay too, thank you," Jack said sarcastically, as he stood up.

"You'll be fine either way," the Doctor replied in a whisper, standing up, all his attention towards the rotor and console.
"She's dead," he breathed in horror, watching smoke rising from the console.

"The TARDIS is dead," he whispered, as he began to walk around the console, slowly.

"You can fix it," Rose stated in a soft voice, rubbing on his arm - trying to calm him down.

Oh, she wanted to tell him that she's going to be alright. She hated seeing him so devastated.

"There's nothing to fix. She's perished." The Doctor was talking in a faint voice, pulling a lever back and forth fruitlessly.

"The last TARDIS in the universe... extinct." He just looked at the motor with a lost-hope face.

Jack wanted to say something, but as he glanced at Rose, he saw in her look that they have gone past this before. Now it was only their job to help him find that miraculous cure for the TARDIS.

"We'll find a way. We always do." Rose tried to soothe him.

"Not this time. There's no way out," the Doctor just whispered.

"Either way," Jack interrupted his misery. "We've landed somewhere."

"We fell out of the vortex, through the void, into nothingness," the Doctor retorted in a stronger voice. "We're in some sort of no-place..." Back to whispering. "The silent realm... the lost dimension..."

"Does it include sand and water?" Mickey asked from the doorway, stepping out.

The Doctor straightened up immediately. A sudden hope flickering in his mind. He didn't waste time and walked out of the doors after Jack. Rose following behind the Doctor.

A step...

A single step was made outside the TARDIS and it was all it took for Rose to register where they were.

"It's windy here." Mickey named it. But it was different for her. It was not the weather she was concerned about. Far from it. It was the place.

Rocky mountains standing tall in the horizon, wet sand under their feet, and powerful waves surging at the shore.

Why here?

"Come on, a beach without some sun? How will we sunbathe?" Jack joked.

"I'm burning up the sun just to say goodbye."

Maybe that's why there was no sun here...A place where she died.

Some place she desperately hoped to never see again. But the universe seemed to have different things in mind. It would always let the history repeat itself. Maybe with a bit different things thrown in between, a different order, but it just made Rose time and time again to relive all the painful things she had been through. She felt a hot tear escape her eye, as she watched the scene.
It hurt. Standing here. It hurt. And it was-

"It's wrong." The Doctor finally managed to say something, his expression pained. "Something about this place is...wrong," he breathed. His own hearts tightening at the sight ahead.

"Obviously, a beach without a sun is a torture!" Jack exclaimed.

"So where're we?" Mickey asked, looking around.

"Somewhere on Earth..." The Doctor began faintly. He made quite a few steps forward, leaving the trio a bit behind.

He didn't understand, why this place made his hearts ache so much. He could try to convince himself that it was all because of the TARDIS, or that they seemed to be in a different universe altogether, but in the end, it was not it. Because his heartache made him forget even the death of his precious ship. Something was missing. But he didn't know what.

A missing piece in a puzzle.

A voice. His own voice calling for someone. Or he thought like he wanted to call for someone.

Rose's breath hitched, when she saw the Doctor's right hand lift up in the air, reaching out for something, like it wanted to touch something, something what was not there.

"Norway," he breathed.

It worked like a trigger in Rose's mind. Before her own awareness reached her of what was she doing, she was already one step behind the Doctor. His back was turned to her face, as he stood there still, reaching out.

"Can I...?" A memory echoed inside her mind. Instinctively she raised her own hand, it hovering just above his pinstriped back. She hesitated, one time, two times, her fingers trembling.

"I'm still just an image. No touch." Another memory playing out in her head.

Would it disappear? If she reached out for him now, would her hand go through? Would she wake up from all of this, like it was just another dream? Was everything just a dream? Was she originally standing here, on this bloody beach alone, watching the empty scene before her and her mind playing tricks of what could have been different?

She clenched her fingers in an unsteady fist as her trembling hands were battling with her, aching for that final step. A touch. Just a simple touch, to let her know that he was here. Or not. Desperately hoping it was the former than the later.

A second passed.

Another...Until she finally grazed his back with her fingers, then palm with delicacy.

He was really here now. Not an image. Flesh and blood.

With the touch the Doctor turned around to face her. He knew who it was. He could feel her coming ages ago. Maybe it was because of his Time Lord's genes, or maybe just because she was Rose Tyler.

"Rose," he said in a low, husky voice. Rose swallowed the lump in her throat. She could barely breathe now.
"Rose... Rose... Rose...ROSE!" Another flashback of his voice calling her in her mind, calling her to come to this beach, to him - one last time.

And then his eyes fell on hers, deep brown eyes, locking their gaze with hers. He was not saying anything. Neither of them was. Rose's mouth was twitching slightly, forming a small smile. A content one. Her hand now resting on his arm, tugging on it, holding on like her life depended on it. Because it did. This was the place where she died. But now...she may be having the chance to live again.

On this cursed beach, on the worst day of her life, she was here, together with the one person she had ever wanted to be with.

And then, they found themselves in each other's embrace. Rose's arms around his neck, face buried in shoulder. The Doctor's arms wrapped tightly around her back. Holding her close with his eyes closed, exhaling a shivering breath.

They didn't talk about that. Didn't ask each other, why the other did that. It didn't need saying. It just felt right. Something they needed at that moment.

And the uneasiness the both of them were feeling, even if the Doctor had no clue why was he feeling like that, faded away, buried in each others arms.

"Doctor!"

An american voice shook the pair apart. As they broke from their embrace, their gazes seemed a bit dazed and unfocused. Both of them were feeling a bit unsteady. After such a long time, only standing there, holding each other, their bodies adjusted to that and were supporting each other comfortably. Now, with them apart, it felt like something was amiss.

The Doctor shook his head, trying to get a hold of himself. That was not how he was normally feeling. He could only blame the TARDIS crash and this parallel universe for all of this. Otherwise it would be no way for him to feel unsteady without Rose holding on to him.

"Doctor, I think we've got something here!" Jack called out for their attention again.

"It's alright. You should...go." Rose gestured to the TARDIS, her voice a bit shaky.

"Yeh. I probably should," he responded automatically, but his gaze still fixed on her.

When neither of them moved from their original places, Captain tried again. "You coming?"

The Doctor blinked at that, turning his head towards the source of the voice. Then back again at Rose. "I-" He gestured with his hand and head, tilting it to the side.

Rose gave him a reassuring smile as she nodded. His eyes lingered at her for one more second before he turned with his whole body, walking away.

Rose exhaled a breath she didn't know she was holding. Feeling the loss of the touch herself. Soon enough, a gust of wind reached her, making her shiver a bit. She placed her arms around herself, trying to warm herself up, as she began to walk towards everyone else.

Just as she was about to open the TARDIS doors, a squeal of happiness reached her ears. She jumped slightly, startled by that sound.
"Mickey, we've got power! HA!"

Despite the serious atmosphere just seconds ago, she snorted at that.

"It's alive!" the Doctor shouted out in a deliriously happy voice. Rose opened the doors.

"What's happening?" she asked, feeling infected by the sudden outburst of happiness, radiating from the Doctor herself. She found him right underneath the console, pulling out some important looking internals of the TARDIS.

"It's tiny." The Doctor seemed not to notice her, as he continued pulling out everything he saw from there. "One of those insignificant little power cells that no one ever bothers about, and it's clinging onto life," he spilled. "But with one little-" His voice cracked a bit as he fought with the cable to release its tangles from his head. "Ounce of reality tucked away inside," he continued, once the threat was tossed away.

"Let me guess. And that's enough power to get us home?" Jack joined, sitting on the jump seat casually.

"Not yet," the Doctor replied in a low voice as he picked up the power cell and sat back on the small set of stairs under the grilling.

"I need to charge it up," he spoke. And then he noticed Rose, sitting on the edge of the console grating, just a few steps away from him.

"Rose," he spoke her name with a silly smile on his face. "Look at this." He showed her a small piece of coral, emitting green light, as he was holding it cupped in his both hands, carefully.

"It's beautiful." Rose beamed at the sight, leaning over to look at it from the closer view.

Mickey just rolled his eyes. "As long as this thing gets us back home."

"Mickey," the Doctor chided him. "You don't understand the power of such a little thing. It has to be nurtured."

"I can show it delicacy," Jack joked.

"You would just break it apart," the Doctor whispered, his eyes locked on the small thing in his hands.

"So how do we charge it up?" Rose asked him softly, gesturing with her hand to touch it. "May I?" She smiled at the Doctor, hesitating a bit.

"Just be delicate," he whispered.

She smiled more widely at that, as her fingers grazed the surface of the coral. "It feels like it's humming," Rose breathed.

"It does, doesn't it?" the Doctor sang, grinning at her.

"Like the TARDIS," Rose added, sliding her fingers on it, carefully. The Doctor giggled at that.

Jack just shook his head in amusement. Both of them looking at the coral like it was their own newborn child.

"When are you going to charge it?" Mickey complained, making the pair jump a bit.
"Oh oh, careful." Rose cupped her both hands just above the Doctor's, preventing it to get damaged.

"Don't scare it, Mickey," the Doctor chided him, grimacing.

"It's so small. It can't possibly feel fear," Mickey retorted sceptically.

"You would be surprised what it can feel," the Doctor said in a whisper as his face lit up.

Rose gasped at the sight. "Its glow got bigger," Rose noted. "What's happening?" As she looked from it to the Doctor.

"It's feeling both of our energies," he told her. "I just have to give it a little bit of a nudge." And with that he blew on the power cell gently, it brightening at the contact. The Doctor and Rose beamed at that.

"I just gave away ten years of my life. Worth every second!" he sang, dorkish giggle following.

"So what, we've got twenty four hours stuck here?" Mickey asked, once they left the TARDIS.

The Doctor stood there, his hands in his pockets, as he grimaced in disgust. "This place really gives me the creeps."

Rose forced her heartbeat to steady, as it quickened at his words. She took a deep breath, moving a bit uncomfortably. She felt a hand around her shoulders, moments later. When she lifted her gaze, she saw Jack looking at her softly. She just gave him a grateful smile. With a quick peck on her head, he released her.

The Doctor was pacing about, ahead of everyone else, thus he failed to notice all that. "Twenty four hours in parallel world and with nothing but a beach," he exhaled, talking in a whisper.

"Parallel?" Mickey asked. "We're in parallel world?" His enthusiasm growing. "It's like on films, isn't it? Like an alternative to our world were everything's the same but a little bit different, like... I dunno," he continued on, without being asked. "Traffic lights are blue, Tony Blair never got elected..."

"Okay!" Jack interrupted him. "So what's the plan?" He directed the question at the Doctor.

"Anything, really." The Doctor just shrugged nonchalantly. "Can't say we got much to choose from, though," he breathed sarcastically.

"Well, there must be an inn or something out here, somewhere." Jack tried to reason. "You can feel it where it is, no?"

"Sure I can," the Doctor agreed blithely. Then he stood in a concentrated pose; his head a bit tilted down, forehead wrinkled. "We go...um..." His gaze trailing from one side to the other. "Uh...that way." He sprung around to the right. And before anyone could react, he continued. "No no no. Wrong way. Nothing in there. Weeell." He considered. "Maybe we could find something there. But possibly only a bunch of trees and sand." He waved his hand before him, in a gesture. "And roads, and-" he continued on, when a cough made him go back to the world.

"Oh, right. So where was I? The inn. Right. A beautiful place to rest. With beds. Lots of beds would be better, right?" he asked them casually, grinning silly. Jack only smirked at him, Mickey eyed him suspiciously, Rose grinned. "So!" Back to his concentrated pose. "Let's try...um...uh..." He furrowed his brows.
"You don't even know!" Mickey complained.

"I can't help it!" the Doctor cried, when he turned to face Mickey. "It's another universe." He rubbed on the back of his neck. "I'm not used to this..." He gestured around himself. "Beach," he finally exhaled.

"Okay then. What date is it at least?" Mickey persisted.

"Date, date, date..." The Doctor began muttering, with his head tilted backwards, like calculating. "The date of today...is...2010...December..." He then frowned. "The day..." He began thinking hard. "What's today's date, come on." He started pacing around in circles. "Argh." As he tugged on his hair. "This universe's driving me nuts!" he exclaimed in a manic voice.

"Okay okay, guys!" Jack tried to calm everyone down. "We've got the year and the month. It's a start. And not like everybody knows the date. I never know after a party." Jack smiled slyly at the memories.

The Doctor shot him a look.

"We can try going down that road ahead." Rose suggested, gesturing to one side.

_Better do something before it goes into a fight. Boys. Sigh._

"Of course!" the Doctor exclaimed with enthusiasm. "Let's take a walk." As he took her hand into his, pulling her with him. Soon enough, they were a good distance away from where the TARDIS originally stood.

"They really don't see anyone else, do they?" Mickey stated, his expression blank.

"Good to be young and so in love," Jack sang, going after the pair, but keeping his distance.

"But he's old!" Mickey grimaced, walking right by Jack's side.

"Doesn't stop them." Jack laughed.

And the journey started. Step. Step. Step. Steps left in the sand slowly changing into the traces on the grass. They walked and walked, road by road, when they spotted the forest just ahead of them.

The Doctor and Rose were walking hand in hand, just ahead of Jack and Mickey.

"It's spooky here." Mickey spoke in a whisper. It was a bit darker in that area, shadows of the trees preventing the sun to shine at their direction.

"Boo!" Jack blew into Mickey's ear.

"Aah!" Mickey squealed, turning in a circle. "Where's it, what is it?" he was asking frantically. Jack was laughing out loud by his successful attempt to scare him off.

The Doctor and Rose half turned at them. "Kids, come on, don't fall behind!" the Doctor urged them. Rose nudged on his shoulder, playfully. The Doctor just leaned on her side, grinning, as they continued their walk.

They walked for around half an hour, passing a forest, some roads...Everything seemed peaceful, but quite deserted.
"Don't you feel like someone is watching you?" Rose whispered, leaning to the Doctor's side.

"Have you caught Mickey's disease?" the Doctor cried. "Scared of the dark woods?" he then sang, bumping into her shoulder.

"M not!" Rose cried, chuckling, moments later. "'s just a feeling...I dunno." She shrugged. "Must be nothing." She grimaced, shaking her head, trying to dismiss it.

"Or an alien invasion," the Doctor noted, nodding his head blithely at her.

"Yeh, or that." Rose nodded her head nonchalantly. They kept nodding their heads for a moment, all serious, when their mouths twitched - and they burst out laughing.

The both of them were laughing out loud, as they continued walking.

"Just look at them." Mickey grimaced at the sight ahead. "Can't they get more cheesy? They are even worse than you."

"Does that mean you finally understood that I'm handsome?" Jack asked, interested.

"Forget it."

"There we go! An inn!" Jack announced, smiling in relief, once the group finally reached their destination.

"I'm gonna ask for beds!" Mickey rushed inside first.

The Doctor and Rose just snorted at the sight, shaking their heads. "All you humans think about is sleep! Wasting a third of your life. How stupid is that?" He grimaced in disbelief.

"Being rude again?" Rose sang, grinning. The Doctor grinned at her himself. "It's true. Sleeping is a complete rubbish!" he exclaimed. "Imagine what you could do instead of that."

"What, tinker the TARDIS console or adjust some new settings to the sonic screwdriver?" Rose teased him.

"Well, I don't expect you lot to be so brilliant to manage that, actually you may never get to that point-" the Doctor replied, all serious, failing to notice the visible mock.

"Doctor! Rose! Come here, they got beds!" Mickey announced, interrupting the Doctor; his head peeked out the doors.

"What do you want me to do in the inn?" the Doctor exclaimed.

"I dunno, go to sleep?" Mickey shrugged nonchalantly. When he looked at the Time Lord, the Doctor was only giving him the Do you think? look.


"Come on, let's check it out," Rose said softly, urging the Doctor.

"Aw, do we have to?" the Doctor whined. "I can just stay...out here." He gestured to the park they just left.

Rose gave him a look. "We've got hours till we can go back in space!" Rose looked at him
The Doctor was trying to fight it, but it didn't take him long to give up. "Oh, alright. I'll step in." As Rose tugged on his arm, dragging him inside the hallway.

It was a cozy, wooden place. The hallway was decorated in green and red colours, the fireplace just a bit ahead, and a huge Christmas tree standing tall, right by the window, across the exit.

"It's Christmas!" the Doctor exclaimed in disbelief.

"We just had one and now another one." Rose beamed at the sight. "Always comes down to Christmas with you." As she looked up at the Doctor.

"Our third Christmas now." The Doctor grinned at her. Rose just smiled at him. Fifth, to be precise, but she was the only one aware of that.

"Rose!" Mickey ran towards her, all smiling. "They got a restaurant here."

Rose smiled at him. "Shall we?" As she looked at the Doctor.

"Ye-" the Doctor began, when something caught his eye.

CRASH

A young couple with a small kid, standing near the tree caught his attention. When the mother tried to give her child a snow globe, it crashed on the floor. Of course, the woman just squatted down there, facing her crying girl, soothing her. But the Doctor saw something else. It was like the snow globe went right through the little girl's fingers.

"I'll come a bit later..." the Doctor said absentmindedly.

"Everything all right?" Rose asked, concerned.

"Mm?" the Doctor looked at her, a bit dazed. "Yeh, yeh. Sure. I'll be there in a sec." As he gave her a reassuring smile.

"Alright." Rose smiled at him. "Let's go, Mickey." And they went out of the room.

The Doctor was fiddling with his sonic screwdriver, leaning on the wall in the reception hall, when Jack came into the room.

"Had a good meal?" the Doctor asked Jack casually, as he was still looking at his sonic.

"Could be better..." Jack spoke in an accusing voice. "You didn't show up. Why?" he asked.

"Might have found something." The Doctor grinned at the sonic in his hands.

"An alien?" Jack asked, enthusiasm growing.

"Could be," the Doctor answered blithely. Jack beamed at that. "AHA!" the Doctor exclaimed, leaping off the wall, grinning all happily at his work.

"This should work." He took a few steps into the room. "Gotta show Rose."

When he felt that Jack was not following him, he turned around. With the look he was giving, the
Doctor just tilted his head upwards, exhaling. "Of course." His gaze back to Jack. "Where's she?"

"I don't know." Jack shrugged.

"I told you to keep an eye on her," the Doctor cried, grimacing.

"I left her with Mickey." Jack defended himself.

"Mickey? Mickey's not good enough!" the Doctor shot back. "She swoons off, leaving him stranded there."

After a second, an echo of a voice reached their ears.

"That steak was awesome." Mickey's voice rang in the hallway. Soon enough, the figure came into view, rubbing his stomach in contentment.

"See what I mean?!" the Doctor cried, pointing in Mickey's direction.

"You let her wander off!" the Doctor cried, in an accusing voice. "Parallel world, it's like a gingerbread house!" He gestured with his hands, making his way towards the window. "All those temptations calling out." He ran his hand around the curtains, tugging on them harshly, like trying to find something under them or out of the window. But, obviously, not getting the wanted results. So in the end, slamming them shut.

"Relax, Doc." Jack put his hand on his shoulder. "There's not much to do here. You said so yourself."

"She could get herself into trouble even in a deadlock-sealed empty room," the Doctor muttered. "Always makes people worry." He shook his head, as he was pacing around the room, thinking.

"What, you didn't like the steak?" Mickey asked, concerned. The Doctor just rolled his eyes at him, continuing his walk.

"Captain Jack Harkness," Jack announced, extending his hand to the receptionist.

"How may I help you?" Emilie, the receptionist, asked, smiling at Jack.

"Would you happen to know of any places, where people hang out around here?" Jack asked, grinning at her. "Also, it would be a great help to know the date of today." As he placed a soft kiss on her hand, looking at her flirtly.

"I don't know any places besides Bad Wolf Bay down there and as for the date, it is December the 22nd," she said teasingly.

Thump.

The Doctor previously manically walking in circles around the room, suddenly came to a stop. His face fell. He sprung around in a flash and after a few huge steps, was leaning on the receptionist's desk.

"What did you say?" he asked faintly, looking at her with wide eyes.

"I-I...what?" Emilie looked a bit shocked by that reaction. Jack let go of her hand, looking at her confused himself.

"What did you say!?!" the Doctor asked again, in a stronger voice.
"T-that today is 22nd of December," she shuttered.

"No. Before that!" he half-shouted at her, desperation in his eyes. "What was the place?"

"It's just a b-beach." She shook her head.

"How's it called?!" the Doctor asked in an urgent voice.

The receptionist locked her gaze to the Doctor for a moment, looking a bit scared of him, before she uttered the words.

"Bad Wolf Bay."

The Doctor staggered backwards from the desk like he had just been electrocuted. He was looking at Emilie with horror filled eyes, mouth open slack, as he shook his head to the sides.

"No," he whispered, walking backwards. "It can't be."

No no no no.

The Doctor was moving backwards.

"What is it? Did I say something wrong?" Emilie asked concerned.

"Doctor." Jack turned to face him, taking calming breaths.

"What's happening?" Mickey walked towards them, looking confused.

"It's not over yet," the Doctor uttered in horrified voice, and with that, he flew out the doors, leaving a very confused receptionist following his back with her eyes, Mickey stranded there, and a certain captain, looking all disturbed.

What's it, what's it, what's it, what's it, what's it, what's it?

The Doctor was going mad inside his mind. Bad Wolf. It just keeps haunting them. The end of the universe. He thought they came to this parallel world by accident, but, of course, there are no accidents with him.

And Bad Wolf Bay.

Why did it sound so familiar? Why did his hearts ache at the name? He was missing something. Always missing a piece of a puzzle. Always there, somewhere near, but not close enough. Missing. Missing. Missing. What was the answer? What was it? He feared that the answer was always there, in his mind.

Someone has been messing with his head.

He ran further and further, never stopping. Thankfully to his respiratory bypass system he could afford to run without a stop. But even if he needed to, he couldn't now. He just needed to get there. Now!

Pass the road, turn a bit to the left, run straight ahead, past the forest, further, another road, grass, ground, sand...

It was getting nearer, just a bit more, just over that edge ahead. Almost there, he could almost see
the waves...

And finally!

A strong gust of wind greeted him, when he reached the place where they parked the TARDIS.

Thump

His hearts skipped a beat when he saw that he was not alone. He had to take a few deep breaths, when he saw Rose there.

For a moment, the image ahead cracked, showing a leather back of someone, just a head of him. The images blinked a few times. One time it was showing the leather, another the red back of someone. It went on and on, until it finally settled down on the present. He narrowed his eyes, in an attempt to concentrate.

There stood Rose Tyler. Her back facing him. Gazing in the distance. At first he just stood there, not moving an inch. Not sure himself what to do. But then, he decided that the gap between them was too big, and he needed to close it. The Doctor took a few slow steps towards her, although still keeping the distance.

Rose flinched a bit, when she sensed someone near.

And then she turned...

Slowly... her gaze not meeting his yet, her loose hair scattering around her face by the wind. He was replying that scene over and over again in his head; the blond hair touching her face, just to flutter in the air the next moment. Savouring each detail... when he gasped.

Rose lifted her eyes up, to meet his, looking at him in wonder, tenderly.

"Wh-y are you here?"
"Wh-ere are you?" an echo in his mind prevailing the voice in the surface.

And then everything fell into place...

The last year went by in his mind by a flash, and suddenly there were no more questions, no more doubts. Just sheer happiness.

He stood there, watching her, his awestruck expression slowly changing into a relief filled smile. He exhaled a laugh, not yet fully believing what was happening. But when he saw her concerned expression, he decided that he did not care how any of this happened anymore. What mattered is that it did.

"Inside the TARDIS," he answered in a strong voice, gulping at the last word, as he waited Rose's reaction with anticipation.

Oh, his pink and yellow human was so lost at his words. Rose shook her head slightly, looking at him in disbelief. She thought she was hearing things again. Everything this place had ever done to her was bringing out the last memories of them. Her eyes were starting to shine, filling themselves with unshed tears.

It didn't take long for the Doctor to notice what she was doing. It felt so familiar, to shake the imaginary things out of one's mind. Wanting desperately to hold onto such hope, but refusing to go that road, in order to protect himself. So he told her one thing, which she wanted to hear the last
time. Which he couldn't then, but could now.

"And I'm not just an image," he said in a gentle voice, smiling fondly at her.

A wave of shock ran down Rose's body. She choked a sob from the words, placing the back of her hand over her mouth, looking at him with desperation in her eyes.

Could this be real?

"C-Can I...?" She only managed with her voice cracking. She took an instinctive step towards him, lifting her hand at him.

He just made a small nod, smiling tenderly at her.

The next moment she was running towards him, with all her might, even if their distance was only a couple of meters away. She had to get to him. And seconds later she did, the Doctor catching her in the air, as he took a few big leaps himself. Wanting her near himself. His arms were wrapped around her; them fitting together like they were made for each other. He lifted her from the ground, giggling from sheer joy, Rose letting a watery laugh escape her lungs.

"Rose. Rose. Rose. Rose." He was whispering her name like a mantra, as he held her close. He gently put her back on the ground, but not severing their contact.

"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry for leaving you alone into this," he whispered into her hair. Rose could feel her tears coming through her eyes. She shook her head and buried herself deeper into his embrace. She could feel when he kissed her hair softly, making her feel so dear to him. They stood there for, it seemed ages, rocking themselves slightly and caressing each others' backs and hair and everything. Just so they could draw themselves into each others' smell.

With a visible reluctance the Doctor slowly started to pull away. As his hands left her back and were now on her arms, he slowly lifted them to cup Rose's face into his both hands. He gazed into her eyes like she was the most precious thing in the world. Which she was to him.

"Oh, Rose." The Doctor spoke softly. "I'm so sorry... and thankful, and proud at the same time." He laughed just a bit. "All those lives you have saved..." He was starting to smile more widely at her and Rose made a nervous laugh. "I'm so proud of you, my brilliant Rose." Caressing her cheek with his thumb.

"You came back to me," he said lightly.

"Yeh." Rose let out a watery laugh.

"I told you, I was not gonna leave you. I promised forever to you," she said tenderly.

"Quite right too," he said softly. "You were right by my side this whole time, and I didn't even know." He chuckled in disbelief of his bliss.

"We've got an extra year to our adventures," Rose joked lightly and made the Doctor laugh a bit.

"Rose Tyler, defender of the Earth. You really lived up to that name." He grinned at her and she beamed at him.

He placed his forehead against hers. "I missed you," he said tenderly. Rose smiled through her tears.
"Me too."

_to be continued..._
"Look at you! You look the same as I remember!" the Doctor cried, when he pulled back a bit to take a better look at Rose.

"Yeh, I bet my mascara is all run down now." Rose laughed, trying to wipe it off with one of her sleeves.

"Weeell, you are a bit black," the Doctor agreed. When Rose raised an eyebrow at him, he was quick to add. "But nothing we can't fix!" he exclaimed all happily, as he pulled his sonic screwdriver out and bleeped it on his palms. Rose just watched him in wonder.

"What-" Rose began, chuckling, when moments later, she was silenced by the Doctor's both hands on her cheeks, caressing them gently. Rose blinked at him.

"Good for removing unwanted liquids. Just a bit adjustment by passing on the energy on my hands and it works like magic," he spilled. "Here you go! All clean and perfect!" He pulled back his hands off her face, grinning by the work he had done.

"Don't tell me you just washed my face with your sonic'ed hands." Rose shook her head in disbelief, but smiling despite that.

"Yes, I did!" he exclaimed all happily.

"That must be one of the weirdest things you have ever done," she said in a half-whisper, pushing her hair from her face, as she composed herself.

"Well, thank you." She tried to be serious, but had a hard time doing so.

"You are welcome." The Doctor beamed at her, and Rose couldn't suppress her snort any longer.

"What?" the Doctor asked innocently, feeling intrigued.

Rose just shook her head, as she pressed her lips hard together, stifling the further laugh from coming out to the surface.

After a while only just staring at the waves, she finally turned to face him.

"This's just so..." She trailed off, gesturing around herself with a look of astonishment.

"Mh-hm!" The Doctor nodded his head, grinning all silly. "One major mystery," he uttered each word meaningfully.

"But you know what's going on, yeh?" Rose asked him, hopeful.

"No idea," the Doctor replied in an amused tone.

"What, seriously? You don't even know how you became..." She gestured at him. "Well, you."

"Nope," the Doctor answered blithely. "Weeell." He trailed off, looking upwards. "I might have an idea as to how I remembered all those things."

"Okay..." Rose laughed a bit. "That's a start. So what happened?"
"Emotional attachment," the Doctor stated, looking at Rose now.

Rose just blinked at him a few times. "Meaning what?"

"Basically it means just what it represents," he replied innocently. "And, although, it could represent many things at once, this time it just means what it signifies. Emotions and attachment," he ended simply.

Rose just looked at him in a blank expression. "And how are they related to your memories again?"

"Helped in recovering them," the Doctor stated in an obvious tone.

"So, If I get this right... And I'm not really sure what I should be getting here..." Rose smiled at the last word, the Doctor looked at her in amusement. "This place triggered your memories to come back?"

"You could say that," the Doctor agreed. "But it was not just this place. Bad Wolf Bay." He uttered the words in a low voice. "It happened in that school where we were at with Sarah Jane and Mickey, also in 51st century spaceship." He tugged on his ear while speaking.

"What, in the school too?" Rose looked at him in bewilderment.

"Well, yeh, but it was a pretty small thing." He shook his head together with his hand, trying to dismiss it.

"What was it?" Rose insisted. The Doctor glanced at her, and after seeing her intrigued expression gave in.

"Just the time, when you weren't in the school kitchen," he began, his hands in his pockets now. "I was dead sure you were running before me; me and K-9 as the last ones." He tilted his head to the side slightly. "But that was from our original timeline." He bent his knees a bit to make a point. "Of course, at that time I didn't know that, and it was pretty much confusing." He laughed at that bit. Somewhere along those lines they started walking by the shore.

Rose just nodded, trying to digest the information. "And in the 51st s-spaceship..?" Her voice cracked a bit at the end. She was not sure what were his thoughts on that now, since he had double memories of it.

The Doctor hesitated for a moment to answer that, his expression serious, and Rose thought it must be because of Madame, but what he said was not what she expected to hear.

"It was like literally reliving Canary Wharf," he said in a faint voice, his gaze focused ahead.

*It was the same for her...*

Rose put her hand into his pocket, searching for his hand. When she found what she was looking for, she squeezed his hand in comfort. As he felt her hand into his, he pulled them both out and looked at their entwined fingers. *They fit so well, like none other.* He smiled at the sight, squeezing her hand a bit himself. He met her gaze and smiled at her tenderly. Just then, the Doctor drew her a bit closer to his side, placing a soft kiss on her forehead, thus making her feel not alone into this after such a long time, and *safe*.

They walked for a while in a comfortable silence, before Rose couldn't suppress her curiosity for much longer.
"I thought they were gone," Rose half-whispered. "Your memories from those times." Shaking her head slightly to the sides in disbelief.

"They were not gone gone. Like ever. Not gone gone." The Doctor grimaced a bit, talking in a nonchalant voice. "They were just..." He rubbed on the back of his neck. "Locked away." He shrugged, gesturing with his hand. "Kept safe till it's safe for them to come out. Till they can run into the wild, embracing the riches of the world!" He went into one of his "story telling" modes.

"Trying to be poetic, are you?" Rose grinned at him, raising a suggestive eyebrow.

"Maybe a tiny miny bit." He considered. Rose nodded her head, stifling the snort.

"Alright then." She gulped. Back to serious. "And you managed to do that... how?"

"I'm a Time Lord," the Doctor stated solemnly.

"Sure you are." Rose just smiled at him.

"And it's literally impossible to erase the timeline I once lived at from my awareness completely." He was talking in a casual voice, while they were walking by the shore. "The most one could do, although." He considered. "I'm not even sure what was that... one." He grimaced at that, then shook his head, trying to get back to the point. "The most one could do is lock the memories down. With some sort of energy...something like-" He was thinking of the right word.

"What, like a seal energy?" Rose suggested.

"Something like that." The Doctor beamed at her.

"Do you know what that energy is?" Rose asked, looking at him.

"Nope." The Doctor was just grinning.

"And why are so giddy then?" Rose laughed, slapping him on the arm playfully.

"Oh, there are plenty of reasons to be happy." He leaned to her side, bumping into her shoulder, grinning.

"Yeh?" Rose looked at him with tongue between her teeth smile.

"Uuhuh." The Doctor giggled.

"Stop it." Rose bumped into his shoulder, chuckling.

"I didn't even start," the Doctor sang. Seconds later, he picked Rose up again, holding her in the air, spinning her around. Rose was squealing between laughter, holding onto him tightly.

Some time later, when Rose felt her head spinning out of focus, she was placed on the sand, just to sway on the side, thus leaving the Doctor to hold her in place, his arms on her waist.

"All right?" the Doctor was asking playfully, his gaze fixed on her.

"No." Rose chuckled, her eyes closed.

"Take it easy, or you might need a Doctor." The Doctor formed a serious tone.

"Oh, my God. That's so cheesy." She laughed, resting her head on his chest.
"Oh, don't say that. Already used that once," the Doctor said nonchalantly, as he drew her closer, resting his chin on her head. "Or was it twice now," he muttered, seriously considering it.

"Wha-" Rose began, leaning backwards to look at him, her eyes now trying to get to focus. "What did you say?"

The Doctor just giggled and placed her against his chest again.

---

Something was moving faraway in the distance, past all those rocky mountains and the beach. A black dot. Tiny but visible to the Time Lord's eyes. It was getting nearer steadily.

At first, he had no idea what that was. He just looked at it in wonder and amusement, until his face fell. His double heartbeat skipped a beat.

He looked in the distance, his mouth slack open, the bottom lip slightly quivering, eyes wide. He stiffened in Rose's embrace, his arms wrapped more tightly around her, like preventing anything or anyone from taking her from him.

He recognised it.

"Doctor?" Rose asked him softly, tugging on his arm.

No answer.

"Doctor, what is it?" In a more urgent voice. He was starting to scare her. "What's wrong?"

The second time managed to pull him out of his trance. His mouth closed together with his eyes, as he gulped.

How was he supposed to tell her? All those universes and chances...and neither managed to get things right.

"Doctor!" Rose shook his arm, making him turn to her side. She gasped, when she saw his pained expression. Her eyes travelled from one side to another, desperately searching for an answer to his sudden change. She could see it was hard for him to force himself to speak up. If given the chance, he would be anywhere, but here, in this situation. But he had nowhere to go now.

"I'm sorry," he whispered in such a faint and remorseful voice that it broke Rose's heart.

Thump.

"Wh... why're you saying that?" She shook her head, her voice wavering.

This couldn't look good.

He looked at her for one last lingering moment, before he turned, taking her together with him.
"We've got to go." Was all he said.

"What's going on?" Rose still tried to ask, but got no answer.

"Run," he said instead. Moments later they began running, back towards where the TARDIS was parked. She half-turned to see what was going on behind her back. And, although, her eyesight was pretty good, she could not identify what was the thing in the faraway distance, supposedly moving. So she continued to run, following the Doctor.
They were gone a bit of a distance from their beloved ship, so it took a couple of minutes to get back to her. When they finally reached the TARDIS, the Doctor literally flew into the ship, rushing about the controls in the console room, checking monitor and all kind of things.

"What're you looking for?" Rose asked him, getting inside herself. "Can I can help?" She tried asking softly.

"No," he answered flatly, as he continued his frantic search of something.

*Because of that, Rose felt even more worried.* Something was very wrong. The Doctor wouldn't shut her off like that. They were past that ages ago, and now, more than ever that was not the case. The only possible explanation to that was...if it involved her well being.

"It's alright." Rose began faintly. "I can handle it, whatever that is."

*She was preparing herself for the worst.*

It made the Doctor tense all the more. He didn't want to give her those news. *Anything but that.* It was just not fair! And to make matters worse, the readings he was so desperately trying to get, were not giving the wanted results. He leaned on the console, his hands supporting him, head down as he exhaled a long and heavy breath.

"What're you not telling me?" Rose's voice cracked at the end. "What was that thing?"

*She was not sure she wanted to know it.*

The Doctor closed his eyes as he whispered. *"It's Pete's car."*

It felt like a slap in the face. Sadly it hurt so much more than that. She had imagined all kinds of horrible things. Hostile aliens invasion, something very dangerous that even the Doctor was afraid of. Cybermen? Those were dangerous enough. Daleks? Yeh, Daleks would be very bad news. But as funny as fate was, a car, just an ordinary car of an ordinary man meant every possible destruction. Pete's car. Her parallel dad's car coming here now, at this moment, meant that everything they feared of came true. Thus including Cybermen and Daleks all the same. *The void.* And her trapped in the parallel universe.

She knew it would not heal fast this time round, and it was probably the cruelest thing to happen. *After everything...* Well, nothing she could do about that really. Rose took a few deep breaths, her expression blank. *It felt like she ceased to feel.*

"I'll go check how long we've got." Her voice echoed in the still recovering TARDIS.

She could hear the Doctor's teeth clench as he gulped, swallowing the painful words or would it have been remorseful? Whichever where on his tongue then.

*It was not his fault.*

And it was left for Rose to let him know that. But firstly, she had to get a hold of herself. She went through so much in the last year. All those adventures repeating themselves, but never really working out the way you expect them to. Always preserving the timelines, avoiding paradoxes. It was nothing new to her. But it was new for him. He may be a Time Lord, but it was *not* every day you find yourself tossed between your two possible timelines. No less, it was not every day you learn that no matter how hard your try, doomsday still reaches you in the end.
Once she opened the TARDIS doors, her heart skipped a beat. What was a barely visible dot before, now could be identified as a black moving object in the distance. They had to move fast, with whatever they were gonna do about that.

She closed the doors.

"We-" Rose began, then quickly corrected herself. "They're getting closer," she half-whispered.

The Doctor caught her slip up, but never commented on that. He wanted to pretend it was not who they knew were in the car. So he just nodded, fiddling with the controls again. He tried to put a tough front, but Rose could see through that. She knew him way too well. Despite the fact, that he was still looking for a way out, she could see that he had lost hope and was doing that only for the name's sake.

Rose slowly approached him and drew her arms around his neck. She could feel the Doctor's breath hitch and his fists clench as if searching for a rightful place to put them. When Rose tightened her grip on him, he finally gave in to his instincts and wrapped his arms around her back. They held onto each other so tightly, that it was very likely to leave some bruises on both sides. But their hearts were hurting too much to feel any possible psychical pain.

"This's not your fault," Rose whispered in his neck. The Doctor shivered a bit, refusing to drop his guilt on this with his body language.

"It's just..." Not fair. She wanted to say, but could not make herself to do so. "At least I've tried." Rose tried a casual approach on that, chuckling sadly.

His breathing became even more labored from the words. He was trying so desperately to ease his breathing, to soothe himself and his precious girl, but there was nothing to say to fix this. So he just tightened his grip on her, holding her as close as he could to himself.

They slowly pulled back from their embrace, the Doctor still resting his hands on her waist, and Rose's hands on his forearms. "So, what do we need to avoid the destructible paradox from happening?" Rose said lightly despite her inner heaviness.

"Perception filter," he said, stepping back a bit from Rose to take a better look at the monitor. "But it's not working. Not enough power." He gestured with his hands madly, running a hand through his hair.

It seemed like it became some sort of habit for them. To stand at the edge of the World's destruction. And them being the responsible ones. However, if this was really the end, he will gladly welcome it. Stuck together with Rose Tyler was not so bad. And therefore, if the universes were going to collapse any moment now, he will use his last chance.

He turned around to face her, finding Rose in a concentrated pose, thinking of something deeply. The Doctor chuckled fondly at her. Never losing hope, that was so her.

"Rose," He began softly as he made a step towards her. When she did not recognize him, he tried again.

"Rose Tyler." Saying her name solemnly. Then he opened his mouth to utter the words...but-

"Perception filter!" Rose's squeal shook him in place.

"W-what?" He looked a bit confused, shocked to say in the least.
"I remember!" Rose jumped in place from happiness. The Doctor just eyed her suspiciously.

"Remember what?" he questioned her. He was really trying to form a sentence.

"Rose-" He spoke her name tenderly once again, lifting his hand towards her.

"I know it! I know it!" Rose suddenly fixed her gaze on him. "I know of a solution!" She beamed, making the Doctor only look at her in bewilderment, his hand freezing on the spot. Moments later, he tilted his head upwards, exhaling.

"You're becoming like your mother," he muttered.

"Are you seriously complaining about me finding a solution now?" Rose dared him to say it, raising an eyebrow at him.

"Course not!" the Doctor cried in defence. "Let's hear it, Lewis." He made a prompting gesture at her.

"Working on it, sarge." Rose played along, grinning. The Doctor gave her an urging look.

"We got a hold of this-" Rose grimaced, when she couldn't remember the name. "Um, alien technology back in Torchwood." She decided to dismiss it. "We found out that it used perception filter, but it was broken. So we had to boost its energy."

"What did you use?" the Doctor asked, feeling a bit hopeful by the course of the conversation it was leading.

"Dimension jumpers." Rose looked at him meaningfully. "They had the energy which was compatible with perception filters."

"We don't have them now..." the Doctor stated, furrowing his brows.

"No, but we have a similar device with us," Rose said, looking at the Doctor expectedly. The Time Lord's mouth started twitching into a small smile.

*There just might be a way out.*

"Oh, of course we do! How did I not think of that?!" he exclaimed, walking around the console with more energy now. "Give him a call," he instructed, pointing at Rose. "And he better make it fast."

"On the scale of 1 to 5, 1 being the highest. What's the case of emergency?" Jack asked over the phone.

"Zero," Rose answered at once.

Seconds later, the immortal captain was standing right besides the pair. "Okay. I'm listening. What's the problem?"

"I need to borrow your Vortex Manipulator, Jack." The Doctor extended his hand.

"What for?"

"Why people keep asking?" The Doctor grimaced at that. "Just do as your told. For once." The Doctor directed it at Jack, but possibly meaning all the others including in his travels.
"If we take into consideration the little fact that I've left Emilie out there gaping at the empty space-" Jack began.

"Who's Emilie?" Rose asked, interrupting him.

"The receptionist," the Doctor and Jack answered in unison.

"Oh, " Rose breathed nonchalantly. "So that's Emilie."

"What's with this thing?" The Doctor was looking at the device in disapproval. "I should have disable it ages ago," he noted.

"Well," Rose began. "Lucky you haven't or else we would've been doomed."

"Guess so," the Doctor breathed. "Give me that." As he snatched the Vortex Manipulator from Jack.

"Okay. I was robbed of my time travelling object. Anyone mind telling me why?" Jack asked casually.

Rose smiled at Jack's lost face and took a step near him. "We need to borrow some energy to boost perception filter of the TARDIS," Rose began in a serious tone.

"Perception filter? Why do you need it so urgently-" Jack began, but then was interrupted.

"It's working," the Doctor breathed in awestruck expression. "We've just saved the world. HA!" the Doctor exclaimed, jumping at the last words.

"It's working? The perception filter is working now?" Rose got closer to his side, looking intrigued.

"Good as new." the Doctor assured her, smiling at her.

"That's great!" She exclaimed and the next moment they met each other in a brief hug.

"Alright. Now... back to the inn!" the Doctor exclaimed blithely.

"So everything is fine now?" Jack asked to be sure.

"Yeh. Probably," the Doctor answered nonchalantly.

"Probably?" Jack asked incredulously. "Don't you have to check if it's fixed?"

"Yeh... I guess that would make sense," the Doctor mumbled.

Jack eyed him suspiciously, when the Time Lord was making no effort to move.

"It's..." Rose stammered. "Outside those doors." She gestured with a shaky hand towards the TARDIS exit.

"Let's go then?" Jack asked both of them, but found only two living-statues, glued to the floor. They both ducked their gazes, faraway from the doors.

They couldn't possibly step outside and see...

Thankfully, Jack seemed to catch on and volunteered himself. Before he walked away, the Doctor called out.
"Give us your second one."

"The second?" Jack turned to face the Doctor.

"I know you have it. Just hand it over." The Doctor extended his hand.

"Aw, nothing goes past your eyes, Doc," Jack complained jokingly as he held out his second Vortex Manipulator.

"Superior senses, me," the Time Lord agreed casually. The next second he was buzzing the device in his hand with his sonic screwdriver, then doing something similar to the one on the console.

"Should work now." The Doctor tossed the device in his hands like a ball; swinging it, throwing in the air with one hand, and then catching with another.

"What should?" Jack asked warily.

"We're leaving now?" Rose asked cautiously.

"Yep," the Doctor answered blithely. "Ready?" he asked, turning to Rose.

"As ever I could be," she exhaled, going to stand next to the Doctor.

Jack looked like he wanted to ask something.

"We're going to use it to teleport back to the inn. Can't let our future selves notice," the Doctor spilled nonchalantly, like answering Jack's silent question. The last bit was just an excuse, though. He just wanted to be as far away from this place as possible.

"Your future selves?" Jack asked, blinking.

"Norway, fifty miles in the radius of Bergen...There it is! Ulvehi inn." The Doctor was adjusting some settings for their location, ignoring Jack's question. "Better make it to the right place. Imagine us ending up on South Pole!"

"We could meet penguins," Rose sang.

"Yeh, you would like that." The Doctor nodded, smiling.

"You're pumping a lot of energy out of it," Jack noted, watching the Vortex Manipulator on the console. "Will it work after use?" he wondered.

"Oh, did I forget to tell you?" the Doctor asked innocently. "You're not gonna see that one anymore. It's gonna perish. TARDIS power is too much for it. It gives the needed energy to boost the perception filter and that's it! A piece of junk. Trash." He laughed a bit, then added. "I tinkered it a bit to give you one last trip to the inn. Be careful when you teleport, though," he warned him. "You might get frazzled." Gesturing with his hands fire going out.

"But I guess we'll see you in afterlife if what. No real harm done." The Doctor patted Jack's back casually. When noticing Jack's completely non amused face and Rose's head shaking in disapproval, he leaned to her side to whisper.

"Was that rude?"

"Just a bit." Rose nodded.
"Alright then. Rude and not ginger, together with pink and yellow, are teleporting out!" the Doctor exclaimed, taking Rose's hand into his. "Allons-y!" With that, he pressed the button.

They found themselves in some sort of cramped place.

"Not a cupboard again," Rose complained.

"It certainly feels like one," the Doctor muttered. "Judging by the smell...uh, cotton, feathers. Yep, definitely bedding."

"Well, either way. We better get out of here," Rose's voice cracked as she found her leg stuck in something.

"Wait, don't move," the Doctor chided her. "Something's moving," he whispered, but was too late. Moments later, everything what was in the closet on the shelves fell down right on top of them.

"Whufph" Rose was silenced by a pillow crashing on her face. She stumbled then, taking the Doctor down with her.

*Thud.*

"Sorry," Rose said sheepishly.

"Loud entrances are usually used in wars, not in cupboards. Although." He stopped, considering. "Can't say I explored cupboards all that much. Well, except with you."

"Wait," Rose breathed.

"And that also--" the Doctor began again, but was silenced by a finger on his lips.

"Shh," Rose whispered. They froze in place when a sound of something, or rather, someone, moving outside the doors was heard.

"Something's out there," she breathed.

"Yeh, well. It seems, we took attention of habitats of this room," the Doctor said lightly. "I hope they're friendly," He said, a bit concerned.

Silence

"I don't suppose you thought we ended up in Mickey's room."

At those words the closet doors opened, the bright light blinding the pair, as a young girl greeted them with shocked and amused expression.

"Not Mickey's then," Rose muttered.

"Hello!" the Doctor greeted the girl enthusiastically. "I'm the Doctor, this is Rose." He gestured to her. "What's your name?"

The girl looked at them suspiciously. "What are you doing in our cupboard?"

The Doctor blinked a few times. "Oh, right. Up we go. Come on, Rose. Gotta represent ourselves properly." As the both of them stood up, Rose nearly slipping by the covers, so in the end, the Doctor had to steady her by taking her hand. When they finally stepped out of the closet, the
Doctor squatted down, to meet the girl's height.

"Hello. Better now?" he asked gently, the girl just nodded. "What are you called then?"

"Flora," she whispered.

"Nice to meet you, Flora." The Doctor beamed at her. "You might be related, she is a flower too." He gestured to Rose blithely.

"You're gonna get a smack." Rose joked, joining the Doctor near the girl.

"I saw you had a beautiful snow globe with you," the Doctor said to the girl expectedly.

"It's broken. I didn't hold it properly and it fell on the floor," the girl said in a dispirited voice.

"Did you really drop it or did it fall on its own?" the Doctor asked mysteriously.

The girl's eyes sparkled at once. "Do you believe me?"

"Yes, I do," the Doctor assured her. "Now, could I take a look at it for a sec?"

"Mummy threw it away," Flora said, lowering her head.

"She must have," Rose said softly. "Should we look at the recycle bin?" she suggested to the Doctor.

The Doctor smiled warmly at her. *He really missed having her with him.* Even if they did spend the last year together.

"Come on then," Rose urged him as she stood up. "See you later, Flora." She waved to the girl from the doorway.

"It's not picking up," the Doctor said faintly as they came to a stop near the trash bin and now the Doctor was busy scanning the shattered bits of the snow globe.

"Did too much time pass?" Rose guessed.

"No, it wouldn't matter. The signal must have been only temporal. Like a testing." He furrowed his brows at that.

"So what do we do then?" Rose asked.

"Nothing yet," he answered and stood up, pulling the sonic back to his suit's pocket. "Gotta find Mickey first."

"Oh, right." Rose seemed to suddenly remember him. "But he couldn't have wandered off far, could he?" she asked him casually.

"Let's find out." The Doctor raised his eyebrows as he lead the way in the hallway.

They walked through the corridors for a while, but everywhere seemed to be silent-dead.

"You may have been right. It is kind of spooky," the Doctor whispered, looking around cautiously.

"Mickey?" Rose called out for him.
"Mickey?" She tried again.

"Mickey dipery boy!" the Doctor joined.

"Mickey, are you there?" Rose tried, her head peeked out of one corner.

"Mickey dooby doo!" the Doctor tried. "Where're you?" He stopped for a moment. "Hold on. That was Scooby doo." He shook his head, then continued walking.

"Mickey?" Rose called out.

"Rickey!" the Doctor yelled. Rose gave him a bemused look.

"What?" The Doctor just shrugged. "Thought that might work." Rose just shook her head.

"I feel like I'm searching for Arthur!" the Doctor complained. "Although, that one followed me on his own." Then he turned to Rose. "Speaking of which, where did you learn horse-riding?" he asked her, intrigued.

"Pete taught me," Rose answered simply.

"Yeh? That man was hiding all sort of things under his sleeves..." The Doctor trailed off.

They walked through the dark corridors just when a blur of energy appeared before them. The pair stopped right at their tracks.

"Captain Jack-" he began, extending his hand.

"Stop it!" Rose and the Doctor said together.

"Oh, it's you both."

The Doctor raised a knowing eyebrow at him.

"Was everything alright?" Rose's a bit shaky voice caught both men's attention. "On the beach." She tried warily.

Jack just gave them an uncomfortable look. "Not sure if it could be called as alright."

"Just tell us what you saw," the Doctor told him, his expression blank, unreadable. He was hiding his inner turmoil behind his facade.

"Well," Jack began, inhaling deeply. "First of all, you two met each other. Rose was normal, but the Doctor was what looked like a projected hologram, my guess - it being transmitted from the TARDIS." He then studied their expressions. Both of them just nodded silently.

"You said something about burning up the sun just to say goodbye. That was kind of romantic of you, Doc." Jack told him softly. The Doctor just smiled sadly. Rose bit her trembling lip.

"Are you sure you want me to continue?" Jack asked, making sure.

"Yeh," the Doctor said in a low voice. *They had to know.*

"Okay." Jack took a breath. "Then you-" He gestured to the Doctor. "Asked Rosie where did the
gap come out. I wonder what you drank that you didn't notice it was Norway, considering you have been here before." Jack half-joked. The Doctor seemed to let it pass, Rose, on the other hand, began to frown.

"Then she told you that it was about fifty miles out of Bergen. Called Dårlig Ulv Stranden," Jack said blithely. "You seemed surprised by that-" he was interrupted.

"Hold on," the Doctor interrupted Jack. "What?" he asked, his forehead wrinkled in confusion.

"I said you seemed surprised-" Jack repeated.

"Yeh. And that I asked what was the beach called?" the Doctor asked him again.

"And about Norway," Rose stated, frowning.

"Yeh," Jack agreed. "I told you, you seemed pretty out if it."

"But... how's that possible? It just doesn't make sense!" Rose furrowed her brows.

"It doesn't," the Doctor whispered, looking in the distance. "None of this is actually making sense. Since the beginning it was not making sense at all!" The Doctor began pacing around in circles, tugging on his hair.

"If all this happening for the second time now... how were we reacting to it the same way?" Rose asked, her voice a bit shaky. She locked her gaze with him for a moment. The Doctor's expression slowly changing from concerned, to a hopeful smile.

*Then it clicked him.*

"But of course!" he exclaimed. His face splitting into one huge and silly grin. He turned to face her.

"What?" Rose asked him, watching his amused face. He just continued looking at her, grinning.

"What is it?" Rose persisted.

"*It's our original timeline.*" The Doctor spoke the words fondly. It was the best news he could have gotten today.

"Wha-?" Rose shook her head. "How d'you mean?"

"It seems..." the Doctor began in a casual voice. "That whatever reset your timeline, only did that to our universe. All this-" He gestured around himself. "Was left untouched. So basically the ones on Bad Wolf Bay were us, in our past. Before you met me for the second time at Henrik's."

"That is..." *Amazing*, she wanted to say, beaming at him in disbelief, when her face twisted in worry. "If that's me, in the past. Then we don't have much time!"

"What do you mean?" the Doctor asked her seriously.

"After we left the beach, we came here." Rose gestured to the floor.

"As in here here?" Jack asked again, previously silently observing and coming to a conclusion that a very different Doctor was standing before him. Rose bit her lip.

"Oh, just one more thing to our crate," the Doctor said blithely. "We've had worse. Didn't we?" He
passed the question to Rose.

Rose skipped a few times in place until she launched herself at the Doctor. Both of them giggling as they held onto each other.

"It's not the end!" Rose squealed. "We're gonna fight, yeh?" She pulled back a bit to look at his face.

"Till the end," the Doctor said in a low voice, beaming at her.

"And we have to somehow avoid bumping into one of our past selves." She looked at him sheepishly.

"Would be wise, that is," the Doctor agreed in a half-whisper. "Considering that you might want to avoid one huge paradox, which could lead to some serious consequences, like-" He considered. "Oh, I don't know. The usual stuff." He shrugged blithely.


"Yeh, one of those usual stuff." The Doctor nodded together with her. Moments later, they both snorted, followed by them bursting out laughing.

"Doc?" Jack tried to call him warily. Finally Rose and the Time Lord seemed to calm down from their fits of laughter. "It's still you, right?" Jack asked again.

The Doctor then came to stand before him. "No," he said flatly.

"No?" Jack asked, feeling a bit lost.

"It's Doctor, not Doc. How many times do I have to ask you not to call me that?" the Doctor furrowed his brows in fake annoyance. Jack let out a relief filled laugh at that.

"Doctor." Jack tried again, purposely uttering the word meaningfully, nodding his head at him.

"Captain," the Doctor said fondly. "Thank you." They hugged for a brief moment. When they pulled back, both men were smiling in their silent understanding.

Suddenly a voice reached their ears.

"Doctor? Rose? Captain?"

"Here he comes," the Doctor announced, smiling.

When moments later Mickey's face came into view, the Doctor was first to greet him. "Mickity-McMickey!" he cried, then gave him a bear hug. "Oh, it's been ages since I last saw you! Look at you!" He beamed at him, then considered. "Oh, you still look a bit stupid. But don't worry. We believe in you," he assured him seriously.

Before Mickey could comment on that rude remark of the Doctor's, to which Rose snorted together with Jack, who could barely hold his composure. The Doctor began walking backwards.

"Now then. The good team is finally reformed." He gestured with his hands, still walking backwards. "We've got work to do!" he announced in a lively voice.

"I thought you hated the word team," Rose noted teasingly, skipping towards his side.
"Oh, not if I get to have such brilliant people." He beamed at each of them.

"Doctor," Jack called out for him between his laughs.

"Mm?" The Doctor looked at him in an amused expression.

"I think you going to crash into someone." He made a pointed look behind him.

"Really?" The Doctor grinned all silly. "I wonder who that is," he cried, then turned around, nearly jumping backwards.

"Uh oh," he only said, looking a bit disturbed by the sight.

"Doctor?" A figure looked at him in disbelief.

to be continued...
There were many strange things Jackie Tyler had witnessed in her life, most of them happening in the recent years, but when she thought that everything was finally over, she was just proven wrong. Oh, and how glad she for that. If it was even real what she was seeing now. She had to make sure.

Jackie was walking steadily further in the corridor where a group of people were jumping around, laughing and talking all happily. And there he was. That bloody alien git, which broke her daughter's heart into millions of pieces, not forgetting to break his own two, Jackie noted. Yes, she knew. Who better than the mothers could see the pain and love in the youngsters' eyes. Well, the Doctor was no young being, he was way older than her daughter, that age gap really said something, but when he was with Rose, he looked no older than he would appear to the human eye. Mind you, even for a human body, he would appear younger with all his grins and happiness radiating from him when he was with her.

The Doctor was walking steadily backwards, completely unaware of anything going on behind him, just beaming at his group. And was that Mickey? And Rose? So she had found him! But...no. Jackie just left her daughter in her room, staring at the ceiling blankly. This couldn't be her. What the bloody hell was going on then?

It took only a few steps more before the Doctor crashed, or nearly crashed into Jackie Tyler.

"Really? I wonder who that is!" he exclaimed all happily and sprung around. When his mind recognised the figure in front of him, he quickly dodged the threat and was now staring at her in discomfort.

"Uh oh," he exhaled.

"Doctor?" You better have an explanation. "Oh, bloody hell. That's you, right? You've come back!" She wanted to sound tough, but somehow just seeing him and finding all that hope to make her daughter laugh again, all the previous thoughts just flew away. When the Doctor just kept staring at her, she found her panic get over her.

"Oh my God." Her face suddenly twisted. "Are you a Slitheen?" she asked him in a raised voice. The Doctor just blinked at her. "You are, aren't you!? How else would you be here. Oh, I nearly lost it. With all those cracks closed, how could you possibly be here." Jackie was showing a disappointed and pained expression. When the Doctor tried to move towards her, she composed herself at once, giving him a glare.

"Don't you dare touch me, Slitheen! My husband... or parallel husband, who is still my husband even if he lived his life differently, is a head of a big group. Even without the Doctor, we will put an end to you. Mind you, I even fought one of you myself." She said proudly, masking her burning fear.

"That was actually me!" Mickey said indignantly.

Jackie glanced at him in horror. "Do you read minds too?"

Jack found the whole scene absolutely amusing, and he had to stifle his snorts, Rose was just beaming at her mum, making her look all the more suspicious, until a sound of a throat clearing shook Jackie.

"Jackie Tyler," the Doctor began calmly. "I'm not a Slitheen. Never was and not planning to ever
be. What's with Tyler women and Slitheens, really?" He leaned to her casually. "And if you care to remember, Slitheens tend to be rather big humans, which I'm neither. Nor big, nor human." He straightened himself up, his hands in his pockets. Jackie was trying to process things.

"Ooo, guess this skinnier stomach was of some use for you in the end," Rose sang, grinning at him as she came to stand beside him.

"It also is good for the eyes," he whispered in her ear, making Rose blush slightly. The Doctor was grinning in triumph.

"So it is you!" Jackie breathed.

"It is me," the Doctor repeated playfully.

"And-" Jackie was now looking at Rose.

"Hello, mum!" Rose beamed at her.

The Doctor could sense that some big hugging moments were nearing them, and he would have not protested that much, if a sudden sound, down there in the hallway, wouldn't have taken his attention. Well, it would have been more accurate to say the sound in one of the rooms in a faraway corridor, which really resembled Mickey Smith's voice.

"Oh my, God. It's you!" Jackie breathed. "You are really here."

"Yeh yeh, that's very real me," the Doctor interrupted their emotional reunion, of some sort. "Flesh and blood right before your eyes. Cheers!" He beamed at her. "And now we shall move on to the next part. More important part."

"Oh-" Jackie tried to talk again.

"No no no." The Doctor put a hand to shush her. "Shush shush. You better not say anything, because anything you say can be used against you in court!" He pointed a finger at her.

Jackie just blinked. "In court?" she asked in bewilderment. "What the bloody court you talking about?"

"Shadow proclamation has these laws." The Doctor gestured with his hand, another in his pocket. "Which currently we are breaking. Right at this very moment. Therefore if we are going to stay here and continue to mess with the time and realm itself we may as well all disappear. Right about any minute now," he spilled, looking at her with big eyes. When she tried to talk with horrified eyes, he interrupted.

"But!" he exclaimed. "But, there is always that tiny miny but, which others fear or anticipate." He considered. "Depends on the recipient himself, I guess.. Anyway, that but there just always comes, doesn't it?" he asked nonchalantly, beaming at his team, which now somehow managed to form a half circle, with the Doctor as the commander.

"There has to be or we would all be doomed." He pointed the last word with his mouth. "So well," He clasped his hands, glancing at everyone casually. "To escape our seemingly miserable and dooming fate, which usually would give us no way out, unless you've got me here." He paused a bit. "This is what we are going to do to." He created a serious atmosphere, making everyone wait for his words in anticipation.

"Run!" he yelled out for his team, taking Rose's hand in his and dashing further inside the
corridors. It took a few blinks for Jackie to catch on.

"Where the bloody hell are you taking my daughter, you git!?” Her voice could be heard as she was nearing them.

"Why are we running from my mum?" Rose asked the Doctor, while they were running.

"The universe is collapsing, and Jackie is the reason," he sang. "Blimey, I knew she would do that some day," he muttered. "Now, come on!" he urged everyone. "Mickey, don't slack off. You're part of the universe ruining too!"

"But-but it's Jackie!" Mickey tried to find reason.

"Stay there, if you want to get a mark on your cheek!" he informed him, leaving Mickey quicken his pace.

"You're gonna get slapped, once she reaches you,’ Rose joked.

"I'm counting on you," the Doctor just told her, as the brilliant group of four, followed by a very furious Jackie Tyler, disappeared further into the corridors.

First rule of the running and chasing. If you are on the receiving end, always know where you are going and by no means get trapped on the dead end of the path. If you are the one doing the chasing, consider yourself lucky. And if your running grounds are made like a maze - just go with the flow. Jackie will find you soon anyway.

And so, the unbeatable quartet stood there, in the dark corner, facing a very fiercely looking Jackie Tyler. Of course, the Doctor getting all the daggers.

"Y-you-" Jackie was still panting heavily, trying to catch her breath. "You!" She tried again. "If you make me run like that ever again-!" Her voice was rising.

It took some courage, but the Doctor stepped forward. "We needed to get away from your room you're staying at, Jackie. We can't let our past selves see us."

"Past selves?" Jackie glanced each of them incredulously. "How past you mean? Are you from the future?" Finally with her breath back, she was now standing with her eyebrows raised.

"What, seriously?" Mickey dug in, sounding all excited.

"Weell," The Doctor began, rubbing on the back of his neck. "That's a little bit more complicated than that, but the point stands." He straightened up. "We can't let any of us meet their versions in the room." At that moment Rose walked up towards the Doctor and placed her hand into his, him wrapping his fingers with hers without even looking around.

Jackie was still looking at the picture ahead like she couldn't truly believe what was happening, but just seeing her daughter's bright face made any anger melt.

"So... you two back together again?" Jackie had a gentle smile on her face. "To that box of yours?" she asked a bit humorously.

The pair locked their gazes with each other and smiled, squeezing their entwined hands just a bit more.

"Yeh," the Doctor breathed, looking proudly at Rose.
"Yep," Rose agreed, smiling widely. "Oh, come here, you." Jackie extended her hands towards Rose, who met her in a tight embrace eagerly.

"I love you, mum," Rose said tenderly. "I love you so much, sweetheart." She tightened her grip on her daughter. "I'm so glad you found each other," she said softly. She squeezed one last time, before letting go.

The Doctor was watching the scene with a tender smile. Jackie Tyler just wouldn't cease to amaze them. Her support in the most unexpected ways... even after witnessing the battle of Canary Wharf. He grimaced at the thought. It felt oddly fresh. The feeling of holding onto the magna clamp, Rose on the other side... He squeezed his fingers into a tight fist as he drew his hands into his pockets. He had an urge to bury Rose into his arms. Not caring of the world around.

He tried to get away to the side, to toss his thoughts away, or to avoid the likely smack in the face, but was soon spotted by Jackie.

"Oh no, you don't. Come here!" As she grabbed him towards her. What he found himself into was way more shocking than any Tyler's slap. She began planting him kisses and hugging him! He nearly forgot her habit.

"Oh, you lovely big fella! Oh, you're all mine!" The Doctor tried to protest, but it was all in vain.

"Just-" He was trying to struggle. Kiss. "Just-" Kiss. "Just put me down!" Jackie just wouldn't let him go.

"Yes, you are!" Some more kisses. "Thank you!"

She kissed him again and then finally walked off, leaving the Doctor to wipe his mouth with the back of his hand, looking for all the world like a little boy with an over-affectionate mother. But despite his discomfort towards the action, he found himself smiling at Jackie's back. He missed even her.

Mickey may have been the most excited and frustrated one of the group. He couldn't help feeling left out that somehow the Doctor and Rose had even more past together, of which he was not aware of. He really began to question his own place into all of this.

Jackie took it all in rather quickly. Which was surprising, really, taking into consideration her naturally slow uptake.

Jack found it interesting to finally meet Jackie face to face, not from the shadows, where he watched Rose grow up, and they have just been chatting about, avoiding spoilers, though.

The Doctor was trying to find where the alien signal could be coming from, but moments later, gave up on that task momentarily and was now just watching trough the window.

He glanced at the hyper active group, which maybe should have found it wise to keep it down, considering that they were trying to get away from the paradox in the first place, but that was just how it was with this family.

_Family._
It still felt unreal that somehow not only he got them all back, but never (or only for a short amount of time) had he lost them in the first place.

"You alright?" Rose's voice reached his ears, together with a soft pressure against his arm. *Rose.* She was here too. That was the most shocking part of all.

"Yeh," he breathed, looking tenderly at her. "Just a bit weird." He shrugged. "It takes time to adjust to the timeline. It's like I'm still still living in the previous one."

"Tell me about it," Rose joked, remembering how it was for her at the beginning.

"You were brilliant," he told her fondly. "And I have no idea how you did that." He was looking at her with pride in his eyes.

"Yeh, Madcap-y was just so brilliant," she said in a mock.

"Aw, it's a cute nickname!" he sang, beaming at her.

"A mad person. Very cute," she said sarcastically.

"Oh, come on," he groaned. "It's not so bad."

"No, tell me seriously. You think I'm mad, right?"

"I don't think you are mad." He spoke in a soft voice, locking his gaze to hers.

"The you with a crack in your memories," she said playfully.

"A crack?" He raised an eyebrow, amused.

"Shut up." She grinned, then composed herself. "So?" She looked at him expectedly.

"Mm?" He seemed to be a bit lost, he could very well disappear into her eyes, just watching her... then it clicked him that *that* someone was expecting an answer of him and now was starting to look very worried.

"Oh! No, of course not!" He tried to deny it, but it was not very convincing.

"You can tell me," Rose sighed.

"Well, it's not exactly that I thought you are mad, just a bit weird. And there are a lot of weird beings out there! It couldn't fall to a negative category. It's just being a little bit different than others." He rambled, then looked at Rose, who was raising an eyebrow at him.

"A little bit more different than others?" He tried again. "A bit crazy?" Once again. "Alright!" He turned his gaze away, giving up. "So I thought you were seriously weird and suspicious, but I still wanted to keep you close. I guess that makes me a weird one myself. Happy?" he asked her, faking an annoyance, but Rose just beamed at him.

"Yep," she replied with tongue-between-her-teeth smile.

"Good," he said nonchalantly, but a smile already breaking on his face.

A short yell and a sound of something rolling, making *thud thud thud* sounds, took everyone's attention.
"Are you alright?" she asked the man, concerned, as she lifted him, taking his one arm around her shoulders. "Do you feel anything broken?"

"What happened?" the Doctor asked as he joined her on the other side of the man. The man winced, as his feet met the floor and the pair had to drag him to a nearby couch.

"Can you focus?" the Doctor started bleeping his sonic screwdriver into the man's eyes, with one of its settings presumably being a replacement for a light.

"Yeh, yeh. Thank you," the man replied a bit faintly. "I'll be fine."

"Hmm, strained left ankle, but nothing broken. Shouldn't take long to heal," the Doctor concluded as he scanned the man's legs with his sonic.

"Are you... a doctor?" the man asked breathlessly.

"Nice to meet you. I'm the Doctor." He extended his hand to the man who weakly shook it with him. "Can you tell us what happened?" the Doctor asked.

"Oh, nothing much." The man laughed a bit. "Always was short-sighted, must have failed to notice the railing of the stairs. It just felt like they have disappeared. Annie always told me to bring my glasses," he muttered.

The Doctor and Rose looked at each other. He gave her a meaningful look as he excused himself, leaving Rose to deal with the man, while he went over to the railing to give it a scan. He began to scan from the bottom and was halfway towards the top, when the sonic picked something up.

The trio was already standing there, looking at the Doctor questioningly. Before Jackie could start to complain, the Doctor exclaimed.

"Found it. Ha!" He looked excited.

"Found what?" Jackie asked in a raised voice. "Is there another bloody alien invasion on the list? Oh for God's sake, I just barely survived one," she complained.

"It went upstairs..." the Doctor half-whispered, ignoring Jackie as he continued to go up.

"What have you picked up?" Jack asked, following the Doctor.

"A telekinesis species," the Doctor replied absentmindedly. "But something is not right. Their DNA doesn't match up with that of a telekinesis type. It's altered. An altered species." He was looking at his sonic in concentration.


"Not all," the Doctor breathed.

"Just tell us what we are dealing with!" Jackie demanded.
"Invisobolius," the Doctor said.

"Invisobolius?" Jack asked incredulously. "But I thought they don't go near the humanoid species!"

"They don't. They must have fallen through the breach between the universes," the Doctor said.

"How dangerous are they?" Rose asked casually, when she caught up with others, after leaving the man in the medical care. She was now already standing near the group. The Doctor seemed to take her presence quite naturally as he just continued on with his explanations.

"They are not hostile aliens from nature. In fact, they are considered trickster species, working class on Jews. The planet not the people." He was talking while the group was going through the corridors. "Usually give trouble to tourists at the markets they are working at. Overpriced goods, stealing wallets and so on."

"But?" Rose asked, already feeling it coming.

"But," the Doctor repeated. "If they get scared they tend to run. And fast. The more intimidated it is, the faster is its speed. It's impossible to track them down with human eye, and not many aliens can keep an eye on them."

"Can Time Lords?" Jack asked.

"Time Lords can spot their residual energy, but not actually see them until they slow their pace down," he spilled "The thing is, that energy, Demning Crisp-"

"A what?" Jackie butted in.

"Time Lord terminology." He just dismissed her. "That energy disturbs molecules and atoms, stretching the space between them, that way disturbing their structure and leaving holes. And those holes make the objects go through."

"So it swallows them?" Mickey guessed.

"Something like that, but not entirely," the Doctor continued. "It's like if you take a vase on the table and the table is filled with Demning Crisp then it just goes through the table, and falls on the ground." He gestured with his hand.

"So it's harmless to us," Mickey stated.

"It would be, if we were not in hiding. But now it's one of the most inconvenient aliens we could come across," the Doctor breathed.

"If it can disturb anything consisting of atoms and molecules, does that mean it can go through living people too?" Rose asked.

"No," the Doctor said quickly. "Life forms can regenerate their cells, either slower or faster, but they can, so that method doesn't work on them. If Invisobolius tries to go through a living, it crashes into you. Like bumping into someone."

"So we go around and wait till it crashes into us!" Mickey suggested. "It will stop, right? And we capture him."

"It's not that simple," the Doctor breathed as he went to look through the window, then back again looking around the hallway, buzzing his sonic screwdriver. "It could make holes anywhere: tea
mugs, tables, chairs, walls, ceilings, floors-" he was cut short by a bleeping signal on the sonic.

"It's near," he whispered.

Everyone stood there, forming a circle, facing all sides. Rose walked a bit further away, when she heard some sound coming from the walls. And then it happened.

The Doctor was busy looking at the readings of his sonic, "Why didn't it leave footprints yet," he wondered, when a gasp made his head spin around.

"Doctor!" Rose shouted out for him, as the floor below her swallowed her in.

The Doctor tried to reach her, but he only managed to graze the floor with his fingers, it already becoming solid wood. He stood up, worry and anger rising up at him.

"Oh my God! Where's she?" Jackie shrieked.

"She is just one floor below, right? You said so." Mickey tried to reason.

The Doctor took a few deep, calming breaths, before he went off, further in the corridor, running, the group following him soon enough.

Frankly speaking the Time Lord was very worried. She could have landed on just about anything - the bed, table, floor; soft ground, solid ground, sharp end... And he didn't even want to think what landing on one's back could mean to a fragile human.

He dashed trough the corridors, the trio just behind him, corner after corner, until he reached the place where he deducted would be the place Rose fell into. He was only a corner away, not even sparing a quick glance to the sides, just going straight to his goal. He could hear a background sound somewhere behind him, but didn't bother to take the words in.

Something about- "Stop him!" Jackie's voice.

And he should have taken into consideration her voice, because moments later, a shoe(?) flew to his head, him failing to feel it flying his way, from too much concentration directed towards the door. He stopped abruptly, turning around with a fierce questioning look, when he felt Jack and Mickey(?) drag the Time Lord back to the corner.

"What was that for?" the Doctor asked as he shook off his restraints, taking a few steps back from the group, glancing them suspiciously.

"It's our room!" Jackie exclaimed, leaning to his side.

"What?" the Doctor seemed to be oblivious to the fact.

"Our room. With Pete, Mickey and Rose. We booked it. You said you cannot meet your past selves, or can you now?"

The Doctor blinked at her a few times, then his gaze back towards the door, then again at the group. "Right." He nodded. "I knew that. 'Course I knew that." He shook his hand before them in a dismissing gesture.

"Should I get her out?" Jack suggested.

"You can't. You are not supposed to be here," the Doctor said firmly. "Aaaand, we've got a perfect subject here!" He grabbed Jackie by her shoulders. "You gonna do a bit of undercover work,
Jackie. Done that before, nothing new for ya."

to be continued...
Pete's World End

Maybe it was a bad idea to wander off to the side, when everyone else were securely standing in a somewhat a circle. But being jeopardly-friendly as she was, Rose only got that after she found herself slipping through the made hole in the floor and landed in the room below. The room itself would not have been that bad if she wouldn't have landed on her back, which made a suspicious cracking sound. She let out a moan, when pain suddenly hit her.

Strangely enough, she could hear an echo of her voice. Somewhere a bit higher and to her right side. She blinked a few times to get her focus on the ceiling. It didn't reveal much, but after a loose leather hand dropped halfway from the bedframe, she knew she was in trouble.

The hand was looking awfully similar to that of her own and a sudden rustle on the bed didn't make things any better. Just when the occupant of the bed began extending her legs out of the bed, Rose rolled herself under the bed, hiding behind the covers. Yes, she did roll over, despite her aching back, because with the help of golden light, her back suddenly stopped hurting. She made a note to confront the Doctor about that later as it was really making her nervous.

Her species... Jabe's words, Jack's... Was she not human? She felt a shiver go down her spine from the thought. Somehow she never thought that much about her species, but when you suddenly are being threatened of being robbed of it, somehow it scares you.

She didn't have long to dwell on these thoughts, because her Past self, as she deducted, sleep-walked towards the door, which was fiercely asking for attention, oblivious to the figure under the bed, who was now peeking from under the covers.

Back in Pete's World, she wouldn't sleep much at all, since they went on the road in the search of the Doctor's voice. So it just made sense that after her physical and emotional exhaustion her body would try to succumb to sleep. Sadly it didn't work that way. As soon as she would close her eyes, she would find herself in her never ending nightmare of her hand slipping from the lever and when she would open her eyes, she would see the fading image of her Doctor. It went on and on, in the hours she had stayed in that room. A thud on the ground must have only shook her off her sleep, leaving with a fiercely racing heart.

"Rose, sweetheart." Her mother's voice. "Let's go outside, for a cuppa?"

"I really don't feel like taking anything, mum," her Past self replied blankly.

"I know, I know, but it will pass." Her mother drew her in a hug, in which she leaned in without much enthusiasm. Her tears were all dread off, nothing to shed anymore.

"Thanks, mum." Her voice was hallow. "But-" Suddenly Jackie was standing not alone. Mickey Smith, probably his Future self, since he was still looking all nervous of how to handle the situation, interrupted her.

"Come on. Let's go out. You can't sit her all day long. I'll buy you a drink."

"Mickey, I really."

"Leaving. Yeh, you are really leaving," Future Mickey exclaimed and started dragging her out of the room. She tried to fight him off, but soon found no will to do that and just trailed along him, following him blindly.
When her daughter and Mickey disappeared in the hallway, Jackie rushed to the Doctor's side, informing the group that it was safe to move. The Doctor was, obviously, first to storm into the room, without much of a thought of others.

Rose, the one staying under the bed, did not have the same luxury as others to know what exactly was going on. As soon as the doors closed with her Past self and Mickey together with her mother, she felt only silence echoing in the room. She tried to stir, to get out of her hideout, but suddenly the doors burst open and she had to curl under the bed once again.

She could hear determined steps make their way inside the room. They stilled for a moment, like taking in its surroundings and then began steadily moving towards the bed. Rose felt hiccups starting deep in her throat and had to place a palm around her mouth to suppress the possible sound.

No later, the steps stopped just at the side of the bed and Rose could have sworn she felt someone squat down. Fingers on the cover peeking out, made Rose shiver and she began thinking of ideas of how she would roll off under the bed, jump the person from behind and knock them unconscious, later ask the Doctor to help her make up some story. But to her surprise or utter relief, the face looking at her with a joyous grin, was none other's than her Doctor's!

"Hello." He beamed at her happily, her looking at him with wide eyes, with her mouth still covered with her palm.

"Hiccup" greeted him instead of a word and that only made him chuckle.

"No danger detected in the upcoming minutes, Lewis. Safe to come out." He extended his hand for her to take it.

She blinked some more and released her hand, exhaling a long held breath. With a grin she took his hand and he helped her somehow crawl from under the bed into his arms.

"Uhh," he exhaled in contentment for having her safe and sound by his side. "You alright?" he asked her, when he pulled slightly away to look at her.

"Yeh, I'm." She smiled at him. "About that-" she began, but was interrupted by Jackie's shriek.

"He's here, he's here!" she shouted in a whisper, her body halfway in the room.

"Who is?" the Doctor asked seriously, now stepping away from Rose.

"Pete!" Jackie answered.

The Doctor's eyes widened as he ran a frustrated hand through his hair. "Alright," he breathed, looking in the distance. "This is just getting a little bit more difficult," he muttered. "Jackie." Back to facing her. "Keep him out of this zone of the corridor until we all move away."

"How do I do that?" Jackie asked, furrowing her brows.

"Just think of something. Long lost husband, newly found, memories together..." He trailed off. "Baby! You can talk about your little baby. The expected baby... Do you know what gender it is yet? I could tell you, if you want. Or you can just wait...Anyway. Yeh, talk about him. Or her. Blimey. The Tyler's family just keeps on growing by the day," he said somehow with an amusement.

"I-" she tried to protest but got no chance.
"Now off you go. Off off." He urged her out of the room, pushing by her shoulders. "Meet us in room 102. We'll be there in a tick." He smiled at her reassuringly and closed the doors shut before her face.

"She's gonna slap you," Rose said in a half-whisper as she came to stand besides him, leaning one ear to the door.

"Nah. Had a chance and didn't," he said blithely, listening with his ear on the door too.

When they couldn't hear the steps anymore, the Doctor beamed. "Ready to go?"

"Awaiting permission to follow, sarge," Rose said with a salute, grinning. With that, the Doctor grinned himself as he took her hand and they left the room, scanning the corridor of any living threat. When they found none, they started running down the halls, grinning like mad.

"What do you mean I'm your future self? I have never seen you in my life!" Mickey's voice could be heard from the room they were supposed to meet at, down in the corridor.

"And how would you see yourself? And I have not seen myself with myself in the same room either!" More Mickey's voice.

The Doctor and Rose glanced at each other, locking their gaze, which could only be called Trouble.

They dashed towards the doors and with an easy swung of the doors, the Doctor stepped inside, followed by Rose.

"Everyone shush!" the Doctor chided them. Rose tried to stifle a laugh, when she took in the view ahead of her. Two Mickeys having identical frowning expression on their faces to the point where one trying to twist the muscles in his face, the other would do the same, standing only a few steps away from each other.

"Don't touch yourself!" the Doctor cried and briskly made his way in the middle of the row, pushing them far away from each other.

"And how did you get in here in the first place?!" the Doctor asked the Past Mickey.

"She dragged me in!" He pointed at Jackie. The Doctor turned his head at her, looking at her with wide eyes.

"I thought you said it was Pete!" he cried.

"I got confused!" she cried.

"You don't see the difference between your husband and Mickey?" the Doctor asked in disbelief.

"Whose husband?" the Future Mickey asked, looking confused.

"Mum's," Rose whispered to Mickey. "My parallel dad."

"You got yourself a parallel dad?" Mickey asked incredulously.

"I saw legs." Jackie defended herself. "I thought it was Pete's." She looked at the Past Mickey warily.

"Oh, just what we need," the Doctor groaned.
"Mum!" Rose came forward to her. "You can't just bring Mickey in here like that! We are risking a paradox!"

"What was I supposed to do when Mickey spotted me hovering outside the door. Himself here-" Jackie pointed at the Doctor. "Was nowhere to be seen with you together and then that one Mickey-" She pointed at the Future Mickey. "Started arguing with Captain there." She pointed at Jack.

"Jack, what the hell are you doing?" the Doctor asked, looking at him.

"Don't point at me." Jack pulled his hands in defence. "I was just trying to stop our Mickey from bringing Past Rose here."

"You what?" the Doctor and Rose asked in unison, looking at the Future Mickey.

"She was sad, alright?" Mickey tried to defend himself. "You were sad," he said, looking at Rose. "I figured if you meet boss you may cheer up. I know, that was stupid. Sorry. I have left her in the restaurant." He ducked his gaze.

That silenced the Time Lord. He was unable to say anything, so he just turned his head towards Rose and mentally calmed down, after seeing her give him a reassuring smile. He turned his gaze away from her. This was not the time to dwell on self guilt or the fact that he was gonna hurt her again so very soon...

A sudden thunder, echoing from the outside, through the window, caught everyone's attention.

"Thunder?" Future Mickey asked unnecessary.

"That's not all there's to that," the Doctor whispered as he stepped near the window to check.

"Is that..." Jack began. "Is that a hole in the sky?" He blinked a few times.

"Universe's starting to collapse," the Doctor whispered faintly, his mouth slightly parted, gritting his teeth.

"How do we fix it?" Rose asked, edging towards him.

"As long as we keep both Mickeys from touching each other or us meeting Pete's Rose or the man himself, the thing which is already holding the paradox should keep us safe. For now at least. The longer both sides stay together, the easier it is to bring Reapers here." the Doctor replied, stepping away from the window with his head still focused on the view outside, before he turned his head.

"Anyway. We can't have you both staying here. Pete's Mickey and Jackie." He approached them in an authoritative voice. "You go back to your own room and keep-" He pointed at them meaningfully. "Keep for Rassilon's sake Rose from meeting us or even knowing anything about us. We need you on our side, so I'm not erasing your memories-"

"You're not messing with my head, mister!" Jackie shrieked.

"I'm not, Jackie!" He raised his voice a bit. "But you've got to keep your mouth shut, no matter what you hear or see in the future, because if you don't." He paused a bit, looking at her intensely. "If you don't, then all of us are gonna be erased from existence, and there won't be any you and me now talking, nor Jack, nor Rose and neither will there be two Mickeys arguing with each other like idiots."

Jackie just gulped at that, and the Doctor eased up his gaze, looking at her dismissively now.
"What about that alien, Invisible-something?" Rose asked softly.

"Invisobolius," the Doctor said. "We've got to catch him. If he makes one more portal to meet Pete or Rose, there will be no way back." As if to make impact on his words, thunder sound echoed in the room.

"Well, how does it look like?" Jackie asked, after getting her breath back.

"What does?" the Doctor asked in bewilderment.

"The thing, the alien. If we're chasing it, at least we should know what to look for."

"You, are not chasing anything. You're going back to your room," the Doctor said firmly.

"But we can help!" Jackie tried to protest.

"Jackie." The Doctor came to stand face to face with her, his hands on her shoulders. "Jackie, look at me. You will be helping us out by keeping everyone from meeting each other. We need you there. If we meet, it's all over. Canary Wharf all over again. Just this time, the v..." He cracked at the name, taking a few breaths before continuing. "The void won't be sucking in the threat, it will swallow us." He wanted desperately for her to understand.

"Okay," Jackie breathed. "I'll do what I can."

"Thank you," the Doctor told her with a faint smile and stepped away. "Now move!" he instructed them and with one last glance at the occupants of the room, both of them left.

"So, what does it look like?" Rose repeated the question.

"It's like an Earth rabbit, just blue and with long, meter's long tail with fur at the end of it." He gestured with his hands. "But seeing it standing still is like finding a nail in the haystack."

"Rabbit." Mickey began thinking seriously. Then an idea hit him and he went to his bed table.

"Doctor? I think I've found him." Rose's voice echoed in the room.

"What, where?" The Doctor strode to her side, looking around. When he saw nothing, he leaned near her ear, to meet her eye vision.

"That bump." Rose pointed at the corner of the room, under one of the beds. She could somehow feel the Doctor's face lit up.

"Let's catch the little rabbit," he whispered, steadily going near the bed. Just a few steps and he was almost there... The Doctor was already leaning in to the rabbit, when bam, Invisobolius jumped from the Doctor's grasp, leaving the Doctor staggering a bit. The rabbit started running in circles around the room.

"Don't let it leave!" the Doctor shouted out. "Jack!" he tried to call out for him, but Jack was only standing there, fiddling with some device.

"I'm working!" he shot back.

"On what?!" the Doctor asked incredulously.

Rose tried to lunge on the thing, but it slipped away and was nearing the door now.
"Who left the door open?" the Doctor cried, as he dashed through the door, following the escaped alien. Rose came out next, followed by Mickey and Jack somewhere near.

"It's our only chance!" the Doctor yelled out for them. "Before he changes his speed."

The rabbit was going at a relatively fast speed, but it was more like that of an Earth rabbit's than the alien's. The quartet was running right behind him; the Doctor first, Rose just a few leaps away, when voices of Pete and Jackie echoed in the lobby.

As they neared the last corner, separating them and their past selves, they could spot them hovering in the corridor, Invisobolius just a few meters away.

Luckily, Past Mickey turned his head towards them and as he saw the frantically looking Time Lord, running at them and mouthing "duck", he caught on what he had to do. Suddenly the Past Mickey fell on the floor, face-palmed.

"Oh my, God. Mickey!" Jackie shrieked, leaning towards him. Pete tried to bring him up too. At the same moment, when Past Rose leaned in, the rabbit jumped in the air, just barely grazing the back of her head and disappearing in the next corner.

The Doctor and Future Rose hid in the shadows of the corner, as they watched Pete and Past Rose drag seemingly unconscious Mickey towards their room.

Jack and Future Mickey just joined the pair, slightly panting from running, when a thud of the doors being closed, echoed in the corridor. Just a sign for them to resume their tailing of the rabbit.

"Come on." The Doctor urged them as the quartet ran in the direction of it. They found it casually lurking in the middle of lobby, visible to the eye.

"Why did it stop?" Rose asked.

"It smelt something," the Doctor said in a half-whisper.

"Must be this then," Mickey told them casually, taking something out of his pocket.

"What are you holding a carrot for?" the Doctor asked him in bewilderment.

"Well, it's a rabbit," Mickey stated.

"It's no ordinary rabbit; it's not an Earth rabbit!" the Doctor began, but seconds later, the carrot left Mickey's hand and fell on the floor near the rabbit. It sprung its head around, sniffed the vegetable and opened his mouth. With that action, not only his mouth widened but his whole body increased in size. Before them, stood a gigantic alien rabbit, his head nearly reaching the ceiling. Just as he swallowed the carrot, he shrunk back to his original size.

"Eating habits," the Doctor told Mickey casually, holding a palm on Mickey's mouth, preventing the scream.

_Slam_

The sound of the doors being closed could be heard somewhere on the other side of the corridor.

"I tell you. Mickey would feel way better if we finally leave this bloody place!" Jackie's voice was clearly angry and could possibly be heard all the way back in England. Good ol' Jackie. She was probably informing the group that they were leaving. Or...she was just being Jackie.
"We're doing so now, Jacks." Pete's calmer voice.

The group watched from the corner as Pete's family started walking down the lobby. As if on cue, the rabbit started rushing in the same side as them. The quartet resumed their chasing of the rabbit.

The time was ticking away, and the alien was already narrowing the distance between him and his prey. Humans were descending the stairs; the rabbit jumped at full speed, just a corner away.

"It's going to reach them!" Mickey said nervously, while running.

"I know!" the Doctor shot back.

"No, it won't!" Rose countered them. "Just hurry!" She speed up more, but was still failing behind enough.

Just when they thought that all was over, Jack sped up before the group and threw something on the floor. Suddenly the rabbit was not running anymore, but held in the middle of air, of some sort of blue beam, emitting out of the object Jack just threw.

"You had it with you all the time?" The Doctor looked at Jack questioningly.

"It had to be charged up. I said I was working on something," Jack replied.

"Good lad," the Doctor replied, beaming at him. Seconds later, he was standing casually near the trapped alien. It tried to get away, running frantically to all sides. All in vain.

"You can stop now," the Doctor told him in a soft voice. "We're not going to hurt you. We'll bring you back home." Invisobolius slowed its speed at the words and now was hovering in the middle of beam, looking at the group with his big eyes.

"Hello there." The Doctor beamed at him.

"It really looks like a rabbit." Mickey glanced him over.

"It does. It's even called rabbit species. It just evolved differently. In different time...and planet..." He stood up then. "Mickey. A job for you. Give him some more of your carrots. It will help him regain his strength."

"Will it grow in size again?" Mickey asked, concerned.

"Yep," the Doctor said blithely. "Captain. I leave you in charge of this," he told him nonchalantly and moments later he disappeared down the stairs, before the group even managed to react.

"Doctor!" Rose tried to call out for him, but he was gone.

The Doctor stood there, by the window in the hallway, sending Past Rose off with his eyes.

He knew how hard it was after losing her, but he somehow hoped that Rose would handle it better. That she would move on, have a fantastic life he once told her to have. It was a pointless thought. Seeing her barely saying any word hurt his both hearts. She radiated life, she was not someone to keep herself in the shadows. And here she was, not caring of the world around. She even missed the bloody Invisobolius running past her head. His Rose, who spots the smallest clues...

And will he do this to her again? No, he couldn't. But... he had to.
His eyes followed the receding car for one more second, taking note to the fact that the hole in the sky was gone now, and stepped away from the window. Hands in his pockets, going through the corridors.

She found him in one of the side-rooms near the hallway. He was squatting down, warming his one hand up near the fireplace, possibly doing that only for fun or distraction rather than cold, another resting on his knee. In a few strokes Rose reached him, and joined him in the warming up process.

"Energy transfer." The Doctor spoke faintly. "If two systems are connected by a pathway for heat transfer, heat flows from the hotter to the colder system. Warm your hands and feet up - your whole body gets heat. The never ending circle for the greater benefit. Good for preventing colds," he ended lightly, looking at the fireplace.

He was obviously rambling to hide something, but she let him.

"Hmm." Rose trailed off. Seconds later, she laid down on the floor, her legs pulled up in the air, bended by the knees.

"What are you doing?" the Doctor asked, amused.

"Warming up my feet," Rose said smartly. The Doctor chuckled. He soon stood up, taking his coat off, throwing it casually on the armchair and joining her near the fireplace.

"It's uncomfortable," he cried.

"It sure is." Rose laughed. "But good for the feet." He chuckled faintly at that.

"You'll get tired," he said softly. "I could probably stay like this for daaays, if we don't take into account an absolutely uncomfortable floor, which is very very hard and uncomfortable-" They both laughed. "But it will tire you down."

"Don't underestimate us humans and our stamina," Rose said.

"Is that a challenge?" the Doctor said slyly.

"No." Rose laughed. "It's not fair if I lose without even having the chance to win," she said and rolled to her side, legs curled up.

"You fancy loosing?" he teased her, when rolling himself, facing her now, his one arm under his head.

"You know I beat you more than once," Rose said in a low voice.

"That was cheating, Rose Tyler," he exclaimed.

"It's not. I'm only using the privileges of travelling through time." She smiled with her tongue between her teeth.

"Repeating your own timeline does not exactly fall under the category of time travelling." He raised an eyebrow at her.

She smiled a bit. They stayed there, only looking at each other, until Rose broke the silence. "What did reset my timeline anyway?" she asked softly.
He kept looking at her for a while and she thought that he may not answer at all, but he did. In a way. "I don't know. Should be able to find out with the working TARDIS."

Suddenly the doors burst open, making the Doctor raise his head a bit upwards and tilt sideways. Rose found herself laying on her stomach, with the support of her elbows.

"Having fun?" Jack asked them, amused by the sight and their complete non embarrassment.

"Not hungry, Jack," Rose said, beaming at him.

"I left you two some chicken if you change your mind," he offered.

"Thanks." Rose grinned at him and didn't notice how she began instinctively waving her legs around. She nearly stretched them out, right into the fire. The Doctor had to extend his left leg, pressing it against her calf to block the movement. But as he done it briskly, nobody suffered any harm.

When she felt his touch, she immediately remembered where her leg nearly fell into and just turned her head to smile at him in gratitude. He only raised an eyebrow at her.

As Jack watched the pair, he wondered whether the Doctor had a third eye somewhere on the back of his head or was he simply aware of her every movement.

"Tell you what." The Doctor suddenly stood up, taking his coat back on.

"What?" Rose asked, intrigued, standing up slowly herself.

"Let's get some fresh air, shall we?" he suggested casually.

"Okay-" Rose trailed off, feeling a catch being somewhere there.

"Going out?" Jack looked at them with amusement.

"Yep," the Doctor agreed. "Aaand we're taking Vortex Manipulator with us," he spilled.

"Wha-" Jack began, a bit shaken.

"You know the road, right? 'Course you do. Well then, will meet you there! Cheers!" The Doctor beamed at him, taking Rose by the waist and pressing the button on the device.

They appeared back in the beach, Rose free of failing as the Doctor kept her steady.

"That was rude." She looked at him.

"They know the way," he breathed.

"That's not the point!" Rose half-laughed at his oblivious nature.

"What is then?" he asked innocently.

"Never mind." Rose shook her head.

"Well then, Dame Rose. Should we go for a stroll?" He offered her his arm, and as she took it, they went by the shore.

After a while of just walking and listening to the waves, Rose couldn't hold it in anymore.
"Tell me."

"Mm?" the Doctor answered absentmindedly.

"You brought me here because you wanted to tell me something. What was it?" She looked at him softly. He just smiled faintly. *She always knows.* He untangled their hands, placing his back into his pockets, looking at the ground as they stood there face to face, Rose a bit ahead of him, the ocean to her side.

He brought his eyes to her, and she could see guilt and reluctance in them.

"I have to make myself forget, Rose." He spoke in a faint voice.

She was a bit confused, narrowing her eyes. "Forget what?" she asked softly.

"This day. Lock it from my awareness."

"B-but doesn't that mean that you won't remember our original timeline anymore?" Her voice was a bit shaky.

"Yeh," he agreed in a low voice, with a sad smile on his face.

"Wha- But I just got you back! You can't!" Her voice cracked at the end, her eyes pleading.

He smiled at her fondly. "I won't go anywhere. Will just be back to the way I used to be. Before this trip. Same old life. Me with a crack." He tried to joke, Rose barely twitched her mouth into a smile.

"But..." She shook her head.

"I can't let myself remember," he told her seriously. "There are events, which are fixed points in time, that should happen and will happen, but if I keep my memories back, I don't have the confidence to even land us there."

"Kroptor," Rose whispered, he just nodded faintly. She nodded in understanding, her forehead wrinkled.

"Does that mean..." She tried to form the words, but faltered. She bit her lip nervously before asking. "Does that mean that Canary Wharf has to happen too?" Her voice was barely audible, only her eyes screaming.

"No," he replied in an instant. "You'll have to wake me up before that."

"But...you just said." She shook her head, eyes watery.

"I won't let it happen. We'll think of something." He tried to reassure her, even if he was not that confident himself, but he wished to believe.

"Together." She smiled at him fondly.

And suddenly his resolve crumbled down. He had this all thought through. He had a plan. Of some sorts. He knew what he *could* do and what he *shouldn't*. What would not be *fair*... Considering that he will have to make himself forget so very soon. *But seeing her stand her besides him, desperately trying to be tough for him*...

*He just wanted to make her feel that he was not leaving her.*
He turned his head sideways, to look at the surging waves, them moving in a steady rhythm, like in anticipation. They were encouraging him. Just this once, the universe got things right. He found his mouth twitch into a small grin as his gaze went back to meet Rose's. And he just couldn't imagine a more right time than this. If ever, this is where the universe had to let it happen.

He smiled at her tenderly.

Rose was looking at him with slight confusion and wonder, those beautiful hazel eyes looking at him, which he so adored and he couldn't feel more blessed in the world. That he got his second chance.

"Rose Tyler. If this is the last thing I'm going to say to you. Or no." He looked a bit upwards, before locking his gaze to Rose again. "I suppose, if this would be considered my last second chance to say it, before I go." He chuckled warmly at her, and she couldn't help smiling at him. They just had that effect on each other.

For a moment he just stood there, looking at her with his intense gaze. Both of them staring at each other, that being the most natural thing to them, until they felt themselves completely drowned in each other. There may have existed the world, but they saw none.

There was only Rose Tyler and The Doctor. Or not even that. Just two living souls, who fitted together like none other. Together, only then they were living and complete.

When the Doctor finally opened his mouth, the words just flew like a song. Like a prayer, like a vow.

"Rose Tyler. I'm in love with you."

He looked at her with his soul bared before him, with nothing hidden, everything just being open and honest. And she didn't know what her legs were supposed to be doing at that moment, but she found herself running into his embrace. Him meeting her in a kiss as she whispered just before her lips reached his.

"Forever."

Somewhere back in the inn...

A knock on the door made the occupants of the room shift and a man came to answer the door. There was nobody outside, but there was not nothing there. Just by the threshold a box in a form of a square casually lay down. On the surface was a note.

"To Flora

From Santa."

"Flora, it seems Santa Claus visited you," the man exclaimed lively. He felt a bit wary of the box, but figured that it may have been someone from the staff.

The girl held the box in her hands and unwrapped it open. On the top, was a note and below it, laid a beautiful snow globe. And she thought that it was even more beautiful than her original one.

The note said-

Dear Flora,
I've managed to catch the rascal, who caused you sadness. It appears it was none other, but the Easter bunny gone loose from its grandmother. He was so eager to bring you your Easter present that it confused the date. I had a talk with him and he is deeply sorry for making you lose your previous Snow Globe. Here is the present from the both of us. Now that my work is done, I must leave with my loyal dwarves on my blue sled. Have the best Christmas in the universe.

Santa

to be continued...
She has been chasing him... That timorous beastie has been chasing him for the past hour and there seemed to be no way out of it.

The Doctor peeked his head out of his hideout in the kitchen, which was named as that in the last five minutes he had been staying there. For a moment the corridor was empty. He almost exhaled in relief, until it appeared...

The beast locked their gaze to the Time Lord and showed their teeth in delight to have found their prey.

"Gel!" the voice cried out.

"Oh, not again," the Doctor groaned, paced about in place and after a few skips, resumed his dashing through the infinite hallways of the TARDIS.

"Doctor!" The voice was nearing. Just a bit longer and he would be doomed.

"I'm telling you," he shouted back, his head turned, facing behind himself. "I like it as it is!"

"I just want to feel it!" An innocent voice. Heh, like hell it was innocent.

The Doctor quickened his pace. He had to get away, if he wanted to keep it safe.

"Don't run!" Desperate call, filled with amusement.

"Then don't chase me!" he shot back. He ran further inside, until he saw the dead end not that far ahead of him. Dead end? Since when the TARDIS had a dead end? "Hide me!" the Doctor pleaded his ship. The ship only gave him an amused hum.

"I can't believe it! You teamed up with her!" he narrowed his eyes in disbelief and after he saw that his path had ended, stopped right into his tracks. Before long, one pink and yellow human, reached him, just a few meters away.

"There kitty kitty," she sang. The Doctor was still facing the wall. He had been caught. No. He just couldn't accept it. But he was cornered. With no way out, since someone refused to give him a hand, or space for that matter. Alright, he just had to play his way out of it. With great reluctance he turned around to see a cheeky grin on her face.

"Rose Tyler," he said her name solemnly. "I'm telling you. This Time Lord brain of mine, needs my hair. And you're not allowed to mess with it." He pointed at her. "I have spent two hours readjusting them. Now you want to just ruin it?"

When he thought that he saw her understanding face, he began his rambling. "You see, I used this Transportant Shiny Glue Gel, which I have found in the black market of the planet Baldania. Everyone there is bald, can you believe it?" he cried, beaming at her nervously. Rose just crooked her head to her sides, considering his story.

"But from time to time there would be born a child with hair. And it's bad. Very bad. It's actually considered treason there, because they seek the shine of their heads. They believe if your head shines in the sun, you are nearer the God." He waved his hand dismissively. "So they invented those Transportant Shiny Glue Gels, where your hair gets glued together and shines in the sun!" He
beamed at her. "Isn't that brilliant? Although." His face shadowed. "It got banned in no time too, so in the end only black market has them now."

"Hmm..." she hummed. "What's with the Transportant?"

"Oh, it's for hiding it. A click with your fingers and it appears at your hand. It's actually glued to your DNA. Very convenient. If I must say. Especially if you want to hide it from the curious eyes." He nodded approvingly, and with a snap of his fingers a bottle appeared in his one hand. "See? Isn't that genius?" He shook it to the sides, teasingly.

"Mm-hm!" Rose nodded with enthusiasm, her teeth showing from the corners of her lips, forming a grin. When their eyes met, Rose beamed at the nervous Time Lord. "Gel!" she exclaimed and lunged at him. 'Guess, she didn't buy it.

The Doctor somehow managed to evade her, but was now once again back to the running.

"Let it go. Let it go. Just let it go!" he whined, while running, forwards and sometimes backwards to face her.

"Never," she said, beaming at him. The Doctor just widened his eyes while taking a breath and continued his run.

Somehow the ship was becoming less and less helpful and the Time Lord was robbed of any possible rooms as a hideout and now they were back in the open, in the console room. Both standing across each other, grabbing the console, with their eyes locked. It reminded him of all those times before the adventure, but this time, he was protecting something. There was no way he could join Rose Tyler now!

"Jack! Tell her!" the Doctor tried to find his shelter on Captain's side, who was casually sitting on the jump seat. "She must have hit her head too much from the crash!" the Doctor cried. Jack just laughed out loud at them.

According to the TARDIS official events, they have just recovered from the crash land on Earth. Thus making everyone fall unconscious, leaving even the Doctor with a buzzing head. They really had a bumpy ride, as they hopped to February the 1st - that's where the only breach was, as the one at Bad Wolf Bay had been closed by the Image Doctor. And then they purposely crashed on Earth, making up this charade story.

And the only two, aware of the truth behind the parallel world, were Jack and Rose. Mickey Smith got his memories locked down as a punishment for asking too many questions of "How can it be my past/future self if neither of us were aware of each other?" And now he was back on Earth, as he told them, got a sudden urge to seek independence. Rose wondered whether the Doctor didn't plant that idea in his head to get rid of him...

"Ever since you woke up, you got all weird!" the Doctor accused Rose, pointing at her like a child.

"I've not got weird." She laughed. Well, it may have been a bit hard to restrain herself from launching herself right at him, considering that she was happy beyond belief to have finally heard the end of that sentence! The Doctor had actually finished his sentence! It still felt like a dream to her, and sometimes she would almost believe it was all only a dream, but to her total embarrassment, Jack was not shy to show her one of his meaningful looks that he saw their... little gesture at the beach.

"You did! Well, you're always weird. But this time it's more weird than just normal weird. It's
weird of weirdness of Weirdtownia! You became all giddy and all," he cried. Oh. She really felt an urge to tease him.

The Doctor, being *useful as sometimes he can be*, told her nothing about the source of her time reset.

Something about...if he were to suspect her again and would seek the answer in his brain, he better find none. If his brain had no answer to her time resetting, then he would not know either. Better be safe. And how he found it strange that somehow she was aware of her original timeline, being all human and all. Wasn't she also wondering that? Sigh. She was left once again without the information she needed.

The least she was allowed to do was... play a little game. Right?

"I'm so *not* amused," she said in a low voice. The Doctor had to suppress the quivering mouth of his.

"There there! It's like some inner joke is going on here!" he cried, playing his part of being serious.

"Not *remotely* amused," she said, with a sly smile on her face, when she was edging towards him.

The Doctor snorted at that. And Rose found herself grinning. "I just want to feel your super Transpa-something gel," she said softly, while edging towards him, extending her hand.

"Transportant Shiny Glue Gel. And don't come closer!" He was backing away, with his hands put in defence towards her, when he composed himself. "Back off. Back off." He tried to sound serious.

"Are you seriously telling *me* to back off from you?" she asked incredulously, raising an eyebrow.

"Oh, well. The world is full of surprises," he exclaimed blithely. It was unlikely for him to refuse her something. Very unlikely in fact... He could very well give in, and let her mess with his hair. Of course he could, if she would try to show him one of her faces...Yeh, like those down... No no no, she was starting! If he watches for too long, he will be gone. That *cannot* happen.

Still holding his gaze intensely to Rose's puppy-eyes look, he found himself shouting. "ELVIS!"

That startled Rose, as she blinked and it also nearly made Jack fall off the chair.

"Let's go see Elvis, shall we? 1950s! The time before they called him 'the Pelvis' and he still had a waist. And the hair!" he exclaimed, gesturing to his head, manically. "The hair. It suits the era perfectly." When she tried to talk. "And don't try to put your hands on it. I would be thrown out with bed hair."

"I love your bed hair," she said lovingly.

"That's not the point." He dismissed her, then stopped. "You do?" He beamed at her, but when he saw her getting closer, he stopped himself. "Elvis!" he exclaimed again. "Great fellah, great music, just what we need!" He stood near the console to press some buttons.

"So we're going to see Elvis," Rose stated with amusement.

"Yes we are! So go on. Fetch some clothes, put something to suit the fashion and off we go! With a
style!" He bounced at the console some more, and with the last fling of a hand, turn-jumped to face her, all beaming.

Rose laughed at his ridiculousness. "You're not getting away from this," she told him, pointing at him teasingly and slowly backing away.

"Did for now," he sang, beaming. He followed her with his eyes, leaning on the console with his hands, as she disappeared in the corridors. He widened his eyes, sighing a relief.

"Now. Finally a break to take." He trailed off. "How about you, big fellah? Fancy a trip to Elvis?" he offered Jack, looking at him.

Well, actually, he was planning this trip, having in mind it only being the two of them, but as Jack somehow stayed... It was not like he did not like his company...Just sometimes... It was nice, just being the two of them. The Doctor and Rose Tyler in the TARDIS. Did he seriously start thinking like that? What happened to the more the merrier? Sigh. Somehow his conscience began to literally drown in Reinette's words. His soul. *Rose in his soul.* No no, better not go so deep now. He shook his head fiercely.

"Big Fellow?" Jack interrupted the Time Lord's inner conversation, looking at him expectedly.

"Mm? Oh. Oh! Right, that's from the Sycorax leader. The big spaceship above London this Christmas. Their leader just came out and roared at me what I was doing there. Funny big species." He chuckled at the memory, while flipping some switches.

"With Rosie?" Jack asked casually.

"Oh yeh. She even left me with her mother to go climbing the trees herself! Imagine that! Oh, I still didn't forget that. And nooow she wants to mess with my hair! My big hair!" he cried.

"So, to protect your hair you decided to drop her at Elvis?" Captain asked, amused.

"Well..." The Doctor circled his tongue inside his mouth, in concentration. "Can't let her have the luxury now, can I?"

"Luxury for what?" Rose's voice echoed in the console room.

"Oh, nothing nothing," the Doctor muttered, facing the console. "Finally done?"

"Says someone who has been adjusting his hair for the past two hours," she muttered under her breath, but knew that he would catch on.

"It's different! It's alien product. Not some stupid primitive Earth... gel... soup..." He trailed off, as he took in her appearance - polka dot pink dress with a blue jacket. Rose grinned at his reaction.

"Oh, Rosie! You look gorgeous!" Jack came towards her to hug her. "Were did we get so lucky to have such a beautiful woman onboard." He beamed at her. Rose chuckled at him.

"So are you, Jack." She beamed at him. "It's a bit strange seeing you without your coat though."

"Do you mean...?" Jack looked at her meaningfully.

"Handsome, yeh, yeh, you're very handsome." She laughed.

"I knew you had good eyes!" Jack said enthusiastically and stepped back from her, facing the Doctor now, who was looking at the scene with an unhappy expression on his face. He soon hid it
under his nonchalant mask though.

The Doctor cleared his throat. "Well then...If we're all set off..." He pressed the last button and started walking towards Rose. When he was inches from her, he spun her around and walked her towards the door by her shoulders.

"Um...Doctor?" she tried softly.

"Take a look what's outside!" he exclaimed blithely and pushed her out the doors.

Rose staggered a bit as she was in her heels. She sprung around to face the retreating Doctor. "What's with the spinning?" she asked incredulously.

"Spinning is good!" he exclaimed blithely; his head peeked out the doorway. "Maybe it will get your head readjusted. Think about it. Good for a change. Now wait a sec," he said casually and disappeared inside the TARDIS again.

Rose just stood there dumbfounded. "Someone definitely hit their head hard," she muttered and readjusted her clothes, pacing about outside the TARDIS. She narrowed her eyes at the ship. That's a first. Never have been thrown out the TARDIS before.

To her amusement, the sound of an engine echoed from the inside of the TARDIS and second later, the Doctor rode out on a blue late-50's moped! Rose shook her head, grinning. The Doctor stopped just a few meters away from the ship - big sunglasses and a white helmet on his head.

"You goin' my way, doll?" Pulling Elvis-style expression and voice.

"Is there any other way to go, daddy-o?" She played along, putting on a pair of pink sunglasses - in an American accent. "Straight from the fridge, man!" she teased and walked towards the moped, laughing.

"Hey, you speak the lingo!" the Doctor sang in a delighted, high pitched voice. He tossed her a pink version of his helmet and she caught it, putting it on, moments later.

"Yeh well...me, mum, Cliff Richard movies every Bank Holiday Monday," she said while sitting behind him on the moped. The Doctor just pulled an I knew it face.

"Ah," he exhaled. "Cliff! I knew your mother'd be a Cliff fan."

Rose laughed at him. "That she is. But... What's with the chucking me out of the TARDIS back then?" she asked, pulling a serious voice. The Doctor turned around to face her. "That was rude, ya know?" She looked at him meaningfully.

"Was it?" he asked casually. "Sorry," he said sheepishly, grinning at her. Rose just rolled her eyes.

"Now then!" he exclaimed and made some engine sound.

"Doctor," Rose said between laughter.

"Mm?" he turned to look at her.

"There's still Jack out there." She pointed casually at Captain, who was casually leaning on the TARDIS. The Doctor sprung his head to face Jack.

"Oh. Right." It sounded like he just remembered him.
"Guess it's time for my stroll, then." Jack pushed himself back from the TARDIS.

"Jack..." Rose looked at him a bit unsure.

"No place for me, Rosie." Jack just beamed at her.

"Yep, no place," the Doctor added casually.

"Well, then I'm not going." Rose started to get off the vehicle.

"No no no. Stay there." The Doctor somehow managed to put Rose back on the seat. He looked at Jack and sighed. "Oh, well." With visible reluctance he pulled his sonic screwdriver out and bleeped it at the empty space on the side of the moped. In a flash, a spare seat appeared, supported by another wheel.

"Oh, it had this?" Rose looked at it in astonishment.

"Yeh, well, perception filter. I prefer to only use two wheels." The Doctor grimaced at the seat like it was poison.

"You got some tricks, hidden up your sleeves, Doc. This is amazing." Jack quickly jumped in the spare seat, playing *Mister Oblivious* to the Doctor's huff.

Soon enough, the Time Lord pressed the pedal and they were off on the road. Jack watched their backs in amusement - Rose's hands curled up around the Doctor's waist as they drove. He could hear the Doctor's voice from the parallel world.

"And Jack...don't play with me. My self with a crack already has ridiculous thoughts about your friendship with Rose."

"Is your self suspecting that something is going on between us?" Jack asked in amusement.

"Don't even start."

Thinking back, how could Jack not play with the Time Lord. If he says not to, he wants to do it even more. Jack let himself being driven away, with a smirk on his face.

"So, what's the destination?" Jack asked from behind them.

"Ed Sullivan TV Studios, Elvis did 'Hound Dog' on one of the shows, there were loads of complaints. Bit of luck, we'll just catch it," the Doctor said through the engine sound.

"TV studios in, what... New York?" Rose teased him.

"That's the one!" the Doctor exclaimed happily.

After a red London bus drove past the end of the street, the Doctor stopped. A red post box and Union flag bunting hanging from rooftop to rooftop. The Doctor looked all bemused.

"Dinging that New York vibe!" Rose laughed it off.

"Weeell... " The Doctor trailed off. "This COULD still be New York, I mean this looks very New York to me." He looked around. "Sort of... Londony New York, mind." He just couldn't accept another failure in his driving.
"You know it's impressive how much we try to go somewhere and always end up elsewhere," Rose teased.

"Oi! We did go to Ian Dury concert as we planned!" he cried.

"Yep, only to be thrown back to the TARDIS afterwards." Rose chuckled.

"Guys, I think we've arrived at the right time," Jack interrupted them. "All those flags tell me we're up for a celebration!"

"Yeh? At least someone agrees with me," the Doctor said blithely.

"Good for you." Rose laughed.

They drove some more, until they parked in the neighbourhood. Down in the road, they spotted a man, Magpie, throwing open the doors to his van. Two errand boys took out a television and carried it into a house. The house owner was looking on.

"There you go, sir, all wired up for the great occasion," Magpie exclaimed.

The Doctor, Rose and Jack walked past and stopped, after hearing the man.

"The great occasion? What d'you mean?" the Doctor asked nonchalantly, picking on his ear.

"Where've you been living, out in the Colonies?" Magpie glanced him suspiciously. "Coronation, of course." He said, closing the doors of his van. Rose looked at the man a bit uncomfortably.

"What Coronation's that, then?" the Doctor asked.

"What d'you mean?" Magpie stopped to look at the Doctor with a bemused expression. "THE Coronation," he just said.

"Oh, nice." Jack grinned.

The Doctor looked at the man with a blank expression, turning to Rose for help.

"The Queen's," Rose said softly.

Still nothing.

"Queen Elizabeth!" she exclaimed, hinting.

Then it clicked him. "Oh! Oh, is this 1953?!" the Doctor asked the man all happy.

"Last time I looked," Magpie said, walking casually towards them. "Time for a lovely bit of pomp and circumstance, what we do best."

Rose didn't notice how she backed away from the man in reflex, her expression guarded. Magpie seemed to feel a bit lost, so he turned his gaze away from her.

"Look at all the TV aerials..." Rose said while looking around at chimneys. "It's like everyone's got one. That's weird, my nan said tellies were so rare they all had to pile into one house," she said in a hinted voice.

"Not round here, love. Magpie's Marvellous Tellies, only five quid a box."
"Oh? So you practically give them away. 'Wonder why would a business man do that,' she said in a stern voice, her gaze locked to Magpie.

"It's my patriotic duty." The man paced about a bit uncomfortably. "Seems only right that as many folk as possible get to watch the coronation. We may be losing the Empire but we can still be proud!"

"I'm sure you are very very proud of yourself," Rose said in a low voice.

"Uuum-" the Doctor inhaled. "Thank you, Mr. Magpie! Such lovely tellies." He then leaned his head towards Rose. "What's this all about?" he whispered.

"He's weird and suspicious," Rose said in a firm voice.

"Uh huh. As long as not as weird as you are - nothing to worry about," he sang blithely. Rose gave him a dangerous look. The Doctor just angled his head to the sides, in amusement.

A sudden woman's shouts distracted them.

"Someone help me, please! Ted!"

A man with a blanket over his head was being bundled into a black police car by two suited men. The Doctor and Rose, followed by Jack ran over to them.

"Leave him alone, it's my husband!" the woman pleaded.

"What's going on?" the Doctor asked, concerned.

The blanketed man was pushed into the back seat, as Tommy ran out of his house. "Oi, what are you doing?!"

"Police business, now get out of the way, sir!" D.I. Bishop told them.

"Who was that?" Jack asked.

"Must be Mr Gallagher..." Tommy said, looking inside the car.

Just as fast, the car started driving off, leaving Mrs Gallagher in despair.

"It's happening all over the place. They're turning into monsters..." Tommy said carefully.

"Tommy! Not one word!" Eddie shouted at Tommy, as soon as he stormed out of the house.

Rose gave the man a warning look, but he was oblivious to that and just dragged Tommy inside.

Not wasting any more seconds, the Doctor put on his sunglasses again and ran over to the moped, kicking it into life.

"All aboard!" he exclaimed, when Rose was sitting in her place behind the Doctor and Jack already jumped in his spare seat.

The trio came round the corner on the moped, following the black car, just to stop short of the market stall.

"Lost 'em! How'd they get away from us?" he wondered.
"Surprised they didn't turn back and arrest you for reckless driving, have you actually PASSED your test?!" she joked. The Doctor was not listening, or pretending very well not to listen. He was good at not listening, when he didn't feel it convenient for him.

"Men in black? Vanishing police cars? This is Churchill's England, not Stalin's Russia."

Rose looked around the place. She was not sure where did the Doctor found them the previous time as she stayed behind at the second chase.

"They got some amazing teamwork," Jack said, nodding approvingly.

"Meaning what?" the Doctor asked, a bit confused.

"What would you do if you were left without the TARDIS and you had to hide?" Jack asked.

The Doctor narrowed his eyes. "I would ask Rose to cover up for me, I suppose..."

"Exactly," Jack exclaimed, beaming at them both.

"Ooooh." Rose seemed to get it. The Doctor looked at her questioningly. She then pointed her head towards the gate. When the Doctor sprung around to watch the workers, his face lit up.

"Oh. Oh. Very good. Very very good, indeed!" The Doctor beamed at the sight.

"Infiltration process?" Rose suggested, grinning.

"Right on schedule. Let's get back here after sunset."

"And in meantime?" Jack asked casually.

"Monsters, that boy said..." Rose said with a deeper meaning. The Doctor turned to face her. "Maybe we should go and ask the neighbours," she suggested.

"That's what I like about you. The domestic approach," the Doctor said sweetly.

"Is that a compliment or an insult?" she asked, concerned.

"Depends what you want to hear," the Doctor said.

"Well, not an insult would be nice," Rose said.

"Well then."

"But did you mean it as an insult?" She tried again, but the Doctor only kicked the moped back into life and they were off.

The door bell rang.

Eddie opened the door to the Doctor, Rose and Jack, who were wearing identical cheesy grins.

"Hiiiiii!" the trio sang in an adorable chorus.

"Who are you, then?" Eddie asked, regarding them suspiciously.

"Let's see then," The Doctor glanced the man over, Rose looking amused, Jack expectedly. "Judging by the look of you - family man, nice house, decent wage, fought in the war."

muttered to himself. "Therefore, I represent Queen and country!" he spilled, holding up the psychic paper with a flourish.

"Just doing a little check of Her Majesty's forthcoming subjects for the great day," he spilled in one of his nine hundred per hour speed, making the man at the door all confused and slow on the uptake. "Don't mind if I come in? Nah, didn't think you did, thank you!" the Doctor barged inside at those words, followed by Rose.

Jack was last and didn't lose a chance. "Captain Jack Harkness. Nice to meet you!" He shook the man's limp hand enthusiastically and soon went inside after the pair himself.

"Not bad, very nice! Very well kept! I'd like to congratulate you, Mrs... ?" the Doctor leaned in towards the woman.

"Connolly," she said timidly.

"Captain Jack Harkness, Mrs. Connolly. You're in good hands," he whispered to her, winking. The Doctor gave him a look.

"Now then Rita, I can handle this." Eddie stood there all forced-gallant and all. "This gentleman's a proper representative!" he couldn't suppress his eagerness. Rose just perched herself on the arm of a chair.

"Don't mind the wife, she rattles on a bit," Eddie said.

"Well, maybe she should rattle on a bit more," the Doctor said, leaving both Tommy and Eddie shocked.

"I'm not convinced you're doing your patriotic duty," the Doctor continued, unfazed. He made a side glance towards the flags around the room, waiting to be put up.

"Nice flags. Why are they not flying?" he asked in one of those inspector's voices.

"There we are Rita, I told you - get them up, Queen and country!" Eddie said, after a brief uncomfortable pause.

"I'm sorry-" Rita said, but was shushed by the Doctor, who looked at the man sceptically, and began to move over to Eddie.

"Get it done! Do it now." Eddie talking.

"Hold on a minute-" the Doctor tried, but Eddie talked over him.

"Like the gentleman says -" Eddie tried but this time, the Doctor shushed him.

"Hold on a minute. You've got hands, Mr Connolly. Two big hands!" He glanced at his hands. "Why is that your wife's job?" He asked seriously. Rose watched the scene with full attention, Jack leaning casually on the wall.

"It's housework, innit?" Eddie asked, a bit confused.

"And that's a woman's job?" the Doctor raised an eyebrow.

"Course it is!" Eddie laughed.

"Mr Connolly, what gender is the Queen?" the Doctor asked, pointing the last words.
"She's a female," Eddie stammered.

"And are you suggesting the Queen does the housework?" the Doctor said in a half whisper, daring him to say it.

After a few uncomfortable seconds, Eddie spoke again. "No! Not at all!"

"Then get busy." The Doctor said, handing Eddie a string of flags while giving him an insistent stare.

"Right, yes sir." Eddie set about hanging the flags, feigning enthusiasm. Nobody in the room seemed to be fooled.

"You'll be proud of us, sir! We'll have Union Jacks left, right and centre!"

Rose suddenly rose from her chair, hands on hips, as the Doctor slowly paced back across the room.

"Scuse me, Mr Connolly, hang on a minute! Union Jacks?" she asked with a business smile.

"Yes, that's right, isn't it?" Eddie paused in his work momentarily to look at her.

"That's the Union Flag." She pointed her head at it like it was the obvious. "It's the Union Jack only when it's flown at sea," she scolded him.

"Oh... oh, I'm sorry, I do apologise!" Eddie tried to humble himself. The Doctor glanced from her to Eddie.

"Well, don't get it wrong again," Rose said, smiling widely. "There's a good man. Now GET TO IT!" With a force in her voice to make some impact.

When the man went back to work, Rose gave the Doctor a coy smile. Even he looked slightly bewildered! Jack only felt pride for her, as he took his place at the armchair.

"Right then!" the Doctor exclaimed as he sat on the sofa. "Nice and comfy, at Her Majesty's leisure!" With Rose right next to him.

"Union Flag?" the Doctor sang quietly to Rose, with a grin still on his face.

"Mum went out with a sailor," Rose said breathlessly, beaming at him.

"Oohohohoo! I bet she did!" he sang. "Anyway," Now lauder, speaking to the room. "I'm the Doctor, this is Rose and you've already met Jack there." He pointed to Jack casually, who saluted.

To his utter disbelief, Captain Jack Harkness would have never thought there would be a time when he would feel like a third wheel, but today, more than any other day, that seemed to be the case. There was obviously nobody who could come between the Doctor and Rose-

"And you are?" The Doctor glanced at the boy.

"Tommy," the boy said.

"Well, sit yourself down, Tommy," the Doctor said warmly.

"With exception of helping people," Jack noted as he saw the pair shift aside, making a space for Tommy to sit in between.
Truly, if the Doctor from the parallel universe wouldn't have personally asked Jack to stay, he would have already left by now.

"Did you say you were a doctor?" Rita asked the Doctor, somewhat reluctantly. She was already sitting on the chair, close to the trio on the sofa.

"Yes I am."

"Can you help her? Oh please, can you help her, Doctor?" Rita pleaded with her eyes.

Eddie, overhearing this last part of the conversation, interrupted.

"Now then Rita, I don't think the gentleman needs to know-"

"No, the gentleman does!" the Doctor cut him off.

"Better listen to him. This one is influential." Jack winked Eddie meaningfully, pointing at the Doctor.

Not being able to hold it in anymore, Rita started crying, and Rose moved forward on her seat to address her.

"We'll help. Don't worry." She soothed the woman, wrapping a comforting arm around her. The Doctor watched them with a concerned frown.

"Hold on a minute! Queen and country's one thing, but this is my house!" Eddie looked down at the flags in his hands, chucking them down. The Doctor proped his head on his forearm and balled fist, appearing calm but giving the distinct impression that he's restraining himself.

"What the- what the hell am I doing? Now you listen here, Doctor! You may have fancy qualifications, but what goes on under my roof is my business!"

"All the people are being bundled into-" the Doctor said scathingly.

"I am talking!" Eddie shouted.

"And I am not LISTENING!" the Doctor raised his voice even louder than Eddie's and was literally spitting in his face, as he loomed over him. "Now you, Mr Connolly, are staring into a deep, dark PIT of trouble if you don't let me help!" Eddie only blinked, flabbergasted. "So I'm ordering you - SIR! - to tell me what's going on!"

Jack could only be glad that he was not on the receiving end of the Oncoming Storm. Sadly, this Doctor seemed to not take him as well as the parallel Doctor. One wrong move on Rosie, and he felt like he would be thrown out in the Vortex. When he turned his head, facing Rose, he was taken aback by Rose's complete non affect by the Doctor's outburst.

Once again Captain was questioning his place in there. He had to keep reminding himself...

"Everything is changing. Events play out way differently than those from our original timeline. Timelines... Time itself is spinning around in one big messy yarn ball, and no one knows which end will appear next. You were never there with us, Jack. And I don't know how things will turn out there...I might not even survive it, we barely did it the last time as it is. I could be lost, and Rose would be all alone... Keep her safe, Captain. She's all I have. And I trust her with you, if I'm not there."
The sound of something banging could be heard from upstairs. Everyone's eyes rolled upwards, listening.

"She won't stop," Eddie said with a degree of fear.

The banging continued, even louder.

"She never stops," Eddie said.

"We started hearing stories," Tommy started, taking attention of the Doctor. "All round the place. People who've... changed. Families keeping it secret 'cause they were scared. The police started finding out. We don't know how, no one does. They just... turn up, come to the door and take 'em. Any time of the day or night."

"Show me," the Doctor said.

The group appeared in a dark room, only the figure of Tommy's gran, lurking near the window could be seen.

"Gran? It's Tommy." As he opened the door wider, allowing the Doctor and the others behind to come inside the darkened room.

"'S all right Gran, I've brought help." With that Tommy stepped a little further inside the room, turning on the light. A faceless elderly woman stood in the middle of the room. Rose grimaced at the sight. She remembered Tommy's gran, she was a kind woman. Now seeing her without her face again was shocking. How she must have appeared herself to the Doctor...

"How did that happen?" Jack exclaimed, taking in the sight. The Doctor simply stared with a furrowed brow. He then took a few steps further, closing the distance between the gran and himself.

"Her face is completely gone," he said with an air of fascination.

"Scarcely an electrical impulse left. Almost complete neural shutdown, she's ticking over, like her brain has been... wiped clean." He was talking while scanning the face with his sonic.

They were interrupted by the crash of the policemen entering the house.

"We've got company..." Rose said urgently.

"It's them, they've come for her!" Rita breathed with horror filled eyes.

"What was she doing before this happened?" the Doctor asked hurriedly. "Where was she?"

Rita hesitated, not being able to think of a place and the policemen burst out inside the room.

"Hold on a minute!" the Doctor pulled his hands up in defence, trying to buy some time. "There are three important, brilliant-" He was holding a finger. "And complicated reasons why you should listen to me." He inhaled. "One-" But was shut off by the burly man's punch in the Doctor's face, leaving the Time Lord unconscious on the ground.

"Doctor!" Rose yelled.

"Big mistake, round man," Jack exclaimed, pointing a weapon at the men.
"Jack, they're policemen," Rose half-whispered, while kneeling near the Doctor, slapping his cheeks to wake him up.

"Good thing I'm not the local boy then," Jack said cheesily.

"What is that thing in your hand? Do you even have the licence for that?" One of the policemen furrowed their brows.

"Certainly didn't ask you for one. Now back off!" Jack ordered the men, as they tried to get near the gran.

"What, what... this is outrageous!" Eddie exclaimed. "Since when people representing the Queen has the permission to carry guns?"

"The Queen's representatives?" the policeman asked. "This bunch seems to have more than one crime in their files."

"Surely not as bad as hiding faceless people in the police headquarters," Rose said in a low voice.

"Uh," the Doctor's voice from below took everyone's attention.

"Doctor! You all right?" Rose asked him. He suddenly sat up, taking his surroundings.

"Ah, hell of a right hook! Have to watch out for that! One kind of a welcome. That was rude! And they say I'm rude..." He stood up, facing the men. He then spotted them frozen to the spot, looking warily behind him. He turned around.

"Jack, what's with the gun?!" the Doctor cried in disbelief.

"They knocked you out," Jack said defensively.

"I'm touched," the Doctor said humorously.

"Who are you people?" the policeman demanded.

"Weel, it's a long story, if you want to hear it...?" The Doctor looked at the men meaningfully.

"You're the one in charge here?" the policeman asked.

"That I'm," the Doctor said in an authoritative voice.

"You're coming with us then," the policeman said, turning around to walk away. The Doctor made his way for the door.

"Doctor." Rose tugged on his arm.

"It's alright, I'm just using the front door for the infiltration." He grinned at her. "You two keep an eye on things here." He gestured for them and went off.

_to be continued..._
Idiot's Lantern Part Two

"You two! Get the hell out of my house!" Eddie shouted at them both.

"Why such temper, Mr. Conolly? You won't get the ladies that way, if you know what I mean..." Jack winked at the man.

"Jack..." Rose whispered a warning.

"Wha..." Eddie stammered, looking uncomfortable. "What a disgrace!" he snapped. "Get out!"

"We're going, we're done!" Rose said, walking towards the door of the living room, where the whole Conolly family stood. "Nice to meet you Tommy, Mrs Connolly." She smiled softly at them. "And as for you, Mr. Conolly." She came to stand face to face with him, her head held high. "Only an idiot hangs the Union Flag upside-down. Shame on you!" She grinned cheerfully and took Jack, running out of the house.

And that's how they have been chucked out of the Conolly's house.

"So, judging by the facts we have gathered up until now; we got faceless people, unknown cause, presumably jailed Time Lord, nasty policemen, Mr. Conolly's house with the man, who obviously is a big prick, his lovely wife and brave young man Tommy and the great Coronation just a day ahead." Jack calculated. "Using the basic friendship rule, help friend in need, we better bail him out first and then decide of any further plans."

When he saw Rose chuckling, he grinned at her. "Oh, I know I'm pretty handsome, but no need to laugh at that. Rosie."

"Nah, it's just...you still got that..." She gestured. "Bossy, vibe in you."

"Bossy vibe by the 21st century's slang. Is it good or bad?" he asked.

"Good for you I guess." She laughed. "Mind you, when you're with the Doctor you get no chance."

"A man got to feel he's in charge with his woman near," Jack said teasingly.

"I'm not his woman, Jack-"

"Oh, really? My eyesight must have gotten bad in a hundred years. I could have sworn I saw Rose Tyler and the Doctor snogging each other senseless on some windy beach in Norway. Or did I dream that up?" He looked like he was seriously considering it.

"I'm not talking about that with you." She pointed at him, smiling, with a shade of pink on her cheeks. ",sides, this one said nothing of that sort to me. It doesn't really even count." She moved to relax her shoulders' muscles.

"So you would want him to?" He winked.


"I think he would find it cute, if you went to bail him out with your cheeks boiling red," Jack said seriously, seeing her escape plan.
"Oh my God. Jack, stop it." She put her face in her hands, laughing.

"Seriously, what I'll do with you two. You're like teenagers!"

"Maybe we're," Rose said seriously, her hands down. There was a pause, then she began faintly. "It's just... all that...secrecy thing... He's him, but he's not." She furrowed her brows. "It's like...there's two versions of him-"

"You were with him before regeneration too, Rosie."

"I know, I know, but it's not...like the regeneration. It's different. He knows the different me. We're different. And sometimes...it just feels... wrong." She shook her head. "Oh, that man's so bloody complicated." She laughed.

"Then make it the same," Jack suggested, his gaze serious.

"How d'you mean?" She narrowed her eyes. "I can't tell him, not yet. He told me, he told you too about it-"

"I know. It's not about that. Maybe you just need to show him what he's to you. I mean, it's pretty fun and everything to tease him, but- Jack laughed.

"You did not just say that. He would kill ya, if he heard," she sang.

They both laughed at that.

"He's the most brilliant man I've ever met," Jack said, after calming down. "And he's got you, Rosie. Just this one seems not know it yet."

"So what do I do?" she asked faintly.

"Just be yourself and all will be fine." Jack kissed her forehead, Rose smiling softly. "See you, then. He's going to get mad at me again for letting you wander off, but guess it's you being you." They both grinned at each other, Rose stepping backwards and waving to him.

"Bring him back unscratched," she shouted out, smiling. "Take this with you, you might need it." She threw the psychic paper in his hands.

"You had this?" Jack asked in wonder.

"The Doctor gave me just before he went out."

Jack chuckled. "Won't make the man wait for much longer then. See you soon." He saluted and went off, running.

She wanted to get away from everything for a moment. Maybe that's why she chose to drift away from the "rescue mission". It was a quiet night in the 50's London. Calming breeze blowing in the wind. Just what she needed. Some peace before the big day. Before the face-eating-Coronation took place in England's history.

There really were a lot of odd creatures out there.

Odd... Ood. She swallowed at the thought.

When she woke up after a made-up crash on Earth and met his eyes, she saw that he was gone.
That her time of pretending resumed. She hated doing that. Truth be told - a lot. But she could never blame the Doctor for choosing that. He would have never done that by his own will. But there really was no other choice there. They had to preserve the timelines.

Always something to save.

Always something coming before them.

*You get used to that in a long run.*

She smiled sadly, while walking down the streets. And if her ache in the heart was anything to say... she could only imagine what it was for him.

She was supposed to be strong, but the mere thought of her being there alone... *Impossible planet...* No, she couldn't think like that. He trusted her to look after them both. And she was not alone alone. The Doctor was there. Would be there. *She really hoped he would.* He would just be... *someone who didn't experience that yet.* And she would be *someone who did.*

She exhaled a long, shuttering breath, pulling her arms around herself.

A movement in the corner of her eyes, caught her attention. Rose titled her head to the side just to find two men dragging a person, covered with a blanket.

"'em again," she muttered and dashed towards them.

"Oi!" she called out for them. "Leave him alone!"

After spotting her closing the distance to them, the men quickened their pace and shortly after, disappeared in the corner.

Rose couldn't just leave them. What they done to people. Took them out of their homes, treated them like recyclable stuff... If anything, their families had the right to keep their family members. With or without their faces.

She ran towards the corner where she saw the men vanish to. After a few leaps she reached the place, but to her surprise, found nothing there. The alley there looked even darker than the one she came from, but there seemed to be nothing living there.

*Did they hide the body somewhere?*

She took a few wary steps further. "Hello?" she called out. *Might as well come clean about her being here.*

"Look, I know you're here! So stop mucking about!" she called out.

*Still nothing.* Only a gentle breeze scattered her bangs.

"Well, that's weird," she exhaled, her hands on her hips, looking to the sides. "I could've sworn I saw 'em going here..." She circled her tongue inside her mouth.

Just then, she felt a presence behind her. She took a side-way glance and saw a shadow lurking about.

"Done hiding then," she said, smiling, and turned around.

The smile was short lived, though. She gasped, taking a step back at what she saw.
"Good evening, miss."

"Aaaah!" the Doctor sang in delight, when he spotted Jack coming near his cell. "There's my rescue team! Took your time, I must say. I was almost getting settled down in here." He bounced his extended legs. "A bit dark though. Don't like dark that much." He grimaced. "Oh, well. Time to say goodbye to this place, gang," he said blithely and stood up from the bench, beaming.

"Although." He glanced behind Jack casually. "You seem to be one short?" he asked, with a raised eyebrow. Jack gave him a meaningful look, while unlocking the cell and letting the Time Lord out.

"Oh oh! One wandered off!" the Doctor exclaimed, then his face twisted to *I knew it.* "I knew she would do that. Never stays long in one place," he muttered. "A bit like me. Clever and learns fast. Maybe not always the things she should, but..." He considered. "Blimey, too much like me. Although, I have a time machine to wander off with, she got only her feet. Humans and their way of travelling." He shook his head disapprovingly.

"She's investigating," Jack said.

"Good!" the Doctor smiled. "She may find us a clue. Well, she usually does. Brilliant she is. I would really do no good without her. Good thing that I wont't be-" His face suddenly shadowed. He swallowed the almost slip up.

**Being without her... A thought sharper than any knife or blade.**

Jack watched him in silence. The Doctor's face muscles clenched as a piercing pain ran down his both hearts. Then just as suddenly, the Time Lord put his nonchalant mask on. "Right then!" He clasped his hands together. "Let's head out. Can't do worse than her. I still got Time Lord image to preserve." He saluted to Jack, grinning, as he went off.

"You...what're you doing here?" Rose asked the man in front of her.

"I knew this would happen..." the man said in an exhausted voice. "I knew I would be found out one day."

Rose narrowed her eyes. "What're you talking about?"

"But I can't let others find out. Or she won't let me live the day," he said painfully, looking at her with sad eyes. Then he made a nodding gesture towards the men and they started closing the distance between them and Rose. She tried to back away, but they soon found their way at her, grabbing her by her forearms.

She tried to struggle. "What're you doing?! Let me go! Magpie!" she shouted at him.

"I just want some peace," he said remorsefully. That being the last scene she saw as a rough palm with a cloth on her face send her unconscious.

Not entirely sure after how many minutes or hours, she finally came to. What she instantly felt was the restrains, tightly wrapped around her skin, stifling her movements. Her hands were both tied down behind her back, her legs on one of the chair's legs. She tried to move, but it was all in vain.

*They went all out for this, it seemed.*

It didn't take long for her to take in her surroundings. Ironically she was being kept at Magpie's
shop, right in front of the tellies behind the counter. The man himself was fidgeting nervously on his feet.

Rose snorted. "What a great proud man of the country. Not only he helps take the faces of all those people, but now even resorts to kidnapping. Oh, how lucky of us to have you!" she said sarcastically.

Magpie looked up at her. "You couldn't possibly understand... what...it's like, with her..." he stammered.

"Believe me, I know a great deal about her," she muttered.

Then in a flash, one of the screens blinked up and the woman appeared. "Yooohooo! Oh, what a little girl we have here. Such a shame for being so unintelligent and going through other people's business."

"Comes from the living Wire, posing as a woman of the telly," she bit a snort.

The Wire's face twisted at once. "Who're you?" Her eyes wide.

"Guess you'll never know," Rose sang, her gaze firm on the telly.

"Magpie! Who's she?" the woman asked sharply.

"I-I don't know. I barely saw her one time while delivering tellies. She was with some other two men..."

"WHO are they?" the Wire asked.

"I don't know..." Magpie's voice weak.

"Find them and bring them to me!" she ordered, then turned her gaze on Rose. "And you, little girl." She smiled. "Will settle my HUNGEEEEEEEEEEEEER," she sang, her mouth opening.

Rose shifted in the seat uncomfortably. She was really not keen on getting her face chopped off, but there seemed to be no way out of it. She took one last glance at the doors, extending her fingers, which only proved her once again that physical strength won't take her out of this one.

"And Rose... don't get your face taken."

The Doctor's words, echoing in her mind. She failed to keep her promise. She closed her eyes, muttering, "I'm sorry."

When a sudden wave hit her face, that stretching feeling of one's skin, the feeling of being separated from your own body started, her voice broke out on its own.

"DOCTOR!"

**Int. Bishop's office**

The first thing the Doctor was greeted by when he entered the office, surely was not what he expected when getting arrested. As soon as his legs made inside the room, one of the men, approached him with a nervous smile on his face.

"It's so good to see you here, Sir," he said with a smile.
"Is it?" the Doctor asked sceptically, raising an eyebrow.

The man seemed a bit lost for a moment, but caught on, when Jack cleared his throat, glaring at the man.

"Please excuse my manners, sir. We've just never thought to have an opportunity to meet one of you."

"Oh?" the Doctor nodded blithely, pressing his lips together. "And that would be-?" He urged him on.

"Welcome to our little headquarters, Special Undercover Agents of the Secret Organisation." The man beamed at them.

The Doctor only blinked, his face blank. "Wh-who?"


"Are we now?" the Doctor exclaimed. "Oh. Right." He considered. "I didn't ask how I got out."

"We're terribly sorry for our misunderstanding. We were just not...expecting you."

"Well..." The Doctor took a breath. "The thing is, Detective Inspector Bishop-"

"Have you heard of me?" the man asked expectedly.

"Huh?" The Doctor blinked.

"You knew my name." He beamed at them. *Certainly if he was known among the special forces, it must have meant a pro-

"It's...written inside your collar?" the Doctor said apologetically.

Bishop looked slightly embarrassed and adjusted his collar.

"What can we do to help you, Special Undercover Agent of the Secret Organisation? If you came just before the Coronation, the information must have exceeded to the headquarters."

"No. Don't do that," the Doctor said, grimacing.

"Sorry?"

"Don't say that grandiose name, it just gives me the creeps. Just call me the Doctor," he said and walked over the table.

"The Doctor? As a code name?" Bishop seemed impressed.

The Doctor titled his head to the side in amusement. "You could say that."

"You can just call me Captain Jack Harkness," Jack extended his hand to greet Bishop.

"My loyal colleague," the Doctor exhaled, pointing with his mouth the last word. The Doctor gave one wary look at the round guy, who stood just beside Bishop, but appeared unmoving as a statue, as the Time Lord squeezed past him.

"Ain't you that big guy who punched our agent?" Jack intervened, giving a meaningful look at him.
"Sincere apologies!" the round man exclaimed in a soldier pose.

"Oh, nothing to worry about. Just gotta be on a lookout around you some more," the Doctor muttered, glancing him over, then cleared his throat.

"Please excuse us for our incompetence," Bishop said, rubbing on his forehead.

The Doctor just nodded blithely. "Right right." He dismissed them with a hand, taking a seat on the chair, his legs on the table, looking through the papers. "Is this everything you've got?" He asked in an authoritative voice.

"We keep records. Yes."

"But you're not doing much of an investigation work yourself, are you, Detective Inspector Bishop?" the Doctor glanced from the papers.

"I'm sorry. If we disappointed you-"

"Nah, not me. After aaaaall, they send me for the job." He pointed with his mouth. "But what about you? Don't you want to get out and investigate?" he sang. "No such itch?" The Doctor looked at him expectedly.

"Of... course I have," Bishop exhaled. "But with the Coronation right at the corner..." he said helplessly. "And this is way beyond anything we've ever seen. We don't even know where to start."

"Well... You can start from the beginning," the Doctor said, peeking out from the held papers. "Tell me all you know."

"We started finding them about a month ago. Persons left sans visage." Bishop walked over the wall, where pictures of various faceless people were glued at. "Heads just... blank."

"Is there any sort of pattern?" the Doctor asked casually, standing up and looking through the pictures.

"Yes, spreading out from North London," Bishop breathed. The Doctor turned to examine a file on the desk. "All over the City. Men, women, kids... grannies..." Bishop continued. "The only REAL lead is there's been quite a large number in-"

"Florizel Street." The Doctor read.

A sudden knock at the door took everyone's attention. Everyone in the room looked up.

"Found another one, sir," policeman announced.

A figure, two men in room were expecting in the least to see, stood in the middle of Bishop's office. A figure wearing a familiar pink voluminous skirt with matching pink shoes...

Jack gasped. *This was not her... right? She after all, knew things... This was not her...*

"Oh, er - good man, Crabtree. Here we are, Doctor..."

The moment his Time Lord's brain recognised the skirt, the Doctor walked from the table, dropping any pieces of papers he had had in his hands, not caring about them messily scattering on the floor. His whole body moved towards the figure in a trance, fingers numb.
No. He couldn't believe it was her. He didn't want to believe it could be her. There must be some kind of mistake. Or... a similar person-

And then, the policeman took the blanket off. The Doctor's eyes widen in horror, his hearts skipping a painful beat, as he approached her.

"Rose," he breathed, his voice barely a whisper. What have they done to you?

"Do you know her?" Bishop asked.

"Know her? She-" he said breathlessly. His voice was unsteady, as his words caught themselves in his throat. His hearts were beating frantically in his chest. And his ears shut down all the unimportant background sounds.

Know her? Were there words to describe what she was to him? And would the man even understand half of it, if he were to tell him? How could some stranger human possibly understand what she was to him? There were no words to describe her, much less English. He wouldn't be alive without her, for Rassillion's sake! In body and soul. And now they... they ripped her off her whole essence. Rose. Her heart-warming smile, those beautiful hazel eyes - they were just gone!

Gone. Nothing... left. She... she wasn't even breathing, hell there was no air to breath or mouth to eat. There was just plain nothing!

"What the hell happened! You better tell me, because I'm not exactly a friendly type when it comes to certain things." Jack was shouting at the men. "Who did this?"

"We don't know ourselves. They found her in the street, apparently, over at Master Square, abandoned."

"That's unusual, that's the first one out in the open. Heaven help us if something happens in public tomorrow for the big day, we'll have Torchwood on our back, make no mistake," D.I Bishop said.

Something very dangerous snapped inside the Time Lord, when he heard those words.

"They did what?" he said coldly, interrupting the men with Jack together, who was on the verge of choking a nasty swear at them.

"I'm sorry?" D.I. Bishop asked.

"They left her where?" the Doctor said in a forced-calm voice, gritting his teeth. The voice was anything but calm and Captain would have probably shivered himself, if his own fury wouldn't be helping him close those thoughts off.

"Just... in the street," the man answered, a bit stammering.

"In the street," the Doctor said quietly, his eyebrows rising from anger and suppressed urge to force the words into the poor man's mouth. "They left her in the street." His voice was rising, and the suppressed Oncoming Storm was breaking through. "They took her face and just chucked her out and left her in the street." He took a shuddering breath. "And as a result, that makes things..." he breathed in a low voice. "Simple. Very, very simple," he said pressing his lips together, his intense gaze fixed on Rose's clean-face.

"Do you know WHY?" the Doctor asked the man, finally tearing his gaze away from Rose's face, and taking his glasses off, turning to the two men.

"No..." Bishops said a bit warily.
'Because NOW!' the Doctor shouted furiously. "Detective Inspector Bishop, there is no power on this EARTH that can stop me!" he said in a voice full of anger, which left no doubt that nobody wanted to cross this man at this time. "Come on!" he called for them, going for the door without hesitation.

Someone did this to her. Whatever had interested him of this whole situation before, now put a whole new level to it. Things just got very very personal. And the Oncoming Storm was out on the surface.

The Doctor, Jack and Bishop burst out of the gates into the dawn sunlight.

"The big day dawns..." Bishop announced.

The Doctor did not reply. He moved on immediately.

"Better not get on his nerves now, Detective Bishop. Be a wise man. Nothing can stop him now."

"What has stopped him till now then?"

"Rose," Jack breathed. "And now, he doesn't have to feel the responsibility to do this the human way. I may not be in the best of moods myself, but nothing compared to the Oncoming Storm."

"Is this another code name, Oncoming Storm?" Bishop asked.

"Something you don't want to learn about directly."

Outside the Conolly's house

Tommy opened the door and found the Doctor standing there with Bishop and Jack.

"Tommy, talk to me," the Doctor said in a low voice.

"I need to know exactly what happened inside your house," he continued as Tommy stepped outside the door, closing it behind him.

Suddenly Eddie pulled the door open violently and rounded on Tommy.

"What the blazes do you think you're doing?" he spat in Tommy's face, roughly.

"I wanna help, dad," Tommy simply said.

"Mr Connolly..." the Doctor said warningly. One more word from that man...

"Shut your face, you," Eddie spoke into the Doctor's face. "Whoever you are.

"You don't wanna know who I really am," the Doctor said in a low Time Lord's voice, glaring at the man from above. He could barely see a human man in front of him. Whatever he was, he was only a hindrance, and obstacle to go past to.

Eddie tilted his head backwards a bit. "We can handle this ourselves. And I thought you were supposed to be in prison." He glanced the Doctor over.

"Let the man talk," Bishop intervened. "He's of High authority. You don't wanna bring this upon yourself, and neither do I."
"What, what the blazes?" Eddie frowned at Bishop.

"What can I do, Doctor?" Tommy said.

Eddie sprung around at him. "Listen you, little twerp," he said in a cold whisper. "You're hardly out of the bloomin' cradle, so I don't expect you to understand. But I've got a position to maintain!" He shook his body from the words.

The group only watched silently, but as Jack took in the Doctor's clenched white fists, he knew that the man better shut his mouth soon.

"People round here respect me. It MATTERS what people THINK!" Eddie talked fiercely.

"Is that why you did it, dad?" Tommy asked.

"What d'you mean? Did what?" Eddie leaned back, taken aback.

"You ratted on gran. How else would the police know where to look? Unless some coward told them..."

"How DARE you?" Eddie said in a raging voice. "You think I fought a war just so a mouthy little scum like you could call me a coward?"

"You don't get it, do you? You fought AGAINST fascism, remember? People telling you how to live - who you could be friends with - who you could fall in love with - who could live and who had to die. Don't you get it? You were fighting so that little twerps like me could DO what we want. SAY what we want. Now you've become just like them. You've been informing on everyone, haven't you? Even gran. All to protect your precious reputation!"

"Eddie... is that true?" Rita came to join them, as she heard them talking.

"I did it for US, Rita!" Eddie defended himself. "She was FILTHY." He jumped at the words. "A FILTHY, DISGUSTING THING!" Spitting.

"She's my mother," Rita said quietly, shocked. "All the others - you informed on all the people in our street - our friends."

"I had to." He flailed slightly, looking around for understanding. "I did the right thing...!"

"The right thing for us... or for you, Eddie?" Rita said heartbroken. "You go, Tommy." She turned to her son. "You go with the Doctor and do some good. Get away from this house. It's poison. We had a ruddy monster under this roof, all right, but it weren't my mother!" Close to tears she went back inside, slamming the door on Eddie's face.

"Rita?" Eddie called out for her, concerned.

"Tommy." The Doctor extended his hand, urging the boy to come with him.

The streets were busy as people were preparing for a street party. The Doctor, Jack, Tommy and Bishop walking along.

"Tommy, tell me about that night," the Doctor said impatiently. "The night she changed."

"She was just watching the telly," Tommy said.
"Rose said it," Jack blurted out.

"She guessed it straight away," the Doctor continued, looking up at the TV aerials. "Of COURSE she did. All these aerials in one little street - how come?" he asked Tommy.

"Bloke up the road, Mr Magpie, he's selling them cheap."

Tommy was still talking, when the Doctor started running down the street, towards the shop, Jack following close behind.

"Is he, now?" Bishop asked casually.

"COME ON!" the Doctor yelled back, his voice ringing through the whole street. That was enough to bring the two out of their chit-chat.

When they were just a few meters away from the shop, they saw that the place was closed and Jack was already taking out his blazer to blast the doors open, but got no chance, as the Doctor smashed the glass in Magpie's door with his own bare hand in order to gain entry to the shop.

Bishop still tried to chastise him. "Here, you can't do that, even if you are of Special forces-"

"Better shut up," Jack warned him, but the Doctor ignored them anyway, as he stormed his way in the room.

"SHOP?" he yelled. Then he took a few long strides towards the counter and started pressing the bell on the top repeatedly with mad energy. He shouted to the back of the shop.

"If you're here, come out and talk to me! MAGPIEEE!?" He was bursting with furiosity.

"Maybe he's not here," Tommy said.

"Looks like it..." The Doctor walked over the counter, rifling through the drawers behind the counter. In one of them, he found the device that looked like a cross between a portable radio and TV.

"Oh, hello... this isn't right. This is very much not right." He was inspecting it in his hands.

Much to the surprise of Tommy and Bishop, he licked it.

"Tastes like iron. Polyoxybenzylmethylenglycolanhydride," he said looking at the device.

"Or Bakelite," Jack added. The Doctor obviously couldn't bother to explain what he said. "One of the first plastics made from synthetic components," Jack said to the two blank faces, who watched the Time Lord.

"Put together with human hands, yes." The Doctor put it down on the counter. "But the design itself..."

He scanned it with his sonic screwdriver. "Oh, beautiful work." He admired it, even with the grave situation at hand and that could only mean one thing, Jack noted. "That is so simple," the Doctor said in disbelief.

Yeh, they were moving forward.

"That's incredible. It's like a television, but portable. A portable television!" Bishop talked.
The Doctor then raised his sonic screwdriver, pointing it around the room - the televisions turning on to static.

"It's not the only power source in this room..." he whispered.

As the screwdriver whirred, the static gradually faded away and on each screen appeared a different face - the faces of the people who were taken by the Wire. They all looked terrified, mouthing pleas for help. The Doctor looked around at them, brow furrowed. Tommy noticed his gran's face in one.

"Gran?"

"Doctor," Jack called. The Time Lord skipped a beat, turning around to see Captain looking at one of the screens with furrowed brows. His legs took their way towards the telly and he could identify her face clearer by each step.

Rose. The Doctor's hearts leaped out, when he saw her mouthing 'Doctor, Doctor' over and over again. He squatted down before the screen, looking both sad and intense.

"I'm on my way," he breathed, wanting for her to hear him more than anything.

"What do you think you're doing?! I'll call the police!" Magpie's voice could be heard, as Jack dragged him out of the back of the shop.

"We are police for you," Jack countered him.

When the Doctor spotted the man, his face at once switched to a thunderous one. "I want my friend RESTORED!" he said, rounding on the man. "And I think that's beyond a little backstreet electrician so tell me, who's really IN CHARGE HERE!?" He made Magpie flinch from his outburst, praying to be anywhere but near this fury.

"Yoohoo! I think that must be me," the Wire appeared on one of the screens. The Doctor turned to her, surprised.

"Ooh, this one's smart as paint," the Wire continued, as the Doctor approached her or it.

"Is she talking to us?" Bishop asked.

"Sorry gentlemen, I'm... I'm afraid you've brought this on yourselves," Magpie stammered. "May I introduce you to my new... friend."

"Jolly nice to meet you." The Wire smiled at the group.

"Oh my God, it's her, that woman off the telly," Bishop announced, realising.

"No, it's just using her image," the Doctor said.

"What... what are you?" Tommy asked.

"I'm the Wire," it announced happily. "And I will gobble you up, pretty boy. Every last morsel. And when I have feasted, I shall regain the corporeal body, which my fellow-kind denied me." The screen gradually colourized at those words.

"Good Lord - colour television!" Bishop exclaimed with eyes popped out.

"So your own people tried to stop you?" the Doctor asked.
"They executed me. But I escaped - in this form - and fled across the stars," she said with a smirk.

"And now you're trapped in the television," the Doctor said mockingly. The smirk faded from the Wire's face, and with it, the colour from the television.

"Is this what got my gran?" Tommy asked.

"Yes, Tommy. It feeds off the electrical activity of the brain, but it gorges itself like a great overfed pig," he spat in disgust. "Taking people's faces, their essences, it stuffs itself."

"And this mouse man, let her do it," Jack said coldly. "Tell me when to shoot." He pointed the blaster at his head.

"Pl-please don't. I had to! She allowed me my face! She's promised to release me at the time of manifestation."

The Doctor glanced at Jack. "We're not shooting people, Jack," he warned him.

"I thought some things changed," Jack breathed disappointed, pulling the weapon away.

"They don't. He's just an idiot man, who couldn't know or feel better for his own people." He looked at Magpie in disgust.

"What does that mean? Releasing her at the time of manifestation?" Tommy asked.

"The appointed time - my crowning glory," the Wire said, hinting, taking everyone's attention.

"Doctor - the coronation!" Bishop exclaimed.

"For the first time in history, millions gathered around a television set," the Doctor said. Then his face turned to a gloating one, as he approached her. "But you're not strong enough yet, are you?" he asked, trying her. "You can't do it all from here." His face close to the screen. "That's why you need this!" He shook the device teasingly, backing away.

"You need something more powerful! This will turn a big transmitter into a big receiver."

"What a clever thing you are! But why fret about it? why not just relax? Kick off your shoes and enjoy the coronation. Believe me - you'll be glued to the screen." She smiled meaningfully to them and the next moment lines of red sparking light suddenly pulled all four faces into the Wire's TV - the Doctor, Jack, Tommy and the Inspector.

"Hungry! Hungry! The Wire is hungry! Ah! This one is tasty. Oh! I'll have lashings of him! Delicious!" The Wire was enjoying her meal.

However, the impact was not strong enough for the Doctor to become stiff and he, with effort, but slowly pulled out his sonic screwdriver.

The Wire's face suddenly twitched, noticing. "Ah! Armed!" she said in surprise. "He's armed and clever! Withdraw! Withdraw!" She severed the connection between herself and them, and all four fell to the floor, unconscious.

The Doctor woke up just to see Jack together with the Inspector with no face.

"Tommy, wake up!" He shook the boy. "TOMMY!" he shouted out. "Come on!"
"What happened?" Tommy breathed.

"Where's Magpie?" the Doctor breathed anxiously, standing up.

They both ran outside the shop and saw no sight of the man. Magpie was gone.

"We don't even know where to start looking - it's too late," Tommy said, defeated.

"It's never too late," the Doctor countered him. "As a wise person once said - Kylie I think... But the Wire's got a big plan... so it'll need..." He paced anxiously around in circles, his hands on his hips, thinking. "Yes, yes, yes, it's got to harness half the population... millions and millions of people... and where are we?" he asked.

"Muswell Hill," Tommy answered simply.

"Muswell Hill - Muswell Hill!" the Doctor exclaimed, running a few meters further. "Which means..." He looked around until he spotted a large building on the horizon, gesturing at it with both hands.

"Alexandra Palace! Biggest TV transmitter in North London! Ohh!" He bended his knees slightly. "That's why they chose this place!" He turned around to get back to the shop. "Tommy?" he called out for him, loudly.

"What are you going to do?"

"We're going shopping," the Doctor answered half-humorously and opened the doors.

Tommy and the Doctor were gathering equipment. Tommy holding up a device.

"Is this what you want?"

The Doctor suddenly sprang on his feet from another corner of the room. "Perfect!" he exclaimed, putting the thing on the top of others, which were gathered in their time there. "Right, I need one more thing," he said, giving the whole set of equipment to Tommy.

Then suddenly, a sound of something clanging on the floor echoed in the room. The Doctor turned to face Tommy, who was trembling slightly.

"Tommy! Keep it steady." The Doctor picked up the thing, which rolled on the floor and placed it back. "What is it?" he asked the boy impatiently.

"What's he doing?" Tommy pointed his head towards the floor. The Doctor tilted his head just to find a disturbing sight of a certain Captain's face in the...regrowing process. He had his mouth back, but obviously, not speaking yet. Still lacking the whole other set of his face features.

"Don't look at it," the Doctor said in a low but gentler now voice and turned away to search for the last thing he needed.

Tommy and the Doctor ran out on the streets, both loaded with equipment.

"Got it, let's go."

Tommy and the Doctor were running down a street, the Doctor plugging a device into Tommy's huge equipment bank that he was carrying, with its one end in his mouth. After a few corners, Tommy spotted Magpie on the pylon and pointed at him.
"There!"

"Come on!" The Doctor urged him.

"Woah, Woah, woah! Where do you think-" An official tried to stop them, but the Doctor just flashed his psychic paper in the man's face, not stopping his run.

"Oh! I'm sorry sir! Shouldn't you be at the coronation?"

"They're saving me a seat," the Doctor called back, already a few leaps ahead.

"Who did he think you were?" Tommy asked, as they rounded a corner.

"King of Belgium, apparently," the Doctor said casually, after he checked on his paper.

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**Int. Alexandra Palace, control room**

The Doctor was dashing around, gathering the equipment he needed, Tommy in front of a video machine and television screen.

"Keep it switched on. Don't let anyone stop you, Tommy. Everything depends on it. You understand?" the Doctor called out for him, as he was backing away out of the room.

Tommy just nodded.

The Doctor sprinted back around the corner, past the confused official, trailing a stream of magnetic recording tape behind him from a reel around his waist. He ran up the metal stairs and began climbing up the transmitter, following Magpie.

"You'll get yourself killed up there! Your Majesty!" official called out for him, but was left completely ignored.

*He had no time to spare. He had to get her back.*

He spotted as Magpie reached the mains plug.

"Feed me!" The Wire was demanding. The Doctor was still quite a bit behind, climbing with determination.

Magpie then plugged his TV in to the main current and the Wire laughed triumphantly. Across the country, TV aerials drew in the sparks emitted from the pylon and people watching the TV were being pulled in by the red electricity.

"Oh! Feast! Feast... ing! The Wire... is feasting," it sighed in contentment.

"It's too late! It's too late for all of us!" Magpie shouted out, devastated.

"I shall consume you... Doctor," the Wire said evilly and the Doctor was blasted in the face with red light, making him cry out and nearly loosing his balance on the transmitter.

"I won't let you do this, Magpie!" he shouted, when he regained his firm position.

"Help me Doctor! It burns! It took my face - my soul!"
"You cannot stop the Wire. Soon I shall become manifest." She smiled and blasted yet another beam at the Time Lord.

"No more of this! You promised me peace!" Magpie pleaded.

"And peace you shall have," she said, blowing him into thousands of particles with the red light. The Wire laughed as his screams echoed in the alley, until he dead. The Doctor tried to touch the portable TV but was zapped by red sparks on his hand.

He shook his hand. "Been burning the candle at both ends? You've overextended yourself missus." He mocked her. "You shouldn't have had a crack at poor old Magpie there," he said, picking up the TV, only to be zapped in the foot.

He cried out again, but regained his grip on the device. There was no way he was stopping now. "Rubber souls! Swear by them!" He shook his head madly at the device, as he inserted a switch into the TV, but to his utter shock, nothing happened to the Wire.

"Oh dear!" she said mockingly. "Has our little plan gone horribly wrong, Doctor?" The Wire started laughing as the Doctor only stared, horrified. This couldn't be it.

His fears were short-lived, when the beams started retreating back into the Wire's portable television. Her face twisted at once. She was crying out in agony, wailing with pain. The Doctor started grinning.

"It's closed down, I'm afraid - and no epilogue," he said half-humorously, watching her intensely. With one last piercing shriek from the Wire, transforming that into one of the dead program, the television switched off. The Doctor stared at it for a moment, getting his breath back.

"What have I missed?" the Doctor asked casually, leaning on the frame of the door of the control room.

"Doctor!" Tommy jumped, facing the Doctor. "What happened? The device broken down, it went flying with blazes. He tried to help... but he got too much electricity in him," he said in a wary voice.

"Who did?" the Doctor asked cautiously, edging towards the boy. Tommy titled his head on the floor.

The Doctor leapt towards the fallen body, checking the pulse. "Good lad," he breathed in pride at Jack. "Wakey wakey!" He slapped his cheeks and after a while, Jack woke up with a gasp.

"Blimey!" Tommy breathed. "I thought he was dead!"

"Nah, he's just sort of...playing tricks on all of us." The Doctor laughed a bit.

"Can't say I enjoy this type of game." Jack rubbed his forehead. "Is it gone?"

"Yep. All sorted. I turned the receiver back into a transmitter and I trapped the Wire in here." He stood up, walking towards the device, indicating the video. "I just invented the home video 30 years earlier." He tossed it in his hand playfully, showing it to Tommy. "Betamax." He grimaced.

Jack laughed out loud. The Doctor smiled back at him. "Good to have you, Captain," he said warmly.
"Anytime, Doc." He saluted. "I think you have more important things to attend to now, though," Jack said meaningfully.

The Doctor seemed a bit confused at first, but after receiving Captain's smirk, he only grinned and dashed out the doors.

The Doctor was first to return to their street, followed by Tommy and Jack just a bit behind. There were loads of people milling around and meeting loved ones.

"Gran!" Tommy ran to her, after spotting the elderly woman.

The Doctor smiled at the exchanged hug, but continued with his long urgent steps, scanning the crowds for one person. And there she was! Chatting up with someone, a man or a woman, he did not know, as he was only seeing her. Rose. She turned around just about the same time he spotted her, a wide smile spreading across her face, which the Doctor returned, quickening his pace towards her.

He was only a portion away from running towards her. She laughed, just so happy to see him again and he threw his arms around her, lifting her right off the ground in a huge hug. She clung to him, grinning widely and burying her face in his shoulder. And he was grinning all the same, not knowing any better and more right thing in the universe than having her with him.

The folks were celebrating the big day. Out on the street, 50's music was playing, people were out on the street dancing and talking. Trestle tables lining the centre of the road covered in pastries, cakes, drinks, etc. The Doctor and Rose leisurely walked down the street.

"We could go down the mall, join in with the crowd," she suggested casually.

"Nah." He grabbed a victoria sponge from the table. "That's just pomp and circumstance. This is history right here." He laughed happily, eating his snack.

"The domestic approach," Rose said seriously.

"Exactly," he agreed and they both laughed.

"Is it trapped for good - on video?" she asked.

"Hope so," the Doctor answered blithely, not really caring all that much. All he cared about was walking right beside him. Aaand... let's think about it some other time. "Just to be on the safe side though, I'll use my unrivaled knowledge of trans temporal extirpation methods to neutralise the residual electronic pattern," he spilled, trying to cover up his other thoughts with some science terms.

Rose nodded at him. "You what?" she asked.

"I'm going to tape over it," he translated, leaning to her side.

She laughed. "Just leave it to me, I'm always doing that."

"Having good time, buds?" An American voice from behind their backs, startled them.

"Jack," she laughed. "What have you been up to?" she grinned at him.

"Fetched a drink for a lady, for one." He smiled meaningfully at her and handed one of his glasses
"Thanks."

The Doctor leaned to his side. "Buds? Really?" he asked incredulously. "After the whole Special Undercover Agents of the Secret Organisation you really want to go down that road?"

"Wha-what organisation?" Rose nearly choked on her drink, licking her lips, placing the glass on the table.

"I know, ridiculous. That man has one of a imagination. Imagine him living in the 21st century!" the Doctor exclaimed. "He would go completely mad with all the James Bonds, Detective shows and movies. Silly man." He shook his head disapprovingly.

"Hey, bud." Jack suddenly approached Tommy, who was near the table.

"Hey." The boy smiled at him.

"Look, he approves of bud." Jack pointed at him and laughed as the Doctor rolled his eyes. "Good taste. Keep that in mind when you go pick someone up."

"JACK!" Rose and the Doctor chided him.

"I'm just saying." He defended himself.

"It's never only saying with you." The Doctor gave him a meaningful look. "Tell you what Tommy." The Doctor leaned against the table. "You can have the scooter. Little present. Best... um... keep it in the garage for a few years though, eh?"

Behind them, Eddie walked down the street with his suitcase.

"Good riddance," Tommy said, looking over the Doctor's shoulder. The group turned to face the man.

"Is that it then, Tommy?" the Doctor asked seriously. "New monarch, new age, new world - no room for a man like Eddie Connelly."

"That's right. He deserves it." Tommy nodded. The Doctor just nodded, not buying it though.

"Tommy." Rose nudged his shoulder. "Go after him," she said softly.

"What for?" Tommy asked.

"He's your dad," she said gently.

"He's an idiot," Tommy said sadly.

"'Course he is. Like I said, he's your dad," she said like it was obvious. The Doctor looking at her with interest. "But you're clever. Clever enough to stand up to save the world so don't stop there," she said. The Doctor could only watch her in pride and admiration.

What would he do without her? He wanted to never experience that.

"Go on!" She smiled, giving him another nudge. Convinced, Tommy finally ran to join his dad. The group saw them walk side by side and Tommy taking his dad's bag for him. They continued down the street together. The Doctor, Jack and Rose watched them fondly from a distance.
The Doctor then straightened up and took two glasses of orange juice. Handing one to Rose he smiled at her and she back at him in gratitude. They chunk their glasses together with Jack, smiling.

"Tell you what," Rose said, after taking a sip.

"Mm?" The Doctor looked at her, intrigued.

"Let's join them." She tilted her head to the side, at the dancing couples. The Doctor raising an eyebrow at her.

"Come on." She put hers and his glasses on the table and took his hand, dragging him towards the music.

"Captain?" the Doctor called out.

"I'll just go scan the crowd." He winked at them. "You enjoy." He waved at them and disappeared in the crowd.

"He'll be fine. Don't worry." She chuckled at the Doctor's concerned reaction.

"I bet more than fine," he breathed, raising his eyebrows. They both laughed at that.

_____________________________

_to be continued..._
Idiot's Lantern Aftermath

Chapter Notes

Well, this's like an extra of the arc. Takes place after the celebration in the streets.

They danced, they laughed and even sang along some music, being played on the day and nooww, they were finally back to their home - TARDIS.

Everything took place in the kitchen. Rose and the Doctor the only ones present. Jack was somewhere out and about, maybe taking a hint to give them some space. Jack. He really saved their heads today. And faces, for that matter. He couldn't be more grateful than today to have him with them. Even if sometimes his presence seemed to be a hindrance but that was only because!

Besides, Rose liked his company. He could tolerate him. It was not like he really disliked him, just... What was going on between him and her? He wanted an answer to that... What was about him, seriously? The immortality? Blah, well, he was not immortal, but his lifespan was nothing to worry about. His handsomeness? Pff, he was not bad himself, if he must say so. Right? She did approve of him! Well, Cassandra may have hinted something... but either way!

Sexy aaand foxy.

So what else? His flirtatious nature? Um...was he seriously trying to compare that? They were a natural! Both him and Rose. There was no need to...try. So how could Captain Flash Jackness.. oh, he caught Mickey's disease. How could he... Why was he even thinking about Jack regarding that? He was out of question.

And there was always her partner to consider.

Partner. The name rolling on his tongue like poison. He was a great big mystery still. The Time Lord wanted to know more, needed to know more, but he could never push her to that.

He sighed inwardly.

A great big mystery, which settled deep into her heart. He shook his head mentally. NO point in thinking about that!

Moving on!

"So, I was thinking..." she began teasingly, looking at him with that illegal smile. "Would you like to..." Hug her? Yep, hugs were nice. He liked feeling her near. Safe and sound in his embrace. He could stay like that forever sometimes. Or not. Not sometimes. He could stay like that and see no tomorrow.

Since when had he became so dependant on her presence? Oh, it must have been a long long time.

The Wire really made his hearts stop for a moment there. For never being able to see, talk with her again. Her weird quirks, her smiles and compassion. Her herself. He was fairly sure he would not meet anyone like her ever again. Just one chance in life...and that, short too.
Funny thing, that of all the times he found himself brilliant, he desperately wanted to be a clueless fool, not knowing his future's griefs. His both hearts wanted the grief to be hope, happiness, warmth... but the universe never worked like that to him, did it? No, it did not. He wanted her to never leave him. *He wanted her mind.*

*Wow, that was a bit of a powerful thought.*

Words hold power, so does thoughts, if it is a Time Lord's brain you are talking about. And anyway. Would she even want him, if he... no, how could she? Well, he could see in those moments that she cared for him, but her longing faraway looks told him that him was not whom she wanted.

*Oh.*

Did he... he didn't, right? No, that couldn't be... of course not, he wouldn't have... *would he?* Time Lords don't do that and certainly not *THAT.* And it was not like they were... so, um...no, that couldn't have happened anyway...It just couldn't! He was not, he was not, he was not! I'm telling you, he was...!

*Oh, Rassillion.*

If anybody from the Academy would hear him now! *Was he... suffering from the unrequited love?*

That was just ridiculous...Utterly, impossibly ridiculous! Sigh. *But was it really so strange?* She was brilliant. More than that. Much much more than that. She was *everything.* And her having feelings for a broken man like himself, would have been more strange.

There, he had said it. And what sort of rubbish word was unrequited? Like, really? Unrequited? Un...re..qui...ted... Blah. Should be something liiiiiike - inconvenient. Um...rubbish too. One-sided? Who has two sides? Him and Rose have.

No, wait.

He just admitted that he was one-sided. Um.. no that doesn't suit them, since they are really, very very two-sided people. What sort of people? Well, one slightly pinkish-yellow-y human another slightly Time Lord-y alien... Anyway, it's either the two of them or none. So moving on! Ridiculous love? Um, nah. Presumptions? Unfair? Oh oh!... Different?

"*Good different or bad different?*"

"*Just different.*"

Yep, definitely different love. There we go! Way way better than unrequited love.

Yikes, his brain was certainly more running ahead of him this time round than ever. And his mouth! Oh, it could bring him trouble on so many occasions, despite saving him the other times. And those thoughts! Well, he could only be glad that he said it only in his mind. And then again, he had been daydreaming for the past few minutes... Wait, *daydreaming?* Since when Time Lords daydream? Huh. Anyway, he better check on his precious girl now. He surely had missed a sentence or two.

As always.

There she was! Staring at him. Waiting. Of course, waiting for him to comment on something he hadn't heard, *SINCE* he was way too preoccupied in his ridiculous un-...no no no no no! He was
certainly not going down that road of thoughts again. And he said! Different it was. Different. Just
different. So there... let's analyse. Her expression... hmm, did he have something on his face? Why
such an odd expression. Was it... shocked? Um, hopeful?... gentle understanding? Wait, under-
what? Why would she even-

Oh.

Oh. Oh. Oh. Ooh. No, that wasn't it, right? No, 'course not! Out of everything! He didn't... as much
as oblivious he was, he just wouldn't be that much to not...wait, did he just admit he was oblivious?
Weeell, he may be...a bit. But only a bit. And anyway! It was not even humanly or Time Lord-y in
this case, psychically or universally, however you prefer, possible that for some reason that could
have happened! Right? It didn't, right?

Oh, he did say that out loud.

She was losing hope of him listening. "Or I could always try jumping on my head in the river full
of alligators."

Still nothing.

Certainly not listening. "Well, it's nice of you to wander off. And guess what? Not me this time,"
she muttered.

Then his mouth slightly parted. What was he saying? She was sure he was not aware of it, but...

"...unrequited love..."

"What did you just say?" she whispered, but got no answer again. She just blinked. What was he
thinking about? It couldn't be her, after all they were... Oh, this one still didn't know. It must be
that. So, what, did he think he was alone in that? Seriously? Could he be more oblivious?

Mind you, was he pondering over that fact?

Oh, silly Time Lord. When will he let himself let go of his worries? 'Guess, never... She really
wanted to hug him now.

But then she saw his expression go confused, concentrated, until it went to complete shock and lost
of what to do.

It must have just clicked him what he said.

"Do-" she began, but was interrupted by an unasked for, loud shout.

"PERLEY GIMER!" he exclaimed, louder than was necessary for any occasion.

"W-hat?" She blinked, startled. Who was that?

"Perley Gimer "Unrequited Love". Rubbish movie, I must say. Don't watch it, you would regret it.
As much as brilliant lot you are, this one really cut it over the edge."

"Huh." Rose looked at him sceptically.

"If you want to watch something, I have a whole collection out there. Weell, strictly speaking the
TARDIS has it, but since we share everything, well, almost everything, so in a way it is mine too,
more than mine, well the ship is mine, so it is mine as in mine mine, but maybe not as mine as
"Doctor!" Rose interrupted him, laughing. "Hmm? What?" He blinked a few times.

She chuckled. "What are you on about?"

"Who, me? Oh, this and that. I was just..." He considered, rubbing on the back of his neck. "Just telling you..." He nodded. "Letting you know about my relationships with y-the TARDIS! Yeh. That's right. That's what it was." He grinned nervously, his hand down.

Her lips quivered, but she stifled the snort. "Oh?" She bit her lip, looking at him teasingly. "You sure?"

"Yep. I'm sure. More than sure. Brilliantly sure, in fact!" He laughed nervously, when Rose was edging towards him.

"Hmm..." she hummed, her fingers were nearly inches from his tie. Her body too. Let's not forget her body. After all, her fingers were part of her hand, lovely hand, soft hand, which was part of her body.

The Doctor's eyes widened, when he had a flashback of Cassandra going that way at him. Well, Rose was going a bit differently, more Rose-y, but that didn't make matters better. In fact, it made matters worse. Because it made him expectant.

And oh oh, his eyes widened even more, if that was possible, as her hands grazed the fabric of his tie. She was so close to him.

"I think you want..." she said in a husky voice. "Need..." She locked her eyes with him and he gulped, not daring to move. His eyes travelled to her lips, as he felt her close proximity. Her lips were slightly parted, on the verge of forming a word, a small amount of warm air emitting from her mouth. He was mesmerised by the sight. His breathing picking up the speed of hers, his both hearts skipping just a bit or maybe a lot more faster than he held normal for his Time Lord self. But he did not care about that now. It was unusual for him to not think straight, but at this moment, he could find nothing in his mind besides Rose's closeness. Her warmth.

He loved the feeling of her against his chest, her scent of so Rose, and the current situation was provoking thoughts of having her even closer to him.

He involuntarily leaned his head down just an inch, waiting impatiently. If she would just move a bit more forwa-

"To take some chips with you," she said, poking him in his chest and backing away.

"Huh?" The Doctor let out a breathless sound. He was a bit dazed - mouth half-parted, eyes unfocused.

"We can't just watch without chips!" She laughed, that melodious sound.

"Wh...what?" He blinked. Where did the reality fly off to?

"The movie," she said like it was obvious. "Your big great great collection. Better choose something," she said casually. "If not the "Unrequited Love", she said in a low voice.
"What?" He shook his head, narrowing his eyes. Was he losing it? What was happening? He really found a hard time grasping the meaning of all of this.

"Doctor, are you gonna continue what'ing me or are you going to pick those chips?" She laughed. The Doctor mechanically jerked his head towards the named object - chips. They were called. What were they again?

"Meet me in the media room. Mind you," she said in a more serious tone now. "Good thing we don't have to worry about such things as unrequited love," she said and went off, out of the kitchen.

"Yeh," the Doctor agreed faintly, before he sprung his head towards the doors. Wait. What?

"What?"

One more what was heard that day.

Or a lot more...

_________________________

*to be continued...*
It's a strange feeling coming to a familiar place. Your heart beats just a little bit faster in recognition. Your eyes wander to the familiar surroundings.

When you step into the devil's trap - it's a different story altogether.

_Thump._

"Everybody leaves home in the end."

They do. But how can you leave your heart?

How can you bare to separate the one person, whom you came to love from the bottom of your heart, with their only home left? And later, how can you bare to let them go, alone, with possibly no return, to retrieve what was lost?

The thing is... you don't.

Somewhere in the core of the Impossible Planet, the TARDIS materialised. However, the landing was not smooth - she groaned and wheezed as if finding it difficult. Those were certain warning signs. But none bothered with them much.

The Doctor stepped outside the doors first, followed by Jack and a very reluctant Rose, who was being unusually quiet.

"I dunno what's wrong with her, she's sort of..." the Doctor began, looking at the TARDIS. "Queasy, Indigestion, like she didn't wanna land," he ended, caressing her surface.

"If we find any trouble, I'll protect you both," Jack said humorously.

"Thanks," the Doctor replied sarcastically, but smiling despite himself.

Rose only looked at Jack with a faraway look.

"Oh, if you think there's gonna be trouble, we could always get back inside and go somewhere else..." she said seriously to him. They looked at each other and burst out laughing at the absurd notion.

She turned her gaze away, chewing on her lip.

"I think..." the Doctor said, looking around. "We've landed inside a cupboard! Here we go!" he exclaimed and made his way towards the door to the next base.

"Open Door 15," the computer announced.

The Doctor went inside, Jack following him close by. Only Rose was standing like a statue, gripping the TARDIS surface with her hands behind her back.

"Rooose? You coming?" The Doctor's voice shook her.

"Y-yeh!" she called out. "I'm coming..." she whispered to herself and turned around to face the TARDIS with a pained expression. She didn't want to let go. Not ever. Not with _that_ outcome.
She exhaled a breath, caressing the wood gently. "We'll get you back." She smiled softly. "See you later, girl." With one last brush on the surface, she left their home to her fate.

She found herself alone in a small corridor and she had to open yet another door.

"Open Door 16," the computer announced.

"Flat-pack wardrobe," Rose muttered under her breath, recalling the Doctor's words, when she found herself alone once again.

"Open Door 17," the computer announced.

With the last push of yet one more doors, she finally found the two familiar faces lurking about.

"Aaaah!" the Doctor exclaimed, beaming at Rose. "We started without you. Look, it's a sanctuary base!"

"Close Door 17," the computer announced as Rose closed the door.

"Deep Space exploration," the Doctor began talking, while steadily making his way towards the slowly approaching Rose. "We've gone way out. And listen to that, underneath..." He leaned towards her, pointing downwards, indicating for Rose to listen. The hum of drills could be heard.

"Someone's drilling," he half-whispered. Rose only nodded.

"You alright?" the Doctor asked, furrowing his brows.

"Mm? What?" Rose shook her head.

"Don't know..." He frowned. "You seem a bit... out of it?" He raised his eyebrow.

"Must have gotten the TARDIS indigestion," she joked and nearly choked on her words.

"What's wrong with you girls, eh?" the Doctor asked playfully, nudging her shoulder. Rose just smiled softly at him.

"Welcome to hell," Jack said. "I always told you we would see each other in one."

"Oh, it's not THAT bad!" the Doctor cried, turning around to face Jack.

"No, Doc, I'm talking about this." Jack pointed at the words, scrawled on the wall, with ancient symbols written underneath. The Doctor stared at them.

"Hold on... " He furrowed his brows, going over to it. "What does that say?"

"I was kinda hoping you would tell me," Jack said casually, when the Doctor joined him near the scrawling. He peered closely at the ancient text, but it remained stubbornly incomprehensible.

"That's weird. It won't translate," the Doctor whispered.

Jack glanced over at Rose, who was standing a few steps away, looking at the wall with a concerned expression. When he saw that she was making no effort to continue the investigation, Jack took over the position.

"I thought the TARDIS translated everything."
"She does," the Doctor breathed. "At least she should be." He grimaced. "If that's not working, then it means... this writing is old. Very old. Impossibly old." He shook his head in disbelief.

Suddenly the Doctor stood up and made his way over to another door.

"We should find out who's in charge," he said while turning the wheel to open the door. "We've gone beyond the reach of the TARDIS' knowledge. Not a good move," he continued and Rose's breath hitched. "And if someone's lucky enough-"

"Open Door 19," the computer announced.

The door opened, and the Doctor and Jack gasped in shock, stumbling backwards a few steps. Rose was only momentarily startled by the suddenness, but quickly recovered. On the other side of the door, the Ood stood there, blinking at them.

"Right!" the Doctor exclaimed, trying to regain his composure. "Hello! Sorry! Uh..." He stumbled for words. "I was just saying, uh... nice base!" he said nervously, not sure what were the residents here like.

"We must feed," the Ood said in a chorus.

The Doctor blinked. "You're gonna what?" He furrowed his brows, taken aback.

"We must feed," the Ood repeated.

"I kinda think they mean us," Jack said half-joking.

The Ood started to advance in the room, and the trio were left no choice but to back away.

"We must feed." The Ood marched towards them.

The Doctor turned sideways, seeing as Jack went to check for the other door, but a curse under his breath spoke for itself. Rose took in a deep breath, preparing herself, for all that's to come. She was just about to make her move, when yet another door opened, revealing more Ood slowly walking through it.

They were cornered.

"Okay, that's enough," Rose breathed to herself, but the Doctor heard her and just glanced at her worriedly. He put his hand in front of her, trying to shield her from the danger, Jack was taking out his blaster and was ready to shoot.

Rose took a step forward. "I think that's enough for scaring us. Mind to check your speech bulbs, because they seem to be having a serious problem here," she said firmly. The Doctor glanced at her questioningly.

"I don't think they-" the Doctor began, when one of the Ood's shook their orb in their hands.

"We apologise," it began in a gentle voice. "Electromagnetics have interfered with our speech systems."

"I'm sorry?" the Doctor blinked, confused.

"Would you like some refreshments?" the Ood offered. Suddenly all tense atmosphere disappearing from them.
"Are you offering us food?" Jack asked warily.

"We offer good policy and meal," the Ood said.

Jack eyed the speaking Ood suspiciously, but decided to drop it. He slowly hid his weapon back to its place. The Doctor seemed to relax too.

The Doctor leaned in to Rose. "Mind sharing with us, what are they?" he asked her in a serious voice. Rose could see that unlike his usual interest in her "mysterious travels" this time he was visibly bothered by them. She kicked herself mentally. Revealing to have been in the place where the TARDIS had no knowledge of, was a bad move.

"They look like the Ood I have came across before," Rose said carefully.

"The Ood?" the Doctor furrowed his brows. "What planet are they from then?" he asked, his eyes piercing through hers. He was silently demanding for answers, his casual approach only a façade.

"They are not," Rose said, shaking her head. The Doctor raised an eyebrow.

"Not from a planet," Rose added. "They are just...there. They are considered a..." Rose frowned. It still felt wrong.

"A what?" the Doctor persisted.

"Slaves," Rose said, locking her gaze to his. "A slave race, which apparently is common among... humans."

The Doctor just stared at her silently. She could see that he was also bothered by slavery, but instead of anger she saw the disappointment in his face.

\textit{Slavery always had that effect on him. They could do so much more better than that}. He didn't have much time to dwell on it, when the door suddenly opened.

"Open Door 18," the computer announced.

A door opened and Jefferson came through it, flanked by two others holding guns.

"What the hell...? How did...?" he exclaimed in utter shock.

He approached the trio staring at them.

"Captain... " he began, talking into his communication device, absolutely incredulous. "You're not going to believe this. We've got PEOPLE. Out of nowhere. I mean, real people." The Doctor rubbed on the back of his neck, as the man spoke. "I mean three... living... people," Jefferson continued. "Just standing here, right in front of me." He spoke in disbelief.

The Doctor and Jack obviously didn't quite know what to make of this unusual reception, so just stood there with blank faces. Rose kept her face neutral.

"Don't be stupid, that's impossible," a voice of a man came through the device.

"I suggest telling THEM that," Jefferson said, staring.

"Are you saying it's so uncommon for people to come by?" Jack asked with raised interest.

"You're telling me you don't know where you are?" Jefferson said roughly.
"No idea." The Doctor shook his head with ease. "More fun that way," he said, grinning.

"Stand by, everyone. Buckle down. We have incoming. And it's a big one. Quake Point 5 on its way." A female voice came through.

Rose felt her breath catch in her throat, as she swallowed hard. The Doctor looked around, curious.

As the base started to quake and tremble, Rose could feel her legs shake. But they were not shaking from the impact. Almost involuntarily she snapped her head sideways, towards the door, which held all that was dear for her Doctor and nearly made a step towards it.

But just as suddenly, Jefferson rushed over to a door and opened it. Taking charge of the situation, which was clearly not a promising one from his experience.

"Through here! Now. Quickly, come on!" the man shouted urgently.

Loud sirens sound echoed in the base. The Doctor didn't need to be told twice. He made for the door, after Jack, stopping by just to see Rose standing still in the same place.

"Rose!" he called anxiously for her. When she just stood still, he rushed to her side, yanking her by her arm. "Come on!" For a moment they locked their eyes together. Rose had a devastated expression on her face, which she tried deliberately to hide, but was failing. How could one bear the guilt of letting their loved one's home be lost from them?

The Doctor could hardly grasp her emotions, playing out on her face, but he made no questions. They had no time.

As if on cue, a harsh voice yelled at them. "What the hell are you doing!? Hurry!" Jefferson snapped.

Rose followed the sound of the voice, turning her head towards the door, almost like not knowing what was happening. The next thing she felt, was a familiar hand tightly grasped into hers, and a sensation of being pulled out of the room.

They came through into corridor, which was shaking, smoke rising from the floor, complete chaos.

"Move it! Come on! Come on, come on! " Jefferson was urging them through the noise.

The sparks were flying everywhere. They delayed their escape and they were more powerful than she knew them to be the previous time. The ground beneath them shook violently, nearly making the group lose their footing.

Seconds after they stumbled into the control room, where the crew were busy working, a violent shake sent the Doctor and Rose flying off the stairs, at the very bottom of them, on the ground. The Doctor came crashing down on his back, moaning on the impact, Rose landing on him, his hands holding her protectively.

Jefferson managed to take hold on the railing of the stairs. Jack was not as lucky. He hit his head hard, on the metal doors, losing consciousness altogether.

After a little while, the shaking stopped, and everyone momentary sighed in relief. "Well, that wasn't so-" the Doctor began, when another, a more powerful wave hit the base. "Bad!" Rose clung onto the Doctor's body desperately. Feeling each quiver hitting her in the gut. *This impact was the worst. Worse than anything.* The knowledge of their home falling down to the pit. Rose squeezed her eyes tightly shut.
"Okay, that's it." Jefferson hurried forward with a fire extinguisher.

"Everyone all right? Speak to me, Ida?" Zach asked urgently.

"Yeah, yeah!"

"Danny?"

"Toby?"

"Yeah, fine."

"Scooti?"

"No damage."

"Jefferson?"

"Check!"

"We're fine, thanks, fine, yeah, don't worry about us," the Doctor intervened, lifting the two of them up slowly from the ground.

"The surface caved in," Zach announced.

"You alright?" the Doctor asked, looking Rose over. Rose took a calming breath.

"Rose?" the Doctor asked in a more concerned voice, squeezing her shoulders slightly. She looked up to meet his intense gaze.

"Yeh. Yeh, I'm fine." She tried to smile assuring to him.

"You're pale," he stated, caressing her cheek gently.


"What's better than a fair ride on a roller coaster." The Doctor grinned. Rose grinned back at him.

"Oh, my GOD. You meant it," Zach suddenly exclaimed. That took Rose's and the Doctor's attention.

"People! Look at that! Real people!" Scooti said.


"Yeah, definitely real," Rose said, smiling at them, but purposely avoiding eye contact with Toby. "My name's Rose... Rose Tyler, and-" She pointed. "And this is the Doctor." The Doctor smiled at her. "And-" She turned around. To her horror to see their friend sprawled on the top stair, laying what looked like – dead.

"Oh, my God, Jack!" she cried and rushed towards him.

The crew exchanged uncomfortable glances. New people on board with fatality only a few minutes later, didn't sound that welcoming.

The Doctor cast a nervous glance at the crew, making his way towards their friend. He didn't know
yet if he could trust the people, who apparently had slaves. *That didn't sound right.* And having to explain the resurrection from the dead so soon in the conversation was not what he was eager to do.

He checked the Captain's pulse and to both of their relief, he was just unconscious. Rose let out a breath.

"Nah, just unconscious," the Doctor announced casually, standing up, turning to face the crew. "So where were we?" he asked nonchalantly.

"How about we start with how you got here?" Ida asked.

"Oh, we have this, um, transport, of sorts." The Doctor waved his hand dismissively. Rose turned her face. "What we would like to know is… where have we landed. What's this planet called?" The Doctor looked the crew over expectedly.

"Now, don't be stupid. It hasn't got a name. How could it have a name?" Ida asked incredulously.

The Doctor only raised his eyebrows.

"You really don't know, do you?" she asked softly.

"What's the damage?" someone from the crew asked, after their captain finally calculated the loss.

"I deflected it onto storage 5 through 8. We've lost them completely. Toby, go and check the rocket link," Zach said.

Rose gripped the railing with her hands for support, trying to play out casual as much as was possible.

"That's not my department," Toby complained.

"Just do as I say, yeah? " Zach countered him. Finally, Toby grudgingly left the room.

"Oxygen holding. Internal gravity 56.6. We should be okay," Ida announced.

With a sudden groan, Jack came to, rubbing on his head. "Gorgeous fall down," he joked.

"You alright?" Rose helping him to stand up.

"Yeh, no worries." Jack smiled warmly at her. "One powerful hurricane this planet has. Even I can't shake that much." He grinned.

The Doctor gave him a look.

"You'd need an atmosphere for a hurricane. There's no air out there. It's a complete vacuum," Scooti said.

The Doctor gave her a puzzled look.

"You're not joking," Ida stated. "You really don't know?"

The Doctor shook his head. "Weell, besides that you've got..." He grimaced at the word. "Slaves..?"

"Oh, don't start. Are they like those - the friends of the Ood," Scooti sneered.
"Well, maybe we are, yeh!" Rose half-snapped. "Since when do humans need slaves?"

"But the Ood offer themselves. If you DON'T give them orders, they just pine away and die," Danny said.

"I know that it's all they crave for," Rose said, before the Ood, approaching her, could start.

"Then?" Danny raised an eyebrow.

"But that doesn't mean you can come up and call them slaves. That's how they live. Their lifestyle. Humans or not, you don't have the right to call another living being's life slavery," she said in a bit annoyed voice.

"We're good to them!" Danny defended himself. "We just order them, and they do it."

"Well, they wouldn't be called slaves for no reason then, would they?" she pressed them, and they momentary silenced down. The Doctor watched them with interest. The very idea of slavery wasn't sitting all that well in his stomach, but he knew many civilisations had them and he accepted the existing fact. Only Rose made him smile proudly at her once more.

"Alright then!" Ida exclaimed, previously warily looking at the exchange. "Well." She prepared herself. "Introductions. If you're starting a fight, at least know your opponent's name, or how they said in the olden days," she began. The Doctor and Rose sat on the stairs. Jack leaning onto the railing.

"I'm Ida Scott, science officer." She then pointed towards Zach. "Zachary Cross Flane, acting Captain, sir... you've met Mr Jefferson, he's head of security. Danny Bartock. Ethics committee."

"Not as boring as it sounds," Danny hurried to add. The Doctor and Rose both grinned at him.

"And that man who just left, that was Toby Zed, archaeology, and this..." Ida placed her hands on Scooti's shoulders. "Is Scooti Manista. Trainee maintenance." Scooti smiled at them. Ida went over to a set of controls.

"And this... this is home," she breathed the word meaningfully. She turned a lever, looking up, as a whirring sound started.

"Brace yourselves. The sight of it sends some people mad," Zach informed them in a serious voice.

The Doctor gave him a side-way glance, not yet sure what to expect. Rose kept her gaze firm on the opening ceiling, breathing in the sight once again.

The room soon flooded with a red-ish light as an overhead window was opened, revealing a black hole right above them. The Doctor sprang to his feet at once, amazed, watching the light being sucked into it. Rose slowly came to stand herself, not breaking eye contact with the power above them. They steadily made their way in the middle of the room, Jack following too.

"That's a black hole," Rose said in reflex, her voice cracking at the end.

"But that's impossible," the Doctor breathed, his eyes wide in disbelief, mouth half-slack.

"I did warn you," Zach said.

"What the hell?" Jack furrowed his brows.

"We're standing under a black hole," the Doctor breathed, still in a complete shock.
"We're in orbit," Ida said.

"But we can't be..." The Doctor shook his head, crossing his eyebrows.

"You can see for yourself. We're in orbit," Ida said softly.

"But we CAN'T be." The Doctor turned to look at her.

"This lump of rock is suspended in perpetual geostationary orbit around that black hole without falling in. Discuss," Ida said in a wavering voice.

"How in the world did this happen..." Jack mused. "This is bad."

"Bad doesn't cover it..." the Doctor breathed. "A black hole's a dead star," he continued in a stronger voice. "It collapses in on itself, in and in and in," he spilled. "Until the matter's so dense and tight it starts to pull everything else in too." He uttered each word meaningfully, trying to calm his own nerves down. "Nothing in the universe can escape it." He turned to look at Rose. "Light, gravity... time... everything just gets pulled inside... and crushed."

"We should be pulled right in," Rose exhaled.

"We should be dead," the Doctor said, looking at the intense sight.

"And yet... here we are. Beyond the laws of physics. Welcome on board," Ida said.

Rose inhaled, pressing her lips together. She then turned to Ida. "But if there's no atmosphere out there, what's that?" She pointed to clouds speeding rapidly towards the black hole outside the base.

"Stars breaking up... " Ida began. "Gas clouds... we have whole solar systems being ripped apart above our heads before falling into that thing."

Suddenly the base began shaking again. Rose grabbing onto the Doctor for support in steadying herself. The Doctor held onto her arm, until finally the shaking subsided.

The crew, together with the Doctor, Rose and Jack were crowded around the control panel, when Toby came back into the control room.

"Close Door 1," the computer announced.

"The rocket link's fine," Toby muttered edgily.

Zach tapped some button on the controls and suddenly a hologram black hole appeared before them. The Doctor put his glasses on.

"That's the black hole officially designated K37 Gen 5," Zach said. The Doctor propped himself on his elbow, his cheek cupped in his palm, looking at the hologram.

"Can I?" Jack indicated to transfer the reading on his Vortex Manipulator.

"Go ahead," Zach gestured casually.

"In the scriptures of the Falltino, this planet is called 'Kroptor'," Ida said. "The bitter pill. And the black hole is supposed to be a mighty demon. It was tricked into devouring the planet, only to spit it out. Because it was poison."
"The mighty demon," Rose breathed, resting on her forearms on the console.

The Doctor shrugged his eyebrows. "We are so far out. Lost in the drifts of the universe - how did you even GET here?!" he asked, furrowing his brows.

"We flew in," Zach said simply. "You see..." He pressed another button and the hologram changed to one of the planet with a gravity field emanating out from it like a tunnel.

"This planet's generating a gravity field. We don't know how - we've no idea, but... it's kept in constant balance against the black hole." The Doctor raised his eyebrows in Oh, really? way. "And the field extends out there," Zach gestured. "As a funnel. A distinct... gravity funnel, reaching out into clear space. That was our way in."

Jack grinned. "Reminds me of our meeting with Rosie."

The Doctor glanced at him. "The visual image practically shows how she flew into my ship. Through the beam, all the way into my hands." Jack beamed at Rose.

"Like a rollercoaster," Rose said, grinning. The Doctor decided to ignore this exchange.

"By rights, the ship should've been torn apart. We lost the Captain... which is what put me in charge..." Zach said.

"You're doing a good job," Ida said consolingly.

"Yeah. Well, needs must," Zach exhaled.

"But if that gravity funnel closes, there's no way out," Danny pointed.

"We had fun speculating about that," Scooti said casually.

"Oh, yeah. That's the word." Danny whacked Scooti on the head with a scroll. "Fun".

Rose looked at the girl with a pained expression.

"She was only twenty years old." 

"But that field would take phenomenal amounts of power," the Doctor said, completely stumped. "I mean... not just big, but off the scale! Can I...?" He gestured to the controls with his finger.

"Sure. Help yourself," Ida said, pushing the calculator over to him and leaving him and Jack to it.

Rose stood up to stretch herself, when one of the Ood approached her, giving her a cup.

"Your refreshment," it said gently.

"Oh yeah, thanks," Rose said, taking it. "Thank you." She smiled at the Ood. At one moment her forehead wrinkled, as she had a flashback of the red-eyed Oods, marching towards them dangerously.

But that was not their fault. They were possessed.

"We can offer our accommodations, if you are unwell." It crocked its head in what looked like a possible concern.

Rose smiled at it. "No, thank you. I'll be alright." She then moved back towards the console.
"There we go. D'you see? To generate that gravity field, and the funnel, you'd need a power source with an inverted self-extrapolating reflex of six to the power of six every six seconds," the Doctor spilled hurriedly, having finished with the calculator.

"That's a lot of sixes," Rose noted, leaning onto the console.

"Aand it's impossible," the Doctor breathed, looking at Rose, his lips pressed together.

"It took us two years to work that out!" Zach sounded impressed.

The Doctor half-shrugged. "I'm very good," he said modestly.

"But... " Ida shook her head. "That's why we're here. This power source is ten miles below through solid rock. Point Zero. We're drilling down to try and find it.

"It's giving off readings of over ninety stats on the Blazen Scale," Zach said.

"We could revolutionize modern science," Ida said enthusiastically.

"We could use it to fuel the Empire," Jefferson added.

"Or start a war," the Doctor said seriously, taking his glasses off.

"It's buried beneath us. In the darkness, waiting," Toby spoke mythically.

"Is this the part where you start talkin' about the devil?" Rose said, looking him in the eyes. The Doctor smirked at that, although, Rose was dead serious. Jack observed them carefully, taking note that there was something about the boy.

Something went past them in that moment. She could have sworn that Toby's eyes reflected some sort of recognition. But he soon hid it under his mask.

She was wary of him. Scared even. Not that much for herself as for someone else. But that didn't mean that she could just let him off easily.

"Well, whatever it is down there is not a natural phenomena. And this, er, planet once supported life. Eons ago, before the human race had even learned to walk," Toby said.

"I saw that lettering written on the wall. Did YOU do that?" the Doctor asked Toby.

He nodded. "I copied it from fragments we found on earth by the drilling, but I can't translate it."

_How convenient, that You copied them._

"No, neither can I," the Doctor agreed. "And that's saying something," he sang, tilting his head sideways.

"There was some form of civilisation. They buried something. Now it's reaching out. _Calling us in._" Toby was talking. Rose held her head high, as she watched him suspiciously.

He wanted the Doctor there. It was his plan all along. And at this very moment, Rose was witnessing the Devil's call.

"And you came," the Doctor said, not hiding his adoration, grinning at them. _So did we._

"Well, how could we not?" Ida asked incredulously. Zach switched the hologram off, in the
meantime.

"So," the Doctor began blithely. "When it comes right down to it, why did you come here?" he asked them fondly, grinning. "Why did you do that? Why?" he asked them softly. "I'll tell you why. Because it was there. Brilliant." He knew the feeling all too well. "Excuse me, ah, Zach, wasn't it?" He turned to face the man.

"That's me," Zach said.

"Just stand there," the Doctor instructed him. "Cos I'm gonna hug you," he stated softly. "Is that all right?" He pointed the finger at him, casually.

"I s'pose so." Zach shrugged.

"Here we go. Coming in." The Doctor steadily edged towards him. He extended his hands and clutched the man in a bear hug. Smiling proudly at humans.

"Ahh," the Doctor exhaled in contentment. "Human beings, you are amazing!" he cried with enthusiasm.

Ida looked bemused, not getting the situation.

"Ha!" the Doctor exclaimed. Jack and Rose both chuckled.

With one last pat on Zach's back, the Doctor released the man.

"Thank you," the Doctor said sincerely.

"Not at all." Zach smiled at him.

"But apart from that, you're completely mad," the Doctor said now in a completely different tone. "You should pack your bags and get back in that ship and fly for your lives." He looked meaningfully at them.

"You can talk! And how the hell did your "ship" even get here?" Ida asked, standing her ground.

"Oh, it's... it's hard to explain." The Doctor shook his hand dismissively. "It just sort of... appears."

"I'm sure Doc could show you around. It kinda has this retro look. You should love it!" Jack exclaimed, smirking at the group. "We parked it in habitation area three." He then glanced at Rose, who's face lost all its colour. What did he say?

"Do you mean storage six?" Zach asked warily.

"Uh, it was a bit of a cupboard, yeah," the Doctor agreed casually. Zach only glanced uncomfortably at Ida.

"Storage six," the Doctor repeat aloud. "But you said..." Zach closed his eyes, as it dawned on him. "You said..." the Doctor could feel his breathing catching up. His eyebrows rose. "You said storage five to eight!" he breathed and without another word turned on his heel, dashing from the room. Rose close behind with Jack, who caught on about the same time as the Doctor.

He sprang back down the corridor, the pair close on his tail. Rose kept silent all the way down. What she will tell him? What this will do to him?

The Doctor frantically opened Door 19.
"Open Door 19," the computer announced. They were back into the canteen area once again.

He sprint the length of the room, Rose following behind. She took a quick glance at the room, where she saw a flash of images them sitting there, talking about never reaching home again. Discussing the houses and mortgage-

"Close Door 19," the computer announced.

The Doctor was near the door, spinning the wheel to try and open the door back through the other corridor.

"Stupid doors, come ON!" he spoke through his teeth, furiously. When it finally swung open, the trio found themselves in yet another corridor.

"Open Door 17," the computer announced. The Doctor quickly passed the space, slamming into the door across the room.

"Open Door 15," the computer announced. The Doctor was frantically pushing the button to open, his expression desperate, but it wouldn't budge.

"Door 16 out of commission," the computer announced. Rose gulped, keeping some distance away. Jack was having a shocked expression. He understood what just happened, but he couldn't believe it. And someone didn't take time to voice those thoughts out.

"Can't be, can't bee!" the Doctor gritted through his teeth. Slamming on the buttons again and again.

"Damn it," Jack cursed.

Giving up on the button slamming, the Doctor opened a small round window in the door to look through. His breath caught in his throat at the sight. He watched the view wide-eyed, breathing heavily.

It was impossible. It couldn't be. They were inseparable. This was not happening!

He staggered backwards from the door, taking a sideway glance on the floor, his mouth slack open. It was opening and closing again. How could it be? She was his constant companion. Through all and everything.

"She's gone." He heard his own voice say in a whisper. "The TARDIS is..." He furrowed his brows, not believe what he was saying. "Gone."

"The earthquake," Jack voiced the Doctor's thoughts. "This section collapsed," he ended softly.

"Well..." Rose bit her quivering lip. "We'll get her back. Yeh? We always do," she said in a faint voice.

The Doctor closed his eyes, taking his face in his both palms.

"Doctor," Rose began faintly, edging towards him. "We'll go through this."

"Stop it," the Doctor said in a low but quiet voice.

"W-what?" Rose asked, blinking.

"Just stop," the Doctor repeated in a stronger voice.
"Stop what?" Rose asked, confused.

The Doctor rubbed his face in his palms, letting them fall, moments later. He had his gaze sideways, when he slowly turned to face Rose. Rose gasped at his expression. *He never had that expression on his face before. Never on her.*

It was beyond disappointment. It was giving up. On her.

Rose felt her quickening heartbeat. Then he opened his mouth to speak. "You knew she was gonna fall," the Doctor said in such a pained voice, like he felt betrayed, stomped on his both hearts, them crushed.

Rose shook her head slowly. Not from denying, but from pure disbelief what was happening.

"So why don't you start talking now?" he asked in a voice, which could only be directed to a stranger.

*to be continued...*
The Impossible Planet Part Two

The TARDIS was gone. His beautiful ship. Gone! He couldn't believe it. His only home. The only thing which was truly his - gone.

He watched through the window into thin air, rocky planet ahead, and couldn't stop his hearts from aching.

"She's gone," he whispered. "The TARDIS is..." He furrowed his brows, not believing what he was saying. "Gone."

She was gone the moment storage 5 to 8 collapsed. They heard about it. He heard about it, but didn't put the knots together. But she did. No. That wasn't right. She knew that it's gonna happen. From the moment she stepped into the base there was something wrong about her. She was restless, uneasy about something. But the Doctor, clever as usual, just dismissed it.

Always dismissing the main points.

And now, he was paying for it. He lost the TARDIS. The Doctor closed his eyes, taking his face in his both palms.

"We'll get her back. Yeh? We always do," she said in a faint voice.

"Stop it," the Doctor said in a low but quiet voice.

"W-what?" Rose asked, blinking.

"Just stop," the Doctor repeated in a stronger voice.

He needed time to think.

"Stop what?" Rose asked, confused.

Rose had been here before. And that was impossible. The planet was suspended in orbit emitting around the black hole. The chances of ever reaching this place, were near to none. And even if she somehow managed that... this was the only sanctuary base parked in Kroptor. If she had been here before, the crew would have known her.

But they didn't.

And that... only left to the last possible explanation - she had been her before with him.

The Doctor rubbed his face in his palms, letting them fall, moments later. He had his gaze sideways, when he slowly turned to face Rose.

He didn't even want to think of the implications this could cause. Foreknowledge was the most dangerous thing in the existence. He would know. It was his very nature - preserving time. Constantly being aware of various possibilities, but never knowing which would play out in the day.

Something really bad must have happened if he somehow indicated a time loop... It was him, right? Who else? There were no more Time Lords and the crew was fully human. Except for...

No... the Ood do not create time loops.
Sigh. But they lost the TARDIS. Rose knew that. She let that happen. Why? Without her, how are they ever going to get back?

"You knew that she was gonna fall," the Doctor said in a pained voice. It hurt being psychically separated from her. He could barely hear her anymore. Only a dim hum.

Rose shook her head slowly. He could see that he surprised her. Her gasp of air just confirmed that she didn't expect to be found out. Well, it was as long as she could hide it from him. It was time to get some answers... but more than that. Why could he not remember? Why would a Time Lord not remember and a human did?

It wasn't making any sense... and it didn't look like even with his Time Lord senses he was going to come anywhere near the right answer. That lead to only one thing...

"So why don't you start talking now?" the Doctor suggested in a tired voice. *Rose... what's going on?*

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She stared at him with full eyes and he could see her debate with herself. She was keeping things from him. And rightfully so. If there were any other situation at hand... but now! Now he... needed some answers.

A time loop he could live with... but his not awareness of it? That was... that was not possible. At least not in a way for a human to be the only one aware.

"How are you doing this?" he asked her in a slightly fearful voice. He was not sure what to expect. Captain Jack found this very moment to be the one for his departure. Whatever they were going to say or do next - he would not take part in.

*Considering he didn't really have any real proof to support either side.* So he just sneaked away...

Rose's mouth twitched with opening and closing motion. She shook her head slightly. "Doing what?"

"This is a time loop," he stated firmly. He saw her gasp in surprise, but he continued without further dwelling on it. "And I'm not aware of it. I don't feel it. But you do. You... how can it be? You can't be aware of it! It's impossible!" He grimaced. "If a Time Lord is not, then surely humans alone can't do that- This is making no sense!" He cut his own sentence short, tugging on his hair, his eyes tightly shut as he paced about.

"You made it happen," Rose said in a soft voice.

The Doctor abruptly stopped in place. "What?" He sprung around, sheer shock on his face.

"You made yourself forget," she said in a faint voice, her mouth twitching in a tentative smile.

"But... But why would I do that?" he asked, looking in the distance. He narrowed his eyes in concentration.

"I don't understand..." He was shaking his head. "If I wanted another chance I had to know what was happening. What to do differently. Where to go." He was gesturing with his hands wildly. "What to say. Not just go and make myself forget everything." He grimaced at the thought. "This is a piece of-" he faltered, when it slowly downed on him. His eyes widened slightly, eyebrows rising, mouth parting. "Oh." *He was running away.* And that meant! *That...*
Dread suddenly filled him whole. A cold shiver ran down his spine as he turned around to face Rose with big eyes. "Tell me it's not," he whispered.

"Not what?" She looked confused.

"No," he whispered again, his forehead wrinkled. "No. Tell me it didn't. It couldn't. I..." He faltered, swallowing painfully. "I wouldn't let that..." He was looking painfully at her.

Rose observed him carefully, her previous fear nearly disappearing just to be replaced by a new sensation. The Doctor was clearly having some serious thought in his mind, which could not be good. But could she afford to deny it, when she had no cover up story? Could she really do that?

The Doctor was slowly edging towards her, his hand hovering half-way from reaching her. He opened his mouth, but no words came.

Rose watched him intensely, searching for his sudden silence in his eyes until she saw something in them.

She had seen fear in his eyes more than once, but only one time was it like that... And then she finally realised what was inside the Time Lord's head.

Her eyes widened. "No!" she exclaimed.

"I-" the Doctor began.

"No. Seriously. I did not die!" she said firmly, locking her gaze to his.

"You... didn't?" the Doctor asked in disbelief.

"No. I'm fine," she exhaled a soft chuckle from disbelief. "Really. I'm fine. I was fine." Well, except for her almost being swallowed by the black hole, but that... was not something the Doctor should know now.

He exhaled a chuckling breath. It felt like a heavy stone was lifted from his lungs, and he was able to start breathing again. With respiratory bypass or without.

"So you-" he began timidly.


"Good." He nodded. "That's good then," he said casually, beginning to relax in a smile.

"I guess it is." She bit her lower lip nervously, glancing at him.

"It is for me." He shook her with the seriousness and intensity in his voice. She could still see the remains of the bare fear and loss he was just experiencing. He could not let it go yet. His frantic eyes, travelling from her face one side to another, memorising every detail of her as if she would disappear any minute now.

So she did the only thing she could do to assure her presence. She took a step forward, closing their distance of a mere inches. The Doctor's questioning stare was quickly displaced by a moment of surprise, when he found himself in the arms of Rose Tyler. Her arms around his neck, her breath against his shoulder and sometimes giving chills when reaching his neck, gave him all the reassurance he so desperately needed.

His own both hands had found their way around her back, pulling her closer to him yet. They may
have not won the war... They may never will. But for the moment, they had won the battle. She was here. With him. And with them together, he truly believed there were many impossible things they could do.

He held her tightly in his arms, when a sudden thought woke him up. The TARDIS. He broke their embrace, holding Rose at arms' length.

"Tardis," he whispered and the next moment he flew to the door.

"Open Door 17," the computer announced. He briskly pulled the metal doors and stepped inside, them closing shut after him.

"Close Door 17," the computer announced. Leaving Rose stand there alone.

She took a deep breath. "Alright then. Let's get to work," she whispered to oneself and went to follow after the Doctor's retreating back.

When Rose finally reached back to the control room, she found the Doctor on at Zach.

"The ground gave way. My TARDIS must've fallen down right into the heart of the planet. But you've got robot drills heading the same way." The Doctor was speaking with urgency.

"We can't divert the drilling," Zach just said simply, walking off. The Doctor stared at him for a moment, then followed him.

"But I NEED my ship. It's all I've got." His voice was wavering a little. "Literally the only thing." He tried to make them understand. He knew they wouldn't, but it was his home. His only home. He couldn't give it up. He needed her to survive. Their connection was already beginning to dim...

"Doctor, we've only got the resources to drill one central shaft down to the power source," Zach shot back, obviously irritated. "And that's it. No diversions, no distractions - NO EXCEPTIONS. Your machine is lost. All I can do is offer you a lift if we ever get to leave this place, and that... is the end of it." Was his last words, before he left.

From the corner of his eyes, the Doctor could see Ida approaching, but he made little effort to recognise her.

"I'll uh - put you on the duty roster. We need someone in the laundry," she said, a bit awkwardly and then followed after Zach, out of the room.

"Open Door 1," the computer announced.

The Doctor and Rose locked their gaze with each other, reading theirs expressions.

He trapped her here. Again. Away from home, right under the black hole- Or not. Maybe she wasn't trapped after all. They had Jack. Which meant, that they had Vortex Manipulator, which may not be working now, caused by the black hole's electromagnetic fields, but once they leave here, back to some planet, Jack could get her back home.

That was good. He didn't have to feel guilty about separating her from home. She would get back.

In the end, he was the only one really stuck here.

"Close Door 1," the computer announced, when the last Ood exited the room, leaving the Doctor
and Rose completely alone.

The Doctor turned his eyes away from her, resting on the console. He was trying to calm his breathing down, but his posture was stiff and he couldn't bother himself to say something. He tilted his head to look at the black mass, which started everything and possibly will end everything. Leaving him with nowhere to return to.

He was feeling so alone.

He could hear steps getting closer to him, the swift movement, but he said nothing. He just continued to stare at the destructible sight.

He jumped a bit, when he felt a soft hand caressing the outside of his palm, slowly unlocking his fingers from the fist-white grip on the console. He felt those same fingers brush against his own until they finally found their way around, wrapping them together in a comforting squeeze. The only thing that still truly fit.

"There's me," she said in that soft, tentative way she did such a long time ago to a broken man. The Doctor jerked his head to her, looking at her in almost a shock that she was offering to be his pillar.

He could only stare at her. Intense gaze burning her whole, but all he found was unimaginable support. And determination.

She squeezed their fingers, giving a small but certain smile. "She's not lost forever, Doctor. We're going to get her back."

His eyebrows knitted in confusion. "How?"

"The drilling."

"They refused to turn it, Rose. There's no way for it."

"It was not important," she began. The Doctor gave her a questioning look. "The side of the drilling." She had her eyes lowered downwards. "You just..." She shrugged slightly, biting her lower lip. "Went down." Her fingers sliding from his, to play with the fabric of her top.

His eyes narrowed. "I got back... right?" he asked quietly.

She looked at him. "Yeh, you did. With the TARDIS. You must have found her there. Or...something." She turned her gaze sideways, roaming around the room. "I don't really know." She shrugged, playing with a string of her hair. "I mean, I never went there, so I'm not really sure. And I can't really say anything more. Timelines and all. I don't know. I mean-" She shrugged nervously.

"Anyway!" the Doctor cut her, clearing his throat.

"That's just it. Yeh." Rose shrugged.

"Right." The Doctor nodded. There was some sort of pause in the room, until the Doctor broke it.

"Well, I guess if I made an effort to make myself forget, I should get as less future information as possible," he said casually. He then considered. "Blimey. A Time Lord deprived off foreknowledge. Now that's, that's what messed up looks like."

Rose chuckled softly. The Doctor joining her, his loving gaze fixed on her. They felt silent for a
moment. "Thank you," he said in a low voice, truly meaning every possible gratitude in the world for this human woman.

"For what?" she asked, smiling.

"For everything... And... I'm sorry to put you through this." He gestured shyly. "Alone." His features grew grim. "Nobody should be in this alone," he said in a low, quiet voice.

"No. Don't worry about me," Rose said casually. "I'm tougher than I look." She smiled in reassurance to him. The next moment her stomach gurgled. She bit her lip, giving him a coy smile. The Doctor couldn't suppress his laughter.

"Come on. We gotta put something in your stomach, until it decides to join national chorus to get itself attention."

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**Int. Habitation Area Three**

Once they were back at the Habitation area, they found Jack sitting by the ancient text in the canteen area, staring at it intensely. The Doctor came over to him, to join him.

"Worked it out?" Jack asked the Doctor in a half-whisper.

"Yeh," the Doctor breathed. "If one could call it working out." He trailed off, his head slightly turned, following Rose with his eyes for a moment and then back again on the writings.

"Danny, check the temperature of Ood Habitation. It seems to be rising," Zach's voice echoed in the room over the tannoy.

Rose scanned the room and made her way to the hatch, through which the food would be served. Scooti was already by the hatch with her tray.

"Help yourself," Scooti said, gesturing to the trays. "Just don't have the green. Or the blue." She laughed and walked away.

Rose let her eyes linger on the girl. She had to save her... even if she had no idea how yet... With a sigh, Rose picked up a tray and went over to the hatch. The Ood were serving. Still peaceful. Rose eyed them a bit suspiciously, preparing for their malfunction, if there would be any.

"Uh, bit of that, thanks," she said, pointing. She had her eyes fixed on the Ood, who spooned some sloppy blue gloop onto her tray.

"Would you like sauce with that?" it asked gently.

"I'll have a go, yeah," she said. The Ood shook some sauce onto the tray.

"I did that job once," Rose muttered, her gaze on the tray. "When I was a dinner lady..." She lifted her gaze to the blinking Ood. "I'm not saying you're a lady. Although, I dunno, you might be. You never answered to that." She crooked her head, considering. "Are you a lady?" Her eyes narrowing.

The Ood lit up its orb. "The Beast will rise for the final battle against the golden sun. Bad Wolf shall perish under the black sun," it said politely, turning off the orb.

Rose stared at him, her legs stuck to the ground. "... what?"

The Ood tapped his communication orb. "Apologies. I said, "I hope you enjoy your meal"."
Rose swallowed. "Yeh." With an unsteady feet, she picked up her tray and walked off to the table.

After everyone were done with their food, suddenly the lights started to flicker in the canteen area. Everyone turned around to see the source of that.

"Zach - have we got a problem?" Ida asked into her wrist communication device. Rose watched her with concern.

"No more than usual. Got the Scarlet System burning up, it might be worth a look," Zach replied through the device. Ida turned to look at the Doctor and Rose who sat opposite each other at one of the tables and Jack on the chair beside her.

"You might wanna see this. Moment in history," Ida said. The Doctor had an up for anything really kinda look.

Ida walked over to pull a lever which opened the overhead 'shutters', revealing the black hole overhead and flooding the room with soft red light.

"There," she said softly, pointing. "On the edge." They saw a stream of red light spiralling into the black hole.

"That red cloud..." Ida continued. Rose and the Doctor had similar pained frowns on their faces. "That used to be the Scarlet System. Home to the Peluchi... a mighty civilisation spanning a billion years... disappearing. Forever. Their planets and suns consumed."

She gazed up at it, fascinated, as were the Doctor and Rose. The last of the Scarlet System disappearing into the black hole.

"Ladies and gentlemen... we have witnessed its passing," she ended and went to pull the lever to close the shutters again, but the Doctor stopped her.

"Er, no, could you leave it open?" he asked. Rose turned to look at him.

"Just for a bit," the Doctor continued. "I won't go mad, I promise," he said in a low voice.

"How would you know?" Ida asked sceptically. The Doctor only crocked a smile. Understanding his intentions or giving up on trying to make him change his mind, Ida left it at that, addressing Scooti.

"Scooti, check the lockdown."

Scooti only nodded and went to leave.

"Jefferson, sign off the airlock seals for me," Ida continued. Finally Jefferson and Ida exited, leaving the trio alone.

"Open Door 18," the computer announced.

"Is it true what they say?" Rose suddenly asked, casually. The Doctor turned to look at her.

"They said in films and things, that black holes are like gateways to another universe."

"Close Door 18," the computer announced.

"Not that one," the Doctor said in a low voice. "It just eats," he said, his gaze back on the mass.
"So there's no way... to travel to another universe through it," she said quietly. The Doctor cast her a side-way glance.

Rose nodded to herself. "Long way from home..." she breathed, watching the sight ahead.

"You phone isn't working?" Jack asked hopefully.

"No," Rose said, not leaving her eyes off the view. "No signal here. That's a first. Or second... Or third..." She trailed off. "Never mind." She was playing with her earring.

The Doctor glanced at her. "Anyway," Rose spoke up. "We've got to have some kind of plan, yeh?" She turned with her body to the table fully. "In case something..." She shrugged. "Whatever happens. Just to let us know what we gonna do, be or whatever."

"Well," the Doctor began. "If when I go down I don't bring the TARDIS back, then... we're kinda stuck," he breathed. "Well, I am," he added casually.

"You found a way to bring her back?" Jack asked.

"In a theoretical way, yes," the Doctor replied absentmindedly. Jack only glanced him over. "If I go down to the planet," the Doctor answered his unasked question.

Jack narrowed his eyes. "And they are going to let you?"

"I don't know." The Doctor shrugged. "They could. Or they could not. Ah, well, even if they don't, I just got to make them." He smiled at Rose, who gave a small smile to him herself.

"If it doesn't work..." Rose began softly, not making eye contact with the Doctor. A sign of pained worry flashed on the Doctor's features. "You could always come with us. Back on Earth," she said softly.

"And then what?" the Doctor asked, propped on his elbows on the table, looking at her expectedly.

"I don't know..." Rose diverted her gaze, her fist supporting her face on the table. "Visit mum... tell her we're alive..." She laughed nervously. "Then..." She shrugged. "I don't know, we could still travel." She turned to Jack, her hand down. "You've got a Vortex Manipulator, yeh? We could travel." She looked between him and the Time Lord.

"It's not comfortable with carrying three people," Jack said apologetically. "It would burn out..."

"There goes the plan," the Doctor breathed, eyeing Jack. "And well it's better that way. Wouldn't want to owe something to Captain," he said half-humorously.

"You owe me enough, Doc," Jack joked.

"Like what?" the Doctor asked incredulously.

"But I don't take payment back from my friends. It's free," Jack said firmly. The Doctor stared at him for a moment, then turned his face.

"You don't have to wait..." the Doctor began quietly. Rose eyes shot up to meet his face. "You know, after they're ready to give you a lift-"

"I'm not leaving you," Rose shot back, slightly angry.

"Rose..." the Doctor began faintly.
"I won't. We're in this together. And if we had no Vortex Manipulator we would be all in this. Stuck together."

"But we are not," the Doctor breathed, raising his eyebrows.

"Yeh. But I'm going to treat it as that." Rose nodded, pressing her lips together. "And that's final. So get it, alright? You're not getting rid of me."

The Doctor didn't say anything. "And if you're going to keep this up," Rose continued. "Then... then I'm going to drag you into a house with doors and carpets and... and mortgage!" she exclaimed, pointing towards him.

"What?" the Doctor exclaimed, horrified. "No. No. I would not step inside-" He shook his head, eyes wide.

"I will help her," Jack intervened. "To make sure... you get the mortgage."

"I am dying. That's it. I am dying, it is all over." The Doctor shook his head in defeat. Rose laughed, Jack joining her. When the laughter subsided, the Doctor and Rose had their eyes fixed on each other.

Jack glanced at them from behind and could sense some mood going on. He suddenly stood up. "Wonder if they got some snacks," he muttered casually, walking away from the table, Rose and the Doctor watching his retreating back as he went over to the counter.

"You know..." Rose began softly. "Whatever they send at us, whatever... our place might be. Be it stuck or not. I wouldn't change it to anyone else, to be stuck with." She caught the Doctor's gaze.

"Yeh?" the Doctor asked faintly.

"Yes," she replied sincerely. The Doctor smiled at her.

The moment was quickly broken by Rose's phone ringing. She warily took out the phone from her pocket. Jack came over to the table after hearing the sound.

"Want to answer?" she asked half-heartedly, directing it towards the Doctor. The Doctor held his gaze to hers for a moment and extended his hand. With a slightly trembling hand, she placed the phone in his palm.


"He is awake," the voice in the phone said. Rose felt a shiver go down her spine.

The Doctor only furrowed his brows. "Who is?" he asked darkly, but got no answer. The phone went off.

"Who was that?" Jack asked, concerned.

"Well, supposedly..." the Doctor inhaled, his eyebrows raised as he watched the phone. "Someone just woken up from their lethargic sleep," he breathed, his lips pressed together.

\[\text{Int. Ood Habitation}\]

The Doctor, Rose and Jack bound down the stairs to see Danny in Ood Habitation.
"Evening!" the Doctor exclaimed casually.

"Only us!" Rose added with a smile.

"The mysterious trio. How are you, then? Settling in?" Danny asked, working on the computer. The trio formed a circle around the man.

"Yeeeah, sorry, straight to business," the Doctor said. "The Ood - they communicate with a low level telepathic field connecting them, right?"

Danny glanced him over. "If you know, why ask."

"This telepathic field - can it pick up messages?" the Doctor asked.

"Cos I was having dinner, and one of the Ood said something..." Rose trailed off. Danny gave her a prompting look. "Well, " she continued. "Odd."

"Oh. An odd Ood," Danny said, feigning understanding.

"We also got a message on one of our communicators," Jack added.

"Oh, be fair. We've got whole star systems burning up around us." Danny paced about. "There's all sorts of stray transmissions. Probably nothing." He dismissed them.

The trio only stared at him, far from convinced.

"Look..." Danny continued, after picking up their gazes. "If there was something wrong, it would show. We monitor the telepathic field. It's the only way to look after them." He turned to look down at the sitting Ood. "They're so stupid, they don't even tell us when they're ill."

"Monitor the field - that's this thing?" The Doctor nodded to the computer, steadily going towards it.

The reading on the screen said 'Basic 5'.

"Yeah. But like I said, it's low level telepathy. They only register Basic 5," Danny said casually.

While he was speaking, the reading had risen to Basic 6.

"Not for long," Rose sang in a whisper.

"It's jumping over 5," Jack said, looking at the screen, concerned, as the number went up and up.

"10..." the Doctor announced. Rose had her gaze fixed on the Ood, who suddenly raised their heads in unison as the reading ascended.

"20..." the Doctor read. He then turned to Danny. "They've gone up to Basic 30," he whispered half-humorously.

"But they can't..." Danny said, suddenly alarmed.

"Doctor, the Ood..." Rose breathed, as the Ood turned, as one, and looked up at the four of them on the balcony.

"Basic 30 would mean that they're..." Jack trailed off. "Screaming inside their heads," Jack stated, with his brows furrowed.
"Or something's shouting at them..." the Doctor said quietly, resting his arms on the railing, his fingers entwined.

"But... where's it coming from?" Danny asked, tapping on the keyboard. "What is it saying? I mean-" He turned to look at Rose. "What did it say to you?"

Rose looked at the man, and down to the Ood, debating with herself what to say.

"Rose," the Doctor said her name in a prompting gesture.

"But-" She shook her head.

"What you don't know - you don't. Leave it as that. But we need every bit of information you can give us now," he said in a quiet, but convincing voice.

Rose swallowed. She held her eyes to his for a moment, then cast them downwards. "It said... that the beast in the pit would rise for the battle," she said, her voice wavering, purposely leaving a few things out.

Danny only blinked. "What about your communicator? What did that say?"

Rose pulled herself together, watching the Ood. She then opened her mouth. "He is awake."

At once, the Ood spoke together, as one. "And you will worship him!"

"What the hell?" Danny asked, shocked. The Doctor and Jack had similar expressions of curiosity and alarm.

The Doctor propped himself on the railing with his hands. "He is awake," he addressed them.

"And you will worship him!" the Ood repeated.

"Worship who?" the Doctor asked, but got no reply. "Who's talking to you? Who is it?" he asked urgently.

The Ood refused to reply, like they were not able to. "Rose?" the Doctor asked her, locking his eyes with hers.

"Something inside the pit," she said warily.

"It's a living thing?" Jack asked in disbelief.

"Who are you, people?" Danny asked, feeling completely lost.

"Someone who might or might not be the only hope for you," the Doctor replied a bit harshly. "Now shush." He narrowed his eyes, supporting himself on the railing, looking at the Ood intensely. "Why would I do that? Why would I make myself forget- This is such an inconvenience," he muttered.

Jack glanced at Rose to confirm his suspicions. Rose only nodded to him slowly. "What about unlocking them?" Jack suggested casually.

The Doctor glanced at Jack like he said the most stupid thing in the universe, but still considered it.

Suddenly the entire base started shaking. The Doctor glanced around, as alarm sounds echoed inside the place.
"It's a bit of an urgent situation for me to have a buzzy head," the Doctor breathed, concerned. Sparks were flying off.


"Which section?" Danny asked into wrist device, scared.

"Everyone... evacuate 11 to 13, we've got a breach! The base is open. Repeat: the base is OPEN," Zach announced from the control room.

"No," Rose breathed, her eyes wide. "Scooti," she whispered, alarmed, making her way for the opposite door, where everyone else were heading.

"Rose!" the Doctor called after her.

"Where are you going?!!" Danny yelled. "We've got to evacuate!"

"No- I've got to... Scooti..." Rose stammered, when the Doctor caught her by her arm, not letting go.

"We will meet with everyone-" he began firmly.

"No, she-" Rose broke off, words stung in her throat. The Doctor stared at her for the moment, taking her silence as the fact and closed his eyes for a second. Rose was looking frantically to the space where she could be running off to right about now, but the firm hand holding her in place preventing that.

She turned around to face the Doctor, who had a hollow look on his eyes. "I'm sorry," he said. "I'm so sorry. But it was her time," he breathed. "It was a fixed point."

Rose stared at him in disbelief.

He swallowed. "Now come on," the Doctor said urgently, dragging her after him, out of the danger.

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**Int. Habitation Area Three**

"Open Door 19," the computer announced.

The Doctor and Rose burst back into the canteen area, running towards another door.

"Close Door 19," the computer announced.

"I can't contain the oxygen field, we're gonna lose it!" Zach spoke through the communicator.

**Int. Corridor**

"Come on!" Jefferson was yelling while struggling to open a door. "Keep moving!"

The Doctor and Rose, after catching up with Jack and Danny, came from one direction and Ida and other crew members from the other.

"And you too, Toby!" Jefferson yelled, pulling Toby through the door, letting him fall flat on his face.
"Breach sealed. Breach sealed," the computer announced as the doors fell shut.

Rose sprung around to face Toby, lying prone on the floor. *They shouldn't have let him in here..."

"Everyone all right?! What happened? What was it?" the Doctor asked, dashing over to them.

"Oxygen levels normal," the computer announced.

"Hull breach!" Jefferson began, panting. "We were open to the elements. A couple of minutes and we'd have been inspecting that black hole at close quarters."

Rose stood firm on her feet, looking warily at Toby, who was sweating and panting on the floor.

"That wasn't a quake. What caused it?" the Doctor asked urgently.

"We've lost sections 11 to 13. Everyone all right?" Zach announced through the communicator.

"We've got everyone here except Scooti," Jefferson said into his wrist device. Everyone glanced around in search for her. Rose had her face blank. The Doctor only swallowed, glancing sideways.


Static and a beep on the communication device was heard.


Again, he only came up with the blank beep and the static.

"She's all right," Zach's voice came through the device.

Rose wrinkled her forehead, pressing her lips hard together. Everyone except her, the Doctor and Jack, who read his both friends' concerned faces, breathed a sigh of relief.

"I picked up her bio chip, she's in Habitation 3," Zach announced.

"Better go and check if she's not responding, she might be unconscious," Jefferson replied.

"How about that, eh? We survived," Zach said.

"Habitation 3... come on," Jefferson urged everyone. "I don't often say this, but I think we could all do with a drink. Come on."

Everyone but Toby, the Doctor and Rose went to follow Jefferson down the corridor. The Doctor giving Jack a prompting gesture to follow them. When everyone were finally out of the picture, the Doctor cast Rose a questioning look of her avoiding the man, who appeared severely shaken. With his eyes narrowed, he crouched down to him. Rose hitched a breath.

"What happened?"

"I- I don't- I don't know," Toby began, speaking very fast, flustered. "I- I was working and then I can't remember. All- all that noise, the room was falling apart, there was no air..."

"You are the brain," Rose suddenly said coldly, taking attention of the Doctor. "You can speak. So talk! Why did you kill her?!" she shouted in desperation.

The Doctor glanced between her and Toby. He then stood up. "Rose..." He tried to approach her, but Rose stepped back.
"No. I want to know why would he do that. He didn't need her!" she cried in desperation.

"Wh-why, what, I don't know... what are you saying? Killed? Killed who? Did I kill someone? Oh, God... I- I don't know. I swear!" Toby was shaking.

"Don't lie!" Rose shot back harshly.

"Rose." The Doctor came to stand beside her, wrapping his arms around her. "Rose," he tried to soothe her.

"He's-!" she began, her voice cracking. "We can't just let him... be!" She weakly gestured towards Toby.

"I know," the Doctor said in a hollow voice. "But he's not aware of it," he said, holding her close to his chest, his one arm around her shoulders, another on her middle back, burying her in his embrace.

"How- how could he not?" Rose tried to protest, but the Doctor only held her closer to him, watching the man with a cold stare, making Toby duck his head.

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**Int. Habitation Area Three**

The canteen, was slightly chaotic - they were all looking for Scooti, all talking over each other.

"I've checked Habitation 4..." Ida said. "There's no sign of her. The bio chip says she's in the area," Jefferson added.

Rose and the Doctor came through the door, Toby timidly following by.

"Have you seen Scooti?" Jefferson asked Toby.

"No, no, no, I don't think so," Toby said hurriedly and sat near the table.

"Scooti, please respond, if you can hear this please respo- Habitation 6," Ida said in her wrist device.


"It says Habitation 3." Zach's voice.

"Yeah, well that's where I am, and I'm telling you she's NOT HERE," Jefferson shot back.

The Doctor paced about in the room, his hands in his pockets, until his gaze went upwards, through the overhead window.

"I've found her," he breathed, his expression grim. They all looked upwards, following his gaze. Rose slowly lifted her eyes to meet the horrifying sight. Her eyes sparkled with unshed tears.

"Oh, my God..." Jack breathed.

Scooti's body was floating eerily just outside the window.

"Sorry. I'm so sorry," the Doctor whispered in a low, quiet voice. The rest of them just stared, horrified.
"Captain... " Jefferson began into his wrist device, quietly. "Report Officer Scootori Manista PKD... deceased. 43K2.1"

"She was twenty... " Ida breathed. "Twenty years old." Not able to watch the sight any longer, she went over to the controls. The Doctor continued to stare up at Scooti's body, grave and silent.

Ida pulled the lever to close the shutters. Scooti was drifting further and further away towards the black hole as they close. Everyone watching in silence. Rose supporting herself on the table.

"For how should Man die better than facing fearful odds?" Jefferson spoke quietly. "For the ashes of his father... and the temples of his Gods," he ended in barely a whisper.

The shutters closed completely, leaving the room noticeably darker and gloomier than before. The Doctor stepped away from the view, his eyes on the ground.

A strange silence fell in the room.

"It's stopped..." Ida said, listening. A distant crash echoed in the room.

"We've stopped drilling. We've made it." Ida looked around. "Point Zero."

The Doctor and Rose locked their gaze to each other. The moment she dreaded had come.

They all had been waiting for this moment and at the same time praying for it to never come. But here it was.

**Int. Exploration Dec**

The crew were preparing to go down the mineshaft.

"Capsule established!" Ida was shouting through the noise. "All systems functioning... the mineshaft is go... bring systems online now."

The Doctor, already garbed in a spacesuit, approached Zach. Zach only stared at him.

"Reporting as a volunteer for the expeditionary force," the Doctor announced.

"Doctor." Zach eyed him uncomfortably. "This is breaking every single protocol." He glanced him over. "We don't even know who you are.

"Yeeah," the Doctor agreed casually. "But you trust me, don't you?" Zach only turned his head sideways, swallowing. "And you can't let Ida go down there on her own. Go oon..." The Doctor urged him. "Look me in the eye... yes you do, I can see it. Trust."

"I should be going down," Zach said.

"The Captain doesn't lead the mission. He stays here. In charge," the Doctor said seriously.

"Not much good at it, am I?" Zach said bitterly. The Doctor didn't answer, but simply tilted his head to the side, looking at him. Zach sighed.

"Positions!" Zach addressed everyone. "We're going down in two. Everyone, positions!" As he walked off.

Rose caught the Doctor's eye and they walked over to each other. This was the hard part.
The Doctor ducked his gaze to check a device on the wrist of the spacesuit. "Oxygen... nitro-balance... gravity," he said to himself, then turned to look at Rose, who was standing a step away from him. "It's ages since I wore one of these!" he exclaimed in a light mood, beaming at her.

Rose couldn't hide her worry. "I want that spacesuit back in one piece, you got that?" She poked him casually.

"Yes, sir," the Doctor replied eagerly. They smiled at each other. He caught her worried line on her forehead.

"I have to go," he said in a low voice. Rose looked up to meet his eyes.

"I know you do." She nodded. "I know, it's just..." She pulled a string of her hair under her ear. "It's tough." Her voice barely a whisper, her hand down.

The Doctor simply stared at her, unsure what to say himself. Rose gave him a weak smile.

This could be it. She could never see him again. Not ever. The last contact with him. And then... just nothing. Losing him forever...

She bit on her lower lip, watching his eyes for some sort of answer and she just couldn't stop her own body. She took a firm step forward, closing their distance and pulled on his spacesuit, taking him towards her. She tilted her head to meet his lips as the Doctor closed his eyes, wrapping his arms around her back, flushing her close to him. He inhaled her breath, his fingers grazing her back, kissing her with desperation, reassurance and most of all... his feelings.

She locked her arms around his neck, pressing herself closer to him as her hands began to roam in his hair, on the back of his neck.

The moment was broken apart by Zach's voice. "Capsule ready to activate! Everyone! Stand by!"

The pair broke apart, their mouths inches from each other, breathing slightly laboured. They locked their eyes with each other and grinned, chuckling, moments later. The Doctor slowly retreating his hands from her back, letting her stand properly on the ground as Jack walked over, smirking, giving him his helmet, which he previously so carelessly tossed to the Captain, back.

"Here you go," Jack said casually, feigning ignorance.

"Thanks," the Doctor muttered, avoiding eye contact with him. He took the helmet from Jack and put it on his head, locking it securely on.

"I'll see you later," the Doctor told Rose with confidence.

"Not if I see you first." She laughed, grinning. She took his helmet-head in her both hands and put a soft kiss on his to-be-forehead and let him walk into the capsule.

"Capsule active. Counting down in 10... 9..." Zach's voice booming out over the tannoy. "8... 7... 6..." The Doctor and Ida going into the capsule as Rose stood by, watching them together with Jack. Jefferson closing the door after them.

"5... 4... 3... 2..."

Jefferson saluted them and walked away, leaving only Rose in the full view and Jack right beside her, saluting to the Doctor.
"I..."

Rose held her hand up, waving, her eyes locked to the Doctor, desperately trying to smile. The Doctor waved back, returning the smile. Rose lowered her hand, putting her both hands in her pockets.

"Release," Zach announced, and then the capsule began descending the shaft.

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to be continued...
The Impossible Satan Part Three

Chapter Notes

Thank you all for your support! ^^

The capsule was steadily descending the shaft. It going down and down, out of the reach. She paced in place for a moment longer and then rushed towards the comm, holding it in her palm tightly. A diagram on a computer screen showed the descent of the capsule into the depths of the planet. Rose licked her lips nervously, calming her breath.

She had been through this before, oh yeh, but it was far from the reassurance she needed.

When Zach informed them that- "Gone beyond the oxygen field. You're on your own." – she hitched a breath.

They were on they're own. Oxygen provided only by their suits. If anything went wrong they would not have oxygen. Without oxygen would be no breathing. No breathing-

Her pulse quickened and she found herself blurt out. "Don't forget to breath. Breathing's good." Her voice a bit shaky. She then demonstrated taking a calming breath, which she obviously needed more for herself. She was going in a panic mode.

"Rose, stay off the comm," Zach said from the control room.

"Fat chance," Rose said at once. There was no way she would step out from it.

But then, she suddenly felt a warm hand resting on her shoulder. Her shaky breathing stopped for a second, taking into account the hand, which was squeezing her shoulder in comfort. She turned around and found a gentle smile on their Captain's face.

"He's going to be fine. The Doctor is a tough guy, you should know." Jack chuckled, making her smile a bit. "You can breathe now. Stop squeezing the life out of the comm. Your fingers got white." He gestured towards the object.

It came as a surprise to her. She hadn't expected herself doing so. Must be worried way more than she thought. "Oh," she breathed and loosened the grip on the comm.

"Thanks." She smiled at him.

"Anytime."

Suddenly the whole base began shaking. Rose quickly glanced at the diagram on the computer screen and saw that the capsule had reached Point Zero. Not a second longer after she had managed to steady herself, she was back on the comm.

"Doctor?" she called out in the device.

No reply.
"Doctor, are you all right?" She tried again.

"Ida, report to me..." Zach said.

Silence.

"Doctor!?" With more force.

"It's all right... we've made it... coming out of the capsule now." The Doctor's voice.

Rose breathed a huge sigh of relief. "That's right... This happened the last time too," she muttered. Jack glanced to her side. "Yeh, this happened before, it's alright... Maybe I should have made a list of some sort?" She glanced at Jack, her voice starting to get hysterical again. "I should have written everything down, to know where not to worry, you know-"

"What are you on about?" Zach's voice.

"Rosie. Breathe. You forgot to breathe. You're becoming hysterical again." Jack rubbed her back, smiling softly at her.

"Right. Yeh." Rose shook her head to gain her concentration back.

"Roose?" The Doctor's voice came through. "Get an air tank, if you can't breathe. I need you alive."

Rose rolled her eyes. "Well maybe if you replied when asked, I would be able to without any extra help!" she said in an edgy voice.

"We've reached some sort of... cave," the Doctor began, ignoring Rose's last sentence. "It's hard to tell... cavern... maybe... it's massive," he went on.

"Well, this should help. Gravity globe," Ida said.

After a few seconds they spoke again. "That's..." Ida began, her voice faltering. "That's... my God, that's beautiful," she breathed.

"Rose... you can tell Toby," the Doctor began. "If he had sorted his head out by now," he muttered. "We've found his civilisation..."

"I don't know about that..." Rose trailed off, looking at the timidly looking Toby, who sat a few meters further than the computer screen.

He smiled slightly at the group near the comm. "Good. I-I'll be sure to check it out..."

Rose kept her suspicious glance at him, but after Toby ducked his head, she turned hers back on the screen, pressing the comm near her mouth.

"Concentrate now, people. Keep on the mission," Zach spoke from the control room. "Ida... what about the power source?"

"We're close," Ida began. "Energy signature indicates north, north west. Are you getting pictures up there?"

"There's too much interference. We're in your hands," Zach said.

"Well... we've come this far," Ida said. "There's no turning back."
"Ooh," the Doctor groaned. "Did you have to? No turning back?" he began in a disappointed voice. "That's almost as bad as "nothing can possible go wrong" or "this is is gonna be the best Christmas Walford's ever had-" he rambled on.

"Are you finished?" Ida's steady voice.

After a few seconds. "Yeh," the Doctor breathed. "Finished." In a faint voice.

Rose had a small smile on her face. It gave her the needed reassurance, just hearing the Doctor being… the Doctor. They will be alright. She had to believe that.

Rose chuckled softly. She could feel her insides warm a bit up. It didn't last long, though.

"Captain, sir," Danny whispered from the Ood habitat. "There's something happening with the Ood."

Jack and Rose glanced at each other, after hearing him.

"What are they doing?" Zach asked.

"They're staring at me," Danny continued, keeping his voice low. "I've told them to stop, but they won't."

"Danny, you're a big boy. I think you can take being STARED at," Zach replied.

"But the telepathic field, sir," Danny persisted. "It's at Basic 100! I've checked - there isn't any fault. It's definitely 100."

"But that's impossible," Zach said in a concerned voice.

Rose gulped, staring at the distance for a moment then snapped her head towards Toby, who appeared to be listening to the conversation in wonder, his brows wrinkled. He even appeared to be worried! She was so not buying that.

"Hey," Jack exclaimed, this whole thing taking his attention. "100 is brain dead."

"Exactly," Danny breathed.

"But they're safe? They're not actually moving?" Zach asked, concerned.

"No, sir," Danny announced.


"Officer at arms!" Jefferson announced, going to ready his gun.

"Yes, sir," some crew member replied.

"You can't fire a gun in here," Rose said, stopping Jefferson's movements. "What if they hit a wall?" she asked. She needed to know if anything changed.

But just as the last time, Jefferson only replied with- "I'm firing stock 15, only packs upon organics." He then turned to security guard. "Keep watch. Guard them," he instructed.

"Yes, sir."
"Don't worry. I'll take care of us both," Jack told them calmly.

"Is your gun suitable for this base?" Jefferson eyed him suspiciously.

Rose glanced at Jack. "You can't use yours, Jack," she began softly, putting her hand on his forearm gently.

"Got other means. Don't worry. I won't let Doc down." He winked at her. She smiled at him slightly.

"Is everything all right up there?" The Doctor's voice came through.

"Yeah, yeah," Rose replied quickly. Couldn't make him worried.

"It's FINE," Zach replied in a fake voice.

"Great! " Danny exclaimed sarcastically.

"We've found something," the Doctor announced. "It looks like metal. Like some sort of seal," he exclaimed. "I've got a nasty feeling the word might be 'trapdoor'," he said in a low voice, his forehead wrinkled. "Not a good word, 'trapdoor'. Never met a trapdoor I liked," he went on. Somehow the metal thing gave him a bad feeling. He was sure he came in contact with it the previous time and that didn't necessary mean a good thing.

"The edge is covered with those symbols," Ida said, shining the torch around the edge.

"Do you think it opens?" Zach's voice.

"That's what trapdoors tend to do," the Doctor replied, eyeing the thing suspiciously.

"'Trapdoor' doesn't do it justice," Ida exclaimed, hurrying around it. "It's massive, Zach. About thirty feet in diameter."

"Any way of opening it?" Zach asked.

"I don't know. I can't see any sort of mechanism," Ida replied.

"I suppose that's the writing, that'll tell us what to do," the Doctor exhaled casually. "The letters that defy translation." Was this the way out? Did he have to open the trapdoor in order to get to the TARDIS? The Doctor couldn't help feeling that something… something was going to happen.

"Toby, did you get anywhere with decoding it?" Zach asked.

"He should know," Rose breathed, clutching the comm to her chest.

"I…" Toby shook his head. "I-I don't know… I'm sorry… I can't help…"

Rose narrowed her eyes at him. "Come off it, alright?" she exclaimed, her voice raised.

"Rose, if Toby doesn't know, then he doesn't-" Zach began.

"No. The thing is, he knows. You do know," Rose said, locking her gaze to Toby, after she made a step forward.

Jack had his eyes firm on her in case the man would make any sort of move on her.
"I-I don't!" Toby exclaimed, his hands shaking. "What do you want me to say!?" He ducked his gaze.

Rose swallowed tightly. What was he playing at? Thought he could fool her? Oh no, mister Devil. Not this second time round. "Stop mucking about! Show yourself. Why're you hiding?"

"Rose… calm down." Jack tried to soothe her. No matter what, getting suspicious glances on themselves wouldn't help them in any way.

"Look," Jefferson began. "If the boy doesn't kno-" he was cut short by a low, hideous voice.

"These are the words of the Beast."

Jack immediately had his hand on his gun, Jefferson's eyes widened in shock, Rose couldn't keep her confusion out of her face.

"And he has woken," the Ood continued.

Jefferson got his gun out, pointing it at the Ood. He narrowed his eyes, ready to shoot-

"He is the heart that beats in the darkness." Suddenly another Ood, on the other side of the row began talking in the same hideous manner.

"What the…" Jefferson quickly snapped his head towards it, pointing his gun at the second Ood now.

However, yet another Ood, in the middle, started. "He is the blood that will never cease."

Rose had her eyes widened, backing away towards Jack. "Jack," she began in a faint voice. "This wasn't supposed to happen…" She pressed her lips together. Jack aimed the gun at the one in the middle and the very first one now with his second gun.

Then suddenly a loose Ood, standing inches from Rose, right behind her, started talking. "And now he will rise."

Rose jumped at once, her heart-rate quickening. Jack swung around and fired his gun.

The Doctor could hear half of the conversation as the comm from Rose's side was shifting from on to off, but he had definitely heard a sound of a blaster.

"What's happening? Jack? What've you done? Rose? What's going on?" His voice was growing in urgency as he paced about.

There was no reply.

The Doctor began taking calming breaths. What the hell was going on? He had heard Rose tell Jack that it was not like how it was the last time. Something had gone wrong… And he didn't know what! He couldn't remember! Why on Gallifrey would he even try such a stupid stunt like locking his memories down? He should be aware of the situation, but now he was not. He was just standing there, down on some rock, helpless.

"Tell me what's going on!" He tried again in desperation and frustration. He began counting time it would take him to get his head sorted after unlocking his memories down. That would depend on the amount. One adventure's worth was not much. It would take a few moments, but anything was better now than just standing still.
The problem was… he was not so sure if it was only one adventure.

"It's the Ood…" After a very nerve-wrecking while, finally Rose replied.

"Rose… I need you to be honest with me. I need to ask you something," the Doctor said, taking calming breaths.

After a short while, she replied. "What is it?" In a faint voice.

"How much of memories have I locked down?"

Rose felt her breath hitch. She was not expecting that. Were they seriously having this conversation now? With the Ood going crazy? And Toby… what the bloody hell was wrong with him? He surely couldn't be innocent.

"Rose, I need to know," the Doctor urged her.

She swallowed. She tried to think of a way out, but somehow all of the possibilities seemed to have abandoned her. She took a deep breath, closing her eyes.

"Since run," she whispered.

To the Doctor it felt like a cold bucket of water. His mouth went dry. Since… run? Since run run?

Since the beginning?

"If you thought of unlocking your memories down, then it's a bad idea. You know that. So stop. We'll handle this here," Rose ended in a soft voice.

The Doctor could only keep silent.

"Stand down. Stand down!" Jefferson was shouting, taking attention of Rose.

"I'll just shoot every each one," Jack announced calmly, his eyes narrowed.

Another Ood, in the corner, began talking. "How many can you shoot? Are you fast enough?"

Jack and Jefferson both aimed their weapons at the Ood who had already spoken and both fired. The Ood went down.

But it was far from the end. And Rose knew that. The black smoke came out from the already possessed Ood, now laying dead, and quickly went into all of the Ood present in the room.

"We are the Legion of the Beast." They spoke as one.

"Rose? What is it? Rose?" the Doctor spoke in an urgent voice. His both hearts stopped for a moment, when he heard a gun echoing from the comm, who was being a stupid thing, not working properly!

After he yet again got no reply, he turned to Ida. "I'm going back up." There was no way he was leaving her there in the middle of whatever the hell shooting was going on up there.

"The Legion shall be many. And the Legion shall be few..." The Ood spoke again, holding their orbs.

Rose watched them with a guarded expression. She held her comm device tightly. "The Ood got
possessed.. all of them," she spoke in it.

"Sir," Jefferson began into his wrist device. "We have a contamination in the livestock."

Rose turned around to watch Toby. "But I know who's responsible," she said in a faint voice.

"They won't listen to us," Jefferson continued his report.

Jack was holding his both guns at different sides at the Ood, when Rose came from his side and snatched one of them from him. She immediately positioned herself to face Toby, pointing the gun threateningly at him.

It was not the same as sending him flying off down the black hole. Far from it. It was more cold blooded, but if it came to that, she had to do that.

"Hey there, what are you doing!??" Jefferson asked, feeling more lost of the situation than he was before.

"Rose..." Jack began. "You don't want to do this. This is a blaster you're holding. You can't pull the trigger."

Rose gave a small smile, but kept her stance. "You think?" she replied, her voice slightly shaky.

Jefferson who was watching the whole situation, could not stand it any longer. "Captain. We've got an issue here."

"What? Is it the Ood again?" Zach's voice came through.

"No. This time it's humans," Jefferson replied, keeping his eyes on Rose and a shaken Toby.

"What are they doing? Don't tell me they got possessed!"

"I didn't see it happen... But I wouldn't bet on that. They just might have been. One of them is threatening to shoot our crew mate."

"Whatever you do, don't let that happen," Zach said.

"Lower the gun, miss," Jefferson began in a warning voice.

Rose took a side-way glance at Jefferson, who was now pointing the gun at her. "You don't understand. He's the one controlling them!"

"We don't know what are you talking about. Toby, come here," Jefferson urged him.

"Don't!" Rose warned and made to grab Toby, but Jefferson shouted out in commanding voice. "Don't move! Any move you make towards him, I got the permission to shoot."

"Look where you're pointing your gun," Jack exclaimed and was already holding his towards the man.

"Wh-hy are you trying to shoot me?" Toby asked timidly. Rose glared at him in a pained expression. How could he do this to her? She glanced at Jefferson who had his eyes firm on hers and was more than certainly ready to pull the trigger if she made any hasty movements.

"I don't know what game you're playing here, but I know who you are," Rose said, watching Toby again, the gun firm in her hold. "You're not fooling me."
"I'm asking you again to lower your gun!" Jefferson commanded. "We saw him do nothing to make him suspicious. Though, you three. Appeared out of nowhere. And you're the most suspicious of all." He indicated towards Rose.

"Rose," Jack began in a whisper. "Are you absolutely certain it's him?"

Rose snapped her head towards him. "Don't tell me you're doubting me too..." She could feel her legs go numb.

"I would always be on your side, Rosie. But you said yourself - things change. It could not be him. I can shoot him right this very moment, if you want. We both know yo wouldn't be able to." He made a pointed look at her. Rose held her gaze to his for a moment and with a gulp, lowered her gun. "But are you sure you want this?" Jack asked and turned his gun to Toby.

"Captain!" Jefferson spoke into his wrist device. "They're both uncontrollable!"

Rose hitched a breath when she saw the real outcome of things. She so wanted to save everyone from the Devil that she didn't stop for long enough to think that maybe, just maybe it wasn't Toby. Maybe it was only the Ood this time round. Or worse. Maybe it was someone else. Someone they least expected.

She glanced at Toby, who appeared severely shaken. It was the first time she actually looked at him. He was a young man. What IF he was only a young man. She would have killed in cold blood (well, Jack may have been right, she may have not been able to pull the trigger... not with a gun at least)...so in the end she would have let her one of the best friends do the job.

She felt her stomach roll upside down. She felt sick. From herself and her whole situation.

*It was the worst curse of all.*

"Let him go," she finally breathed, handing the gun over to Jack. He sighed in relief and Jefferson relaxed a slightly bit.

A short silence echoed in the room.

Jack eyed the room suspiciously. "Don't you think it's a bit strange, though?"

"The silence," Rose breathed, getting worried herself.

"It didn't speak the whole time we argued," Jack said, narrowing his eyes.

"Not interfering," Jefferson noted.

"Maybe...That's what he wants." Rose licked her lip. "For us to turn against each other."

Everyone turned their heads at the Ood, whose orbs suddenly lit up and they spoke in a hideous synchrony.

"He has woven himself in the fabric of your life since the dawn of time."

One Ood separated from the others and was advancing towards the guard.

"Some may call him Abaddon. Some may call him Kroptor. Some may call him Satan.." every Ood continued.

The loose Ood came to stand before the guard, who was standing a bit away from the group.
"Or the Bringer of Despair..." the Ood army spoke and then the separate one held up his orb towards the woman's face as it flew right onto her forehead and electrocuted her.

Everyone's eyes widened at once. Jack didn't take second chances and fired his gun at the Ood, it going down on the ground together with the, now dead, woman.

"These are the words that shall set him free."

The Ood started advancing. Everyone at once, their eyes burning red. Jack gripped on his guns more tightly, reading to make his weapons work any moment needed.

"Back up to the door!" Jefferson shouted. "Quickly! And you, miss, keep your distance from Toby! Any sign of trouble coming from you, I shoot," he warned. Rose made a quick nod and went for the door.

"I shall become manifest."

"Move quickly!" Jefferson together with Jack stood on the front line, ready to shoot whichever tried to strike. Rose and Toby moved towards the door with quick speed.

"I shall walk in might."

"To the door!" Jefferson yelled.

They tried to get it open, but it was going too slow.

"Get it open!"

"My Legions shall swarm across the worlds..."

The Doctor was advancing towards the exit to the capsule, when the ground around them started to shake, nearly making them loose their footing.

"Doctor! It's opening!" Ida spoke through the noise.

Rocks began showering down on the Doctor and Ida. He could see Ida looking terrified and he knew... he knew what he was supposed to do. But he still couldn't help looking back towards the capsule. She had Jack. He knew that. But the guns! The guns! What if she was hurt? She had Jack. He would protect her. But what if he failed?

He needed to see for himself that she was alright, but he couldn't! And with those self loathing and pained thoughts he stumbled back to Ida, falling over as the ground shook.

The trapdoor was opening more and more, the ground shaking violently until it opened fully, both of them nearly falling in it.

"The gravity field... it's going!" Zach announced, frantic. "We're losing orbit! We're gonna fall into the black hole!" he exclaimed. The whole base shaking.

Rose and Toby were desperately trying to open the door, but it wouldn't budge. Jefferson had his gun aimed at the advancing Ood, but they ignored it completely.

"I have been imprisoned for eternity. But no more." The red eyes were watching them nearly face to face.

"Door sealed," the computer announced.
"Just gotta shoot as many as you see!" Jack shouted out, wincing at the thought that his death may cause Rose her life. No mistakes allowed. He positioned his both guns at each side. They had three arms. It may just be enough. He was Captain Jack Harkness after all.

"Come on!" Rose banged on the door, swirling the wheel, but it wouldn't open no matter what.

"Door sealed," the computer announced.

Billows of smoke rose from the pit, the ground still shaking. The Doctor and Ida could only stare at the deep depths of it.

"The Pit is open. And I am free."

The Ood were getting closer and closer by the second towards the group.

Taking a deep breath, Jefferson commanded. "Open fire!" Him and Jack began shooting at the Ood, Jack doing it pretty smoothly, whilst Rose and Toby cowered.

After a while of shooting, Zach's voice came through. "We're stabilising...We've got orbit!" he announced.

Just as the shaking of the base lessened and the fire dead down, Rose ran down the stairs, practically jumping over the dead sea of bodies of the Ood. She took the communication device once more, barely holding in her worry.

"Doctor?" she called out.

Static, no reply.

Rose blinked a few times. "Doctor, can you hear me?" Her voice desperate. "Doctor? Ida? Are you there?"

"Open Door 25," the computer announced.

Jefferson and Jack span around, guns raised and ready for whatever was coming through the door-

"It's me!" Danny held his both hands in defence. "But they're coming," he said in a scared voice, whirling the door close.

"Close Door 25," the computer announced.

"It's the Ood. They've gone mad," Danny exclaimed in a frantic voice.

"We know," Jack replied calmly.

"How many of them?" Jefferson simply asked, standing still.

"All of them!" Danny exclaimed in a high pitched voice, clearing panicking. "All fifty!"

Jefferson made his way for the door. "Danny, out of the way," he breathed. When Danny didn't move an inch, Jack grabbed him by his lapels and pushed him aside.

"If you're not going to fight. Move it," Jack warned Danny and it was all the warning he needed. He stepped aside, moving down the stairs and nearly tripping over the dead bodies of the Ood. He gasped.
"Open door 25," the computer announced.

Once Jefferson opened the door, they came into a full view of the Ood, standing on the other side, their eyes flashing bright red. One of them immediately advanced and was already aiming for Jefferson's head, when Jack stepped in by reflex. He gasped in pain as the electricity went through his body and he soon fell on the floor. Jefferson at once fired his gun, closing the door after him.

"Damn," Jefferson cursed, watching the laying body. Danny hitched a horror filled breath.

Hearing Danny's breath, Rose turned her head and her eyes widened. "Jack!" she squalled, running towards him.

"He's out dead. I'm sorry," Jefferson said and went towards the computer screen.

"Jefferson, what's happening, there?" Zach's voice.

"I've got very little ammunition, sir. How about you?" Jefferson said into his wrist device.

"What about Jack?" Zach asked.

Jefferson glanced at the top of the stairs where his body laid with Rose clinging to him, muttering something.

"Deceased," Jefferson breathed.

Zach inhaled a deep breath. "All I've got is a bolt gun. With uh...all of one bolt. I could take out a grand total of one Ood. Fat lot of good that is."

"Given the emergency..." Jefferson began. "I recommend Strategy Ni-" he cut himself short after witnessing the awakening of a certain Jack Harkness.

"For the love of..." Danny exhaled. "How did you manage that?" He quickly went over to help him stand up, together with Rose.


"Jefferson, you just told me he was dead!" Zach was clearly sounding annoyed.

"I thought so too... But he is standing up right before my eyes." Jefferson spoke into his wrist device with disbelief in his eyes.

"Right. Next time make sure someone is dead before reporting," Zach said. "Okay. Strategy Nine agreed. We need to get everyone together. Rose? What about Ida and the Doctor? Any word?"

Rose rushed over the comm device, taking it back into her hold. "No, not yet. But they will get back in touch. Soon. Yeh, just a bit longer. They will... they just will." She was trying hard to keep herself calm.

Just then, the communication device crackled and the Doctor's voice came through.

"Yeh! Sorry, I'm fine," he announced casually. "Still here!" he ended in a light manner.

Rose took a deep breath. She was clearly so relieved, but that stupid! "You could've said, instead of making me worry, AGAIN! You stupid b-!"

The communication device screeched loudly, blanking the rest of the word out. The Doctor
"WHAH! Careful!" The Doctor tried to cover his ears, but obviously failed with his helmet on. "Anyway." Back to conversation. "It's both of us, me and Ida. Hello!" he exclaimed in a half-humorous way. "But the seel, opened up. It's gone." He kept his eyes on the pit. He could feel where it was all coming to. "All we've got left is this chasm."

"How deep is it?" Zach's voice.

"Can't tell. It looks like it goes on forever," the Doctor breathed. He had no idea how he was supposed to go down there. It could go down miles and miles. Even with his Time Lord self, there was no way he could survive that big of a fall.

"The Pit is open," Jack said meaningfully into the comm device, which Rose was holding close to her.

"Hello, Captain. Good to hear from you too," the Doctor said casually. "Heard some shooting. Mind telling me?"

"Nothing to worry about, Doc. Everything's under control."

"Yeh, especially you coming back from the dead bit," Danny said sarcastically, stepping near the comm to talk into it too.

"What, already?" the Doctor exclaimed in disbelief. "Can't you stay put, alive, for a mere hour?" He mocked him.

"Anyway!" Zach interrupted their bickering-talk. "The pit... is there... I mean... nothing is coming out?" he asked, a bit unsure of himself.

"No, no," the Doctor began casually. "No sign of 'the Beast'." He mocked. Though it was all a facade. He was more than sure that there was just something down there. Something he would meet first hand.


"But... we've come all this way!" Ida refused to budge.

"Okay, that was an order." Zach changed tactics. "WITH-DRAW. With that thing open, the whole planet's shifted. One more inch and we fall into the black hole. So this thing stops right now!"

"But it's not much better up there with the Ood," Ida persisted.

"I'm initiating Strategy Nine, so I need the two of you back up top immediately, no ar-"

The end of that sentence was never heard, when Ida just went and turned off her wrist device. The Doctor raised his eyebrows.

"What do you think?" Ida asked, looking at the Doctor.

"I think they've an order," the Doctor said, looking down to the pit.

"Yeah, but... what do YOU think?" Ida asked again.

The Doctor put one foot on the edge of the pit, staring down into it.
"I have got to go down. My ship should be there," the Doctor breathed.

"What makes you so sure?"

"Weeell, she is not here, so the only place left is thaat-" He pointed towards the pit. "The real problem here is... How do I go down there?" he asked casually, his eyebrows raised in wonder.

"Jump in?" Ida joked. The Doctor looked at her in amusement.

"Oh! Oh, in a second," the Doctor exclaimed blithely. "But then again..." He considered, giving a half-laugh. He turned to Ida.

"That is so human. Where angels fear to tread. Even now," he breathed in a low voice. "Standing on the edge. It's that feeling you get. Yeah?" he asked her, prompting. Then his gaze went back again into the pit as though mesmerised, musing.

"Right at the back of your head," he continued on. "That impulse... that strange little impulse..." He began bouncing back and forth on his feet. "That mad little voice saying "go on... go on... go on... go over, go on..." maybe it's relying on that." To meet him there.

"For once in my life... Officer Scott..." the Doctor said, taking attention of Ida. "I'm going to say..."

Ida glanced at him in anticipation. The Doctor opened his mouth.

"I need a plan. A well detailed plan, which would actually keep me alive." He glanced down at the pit. After all, he had someone to come back to.

"So, yeh. I'm staying heeere, sitting or standing, or rolling over, imagine that." He laughed a bit, amused by the thought. "Anything really to think of a way to reach down there."

"Alright then. Let's... sit!" Ida suggested.

The Doctor turned to look at her. "That's where comes the second part of the plan. You're going up."

"You must be joking, if you think you can stay here on your own. I have the purpose to be here same as you," Ida said firmly.

"I would have said retreat, if not for my ship," the Doctor sang.

"I would have said okay, if not for my life," Ida countered him.

The Doctor sighed. "It's hard with you, humans."

Ida laughed. "You talk like you're not."

"Well," the Doctor exhaled. "You never know." He turned on his wrist device. "Rose."

After a short second, the reply came. "Yes, Doctor?"

"I'm... staying," the Doctor breathed. Then looked at Ida, who was giving him a warning look. "Well, I guess, we are staying."

No reply.

"Rose?" the Doctor spoke again.
"Yeh. Yeh, I know," Rose said softly.

Suddenly Rose was disturbed by the sight of Jack, pointing a gun at Toby. "Jack? What're you doing?"

Jack kept his intense gaze on Toby, who looked terrified.

"Jack?" Rose asked again.

"Nothing. Was just checking if nothing coming out of him."


Rose let her eyes wander from Toby to Jefferson, until she settled with- "Yeh."

The Doctor and Ida were steadily making their way towards the capsule to check if maybe there was something they could use to the pit.

"You can still back away now, you know," the Doctor suggested casually.

"Not happening." Ida held her ground firm. "This is one in a lifetime chance," she breathed.

"Hmm..." the Doctor hummed. "So... What's Strategy Nine anyway?" he asked nonchalantly, keeping the conversation going.

"Open the airlocks... we'll be safe inside the lockdown... the Ood will get thrown out into the vacuum," Ida explained.

"So basically slaughter," the Doctor noted.

Once they had finally reached the capsule, Ida turned to him.

"The devil's work," she explained.

The Doctor didn't make any effort to argue with her on that point. "Captain? Is there some sort of.. um, extra piece we could use? Anything you got hidden in the capsule? No?"

"After defying my orders do you really think I would help you?"

"Well, you could," the Doctor said nonchalantly.

"Well, get this, Doctor. You're not hearing it from me."

"Oh, come on," the Doctor groaned. "It's not even my fault! Well, not entirely," he muttered. "I offered her to go up! More than that. I actually told her to go up. But did she listen? Oh, no. You humans just can't listen. That curious nature, getting deeper and deeper into trouble. You even have a perfect example on board - Rose Tyler."

Suddenly the lights started flickering until they completely went out.

"This is the Darkness. This is my domain," a voice, echoing from all around, spoke.

The display on the screen changed to that of several of the Ood standing together - the Beast using them to communicate.
The Doctor barely blinked an eye, watching them. Ida was captivated.

"You little things that live in the light... clinging to your feeble Suns...which die in the..."

"That's not the Ood. Something's talking through them," Zach said, feeling anxious.

"Only the Darkness remains."

"This is Captain Zachary Cross Flane of Sanctury Base Six representing the Torchwood archive. You will identify yourself."

"You know my name."

"What do you want?"

"You will die here. All of you. This planet is your grave."

"If you are the Beast, then answer me this," the Doctor dug in casually. "Which one? Hmm? 'Cos the universe has been busy since you've been gone. There's more religions than there are planets in the sky. The Archivits... Pordonity, Christianity... Pash-Pash, New Judaism... Sanclar... Church of the Tin Vagabond - which devil are you?" he asked in a wonder.

"All of them."

"What, then you're the truth behind the myth?" the Doctor said in a mocking manner.

"This one knows me - as I know him. The killer of his own kind."

The Doctor furrowed his brows. "How did you end up on this rock?" he asked in a more serious voice.

"The disciples of the Light rose up against me. And chained me in the pit for all eternity."

"When was this?" the Doctor asked in a faint, casual voice.

"Before time."

"What does THAT mean?!" the Doctor exclaimed, grimacing.

"Before time."

"What does 'before time' MEAN?" the Doctor asked with more force in his voice.

"Before light and time and space and matter. Before the cataclysm. Before this universe was created."

"That's impossible," the Doctor breathed. "No life could have existed back then."

"Is that your religion?"

"It's a belief," the Doctor said, a bit unsure.

"You know nothing. All of you. So small."

"The Captain, so scared of command. The soldier, haunted by the eyes of his wife. The scientist,
still running from daddy. The little boy who lied...The virgin... The agent cursed with eternal life..."

He made a meaningful pause.

"And the lost girl, so far away from home. Running through time and dimensions, just to reach her love. The valiant child who will die in battle still."

"What... What do you mean?" Rose asked into the comm.

"Rose, don't listen," the Doctor said quietly.

"What do you mean?!" Rose asked more fiercely. She had been through all that only to be left "dead" again? She knew what her death meant, it meant trapped in the parallel universe. No. She could not accept that kind of fate. Satan could not be right. He was inaccurate the first time too!

"You will die... and I will live."

The footage of the Ood suddenly was cut and instantly replaced with a roaring horned beast, which caused everyone but the Doctor, Rose and Jack to gasp and stumble backwards.

"What the hell was that?" Danny asked, voice shaky with fear.

The humans began to panic.

"You thought I was that thing," Toby said shakily.

"Still..." Rose shook her head. "It said still." She bit her lip to prevent the sob.

"What do we do? Jefferson?" Danny asked frantically.

"Captain? What's the situation on Strategy Nine?" Jefferson asked into his wrist device.

"Zach, what do we do?" Danny doubled.

"What if I can fix it? ... the black hole, everything's true," Zach breathed.


"We've lost pictures-" Zach began.

"Jack, it's..." Rose looked at him helplessly.

"It won't." Jack tried to assure her.

"Did anyone get-" Ida began

"Stop-" The Doctor tried, feeling the panic overwhelming humans way over the top.

"Jefferson?" Zach's voice.

"Everyone just stop-" The Doctor tried once again.

"What do we do?" Danny asked.

Having just about enough, the Doctor took hold of the communication device and put it close to the speaker, making it screech loudly. The babble immediately stopped and silence fell.

"If you want voices in the dark, then listen to mine," the Doctor began in an urgent voice. *Just leave them for a moment and they go to panic mode.* "That thing is playing on very basic fears. Darkness - childhood nightmares, all that stuff." The Doctor tried to make his point.

"But that's how the devil works," Danny said the obvious.

"Oor a good psychologist," the Doctor stated simply.

"But... how did it know about my father?" Ida asked, concerned.

The Doctor glanced at her. He didn't really have an answer. "Okay, but what makes his version of the truth any better than mine? Hmm?" he spilled. "Cos I'll tell you what I can see: humans. Brilliant humans!" he exclaimed in enthusiasm.

"Humans who travel all the way across space. Flying in a tiny little rocket into the orbit of a black hole! Just for the sake of discovery, that's amazing!" He wasn't hiding his admiration. "Do you hear me? Amazing. All of you. The captain - his officer - his elder - his genius - his friends."

"All with one advantage," the Doctor said in a lower voice. "The Beast is alone," he stated slowly. "We are not. If we can use that to fight against him-"

The Doctor was cut sharply by a loud bang, the cable for the capsule snapping. It was quickly falling down the shaft.

"The cable's snapped!" Ida exclaimed, looking up.

"Get out!" the Doctor shouted out, pushing Ida out and diving out of the capsule himself just as the cable landed inside it with force.

Only dust wafted onto the exploration deck.

Rose could feel her heart-rate pick up. This couldn't be it. Was this the last time they spoke? No, it couldn't be. How could she had missed it!

"Doctor! We lost the cable! Doctor, are you all right?" she kept on asking in the comm.

No reply.

"Doctor?" She tried again.

"Comms are down," Zach announced.

"Doctor? Doctor, can you hear me? No, not yet, please." She was still trying, but she knew that she would not get an answer.

*I've still got life signs, but... we've lost the capsule.* Zach's voice.

"He's lost... Jack..." Rose said in defeat, her hand falling limp to her side. Jack took the comm from her grip.

"Doctor? IF you can hear me, say something. Anything. Don't make us worried!"

*There's no way out,* Zach said. *They're stuck down there.*
to be continued...
The whole base was dark, the shortage of power making it look even more hideous than before. Rose had her gaze fixed on the deep pit, going down to the shaft where the Doctor and Ida were now down with no way out.

_Only the TARDIS could bring him back to her now._

"We have to bring them back!" Jack said to Jefferson urgently. His words ringing in Rose's ears like a wake up alarm. _Bring him back!_

"There's no point, Jack," Rose said faintly. Her voice steady despite her inner turmoil. Jack turned to look at her incredulously. "There's nothing we can do." She shook her head slightly. "He has to come back on his own."

"You sure?" Jack asked her again.

Was she? Sure? Was there nothing... nothing they could do? The never ending tunnel ahead - just dark, hollow space and dust. No cable. No transport. No way in. Yeh... that sounded like a sure way of _nothing they could do._

He would come back... Her Doctor... He would come back... She would wait. Five hours, five days or five weeks. As long as it takes. She would wait for him to return, just as he did wait for her. Because the one thing she was absolutely sure of - she had faith in him.

Rose stared at the dusty space some more and with making her resolve, breathed. "Yeh."

A loud bang on the door made everyone jump in surprise.

Jefferson came forward first, watching the door warily. "Captain? Situation report," he said into his wrist device.

A sigh came through the tannoy. "It's the Ood," Zach spoke. "They're cutting through the door bolts. They're breaking in."

"Yeah, it's the same on Door 25," Jefferson replied, after checking the doors.

"How strong are those doors?" Jack asked.

"Well, it's only a basic frame, it should take ten minutes," Jefferson said, when yet another bang could be heard, making him twirl around and back to facing Jack and Rose. "Eight."

"I've got a security frame, it might last a bit longer, but that doesn't help you." Zach's voice.

Rose took a deep breath. No better time than now to start thinking about their survival. "Right," Rose exclaimed. "So it's time we all started working on our part here. We need to stop them - or get
"I'll take both, yeah?" Danny cut her, his voice uneven, watching the monitor for answers. "But how?" he asked in desperation and lost hope.

"You heard the Doctor. Why do you think that thing cut him off?" she asked him like it was obvious. "Cos he was making sense! He was telling you to think-" She gestured with her hands. "Your way out of this. Come ON!" she shouted out for them in urgency to snap out of their daze. She came too far to let them fall because they were too scared to move.

"For a start, we need some lights," she continued urgently. "There's gotta be some sort of power somewhere."

"There's nothing I can do. Some captain, stuck in here, pressing buttons," Zach said bitterly.

"Look there, Captain," Jack said the word bitterly. "I'm putting my title off for you to take charge of my life so don't fall so short."

"Maybe you should come here, then," Zach retorted.

"I'm not the captain of this crew. You are! So get your act together, man," Jack said, barely holding his composure himself.

"Jack is right, Captain," Rose agreed. "So do your job. Press the right buttons!"

"They've gutted the generators!" Zach snapped. "But the rocket's got an independent supply," he then said with realisation. "If I could reroute that..." He trailed off. "Jack?"

"Yeh?"

"Thank you," Zach said, making Jack grin.

"Anytime."

"Mr Jefferson?" Zach continued. "Open the bypass conduits. Override the safety..."

"Opening bypass conduits, sir," Jefferson announced while pressing the appropriate buttons. Jack and Rose both smiled at each other.

"Channeling rocket feed. In 3... 2...1... power," Zach announced.

The lights came back on before everyone's eyes. Rose looked around, smiling in contentment.

"There we go," she exclaimed happily. "See, you can do it!"

"Let there be light!" Danny cheered.

"What about your Strategy Nine?" Jack asked.

"Not enough power. It needs a hundred percent," Jefferson paced about.

Danny had his eyes fixed on the monitor. He suddenly sprung around, facing Jack. "Wait a minute. You had some kind of device with you, right?" he asked in a hopeful voice.

"The Vortex Manipulator?" Rose asked, glancing from Danny to Jack, who seemed to shift a bit uncomfortably on his feet.
"Whatever you say. So?" Danny asked again.

"Jack?" Rose looked at him questioningly. "You still have it with you, yeh?"

With a bit of hesitation, he finally opened his mouth to talk. "Yeh," he breathed.

"Then come on!" Rose urged him, not understanding why was he so reluctant. "Give 'em that power boost!"

He scanned the concerned faces before him and with a reluctant movement, pulled his sleeves up to take his device off. He handed it to Danny.

"But hold on," Rose said, her forehead wrinkled in concentration. "I thought your Vortex Manipulator was not working," she said, eyeing him over.

"It's as good as new on everything except escaping the planet," Jack said meaningfully. Rose swirled her tongue inside her mouth, nodding. *The Devil's work again.*

"It's not working..." Danny said.

Rose frowned, stepping forward near the monitor. "How d'you mean not working? What's wrong?"

"There is just... nothing... it doesn't give away any energy," Danny said helplessly.

"But..." Rose shook her head.

"Did you try extending the range of power consumption? This thing can overload it if not careful," Jack suggested.

"Of course I did! You think I'm stupid?" Danny snapped. *Clearly getting overemotional from stress.*

"Hey there, bud." Jack extended his hands in defence. "I'm just offering you information with a piece of device you are not familiar with. No harm meant."


"Hmm..." Jack hummed. "The energy needs to be transferred to the control room."

"And you can do that, yeh?" Rose asked, standing near him, watching the screen even if it did not really say anything to her.

A broad grin formed on Jack's face. "Thought you would never ask," he exclaimed with sudden vigour, and jumped towards the controls. Rose chuckled silently.

"Captain?" he called out into the comm. "I need the password of your control systems."

"Hold on," Zach said. "I'm putting it in...Okay, it's x9-" he began but cut himself short. "Oh, no."

"What is it?" Rose asked warily.

"We can't access your device. Got only basic power systems here. It would burn the whole thing down if used."
Jack sighed in frustration.

"Oh, just great," Danny muttered. Jack gathered his Vortex Manipulator back, taking it back on his wrist.

"All right," Rose breathed. "So Strategy Nine is off," she said, keeping her voice calm. "Plan B. We need a way out. Zach, Mr Jefferson, you start working on that," she instructed the men. "Jack, I'm sure you can give them some advice from your side."

"The only still bright thing in this situation is you being bossy." Jack winked at Rose.

"Shut it," Rose chided him, hiding a smile. She then spotted Toby, still crouching down a few meters away from the group. She couldn't say she trusted him fully, that nagging feeling she had in her was not going away, but she had to give the man a chance. She decided to take a step forward. "Toby, what about you?" she asked softly, standing right beside him. He looked up.

"So you talking to me now?" he replied bitterly. Rose shifted uncomfortably on her feet, lowering her gaze.

"Look, whatever you think I was or am, I'm not. I'm me, alright?" he said. "And I'm certainly not that thing down there." He gestured, his face troubled. "So unless you start treating me as a human being, I don't think I can help you."

Rose kept her guilty stare at him. She was really too hard on him. He didn't deserve a treatment like that. Nobody would. She bit on her lower lip and squatted down to meet his eyes level.

"I know," she began softly. "I know, and I'm sorry for treating you like that." She locked his gaze to his, who was debating with himself whether to believe her. "I really am," she said with conviction in her eyes.

He looked away. Rose nodded in understanding and stood up, ready to walk away, when his voice stopped her.

"I still don't know much about that language..." he began, as she turned to look at him. "But I'll try to work on that."

She could only grin at him. She then briskly walked up to the group at the monitor. "So, any progress?"

"I've managed to stabilise the controls as much as possible," Jack began. "But the Ood is not my department."

"What? Captain Jack Harkness never walked upon an Ood before?" Rose teased him.

"Can't say I have." Jack laughed at the thought. "They're a bit..." He looked at her.

"Ood," Rose said together with him, chuckling moments later.

"Well then, Danny-boy - you're in charge of the Ood - any way of stopping them?" she asked.

"Well... I don't know." Danny shrugged.

"Then find out," she said as a matter of fact, pulling him over to the computer. "Do what you do best. Look after the Ood. Shift," she ended, playfully smacking him and walking over to the railing.
to look at the never ending shaft.

The Doctor stood up, watching what was left of the capsule with his eyes. Ida was brushing herself off of dust, getting her breathing back from the shock the two just experienced.

"Guess we found our way down," Ida said, looking at the fallen cable. The Doctor gave her a side-way glance.

It was too convenient. The solution literally falling down from the sky. Well, whatever was down there, he couldn't wait to meet it.

"How much air have we got?" the Doctor asked suddenly.

"Sixty minutes," Ida answered breathlessly. She then checked her wrist device. "Fifty-five."

The Doctor inhaled, raising his eyebrows. "Well, then, better not waste time. Come on, let's get this out." He urged her, bending down to gather the cable.

"The drum's disconnected," Ida said faintly. The Doctor looked up at her questioningly.

"We could adapt it," Ida said like it was obvious. "Feed it through."

The Doctor's face lit up. "Of course! That's brilliant! Ida... you are-" He looked at her adoringly. "Brilliant!" he exclaimed with a silly grin.

Ida smiled at him, feeling a slightly bit awkward. "Right, so, let's do this," she said while getting her hands full of cable. "If we ever get back, might as well try this."

"I'll get back," the Doctor said in a low, serious voice. "Rose is up there." He locked his gaze to hers, without letting her negate the possibility.

Everyone was busy, working in the exploration deck. Rose kept her eyes on everyone in case someone decided to give up and would require some kicking in the their bum.

"Open junctions five... six... seven..." Jefferson was talking over the loud bangs on the door in the background. "Reroute filters sixteen to twenty-four. Go."

Toby was working on the symbols, writing something desperately.

"There's all sorts of viruses that could stop the Ood," Danny said casually. "Trouble is, we haven't got them on board," he ended edgily.

"Well, that's handy," Rose began sarcastically. "Listing all the things we haven't got," she muttered. "We haven't got a swimming pool either," she said seriously, looking at Danny. "Or a Tesco."

Danny only rolled his eyes, annoyed.

Suddenly the computer bleeped. The word 'affirmative' flashing on the screen. Danny's eyes popping wide in excitement.

"Oh my God. It says yes! I can do it!" he said like he couldn't believe his luck. "Hypothetically, if you flip the monitor, broadcast a flare... it can disrupt the telepathy! Brainstorm!" He hit his forehead, grinning broadly.

"And the Ood guys?" Jack asked, casually leaning on the railing.
"It'll tank them, spark out!" Danny talked with enthusiasm, not taking his eyes off the screen.

"There we are, then! Do it!" Rose encouraged him.

Danny was almost saying something but cut himself short, his face falling. "No, but..." he breathed, shaking his head. "I'd have to transmit from the central monitor. We need to go to Ood Habitation."

Rose thought about it for a moment. "You are forgetting something," she said in a strong voice.

"What would be that?" Danny asked in exasperation.

"We've got him," Rose said in an obvious tone, dragging Jack to the monitor. "Come on. You said you can channel the energy from control room before."

"Can you do that?" Danny asked in a newly gained hope. "Can you do it? Connect me to the Odd Habitation?"

"Will try," Jack replied, stepping near the monitor. "Can't be that hard with basic controls." He grinned to himself.

"Good to have you, Captain," Rose said, smiling with tongue between her teeth.

"Not the captain of this base, Rosie."

"Yeh?" Rose asked softly. "Well, you are our captain," she ended with a tender smile. Jack smiled at her himself.

"What can I say?" Jack said casually, pressing various buttons and getting deeper into showed numbers on the screen. "Doc is a lucky man."

"Well, he better get his bum here first. Then we will see about that," Rose said seriously.

"Don't worry. I bet he will come back with more than his bum," Jack said, smirking. Rose stared at him for a moment, her cheeks becoming rose-colour.

"You just can't... I just can't talk in... metaphor with you, can I?" Rose shook her head with a disbelieving smile on her face.

"Never." Jack winked.

"Are you done playing around?! Hurry up!" Danny was starting to get his panic get the better of him once again.

"Relax, bud. Almost there," Jack said blithely and with the last press on the button, the Ood Habitation computer access appeared on the screen.

Basis 100 flashed on the screen.

Everyone's faces flashed in huge grins, until the bliss was cruelly disturbed by a loud bang on the doors from one side, making everyone turn their heads at them. The mirrored sound soon followed the doors on the other side.

"How much time has passed?" Rose asked urgently.

"It's already passed eight minutes," Jefferson said. "They're breaking in!" He came to stand on
guard on one side. "Jack, you hold the other side down!" he instructed. "Pray that us two will be enough," he muttered, loading his gun.

Rose watched how Jack came to stand on the other side and then back again to Danny.

"Come on, Danny! It's all up to you now!" Rose urged him.

"I know!" Danny yelled out and the same moment the doors on Jefferson's side burst open, revealing a group of red-eyed Oods, dangerously stepping further into the room.

*Bang*

Jefferson shot and one of the Ood fallen down. Rose watched the exchange with her own panic rising, but after seeing Danny's fretting state, she told herself to calm down. He would never get it done with those trembling fingers.

With a loud bang, the doors, where Jack was positioned at, opened up, revealing yet another group of the, anything but friendly, looking Oods.

"Bad day for you, guys," Jack said in a sneer and shot two of them at once. That, of course, didn't make their numbers all that less. With the two fallen down, the rest just kept going in.

*Bang*

Some more shots could be heard from Jefferson's side.

"Damn," Jack cursed. "Danny, transmit!"

"I'm trying, I'm trying! I'm getting at it-!" Danny yelled out hysterically, his fingers trembling from received pressure.

"It's alright," Rose tried to soothe him. "You can do it. Just breathe in. Take a deep breath and press the right buttons." She took hold of his forearm. Danny momentary looked at her in the eyes and felt himself loose a bit of shaking in his body.

"Danny, I need some transmission help! I'm running out of bullets here!" Jefferson shouted out over the shooting.

"I know! I..." Danny shook in frustration, searching the screen in desperation. And with the last press on the controls, Danny bunged the required piece into the computer. The reading flashed and quickly went down to Basic 0.

At once, every Ood in the room froze in place and clutched at their heads, stumbling about. They finally collapsed to the floor. Silence fell.

Everyone took a moment to take their breaths back. "You did it!" Rose began, smiling at Danny. "We did it!" she exclaimed, jumping into Danny's arms from sheer joy.

"Yes!" Danny exclaimed, still a bit dazed but just as happy.

After Danny released her to hug Jefferson, who was looking a bit unsure of this gesture, Rose found herself in a tight embrace of a certain Jack Harkness.

"We did it, Jack!" she squalled, jumping about, after being released.

"Captain, sir, reporting, the Ood are taken care of," Jefferson said into the comm.
Some static noise could be heard.

"Captain, report!" Jefferson said with more strength in his voice. Rose's face began to fall, when-

"Good work, everyone. I'm on my way to you." Zach's voice came through.

Everyone sighed in relief.

"Now, only the Doctor is left," Rose said, biting on her lower lip and watching the shaft.

The Doctor and Ida were working on securing the cable so they could abseil down the pit.

"That should hold it. How's it going?" Ida asked, while holding the drum with the cable around it. The cable was slowly beginning to unravel.

"Fine!" the Doctor exclaimed blithely, while walking backwards, nearer the pit. "Should work... doesn't feel like such a good idea, now," he muttered, when standing on the edge of the pit.

"Ha..." he breathed. "There it is again. That itch. Go down, go down, go down, go down, go down." He bobbed up and down crazily.

"The urge to jump," Ida said while doing some adjustment to the drum. "Do you know where it comes from, that sensation?" she asked softly. The Doctor looked up at her.

"Genetic heritage. Ever since we were primates in the trees. It's our body's way of testing us. Calculating whether or not we can reach the next branch," she explained.

"No, that's not it..." the Doctor said in faint voice. "That's too kind," he said thoughtfully. He looked around. "It's not the urge to jump, it's deeper than that." Then it hit him.

"It's the urge to fall!" he breathed and jumped backwards down the hole without a second thought.

Ida snapped her head at once. "Doctor!" she called out for him and pressed a button - the cable becoming taut.

The Doctor suddenly stopped falling, his feet meeting the wall of the pit, hanging by the cable a short way into the pit.

"Are you okay?" Ida asked in concern.

"Not bad, thanks," the Doctor replied nonchalantly. "The wall of the pit..." He looked around. "Seems to be the same as the cavern, just..." He bent his head down to shine the torch down the hole. "Not much of it," he said faintly as he really didn't see much of what was going on down below.

"There's a crust about twenty feet down and then... nothing. Just the pit," he said. He started to think that maybe his whole trip down the hole in the search of the TARDIS was after all absurd. There was no real, certain way she was there. Maybe he missed her by accident and she was actually up here, with Ida...But being the Doctor as he was-

"Okay, then," he breathed. "Lower me down," he sang half-humorously. "Oh, well. Not like he could back down now. Might as well go all out.

"Well, here we go, then," Ida said, her voice cracking a bit. She was starting to question her own ideas about this whole thing. But she pressed the button again anyway. With that, the Doctor was
slowly lowered down the pit.

"You get representations of the Horned Beast right across the universe," the Doctor began in a casual way, keeping the conversation going as he was still being lowered down the pit, in complete darkness.

"In the myths and legends of a million worlds. Earth..." He stopped his pace to think. "Draconia, Velconsadine... Daemos... the Kaled God of War..."

"It's the same image, over and over again." His voice back to casual. "Maybe... that idea came from somewhere. Bleeding through... the thought at the back of every sentient mind," he said thoughtfully.

"Emanating from here?" Ida asked from the top of the pit.

"Could be," the Doctor said blithely.

"But if this is the original... does that make it real? Does that make it the actual devil, though?" she breathed, concerned of the truths.

"Weeell," the Doctor began. "If that's what you want to believe," he muttered. "Maybe that's what the devil is, in the end. An idea."

And suddenly the Doctor was jerked to a halt. He looked up to see what was going on, though he was beginning to suspect just what.

"That's it," Ida noted. "That's all we've got," she said softly, checking the end of the cable.

The Doctor went to press buttons on the device on his wrist.

"You getting any sort of readout?" Ida asked hopefully.


"I could survive thirty feet," he whispered to himself, thinking about it.

"Oh no you don't," Ida said at once, probably having heard what he was planning. "I'm pulling you back up." Her voice a bit scared.

She pressed the button to hoist him back up. The drum spinning the cable back, but at the same moment, the Doctor pressed a button on his own end, stopping her.

"What're you doing?!" Ida asked in desperation, striding to the edge.

"You bring me back, then we're just gonna sit there and run out of air," he said in a low voice. "I've gotta go down. I told you."

"Back then I thought you would survive!" she said, scared.

"I will," the Doctor whispered. He had to believe that.

"Based on what?!" Ida asked.

"Call it an act of faith," the Doctor said through his teeth, while releasing one of the hooks securing
him to the cable. He had to believe the TARDIS was there. Because he had to get back to her. It was the only way back.

"But... " Ida faltered, looking sideways. "I don't want to die on my own."

"I know," the Doctor said softly, releasing another hook.

"What about communication? Can we reach the Doctor and Ida yet?" Danny asked, when Zach finally reached them in the exploration desk.

"The comms are still down," Zach began. "I can patch them through the central desk and boost the signal." He suddenly looked at Jack. "You want to give it a go?" he suggested, gesturing to the monitor.


Zach only nodded at him. "Just give me a minute," he said as he began working on it.

Rose stood there, with a blank face, not really hoping for anything. It was too soon. The Doctor... she wouldn't be able to reach him yet.

She closed her eyes.

The Doctor released yet another hook.

"I didn't ask - have you got any sort of faith, or...?" the Doctor asked softly.

"Not really," Ida said, sitting on the edge of the pit. "I was brought up Neo Classic, congregational... because of my mum, she was..." She paused, reminiscing. "My old mum..." she whispered sadly. "But no, I never believed," she said after a while, her voice wavering.

"Neo Classic - have they got a devil?" the Doctor asked, while he was busy working on the hooks.

"No, not as such." She shook her head, stifling her tears. "Just um... the things that men do."

"Same thing in the end," the Doctor muttered in a low voice.

"What about you?" Ida asked. It came as a surprise to the Doctor. Here they were, talking about faith. He paused.

Faith... Something he believed...

"I believe... I believe I haven't seen everything, I don't know..." He trailed off, thinking. "It's funny, isn't it? The things you make up - the rules. If that thing had said it came from BEYOND the universe, I'd believe it, but BEFORE the universe..." He cringed his nose. "Impossible," he breathed. He inhaled deeply. "Doesn't fit my rule."

Then there was also that fact that he was not capable of creating a year's worth of time loop. It would require a different kind of power. An immense source which shouldn't even exist or be possible! But he could dwell on those later. Now he could only see her in all those moments with a burden she shouldn't have been left to deal with alone.

Getting to know one another from scratch.
If anything, Rose Tyler done the impossible.

"Still, that's why I keep travelling," the Doctor said after a long while. "To be proven wrong."

Rose Tyler must have shattered most of his impossible rules. A great portion of them he still couldn't remember. He could feel that. Why had he let himself conceal the memory?.. He knew... but no reason was good enough. It was time he fixed that.

"Thank you, Ida," the Doctor said in a low voice, after he was almost done with all the hooks. Only the main cable left...

"Don't go!" Ida said, suddenly standing up.

"If they get back in touch... if you talk to Rose... just tell her..." he faltered with his mouth left open. Tell her... tell her...Oh, Rose.

"Tell her I..." It was on the tip of his tongue. His both hearts burning to say those words. To let her know. To let her know what he always knew. What was always there. What he was sure was before, in the memories he did not remember and will be in the future.

It was there.

But no. A third party telling her... Ida...no, he had to tell her that himself. He will come back.

"Oh, she knows..." he breathed and released the final hook, falling into nothingness.

And as he was falling deep into the pit...he released his final lock on his own mind. Whatever was down there – he would be ready. And when he came back to her, he would be whole again.

He believed he would see her again...

"We got the comm back," Zach announced, looking at Rose, who stared at him for a moment and then instinctively dashed to the comm.

"Doctor? Are you there? Doctor, Ida? Can you hear me?" She was talking through the comm. Maybe.. Maybe... Just maybe she could hear him once more...

"Are you there, Doctor?"

"He's gone," Ida's voice, which sent Rose unmoving. Too late... Too late again. No, she couldn't speak again.

Jack snatched the comm from Rose's grasp, his brows furrowed. "Your lovely Jack Harkness speaking," Jack said sarcastically. "What do you mean, "he's gone"?"

"He fell," Ida said simply. "Into the pit." Her voice cracking. "And I don't know how deep it is - miles and miles and miles."

Rose closed her eyes, her lip trembling. Her heart heaving. It's alright.. It's alright.. Everything will be alright...She didn't trust her voice to speak up.

"Look here," Jack was beginning to lose patience. "What the hell does "he fell" even mean?"

"I couldn't stop him," Ida said in defence. She felt their grief too. "Rose..."
Rose looked up, her eyes fixed on the comm, just staring.

"He said your name..."

Jack glanced at his dear friend, who was having a hard time holding on. He handed the comm back to Zach, who only took it gently.

"I'm sorry," Zach said in comfort.

She found herself in a tight, comforting hug of her Captain, rubbing circles on her back. And she just kept staring ahead, silent.

"Ida?" Zach spoke into the comm. "There's no way of reaching you." He shook his head. "No cable, no back-up... you're ten miles down..."

"We can't get there," he said regretfully.

"You should see this place, Zach," Ida said quietly. "It's beautiful. Well, I wanted to discover things..." Her voice cracked as she teared up. "And here I am."

"We've got to abandon the base," Zach said. "I'm declaring this mission unsafe. All we can do is make sure no one ever comes here again."

"But we'll never find out what it was?" Ida said, her voice unsteady.

"Well, maybe that's best," Zach breathed.

"Yeah," Ida said sarcastically, taking calming breaths.

"Officer Scott-" Zach began, but was cut short.

"It's all right."

Zach lowered the comm, closing his eyes and pressing his lips together.

"Just go. Good luck."

"And you," Zach breathed, placing the comm into his rightful place.

"Danny - Mr. Jefferson - close down the feed links. Get the retrotopes online. Toby, don't fall behind. Everyone. Get to the rocket - strap yourselves in. We're leaving."

"And the Doctor?" Jack asked in defence, stepping a bit away from Rose.

Zach stopped for a moment, facing him. He shook his head. "There's nothing...nothing we can do for him anymore. I'm sorry."

"Yeh, that's great, nothing you can do, so you just leave them behind. Great, Captain, just... great."

Rose exhaled a long held, shuddering breath. "It's alright, Jack. He'll be back." She formed a small smile on her face, trying to reassure him, but couldn't fully relax herself. Not until she saw him again.

Jack narrowed his eyes in disbelief at her. "From there?" He gestured towards the shaft. Rose exhaled a watery laugh.
"Yeh." She nodded, pressing her lips together. "From there. TARDIS, remember?" She looked up at him, her forehead wrinkling.

Jack sighed in relief. "Oh...that man." He chuckled.

Everyone else in the base were watching the two of them like they had gone mad. "I'm sorry..." Zach began. "But he's...dead." He was making sure of their sanity. Nobody would survive miles and miles and miles of a fall.

Rose exhaled and then forced to look up at Zach with clear eyes. "He's not," she began. "He's... alright." She nodded. "You don't know him." She shook her head, when Zach tried to protest. "I know how it sounds." She gave him a half-smile. "But he's-"

A flickering sound on the screen disturbed everyone in the room. The view on the screen, made Rose's heart stop right there.

Before their eyes, laid the body of the Doctor, somewhere dark in the pit, his eyes closed, his helmet glass shattered to pieces - no signs of life.

Rose just stared at the imagine with wide eyes, them gathering up with tears. Her lips trembled as her forehead wrinkled. She titled her head. "No," she said, shaking her head. "No, no, it's not... it's not him." She was shaking her head and getting closer to the screen, her breath speeding up.

"There's no oxygen there," Toby said.

"Oh God," Danny breathed.

"Turn that off!" Zach commanded and Jefferson began to take a step further.

"NO!" Rose yelled, placing herself in defence of the screen.

The base's crew all looked at her sympathetically. "Don't look at me like that. Because he's not! He's not! He just..."

"He's not regenerating, Rose..." Jack said in a grieving voice. Rose shot him a painful look. "Don't you... don't even go down there.." Rose pointed at him.

Jack took a step forward, grabbing her by her wrist. "Jack, he's not. You know him! Please, you know him, Jack," she pleaded him with her eyes.

Zach tried to grab for her, but she shook him off, together with Jack, stepping away from them both. "I'm not leaving!" she yelled out.

"Then I apologise for this," Zach said regretfully. He locked his gaze to Jack. "Make her secure," he said and Rose just knew what was coming next.

"No - no!" She was backing away but Jack grabbed for her first. "No! No! No! Let me go! Jack! Don't do this to me!" she screamed at him in desperation, straining. Jack could only look at her with painful eyes.

"Get off me! I'm not leaving!" She still tried to struggle. She sprung her head on that cursed screen, which showed the still limp body of her Doctor.

No no no. She was not leaving him again. Not with this outcome. She just couldn't. Living. Not alone. Not like this.
"REGENERATE!" she screamed from the bottom of her lungs. "Just, regenerate!" she sobbed and that was her last thought when a needle in her arm brought darkness to her.

"Regenerate..."

The Doctor was laying face down at the bottom of the pit. His helmet shattered. Slowly he began to stir, groaning. He opened his eyes.

Hell? Rocks in every direction ahead… well, this could be hell… hold on, that was his… pieces of glass from his helmet. Oh. He fell down. Right. Into the pit. To visit the Devil. Or Satan. Or Lucifer. Or however he preferred to be called. Didn't matter really.

He slowly stood up, taking in his surroundings.

Right. He had been here before. Now he could remember. Sigh… his other self was really determined to get those memories back. Now he was not so sure if that was a good idea. His memories were finally intact and not swirling messily around but now he had to get his personality in check.

If he was gonna do this, he had to do it as his one self, not some… duo. And they thought regeneration was weird enough…

It wasn't that horrible the first time at Pete's World! Why was it now? Oh… oh… he got too influential… this other self… could he even call it his other self anymore? Guess not. He was still him but not only him.

Okay… He might have a little bit time to sort himself out, considering he wouldn't have to check the cave out like the last time.

"Can you hear me, Ida?" he asked into his comm. It only crackled. "Guess not," he breathed.

"Dislocating B-Clamp...C-Clamp... raising...nitrates to maximum...Toby... negapact feed line?"

A background sound woke Rose up, she began to stir in her seat.

"Clear!" Toby shouted. "Ready to go, sir. For God's sakes, get us out of here!"

Rose looked around. She was in the rocket. Sitting, on the seat, in that bloody rocket again! No. This couldn't do. Her whole body was shouting that she had to get away from this place.

"Captain..." Danny began, after noticing Rose waking up. "I think we're gonna have a problem passenger..."

"Keep an eye on her," Zach informed him.

"Wait... " Rose shifted in her seat. "I'm not..."

"It's all right, Rose - you're safe-" Danny tried.

"I'm not going anywhere!" she shouted at them.

"Rose," Jack began in a soft voice. He was sitting right next to her.

Rose wanted to hear none of his nonsense. Not after what he did... "Get me out of this thing! Get
"me out!" She was tugging at her seatbelt.

"And... lift-OFF!" Zach announced with enthusiasm. Toby, Jefferson and Danny were cheering, watching their rocket going up.

The Doctor turned his head in time, from the bottom of the pit, to watch as the rocket flew into the sky.

"A rocket..." he whispered. But unlike the last time, when he thought he would never... She would be safe, but he would never see her again... This time, his mouth twitched into a gentle smile.

"I'm coming back for you, Rose." *He will see her again.*

He watched as it flew further and further away.

Rose glanced at the gun, which laid on the same spot as the last time. She couldn't shoot anyone. But... She was not staying here either.

"Why have you done that.. Jack..." Rose asked in a faint voice. Jack could only sigh.

"He told me to take care of you if something happened. If he didn't make it!"

"Do you think I would have stayed that long otherwise? As a third wheel with you two going at each other?" he almost chuckled. Rose only lifted the corners of her mouth. Now she understood... Of course it would be him...

"I promised him I would take care of you," Jack ended softly, begging her to understand just how important her safety was to him, to her Doctor.

She nodded, biting her lip. "And I promised him something too..." she said softly, and turned to look him in the eyes. Her own eyes full of emotion.

"I told him I that I was never gonna leave him," she said firmly and the next moment Jack felt something being ripped apart from his wrist. He ducked his head to see his wrist free of his Vortex Manipulator. He only had time to tilt his head to look at Rose with horrified eyes.

"Rose, no-" but she just smiled sadly at him and pressed the button.

"ROSE!" Jack shouted, but she was gone.

Rose Tyler ceased to exist in the rocket.

The Doctor shined his torch on the wall of the underground cavern - there were crude drawings of a horned beast and tiny stick figures surrounding it.

"History of the big battle. Battle battle battle..." he muttered. "Boring. All the same!" he exclaimed.

"How could one bare to watch all the same things. Over and over. Ah." He put his tongue out and back in again, expressing his disgust.

"Nah, better meet the neighbour. The *beast.*" He pointed with his mouth and was ready to go near the vases when a light, right to his side, took his attention.

He turned around and his mouth fell open, eyes wide. His both hearts started to beat wildly. Dread
and warmth filling his insides. He thought he saw many impossible things in his long lived life. But apparently not nearly enough.

"Rose."

*to be continued...*
A blinding flash took Rose Tyler to her destination of nowhere. She didn't really think. She just pressed the button, hoping for the best. That might have been stupid, but she didn't have time to dwell on that. She got only one chance and she used it.

She appeared on a solid ground, but other than that it was pitch black. She couldn't see a thing. Until she turned around and saw a light, emitting from a torch. It was keeping still, unmoving and Rose nearly started walking towards it, towards the light, when the voice, stopped her.

"Rose."

Her heart skipped a beat. It couldn't be... could it? She couldn't mistake that voice for anyone or anything else (as her current lifestyle had already thought her). It was...

"Doctor...?"

She asked so softly that she was not sure if anyone even being there could answer her, but then it began to move. The torch was moving and steadily coming right to her. She followed its movements with her eyes, it keeping mid-hight. Rose gasped, when she felt two strong arms wrapping her in a big hug, holding her tightly.

"Doctor," she choked, letting a relief filled laugh escape her lungs. It was him. He was here. But how...?

"Rose," he breathed. "What're you doing here...?"

"Oh, my God. You're alive!" she exclaimed, clinging to him desperately. She melted into the feeling of peace, of having him breathing and clearly alive. The Doctor was keeping his arms securely around her back but after hearing her words stiffened in their embrace and started to pull away.

"What d'you mean?" he asked, his voice sounding fearful.

"I thought..." Rose began. She lowered her head, biting her lip. "I thought... oh, my God." She laughed nervously. "I thought, I saw you... um, back on exploration deck, there was this screen... and um... they were gonna leave for the rocket when the computer screen flickered suddenly and there was this...well, you...in some dark, hollow place... just laying still..."

"I fell, yeh," the Doctor began. "The air cushion supported the fall. Still, it left me unconscious for a while... For one reason or more," he muttered almost inaudibly. "Anyway, I woke up la-" There was a silence of sorts and a sound of inhaling. "But you thought..."

Rose tensed up. All her thoughts when coming here were in preparation for the worst. Even if she did have a small hope left that he might somehow be there, alive. That it was all a misunderstanding. After all, it was the Doctor. If anyone could surprise her in strangely coming back from the dead, it would be him.

"And you came here..." His voice was low, mixed with unshielded worry and accusation.

Rose stood firm on her ground. She knew the trip was dangerous enough, but she could never regret her decision. Even if it wouldn't have turned out that well.
"What d'you expect? That I go back on some planet, wait until Jack takes me back on Earth and then what? I get a job, eat chip and beans on toast? That kinda thing?" She laughed half-humorously. It was ridiculous to expect her to do that. "Well I can't." She shrugged casually. "Not anymore. Not for a long time. I've made my choice a long time ago. I'm never gonna leave you."

The Doctor released a shuddering breath. He looked sideways, swallowing the deep emotions. What did he expect? Was there anything else to expect of Rose Tyler? Coming, coming and coming... coming back for him. He sends her back and she just pushes back, towards him. There was nothing he could do. The last of the Time Lords was hopeless in persuading one pink and yellow human to go home, to be where it's safe.

Because she knew him like nobody else did before. In ways, which didn't require her knowing about his past, which he would consider to gradually introduce her with, after all he did try...before. By abruptly telling her he was a father once. He wanted her to know. But it was still too scary for him to dwell deeper into that...

But she would understand... She always understood him. Going past his seemingly unbreakable shields. And he didn't want her to leave. All those times when he sent her away, a part of him just wanted her to stay. But another part pushed her away. Because besides wanting her to live a fantastic life, he also couldn't bear to see her die before his eyes. Her life to whither away with him standing helpless there.

"Doctor." A soft voice and a hand, tugging on his space suit sleeve returned him to reality. He swallowed.

The Doctor lifted his both hands, reaching out to cup her cheeks, feeling her leaning into his touch. He pressed his own forehead against hers and exhaled. "Be safe."

A rustle of something living and chains, followed by a snort reached their backs. Rose stiffened in his arms. "Doctor? Do we have company?" she asked, chuckling. The Doctor soon joined her, feeling warmth fill his insides.

"We certainly do have company, Rose Tyler," he announced solemnly, stepping a few steps away from her. "And that would be-" He bent down to pick up the torch, which fell from his grip just before. "The true face of the Devil," he breathed. "Or more like an idea of him. Either way." He took a few firm steps and Rose followed after him, her legs feeling slightly unsteady as she put her feet on the ground.

"Rose," he began softly. "Meet our neighbour." His hand flew to reach the vase on the left side. With a single touch something inside it began to shine, until the whole vase gained a solid colour. The vase on the opposite side soon mirrored it on its own. "Also known as the Beast." He pointed with his mouth, his hand falling to his side.

Rose gasped at the creature right in front of her. Her one hand flew to her mouth.

"Is that... him? The Devil?" She timidly pointed towards the creature in chains. "What is he anyway?"

"Well..." The Doctor trailed off, thinking it through. "I'm not sure," he breathed and the horned beast ahead raised its head and reached one of its hands on the wall nearest to him for support. Without much of dwelling it leaned in towards them, roaring into their faces. Rose shrunk to the Doctor's side a little bit more.

Rose met the Devil's mind. But this was new altogether. The massive in size body. Black eyes
sparking dangerously as the hot air emitted from its mouth. With one single hand it could snap them dead. There wouldn't even be any body left for cleaning.

"Doctor..." Rose's voice wavered in warning but she kept herself right by the Doctor's side. She had a very real feeling that they shouldn't stay for tea on this one. "You sure we should stay so close...?" she asked, a half-hearted laugh escaping her mouth.

"Yep, perfectly safe," the Doctor breathed, sensing her worries. "He's chained. At least for now."

Only then did Rose notice that those chains in fact kept him steady and that no matter how big his exterior body was, he couldn't get out. He was trapped. Sealed away from the whole civilisation. She swallowed.

"What does it want?"

"Now that's a good question. What do you want, really, mm?" the Doctor took a step forward, daring the beast to say it. "Not the first time meeting so let's drop the introductions, shall we? Good. Why I'm here again?!" he asked in a raised voice.

Rose's head snapped towards the Doctor. Did he already settle down with the thought that all of this he had gone through before... or was it something else.

"Because it's not only that you knew me. No. That we all learned long time ago. You knew something else." His eyes narrowed. "You were aware of something you shouldn't be," he said in a low voice. "You know this's happening the second time, don't you? You can feel it! Right into your every bone and mind... Oh oh, speaking of mind! Where did you hide it this time, eh? Only took the Ood this time? Nah, I don't think so. It's in him, isn't it? Always was. You just hid him. So nobody would know. But what for? Why would you hide your own mind so desperately?"

Rose's gaze shifted from the beast to the Doctor. She was beginning to feel more and more lost by the second. "Doctor?"

And then it dawned on him. "I wasn't the only one expected here..." he said in a faint voice. He abruptly turned, facing Rose.

"How did you get here anyway?" he asked her casually, narrowing his eyes.

"I, um, took Jack's Vortex Manipulator?"

"He let you!?!" he exclaimed.

"No." She laughed. "I snatched it away," she said, smiling with tongue between her teeth. The Doctor raised his eyebrows at that, feeling slightly impressed.

He then furrowed his brows. "But how did you know where to go? What coordinates did you put into?"

Rose moved her shoulders. "I didn't," she said faintly, not looking into his eyes. "I just pressed the button and it took me here..."

"What?" the Doctor exclaimed, his eyes narrowing even more. "How did you even-" He stopped mid-sentence, realisation on his face. "Oh," he breathed, looking into the distance. "You took her to this place," he said in a low voice, turning to face the Devil again. His previous lightness gone completely. "There's no way the Vortex Manipulator would randomly happen to connect here. Not unless there was something interfering. Why did you bring her here? What do you need her for?!?"
he yelled in fury, his eyes burning with Oncoming Storm. The beast roared his own fair share.

"Who ARE you?!" He wanted answers. This time not just settling down with an explanation of humans sealing the beast, as an idea in. No. There was something much deeper than that going on here.

"Doctor, come take a look!" Rose called out for him when suddenly her (or, technically, Jack's) Vortex Manipulator flickered and a hologram came to view. It made no sense to her. It showed a humanoid shape-like figure. A metal head, rhombus shaped head, with holes fitted for eyes and mouth, a metal collar and a long robe with metal hands hanging from it.

"No," the Doctor breathed. "It can't be!" He took a step forward, watching the view with wide eyes. "Impossible. You can't... he dead."

"Doctor, who's this?"


"And what does it got to do with the beast right there?" Rose pointed in it's direction.

"You're looking at it." He raised his eyebrows, slowly walking back towards the beast. "He's the same one."

Rose didn't know what was surprising her more. The fact that apparently not all the Time Lords were dead or the fact that not only could Time Lords change faces, but body structures too. No matter how bad one's opinion about human race could be, the thing before her eyes, fell from the perception of humanoids as far as it could get.

"What d'you mean he's the same one...?"

"No no no. But you can't be! I saw you dead! Right before my eyes. You.. crumbled away!" he exclaimed, grimacing. "And now you're telling me, what? That you swanned off to be trapped here?" he cried. His brows were furrowed, not accepting even the existing fact of what was before his eyes.

"Doctor, what d'you mean he's a Time Lord?" Rose took a step forward to the Doctor's side, despite getting chills from the thing in front of her.

The Doctor turned to look at her. His eyes unsettled. "He's not a Time Lord."

"W-what?" Rose sputtered. "You just said he was!" This man was making no sense!

"Well, not anymore. Not for a long time..." The Doctor took a deep breath, turning to face the creature. "Long, long ago, we learnt the secret of time travel, but in order to make it a reality we had to have a colossal source of energy. Omega provided that energy by a brilliant feat of solar engineering. He was thought to be destroyed, instead of which he ended up in the black hole."

"His imprisonment was the price of our freedom to travel in time," the Doctor breathed.

"So he's... the creator of time travel." Rose looked up at the creature who roared at her in full force.

"He's one of the founding fathers of the Time Lords itself," the Doctor breathed, locking eyes with Rose who looked at him for a moment and then at the creature in amazement.

"But... but how did he become like that? His body... it was the shape I saw on the Vortex
Manipulator, yeh?"

The Doctor had his steady gaze fixed on the beast, who was struggling with his chains. Reaching out. "When Omega was transported through a black hole into the anti-matter universe, he gained control of the singularity and used its vast power to create his own world. He was able to shape matter within it at his will. But the corrosion in it already made its work. There was nothing left of him. He was living by his will alone," he breathed in a low voice. "We stopped him there. Blimey. All three of me, in fact," he muttered in amusement.

"What?" Rose shook her head. She soon composed herself. "So he has no body."

"Weeell, technically, yeh. So he created this. A body born from anger and thirst for revenge. A horned beast. That's all what was left of his imagination. A beast of himself, trapped in a planet of his own creation, watching over the black hole for eternity."

"And this's so not right," the Doctor whispered, shaking his head. "He was gone. Supposed to be gone. You shouldn't be here. It's wrong... unless..." His eyes suddenly widened.

"Unless what?" Rose whispered.

"That time, when we came back from the anti-matter universe, back home, to our rightful places... you came back too. Of course, you did. But what's you rightful place? You're not a Time Lord anymore. It's not Gallifrey. Not for a long time..."

"You're the holder of time. And black hole is your price. As long as there's time travel, there's also you. Holding it in place."

It roared and clenched its fists in anger, spitting fire from its mouth. "You can't escape. I'm sorry!" the Doctor looked at the creature with a disturbed expression, stepping backwards. "But I've got to stop you. I can't let you pull people here." He stopped one step away from the gate. "Black hole is your home. But then again... it leads us to one big difference. Because this black hole is not the same you were in originally. This one isn't a pathway through universes. This one just eats. And eats and eats... and it'll eat you too."

He bent down to pick up a rock and was ready to swing it over his head, to bring it crashing down on the vase - but then he stopped. Dropping it.

"I know why you're here, Rose," he breathed, his voice barely a whisper.

"Yeh? Because I still haven't got a faintest idea." She laughed nervously. Surely she couldn't be important enough for the creator of Time Lord race to meet her.

"I destroy this planet, I destroy the gravity field. The rocket loses protection and falls into the black hole. You fall in. But so do I. And Rose..."

"You're clever enough to use this against me. I can't kill her with my own hands..." he said in a pained voice. The beast laughed in triumph, roaring moments later. Rose shifted on her feet, watching it. She could only stare at him for a moment. Oh no. He was not going to get away so easily. But before she could protest of the Doctor's retreat, the alien himself interrupted her.

"Except," the Doctor began in a casual voice.

"I'm not a Time Lord you saw back then." He casually walked over to the vase on the right side. "I'll tell you who I am," he said grandly. "I'm the Doctor. With the TARDIS, together with Rose Tyler!" he exclaimed and then he swung the rock on the vase, hard, it crumbling down to pieces.
The vase on the opposite side soon following as he locked his gaze with Rose, her hands with a rock in her grip. They grinned at each other.

Flames came running from the beast's mouth as it struggled in its chains. The whole ground began shaking, rocks falling from the walls. The light falling, only the beast and its fire lightening the place.

"Roose! Come on!" He took her hand to drag her from the crumbling place. She ducked as one and two more rocks flew right beside her head. They ran further inside the pit, the Doctor leading them to the place where he knew, or expected, or honestly really hoped the TARDIS had to be at.

They were running down the tunnel, away from the Beast. Suddenly a blast of air knocked the Doctor backgrounds, him taking Rose with him. His arms securely around her, taking most of the impact on his back to himself. He was sent straight into something blue...

Rose looked up, her face lighting up. "It's the TARDIS!" she exclaimed, laughing in delight. The Doctor just beamed at the sight.

"Still there." He looked at his magnificent ship with pride and relief in his eyes.

If before she had some doubts, now Rose was more than sure that her previous assumptions were right. "You're back," she said in astonishment. The Doctor turned to look at her, considering what had she just said for a moment and then giving her one of his wide grins.

With a bit of a struggle, they managed to get themselves in their home and the Doctor rushed straight to the controls as they had yet one more trip to make before they could fetch their captain back.

"Ready for Ida Scott." The Doctor pulled the necessary levels and knobs, rushing about. "Hold on tight!" he exclaimed and grinned at Rose as the last pull of the lever took her nearly off guard and she had to grab on the jump seat to keep steady.

The TARDIS materialised right at the top of the pit and the Doctor ran to the doors. Rose tried to follow but the Doctor stopped her, warning her that there was no oxygen there and he would be back in a sec. He found Ida fallen unconscious from lack of oxygen same as the last time. His respiratory bypass kicked in when the lack of air made him struggle to breathe. He didn't waste time and after briskly picking Ida up in his arms, carried her back to the TARDIS.

Soon after Ida was packed into the TARDIS and resting to gain her oxygen back, the Doctor rushed about to fetch the rocket out of the grasps of the black hole.

"Aaah!" the Doctor sang in delight, taking one step back as he looked on the screen. "There they are!"

The TARDIS lurched for a moment, taking Rose sliding off the jump seat. The Doctor glanced sideways and took her hand in his, her taking support in him to keep steady. She slowly lifted her head up to meet his gaze. Her Doctor's gaze. Who was back.

"You're back," she said softly again. The Doctor only gave her a warm smile. And then, without another moment of consideration, they met each other in a hug. Rose locked her arms around his neck, burying her face into his neck while the Doctor lifted her up, taking a few steps back to slowly swing her around. Rose chuckled in his neck, making him slightly ticklish but feel the irreplaceable feeling of home. He hummed in contentment.
Rose and the Doctor stood side by side near the console, their hands between each other linked, just for reassuring purposes.

Suddenly the screen came to life, showing the inside of the rocket with its occupants looking more than a bit confused. Rose grinned at the sight. So good to be the one by the Doctor's side in this moment. It was where her place was.

Rose could have sworn she felt a slight squeeze of her hand, as if confirming her own thoughts but other than that, the Doctor appeared not affected by that and just casually addressed the crew.

"Sorry about the hijack, Captain. This is the good ship TARDIS," the Doctor exclaimed to the screen, while flicking some buttons with his free hand.

Rose saw as Jack's mouth literally dropped open and his eyes lighted up.

"Just to be on the safe side. Have you got Captain Jack Harkness on board?" the Doctor asked, the corners of his lips twitching up.

"Doctor! Rosie! You're both okay. Oh, you both nearly gave me a heart attack." Jack laughed through the comm. The Doctor hummed in response, smiling.

"Doctor, Rosie! You're both okay. Oh, you both nearly gave me a heart attack." Jack laughed through the comm. The Doctor hummed in response, smiling.

"Told you everything's going be alright, Jack!" Rose exclaimed, beaming at the screen.

"Where're you both?" Jack asked.


"Well - in fact, they did," the Doctor said and locked his gaze to Rose for a moment, who smiled at him knowingly. He pulled a lever, turning his face back to the controls. "In a couple of minutes, we'll be nice and safe."

"Oh, and. What do you say, if we... make a little swap? Let's say you give us the Captain, not your Captain, there's no need of him for us, not that I have anything against you, brilliant man you are, but still don't need you."

"Doctor," Rose chided him playfully, patting on his arm with a smile on her face.

"Right. Where was I? Oh, yeh. Captain. Let's take our Captain and trade him for... would it be fair to say... Ida Scott?"

"She's alive!" Zach exclaimed in delight.

"YES! Thank God!" Danny joined him.

"Bless us all," Mr. Jefferson said softly.

"Yeah! Bit of oxygen starvation, but she should be all right," the Doctor said casually. His face suddenly twitched into a grin, beaming at the crew. Zach shifted on his seat a bit unsure what to expect next.

"Mr. Jefferson!" the Doctor exclaimed. "You are..." The Doctor shook his head in disbelief.

"Is something wrong, Doctor?" Jefferson asked, being eyed by his crew questioningly.

"Wrong?" the Doctor asked, blinking. "Oh. No no no. No, in fact, I would say, brilliant. This
Jefferson laughed nervously. "We're very glad to see you two again too."

Rose grinned at the Doctor, who smiled warmly at her. He was so proud of her. She kept on surprising him. Making more and more reasons for him to care for her so unconditionally... He then remembered, clearing his throat.

"I couldn't save the Ood," he said in a more solemn voice, switching back to the screen. "Had time for one trip. They went down with the planet." Rose squeezed his hand in a comforting gesture. He gave her a gentle smile in return.

Suddenly something on the computer bleeped, taking the Doctor's attention back.

"Ah! Entering clear space - end of the line - mission closed."

Rose stood by the console with the Doctor, both of them waiting for Jack to come back up in the TARDIS. Ida Scott was already rushed back to her teary-faced crew. Even if nobody would have admitted that. But they were...glad to have her back. And Rose was so glad everything worked out this time too. She just had one nagging feeling to settle still.

"Um... since you're back now." She took a string of hair under her ear. He looked up to her. "What d'you feel like more? I mean... which one of you, is the real you? Is it the you from our..." She gestured. "Time." She shook her head slightly.

"Original timeline," the Doctor offered, smiling at her.

"Yeh, the you from original timeline," Rose began again. "Or the new you." She looked up at him. "The New New New Doctor." She could hardly suppress the grin on her face.

The Doctor giggled, beaming at her in delight.

"So?" Rose asked, prompting him.


She blinked. "Both?"

"Yep," the Doctor agreed casually, pointing with his lip. "I'm still the New New New me, but not just that. I have the whole knowledge of our past time together. Aaand, at the same time, I'm the old me." He stopped suddenly, frowning. "Old me. Brr." He shuddered, startling Rose a bit. "Not using that again," he spilled. "Anyway, I'm...both. Yeh, just both. One or two. Or two in one. Or a mix. Yeh. I like mixes...I think."

Rose laughed out loud at him. "What?" he asked innocently, amused. She shook her head. "Glad to have you back."

"Glad to be back," he said warmly.

Suddenly the doors opened up and Jack came into view, grinning at them both while at the same time shaking his head in disbelief. Rose grinned at him and skipped to meet him in a hug. "Uhh, good to see you!"

"Good to see you, Rosie! Never expected to see you again after that stunt with my Vortex...Blimey, it's good to see you Mr. Jefferson!"
Manipulator. Which reminds me, where's it?"

Rose laughed and stepped away from their embrace. "It's here. Here you go." She handed their captain his device back, who put it safe back on his wrist. He then looked up to see the Doctor standing by the console with a raised eyebrow.

"Good to see you too, Doc." Jack began walking towards him with a smile on his face. Rose leaned in to the walking Jack to whisper. "He's back by the way." Grinning to herself at the abrupt stop Jack done. Putting quite a bit strength in himself, Jack lifted his eyes to see the Doctor casually walking towards him.

He expected the worst. He really did. But what came was only a bear hug! For a moment he didn't know what to do but then hugged the Doctor back just as happily.

When the two broke apart, Jack spoke first. "I'm sorry, Doc," he said regretfully.

The Doctor gave him a small smile. "I know." Rose smiled to herself at their exchange.

"Right then!" the Doctor suddenly exclaimed and walked to the controls once again. Rose went to settle into the jump seat.

"Zach? We'll be off, now. Have a good trip home. And the next time you get curious about something- oh... what's the point? You'll just go blundering in. The human race..." And most of all... Rose Tyler...

"But Doctor," Ida suddenly said, taking the Doctor off his musings. "What did you find down there? That creature - what was it?"

The Doctor's eyes travelled to Rose. She kept silent, just looking at him, waiting.

"I don't know!" the Doctor exclaimed blithely. His attention back on the monitor. "Never did decipher that writing. But that's good! Day I know everything? Might as well stop," he muttered. "Right, onwards, upwards - Ida - see you again, maybe!"

"I hope so," Ida said through the comm.

"And thanks, boys!" Rose called out.

"If those two doesn't call you back, you can always leave me a message!" Jack exclaimed, making the Doctor and Rose chuckle, their heads shaking.

"Hang on though, Doctor. You never really said... Captain Jack introduced himself..." Jack grinned at her words. "But you two... who are you?"

"Oh..." The Doctor paused, his face breaking into a grin. "The stuff of legend," he said fondly, while looking at Rose.

They smiled at each other and turned their heads to watch the rotor rise and fall steadily.

What came next, only surprised the Doctor mildly. They all knew that was coming. Jack asked to be sent back to Cardiff, giving the two of them best regards. Leaving them to have some space and time alone. They needed that. Time was coming short for them and Jack wanted them to use it to the fullest, without being in their way, no matter how tempting it could be. He promised to come to their aid, if the situation asked. But they all knew it would be soon.
It was night time in the TARDIS. Rose had already changed to her pyjamas but couldn't quite bring herself to go to sleep just yet. She expected the Doctor to pop in and tell her goodnight but more than that, she hoped he would stay with her. It had been a long day for them all and she didn't want to let go of him. Not today. Well, truthfully, not ever, but at least for today.

A knock on the door startled her a bit. She came to a stop from her pacing around the room. Without having an answer, the doors swung open and revealed a lean figure coming right in. He had a tentative and tender smile on his face, just watching her smile to him in return. He kept his hands in his pockets like not fully knowing just where to put them better.

Rose locked her gaze to him, searching for something to grab onto. The Doctor was watching her, with one of his deep gazes, being far far away but still seeing only her. But then he shook his head and addressed her casually.

"Ready for bed then?"

Rose's mouth quivered into a smile. "Yep." She nodded, fiddling with her top and taking secret glances at him.

"Good. Good," the Doctor agreed absentmindedly.

"Wanna stay?" she offered softly.

The Doctor's head suddenly snapped to meet her eyes, mouth slightly agape. "W-what" he sputtered, blinking.

Rose pressed her lips together, but moments later composed herself. "I mean, it's been a long day and... I expect you would want to check into my head now?" She smiled at him, chuckling. "To see what's going on."

He swallowed. "Yeh," he breathed, his eyes glazing with fear, curiosity and need. Oh, Rose. It's so much more than that...

"Come on, then." She urged him, coming to sit on the edge of her bed. "Sit yourself, Doctor." She patted the place next to her, beaming at him.

The Doctor kept himself stoned to the ground for a moment longer when he slowly began closing the distance between them. He kept his eyes locked to hers and after reaching the soft material of the duvet, sat down next to her.

She kept a warm smile on her face. He could tell she was slightly wary of what was coming next but her whole body was radiating trust and curiosity for herself. Whatever was going to happen, she had already decided to go for it.

Now it was for the Doctor to make the move. It was hard. He was a telepathic being, he needed that touch of a mind but after the Time War he lost it. And the only few times he got to pass through someone's mind was for a higher purpose. For saving lives. It was the same with Rose here, sitting right ahead of him, in a way... But the problem was, that it could never be the same with her.

And no matter how much shields he would put to his memories, his past, no matter how much he would prepare himself for this...

"I have to tell you first..." he began carefully. Rose let him continue. "You may put doors behind the memories you don't want me to look at, although we might need them... but no, I would just
have to find another way, it doesn't matter-

"Doctor," Rose said, chuckling at him softly, she wanted to tell him...

"Anyway. That's that, but..." He stopped, his mouth open, looking at her fearfully. He exhaled, lowering his gaze. "You can't hide from me completely. You can put doors for your memories but the thoughts you are having right now, would be... visible. It's necessary to not block them for the connection to work through. So I could... er, talk with you, in your mind..." He looked up to her.

Rose only nodded, seemingly not affected all that much or maybe not even at all! "Yeh, thought it would be something like that," she said faintly.

"Rose..." the Doctor began in a low voice, his brows furrowed. "I'm..." He swallowed. Her head suddenly shot up.

"Oh, no you don't. Don't you dare apologizing. This's what I have accepted and decided. And it's alright. I want this too."

"You do...?" he asked her softly, a slight smile playing on his lips.

"Well, yeh, I suppose. I don't know." Rose chuckled, brushing her hair from her face. "I mean, I don't know what it's like, but..." She locked her eyes with him. "It's you. Why would I want anything hidden from you?"

The Doctor's breath hitched in his throat. And it was starting to get difficult to breathe even with his superior respiratory system. He was trying to say something but each time his mouth opened, it would just close again. Having understood that he wouldn't be making a next move himself, Rose took matters in her own hand. She scooted closer and enveloped him in a hug.

The Doctor released a breath and put his own arms around her. Closing his eyes at the feel of her. Letting it relax him.

After a while, he pulled back from their embrace, looking deep into her bright eyes. "Rose..." he began in a low voice. He opened his mouth, but no words came the second time either. He felt a soft hand rubbing circles on his arm.

"It's alright," she said softly. "You can tell me."

He freed his arms from having them on Rose's forearms and ran one hand through his hair. He looked sideways. "Your thoughts won't be the only ones visible..." he said faintly.

"Oh," Rose only said.

"Yeh." The Doctor smiled at her, his smile still not quite reaching his eyes though. "I have many shields on my mind, but... I can't separate my thoughts."

"Well, I guess it just works both ways, yeh?" She tried a casual approach.

"Actually, no."

Rose furrowed her eyebrows in confusion. "What d'you mean?"

"Humans are not able to create shields on their thoughts. They can put their memories behind the doors, but the thoughts just keep swirling around, not staying in one place for long. They are not able to hide them, because they're nothing solid. They're a big mass of...everything."
Rose nodded. "Right. Because we're not telepathic."

"Well, yeh." The Doctor chuckled. Rose joined him but soon stopped.

"Hold on. Then how you..."

"I can hide my thoughts from others, but I can't hide them from you... Even if I wanted to, which may be a good idea, sometimes," he muttered. "Still, I... just can't."

"Why not?"

"We have a connection, Rose... Going through strangers' minds to me is like... well, if we put it in professional side, like a doctor with his patients. Looking for what's wrong. But with you... " He pressed his lips together. "I can't be casual with you. Not with your mind. It's...I guess I got too attached." He smiled half-humorously. "And now I can't be objective with you. I can't separate my going into your mind as professional. Because you... This..." He faltered, his voice slightly shaky.

"It means a lot to me."

"I would be mad if it wouldn't," she joked, giving him a warm smile, a brush of pink on her cheeks.

"Yeh?" he asked faintly.

"Yeh. Well, not really, I suppose. Since.. I couldn't really... I mean, it's not my place to be mad about something like that, but... I would be a bit unhappy, yeh."

He smiled at her tenderly. "Then you have nothing to worry about, Rose Tyler."

"Good to know," she joked, smiling with tongue between her teeth smile. "So, what do I do?" She sounded quite excited.

"Just relax. I'll guide you through. Just let me in." He scooted over, to gain better access and more comfortable position for them. He then slowly, some would say achingly slowly, lifted his fingers to her temples, stopping just an inch away to get one last approval.

"Alright?"

"Yeh." She nodded and the next moment she felt a huge wave of gust fill her mind. It felt like everything became confusing at once. So many thoughts swirling around, that none seemed to make any decent sense. She twitched her face muscles in concentration.

"It's alright. Stay with me. It's me. Only me." The Doctor soothed her. "I'll try speaking to you now into your mind. Just concentrate on my voice." Rose nodded absentmindedly.

"Can you hear me?"

Rose gasped, flinching slightly on the surface.

"It's me. The Doctor."

She seemed to relax a bit.

"Um, hello?" she tried in her mind. The Doctor was silent.

"Doctor? Am I doing this wrong? Oh, I don't know..."
"No," he said. "No. You're doing fine. Brilliant, in fact. I didn't even tell you how to speak here."

"Just think it through and it pops in the conversation, yeh?" she joked. He laughed with her.

"Yeh."

I love your laugh.

The Doctor suddenly tensed up on the surface.

"Um, Doctor? Was that your random thought or something?" she joked, expecting him to deny it. But he didn't.

"Yeh."

"Oh. I see."

"Is that alright?" he asked in a tentative way.

"Yeh," she answered at once.

"Right then. Let's try get going."

"Going where?" she laughed.

"Weeell... we can try... let's just try that door over there. Or, an arch, more like. Rose, why do you keep doors there if you leave them open anyway."

"Dunno. Just thought it would leave us better access. You know. One time period with another. So it won't get messy."

"Rose Tyler. Your real room is a mess," he joked.

"Well yeh, but it's my own mind. I might need to know what I'm looking for." He only chuckled at her.

"Come on, then." He lead their way, tugging her by her hand.

"You're holding my hand," she said, watching them linked.

"No. It's only my mind taking yours with me. I just put it like an image of hand-holding. I like hand-holding. I think it fits... us..."

"I like that too."

-888-

Suddenly a burst of memories came crashing to them. They saw Rose, ten years old Rose at her cousin Mo's wedding. She sat with some other girl, who was younger than her by a few years, watching the pair at the aisle with fascination.

"How do they know who to marry? Is it written somewhere?" the girl asked absentmindedly.

"Mum said once you see him, you know," Rose said. "When I see him. I'll know."

"How would you know?" the girl asked, either taking Rose not seriously or being curious.
"I just will."

The Doctor had a warm smile on his face. Well, or a projection in his mind of a warm smile. Or a projection of his feelings.

"That wedding was ridiculous." Rose laughed. "Mum always said they're gonna kill each other one day. They were just like cat and a mouse. Always doing this-" she stopped abruptly, another flash coming right up. But it felt different. It didn't feel like it was coming from her memories. Not even from her herself, in fact.

In this flash, of event, Rose saw two people standing by the aisle. But when she looked more carefully to see who was the bride and the groom, she saw...well, herself. And she looked very beautiful. She didn't know if she ever saw herself that beautiful. She was smiling, radiating with joy at the man in front of her. And what made Rose's heart leap, was that the groom... was the Doctor himself. Wearing a black/brown pinstriped suit and converses.

Right. Of course it would his choice of clothes. But then she felt like something was drifting away from her mind. The presence. The Doctor's presence suddenly felt completely still in her mind. She tried searching for him but even so she could still feel him, she couldn't reach him.

Very carefully she tried to grab onto the Doctor's sleeve on the surface. It felt like a rush of electricity came rushing back into her mind. She gasped. Both in her mind and outside.

"Right. Yeh. Sorry. Off we go then?"

Rose was sure the Doctor could pick on her curious thoughts, but if he felt like dropping the subject... She let him. It was not really the time, or place to consider...whatever was that all about.

They walked further into her mind, to more recent memories, in somewhat an awkward silence. Rose tried desperately to not Think about Anything. But it was hard to do. Sometimes it would get so weird that they would walk into a bright red, bricked wall. But the Doctor was acting even more strange. Because he would just lead them both around the wall, like nothing was really there out of place.

They came to a stop when they felt a rush of wind coming from the not-so-closed door. They walked in just to step onto... sand.

Bad Wolf Bay.

"It's cold here," the Doctor said faintly. "Was it cold there?"

"Just a bit."

The Doctor half expected to see himself appearing on the cursed beach, but not only did he not see himself, he neither saw Jackie or Pete or Mickey the idiot.

"Where's everyone?" he asked, looking around.
"I came by myself."

The Doctor turned to look at Rose, who was watching something in the distance. He followed her gaze to see Rose, memory Rose, sitting on the cold beach, watching the ocean.

"I came here five and half days after." She chuckled faintly, biting her lip.

The Doctor tried to smile but it only came as a grimace.

-888-

His thoughts were suddenly disturbed, when the memory Rose appeared, on the same day, but was now walking near the rocky mountain, where the path lead. He felt how his Rose, well... let's just call her his Rose for now, right, then, he felt how His Rose tensed up. He squeezed her hand in reassurance and then heard a yelp, coming from the memory Rose. He looked up to see a big piece of rock laying near her. She was breathing heavily, but other than that, she didn't seem to feel That bothered about being almost killed by the rock.

-888-

They suddenly were dragged to another memory. In this one, she was with her family. Pete, Mickey seemed to be there too, a rather pregnant Jackie and Rose. Rose. She was sitting on the table, writing something, while the others were rushing about in the room, going in and out, which looked like a study room. Suddenly Mickey's voice rang from the hall.

"Rose, it's starting!" he called out. Rose stopped her writing and sighed. She put the pen back on the table and got ready to stand up when her leg chair got mixed in the carpet bellow and her leg twisted. She unbalanced and came crashing hard on the floor. The next moment the whole bookcase began shuddering and a glass statue, standing on the very top shelf was swinging dangerously.

"You've got to be kidding me," memory Rose exclaimed and rolled over just at the time when the statue came crashing on the floor, shattering to pieces. Some pieces flew far, and they stuck to Rose's skin. But only shallow wounds were made.

-888-

Rose could feel the Doctor next to her, clench his fingers into fists in his pockets.

-888-

Other memories were crashing onto them like a roller coaster. She would be walking in the bank and suddenly a pair of masked men would decide to rob the bank, armed. While their intentions would look like they weren't even trying to pull the trigger, it would suddenly get off, inches from grazing her head.

-888-

Or she would be swimming in the pool, somehow getting out the last, before the closing and then would be pulled right in the water, by some unknown energy.

-888-

It went on and on and by the twentieth of those memories the Doctor was barely standing still, well, mentally standing, his eyes black with self loathing to have left her there and worry for his
pink and yellow human.

At first he still tried to joke about her being jeopardy-friendly but they soon saw that it was not the case.

Something was coming...and bad.

Nothing really could have prepared him for this.

-888-

In the memory, Rose was on a mission from Torchwood. It was the only place which really felt like she was being at least a bit closer to the Doctor.

And being joapardy-friendly as she was, she managed to get herself shot by an alien gun, directed towards the aliens for a purpose.

The impact was instant and the Doctor, together with Rose, saw how her own image crumbled to the ground, clenching her chest.

She was laying on the cold, hard ground. Her breathing shallow and eyes unfocused. She could barely feel her surroundings, so her memories were slightly fuzzy, hard to see. They felt how memory Rose saw Pete come squatting down next to her, together with Mickey, who was on the verge of tears. He was asking her to keep awake but her eyes would get heavier and heavier. Their view on the memory would get cloudier and cloudier until it got pitch black. And Rose knew what was coming next, but she never got to Show him that.

The next moment, Rose was thrown aback by an abrupt link severing. She gasped in the surface, her head spinning and eyes unable to focus. She rubbed on her temple, grimacing a bit. Little by little her focus came back to her and she could see the view ahead of her. The Doctor was sitting very still. His forehead getting a whole new level of wrinkled line. And then she understood what was wrong.

The Doctor was no longer in her mind. He got out. And as fast as he could.

She reached out to take his hand, trying to reassure him that no matter what happened she was here, alive. At her touch he only closed his eyes tightly shut, trembling slightly.

They stayed like that for a moment, Rose brushing her thumb on his hand. She inhaled a breath. "Do you... want to try again...?" she asked carefully, her voice faint.

She could hear the Doctor exhaling a shuddering breath.

"I can't...Not right now."

"Okay."

"I just...can't."

Rose only nodded, even if the Doctor couldn't see it. She knew he could feel it at the very least. She understood.

"I'm here," she said softly, giving him a small smile.

He knew what he was getting himself into. By accepting her, by taking that one step forward. He knew. But to have seen that... He was reminded once again that not only was he condemning
himself to watching her age her whole life and eventually die from old age, he was also signing up for the possibility of her accidental death. For one of the times when he would not be able to save her.

Would it be him? The one sitting by her laying still body, pleading for her to stay awake. Would it be him next?

"You won't be," he said in a low, pained voice, his eyes opened. Not always.

Rose opened her mouth to say something, but he didn't let her finish. He leaned in and sealed her lips with his, tugging her closer by her neck with his one hand, another cupping her cheek. He wanted reassurance. That she was alive. But most of all, he wanted her to know, just how much she meant to him.

His kiss was tender but firm too, not letting her escape for a second longer when she broke their kiss to take a breath. His mouth soon followed hers and captured them once more. She never did protest though. She was more than eager to show herself all the reassurance he needed.

When they broke apart, Rose was panting slightly. They had their foreheads pressed together, just staying like that for a few moments.

"Sleep, Rose," the Doctor said faintly. He pressed one last kiss on her forehead and got ready to get up but came to an abrupt halt, when a hand stopped him. He looked down to see Rose grabbing his hand.

"You too," she only said.

He swallowed. "Rose, I don't need-" he tried to say but was interrupted.

"Yes, you do," she said firmly and reached out for his face, to brush her fingers under his eyes where heavy bags were visible. He didn't have the will to fight it anymore. But neither did he make a move to lay down. He just slumped on the bed, staying still.

Rose scooted towards him, lifting herself up on her knees and took charge of taking him out of his suit, which he just let her to take off and then tie. When he was done and only in his shirt, she moved away from him to get under covers. She settled down and for a moment there was just a silence in the room. The Doctor still sitting by the end of the bed, Rose already set for sleeping.

Their eyes met for a moment.

And she just smiled at him. "Come here then." She patted the place next to her, almost playfully. The Doctor eyed the place a bit suspiciously for a moment and then sighed, running a hand through his hair. His one hand instinctively came towards his collar, wanting to readjust his tie, but then found nothing there.

Rose chuckled. "Right. Already off," he said and went to settle down next to Rose.

And that night, one of them indeed had a blissful sleep. Snuggling up to the Doctor, his one hand resting on her waist while her own hugging him close to herself. The Doctor counted her breaths while playing with the strings of her hair and looking in the distance.

He couldn't lose her now. The battle of Canary Wharf had to change.

After a few hours, he closed his eyes.
to be continued...
Fear Her Part One

He hated this place.

He hated being here and most of all having any thoughts about it. Regardless.

He stood still inside the room, the strong wind ruffling his always already ruffled enough hair. But he didn't seem to be affected by the pull himself. Only the hair. Weird, that.

He clenched his fists in white grips, anxiously awaiting for the man, named Mr. Pete Tyler, to come back.

Only he was not.

The Doctor whipped his head, looking around the room for any clues what has gotten wrong. Why the picking-up spot was still vacant. "Where's he?" he asked in a thick voice, alarm taking over.

The Doctor watched how his pink and yellow human strained her fingers to keep a better hold on the lever, but they dangerously slipped by. His both hearts skipped a beat, scared.

"Mr. Pete Tyler. Where the hell is he?" he yelled out, eyes filled with desperation. He looked back at the White Hole, just as she...

went inside.

His eyes flew open.

No, he was not getting his sleep today. He could feel his hearts beating wildly inside his chest. Respiratory bypass or not, it was poor aid for heartache. Heartaches, in his case. Double the dose, double the damage. He could feel himself loosing it. Finally starting to go to terms with the Time War only to get this? No. He could not do this. He needed to run. To move, to just do something. Anything! Just... make it stop.

His fingers twitched.

Unnatural body warmth for his relatively cool body temperature passed to his body. There was... something he was missing, something was there. No. Wait. Not something. Someone.

He jerked his head to the side and it was! She was. His... Rose. He twitched his fingers again and finally saw where they ended, where the warmth was coming from. Right arm - completely slack on the duvet, was tightly buried underneath Rose's body. Well. Her... neck, or... shoulder-sort-of, giving the Doctor just enough access to his hand to wrap it around her body.

As if sensing him, Rose chose that particular moment to shift; her right hand blindly searching for a second body on the bed. When she did, she pulled herself closer to him, nuzzling his ribcage and exhaling a content sigh. His hearts soared at the sight. Oh, Rose. What seemed like a vital need of getting far far away, began to gradually leave his body. Even if he was hurting... he would not be calmer anywhere else but here. In this moment. In this completely impossibly given (something he was more than sure he didn't deserve - judging by the evidence how the universe rubbed it in at daily basis), but even so, unashamedly and deeply desired moment. Chance. A second chance.

And that, was something he wasn't given often.
It was dawn already. Well, as much as dawn could be in a timeless spaceship. It was more of a human-time-tracking, mind... The point being, he should really be going now. He should really re-entangle himself from underneath Rose's body, and just go.

He should... do that. Like. Really should. Any other version of him would be already stuffed into the deep ends of the console. Tinkering! That's!... would have been his destination. But he was yet to move even an inch from his spot, and by each second it was becoming more and more clear that he was not gonna move any time soon.

He would stay. He would stay for her. He would stay for himself, because...

He needed her.

So he would make sure she stayed this time. He would fight for her.

A stir of the body, he was leeching the heat for the past couple of hours from, went as a straight impulse to his nervous system, triggering a shiver going for all the length of his body. He swallowed.

He could pick out the change in her breathing. She was waking up! And he was... here. And... panicking. Because he was here. And that, he didn't do. He loved people. Humans. Those little, stupid but amazing humans. And he participated in a lot more domestic gatherings than his previous leather-incarnation could have ever dream to be part of, but still. He did not do sleep overs. Sleep overs. Was that what this looked like? Them, just... sleeping, in the same room?

And after the whole ordeal with Omega, his memories coming back for good (he hoped), and... and the kiss. Oh, kisses, actually. Which were... weell, you know. Brilliant was always the word he liked. But coming back to the point... that means... that means. Oh. Changes. Relationship changes!

That was... he was not sure what it was. Okay, if we think rationally about this, every problem has a mathematical solution, so... Bloody brilliant, this was not a mathematical equation.

So that meant... the answer was still an "x".

At first, she was not sure what was going on, or what were her surroundings altogether. With a grunt, she rolled over on her back, placing her hand over her eyes. She squinted her eyes tightly shut, not yet ready to face the daylight. She was instigating a full blown protest against waking up. Especially when her bed felt that much cosier than the day before.

A low chuckle reached her ears and she froze. Not yet being able to recognise her surroundings, she let confusion and panic overwhelm her for a few moments, when she remembered that she did not go to sleep alone.

The Doctor. He was here. Or rather, still here. That was... new.

Slowly retreating her arm from her face, she twisted her neck to the side. Opening her heavy, morning lids, she came face to face with a beaming smile.

"Hello," he greeted her fondly.

Instantly a smile spread across her own face, mirroring his. "Hello."

There was a pause, a rather unusual pause and silence as they just stared at each other. The lack of
the Doctor's gob was almost deafening.

She could see some weariness beneath his smiles, the tiredness not completely leaving him, if at all. But she knew he needed his space, and she wasn't the one to push him. Shaking the questions and doubts away, for now, she pressed her lips together, shifting in the sheets. "So what's in store for today?" She tried to start it light.

The Doctor shook himself from, what seemed like a deep inner thinking. He then proceeded to roll on his own back. "Well, I was thinking... well, no. Actually, scratch that. I wasn't thinking about it, or her, because if I was, that would be like... terrifying." He nodded in agreement. "Really terrifying." He laughed a bit, provoking an amused smile from Rose. "Also, way too domestic, and we wouldn't want that, no." He cleared his throat. "Anyway." He turned his head to look at her from above, a small, warm smile on his face. "I reckon we should go visit your mother. Can't let the Absorbaloff stay on the loose for too long." He let a grin slip on his lips.

Her brows furrowed. "D'you think Elton will be there too? Met my mum already?"

"I don't know." The Doctor shrugged his brows. "Probably. Timelines couldn't change all that much. And knowing Jackie... the poor lad would be at her flat by dawn."

Rose braced herself on her elbows. "Poor lad? He's the one who done her wrong. Using her to get to us and all that!"

"Well, that was not nice of him."

She flopped on her back. "Mum's been so upset 'cos of him. He made her believe she had a second chance in life," she sighed.

"And she does!" the Doctor cried. "Just not with the same man. Mr. Pete Tyler is a very nice match for Jackie Tyler. She got quite a literal second chance in life." He took a deep breath in, lowering his voice meaningfully. "And take it from me, they don't come so often."

By the end of his speech, Rose was already grinning all ears at him. "Not a bad life?"

He caught her teasing smile and replied in kind. "Better with you."

"You can't be serious..."

"I'm afraid so."

"But it's..."

"I know."

The TARDIS sat comfortably right in-between two gates, one saying "DANGER - KEEP OUT" and the other saying "NO PARKING IN FRONT OF THESE GATES".

Hands in his pockets, the Doctor stepped outside, a bit to the right side, letting Rose come out fully too. Looking around, Rose came to a stop near Shayne Ward poster advertising his greatest hits album tacked onto a fence.

"It's bad, yeh? Us being here," she said with a furrowed brow, staring at the poster.

"Well, it's not good," the Doctor sighed, taking in his surroundings. "Skipping ahead in a timeline? That never ends well. Not the ones I witnessed, at least." He inhaled, raising his eyebrows. "But
then again." Tilting his head to the side, considering. "This new timeline seem a little bit... more flexible than the rest. Sort of... mend-y... mend-able, mind... a lot like you lot."

"But what about Absorbaloff?" Rose went to stand by the Doctor's side. "This far in the timeline, we've already met him."

"Weeell," the Doctor trailed off, his voice nonchalant. "Probably absorbed half of London by now," he said dismissively. He shifted uneasily on his feet, a sheepish smile on his face, when he saw Rose's piercing stare.

"Or not," he added quickly. He cleared his throat, turning his gaze to the view around. "Anyway, I say... let's go take a look around." He started moving, rounding on the corner towards the 'Olympic street'.

"You think it will show why we've landed here?" Rose asked casually, walking down the street. Somewhere in the middle of their walking, the Doctor's hand fell out of his pocket and linked his fingers with Rose's.

"Could do. The universe is very unpredictable in this New World. New World," he tested the words with his tongue, when an idea clicked for him. "We should probably call it - New Universe. The reset timeline is getting old." He frowned a bit.

"Oi," Rose called out in a playful anger, squeezing his hand. "I've thought of that one."

The Doctor inhaled, momentary not sure how to get out of this one. "Aand, it was brilliant. It suited our situation perfectly. But if we are staying in this universe from now on, a more conversational name would come in handy."

"So, New Universe. Like New Earth."

"Yep."

After a moment, an engine sound echoed from somewhere behind them and the Doctor nudged Rose aside to let it pass. A red car drove past them, the Doctor only sparing it one glance as it draw away.

"That car," Rose said, thoughtfully.

"Mm?" The Doctor turned his head, watching her questioningly.

"That's the same car that broke down last time." She pointed in its retreating bumper. "All the cars stopped there for a week... Spaceship must've messed with the engines or something."

"Oh, but that's a brilliant opportunity," the Doctor cried in delight. "Any other time we'd have to pick our skirts and run as far away as we can to avoid meeting another version of us. But noow..." He hummed, pleased. "We can experience it first hand once more."

"Find" the cause. Meet the neighbours," Rose added.

"Exactly," he beamed at her. After a while he seemed to catch himself. "Not that I'm saying I have skirt." He looked at her meaningfully. "Because I don't." At Rose's amused smile, he added once more. "I really don't." He turned to face the road. "Not for me, at least."

"Look at you. All eager for Olympics," Rose sang with amusement in her voice. She then sobered up, as if thinking of something important. "Mind you... Papua New Guinea."
The Doctor freed his other hand out of his pocket to tug on his ear. "Weell..."

Rose shook her head. "They didn't even compete in shot-put."

He inhaled, interrupting her. "As I said... well..." Rose raised an eyebrow at him, waiting for him to make something up, but he just stared at her, mouth open. "Well. They could participate this time. In this New Universe. It looks very promising to me. New Universe calls for a New Papua New guinea... That's New twice. New New Papua Guinea," he kept on going, concentrated expression on his face.

She laughed. "Yeh. Let's just keep hoping that."

While the Doctor kept on going about different ways of naming Papua New Guinea and finding connection between it and New Earth, she let her eyes wander around their surroundings. She scanned the road when a poster caught her eye. "Oh!" She pointed at its direction. "That one still there."

The Doctor blinked. "What is?" Looking at her for answers.

"The poster. About the missing kids."

"Oh."

They went over it, scanning it for any differences.

"So, what's the plan? We gonna pick up the spaceship and leave it at Chloe's door?" She pressed her cheek against his arm, one hand holding on as she studied the poster with great interest.

The Doctor swiftly turned to look at her, as if finding her hard to believe. "Rose Tyler! It would be an... offence, a... crime to our time-travelling adventures to just solve the mystery in one go."

She grinned at that. "Well, I can agree to that," she said, tongue between her teeth smile. The Doctor kept on staring, his disbelief melting from his face. When a small grin appeared on his face, Rose patted on his arm and straightened up towards the road.

The Doctor leaned in to her. "I think, we should blend in. Treat it as any other trip. Bit of trouble in between and... fun."

"Oh, that won't be too hard to do." She turned around to face him, a wide smile on her face. "We always do that," she half-whispered lovingly.

"That's us." They beamed at each other.

A sound of forced engine disturbed their bubble. They looked ahead of themselves and saw how a black man and the driver of the same red car were cooperating in pushing the car from the spot. The black man from behind, straining, whilst the driver was pushing from the driver's side.

Rose patted the Doctor's arm, nudging him with her shoulder. "Come on. Let's give 'em a hand."

"Here we go," the black man exhaled some deep puffs of air while trying to push the car.

"D'you need some help?" Rose offered with a smile on her face.

"No, we're all right, love."

"That doesn't look all right to me," the Doctor duly noted.
The help took a glance at the Doctor, scanning him from head to toe. The Doctor raised his eyebrows in slight amusement, but otherwise appeared calm.

"Alright then. Your bloke can help," the man finally yielded. "Come on, mate, push it from behind."

The Doctor smiled but then it froze on his face. He rounded on a circle, looking in all directions and sniffing the air. He had an expression as thought something was bugging him. He took a moment, but then it passed just as quickly as it started. Shrugging himself out of his coat, he went towards Rose.

He offered her his Janis Joplin's coat, bringing the material to her hands. She collected it with an amused smile on her face. To her surprise, the Doctor didn't reciprocate, only stared at her with a tight-lipped smile. She furrowed her brows in question.

Just before passing by her shoulder, the Doctor stopped. Inches from her ear, he whispered in a low voice, "Someone's watching."

The wariness in his voice sent Rose to turn her head back in the street's direction, searching for anything that meets the eye. She squinted her eyes when she couldn't pinpoint anything out of the ordinary. Once she turned back, the Doctor was already bouncing on his heels, wide smiles and all - ready for action.

It took only a few push for both of them working together when the engine suddenly sprang to life, causing Kel to promptly fall over. He stood up, brushing himself down.

Rose went over to the Doctor, helping him put his coat back on. "Now I know I got native. Pushing cars in broad daylight? That's almost as bad as pushing a trolley in a packed hour of Westfield."

"Cheers, mate!" the driver called out, driving off. The Doctor waved at him with a small smile.

"Hold on. What's Westfield?" Rose asked.

The Doctor inhaled, raising his eyebrows. "A shopping centre in Stratford, London. Will be opened somewhere in... September, 2011. Your mother will love it." Rose chuckled at him, giving a few sweeps along his coat arm.

Once the Doctor was properly groomed, he straightened up, hands in pockets. "So...um..." the Doctor trailed off. "Er... sorry, what was your name?" One hand flew out of his pocket to tug on his ear.

The man looked him over, a bit taken aback. "Me? Oh, I'm Kel."

"Nice to meet you, Kel. I'm the Doctor. Now, could you tell me - this thing." He gestured towards the road. "Cars breaking down, motor giving way... this happened a lot down here?" He let an innocent smile slip on his face.

"On this road?" Kel waved his hands around. "God, yes. Been doing it all week!"

"Since those children started going missing?" Rose suggested, concealing her growing grin.

"Yeah, I s'pose so."

The Doctor turned to Rose, who had a grin on her face, nodding at her with a small smirk on his own.
"So, let me make a guess, Kel," the Doctor started, a concentrated expression plastered on his face. "The cars stopping by around..." He span around, one finger of his hand motioning all over the place. "Round round round... round round round your boat," he sang in absentminded whisper. Rose couldn't stop her chuckle escaping her lips.

"Wasn't it row your boat?" Kel asked, confused.

"Naah, it's 'round' on every civilised planet. Not that I'm saying Earth is uncivilized. 'Cos it is! Well. Reasonable. Just... bit behind from others...eh. Doesn't matter. Anyway. Arouuund... aha!" He bounced on his feet. "There! Right over this spot."

The Doctor quickly crouched down, his hand hovering above the tarmac. His face immediately lit up once he felt the sensation going right through his hand. He giggled, wiggling his fingers. "Tickles."

"How d'you guess that?" Kel asked, impressed.

"Heat. This place emits a huge amount of heat. Right from underneath all this tarmac."

"What, are you saying something from inside's disturbing all my work here?" he asked, worked up. The Doctor didn't reply, just continued wiggle-wagglng with his fingers.

"Everything the same down there?" Rose bent down, watching the Doctor's 'work'.

"Yep. Weell, the heat appears just the right degrees for Isolus species." He hummed in delight of the feeling.

Suddenly two feet appeared in the Doctor's peripheral vision.

"What's your game?" a dubious voice asked. The Doctor span around, finding the same man who chased him away from his yard, by mini football goal.

The Doctor blinked, floundering. "My... um... Snakes and Ladders?" He bent down his head back to the road, thinking deeply. "No. Hold on. We already had that conversation before..." He shook his head out of it. "And you said...!" He stood up, pointing his finger in the man's direction but was yet to face him. "You said... Or not. Hold on. Was it something that I said?" He brushed his cheek, thinking. "Something about... face... facetious...?"

When the man's patience visibly snapped and he was ready to round on the Doctor, Rose stepped in. "Hello." She smiled at the man, bright grin on her face. He seemed to be taken aback, considering Rose. "We were just... talking with this..." She casually pointed at Kel. "Kel, that's him, yeh?" She grinned at Kel, who smiled back.

"That's me."

"We're just travellers... um, for the Olympics? I'm Rose. And that's the..." she trailed off, turning to catch sight of the Doctor who was walking in a circle, deep thoughts and all that. "Doctor," she ended.

"Doctors won't help us."

Rose turned around to find a granny stepping outside from her home. "It takes 'em when they're playing. Danny... Jane... Dale... snatched in the blink of an eye. The police have knocked on every door - no clues, no leads, nothing."
"Look," the man cut in. "Kids run off sometimes, all right? That's what they do-

But granny talked on. "Dale Hixon in your garden, playing with your Tommy, and then...!" She mimicked something disappearing. "Right in front of me, like he was never there! There's no need to look any further than this street. It's right here amongst us."

Rose swallowed, a good natured smile on her face. "Look, why don't we-

"Why don't we start with him?" A random neighbour joined the circle, and accusingly pointed at Kel. "There's been all sorts like him in this street, day and night."

"Fixing things up for the Olympics!" Kel shot back indignantly.

"Yeah, and taking an awful long time about it," the man said, doubtful.

"Doctor?" Rose whispered, trying to get his attention.

"You don't- what you just said, that's slander!" Kel shouted out.

"I don't care what it is!"

Rose screwed her face at the raising octaves. "Shouldn't we stop 'em? Or do you want me to?"

"Is that a ball bearing cake there?"

"Wha-?

"Oh no, you just believe in tarmackers with sack loads of kidnapped kiddies in their van-"

"Ay, ay, ay, that's not what she's saying...

She rested her hands on the window sill, taking one last look around the street and climbed in.

She found herself in a rather small but cosy kitchen. The air was filled with recent cooking. She breathed the scent in. Just seconds later, a giggle reached her ears. She glanced around the room and then spotted the Doctor's back facing her, while he seemed very busy, and too immersed into something ahead of him to notice her.

"What're you doing?"

He span around. "Rose! Take a look!" He stepped away to show what was sitting on the table. "An entire 8.5 inches width banana cake with ball bearings on top of it! Masterpiece!" He took a quick swipe of the cake, pulling the finger in his mouth. He hummed in content, eyes closed.

"Doctor," Rose let out warningly. He opened his eyes, looking at her, curious. "You just practically ruined granny's entire cake right there!" She gestured with her hand towards it.
"Who says it's a granny's cake?" he pondered casually, leaning against the edge of the table while finishing of the remains of cream off his fingers.

Rose gave him a steady look. "That's where I got your mini-cake last time from."

"Oh." The Doctor's finger slid out of his mouth with an audible pop.

With a sigh, she walked over to watch the damage the Time Lord did. She grazed the side of the plate on which the cake sat. "She was making it for all the kids in the street."

"Well... they're not back yet."

Rose gave him a look. "But we're getting 'em back. And then where will they get their cake from?"

"Yeeaah," the Doctor stretched the word out. "But. This is more fun. And I can never resist a banana cake." He gave her a mischievous grin, his head joggling to the sides.

A wet, dripping feeling reached her cheek the next moment. She furrowed her brows, reaching out with her right hand just to come back with a handful of said cake. "Oh, you didn't."

He giggled in amusement. He then bounced back on his heels, making a few steps away from Rose. All ready for her next move.

"We can't ruin the granny's kitchen," she tried protesting while circling after him around the table with a bursting chuckle on her lips.

"I'll leave the sink clean!" He pointed hurriedly.

She laughed, failing to remain upright. "Fine. You brought a war on, mister!" She pointed at him with her finger, giving him a fierce look. She dug her both hands in the cake fully, coming out with a quite a bit of it, holding them out threateningly.

"Ohoho!" the Doctor laughed. "Got a bit... cake-d, aren't we?"

"Shut up." She grinned, making an advance on him to which he briskly leapt out of the way. Then he made a circle around her, watching her puff and huff in amusement. "Come here you. You gonna have a taste, you are."

He side-stepped her just in time as she dove for him, making her hand collide with a window curtain. "Urgh!" she let out a desperate sound.

Chuckling silently he crept behind her, folding his hands around her but not enough to crush her to him. "A bite?" he offered, a piece of cake moving right in to her open mouth, ready to ask the question.

A few seconds passed as she chewed on it. "Mm," she hummed after her receptors recognised the taste. "It's gorgeous!"

"It is, isn't it?" His voice breathing right through her ear. It sent shivers down her spine. And she could feel him right close behind her. She jumped slightly, spinning around. The Doctor barely made it in time to avoid the threat, which her hands still occupied. "Woah!"

She nipped on her lower lip with her teeth, watching him with expectant eyes. At once a transformation showered the Doctor's face. Previously happy-go-lucky grin on his face, melting into something tender and making its way towards something deeper. Without breaking the eyes
contact he took a step forward, making her take one back, until she was cornered between him and
the table. She extended her hands to the sides, welcoming him in closer as his fingers grazed her
face.

"You have a bit of cake left," he said, his voice sounding deep.

"What?" she breathed out, her breathing coming irregular.

"Just..." He bent his face closer. "Right over there."

By each inch he was getting closer, her eyelids started closing down, feeling his breath on her face.
Just as she was expecting his lips... well, it was normal to expect a kiss in this situation, right? She
felt his tongue dart out and take a taste off her cheek. She crunched her face, leaning back to give
him an unimpressed look.

The Doctor, on the other hand, appeared his calculating self. "A bit different taste, yeh. Coming
from human skin. All those hormones dancing in between the natural banana taste." He licked his
lips off the remaining cream.

She frowned. "Hormones? You're tasting my hormones!?!" She was giving him a dangerous look
but he seemed oblivious.

"I'll let you know, Rose Tyler, that hormones for us, Time Lords, have each a different taste.
Adrenaline can be a bit... suppose it depends on the sauce you have with that. And what can be
better than a banana cake. With ball bearings! It has a click to that, yep."

She hit him with her calf. Well, as much as she managed in her very much trapped state. "If you say
one more word," she warned him.

"Nope. None." He smiled at her cheekily. "My lips are sealed," he whispered and bent down to
capture her lips.

She hummed at the feel of his lips against hers, meeting move after move as his fingers tightened
around her hips. She crossed her hands around her wrists, folding him in a hug in need to get closer
to him. That proved to be a bit difficult.

Her fingers twitched to rummage in his great hair, but the cream in her hands forced her to put them
away, bending her wrists in awkward angles to not get any dropping all over the Doctor's back. He
seemed to be thinking the same and stepped just that bit closer to her, feeling the natural and
increasing heat radiating to his always cooler to the human's touch skin. His arms gradually
brushed along her back until they were enveloping her in his tight embrace, holding her close.

"What're you doing here?"

They froze. The firm voice making them break the contact between their lips, leaving them to stare
at each other.

"How did you two get inside?"

This time the Doctor turned around, his hands sliding from Rose's back, along her sides, a sheepish
smile on his face. "Oh. Hello! We were just... er..." He tugged on his ear, searching for words. Not
like it was not obvious what they were doing but not that anybody else needed it hearing either!
"Um, we got in through the window!" he exclaimed, pointing rather obviously at the open object,
in desperation to shift the conversation from the pleasant, very pleasant, in fact, activities him and
Rose were indulged in just a few moments ago.
The granny squinted her eyes as if in deep thinking. "You... I remember you! You were that doctor. The one on the road."

"That's me." He wiggled fingers at her with a wave. Rose was already near the sink, trying to wash the cake once and for all off her hands. The water the only sound coming in the room.

"Dear God. My cake!" The granny came to stand next to the table, completely ignoring the Doctor's presence there. She picked up the plate. A saddened emotion passed by her face.

The Doctor's hand shot out to brush alongside his neck. "Er... the cake... um... weee had a bit of a taste of that."

While the Doctor was sure that now they were in trouble, the granny only sighed in resignation. "Oh, might as well. All the children gone from their homes. Who else would eat that?"

The Doctor inhaled, taking her attention back to him. "Actually." He took a quick glance at Rose, who was just about coming back to stand by his side. "We're here for that," he breathed out. "We're here to help."

"Surprised she didn't turn us in when we wrecked her kitchen like that."

The Doctor and Rose were pacing by Tom dad's (the man's who's chased the Doctor away for two times now) yard; the Doctor sniffing the area, while Rose had her phone against her ear.

"Oh, domestics," he grumbled. "We're getting the children back! No need to worry about a small mess in a kitchen."

"Yeh," Rose breathed out absentmindedly, her concentration focused on the screen of her phone. He turned to look at her.

"Anything yet?"

"No, nothing. I keep trying but... she must be off somewhere, I don't know. Maybe at Bev's? She told me she wanted to make a visit."

"Well then!" the Doctor sang. "No need to fret over one Jackie Tyler. She can handle herself. And him." He then considered. "And I'm sure you would hear if Jackie accidently went down the aisle and became Jackie... what was it again? Pepper? Powder?.. Po...?" He scratched his cheek in thought.

"Pope," Rose deadpanned. "Jackie and Rose Popes." She turned her head towards him, risking a glance. The Doctor's mouth twitched and seconds later he burst laughing. Rose just stared at him.

They passed down the narrow alleyway, picking on the smells, when they came out into an open of front lawn. The Doctor went a step further than Rose, her catching up right after him.

"Oh, you beautiful boy!" Rose exclaimed, full adoration in her voice.

A brilliant smile almost spread through the Doctor's face. But he did say almost. Remembering, he turned his neck to watch how Rose crunched down next to the ginger tom cat.

"The second time being here and you still prefer the cat more," the Doctor said in a disappointed voice.
Rose whipped around to look at the Doctor. "What? No, I don't." She turned her back to him again. "Just, they're nice. All that... fluffy hair to ruffle your hands through." She gestured with her fingers, making a 'rawr' sound.

"I have enough fluffy hair! Look!" The Doctor's hands shot out to his hair, tugging on them from all sides. "More than enough. Just take your pick!"

Rose smiled at him, biting her lip with a grin. She stood up with a sigh, when the cat went towards the cardboard box and disappeared with a yowl. "Oh, be fair. You know you're beautiful."

"Well... maybe... yeh... still, it's nice to hear it sometimes. From... you." He looked at her approaching him, a sheepish smile on his face.

"Very beautiful," she purred in his ear and left a peck on his cheek. The Doctor raised his eyebrows at that, a satisfied smile playing on his lips.

"So, what now?"

"Um... sorry, what?" The Doctor blinked, momentary fazed.

Rose stifled a chuckle from coming out. "What're we gonna do now? Should we take a look at Chloe's?"

"Nah. Tell you what. I'm going to go... take a look around. It seems like there's more than one residual energy out here..." He looked around, sniffing the air of any clues.

"What d'you think it is?"

"I haven't the foggiest... But! Going to find out. So. I'm going to check that and you go sort the scribble creature." He put his hand in his pocket and pulled his sonic out. "Here. Take this. The setting's already on. Deactivates the living scribble."

"Meet you in a bit, then?" Rose beamed at him, taking the sonic from his hands.

"Keep your eyes peeled, Lewis," He gestured with his two fingers, signing 'I'm watching you' and ran off, his coat flapping to the sides as he went. With a grin Rose turned around and went down the road.

Rose was walking down alone what appeared to be a dead end. The neighbourhood was eerily quiet except from a dog barking. She went straight towards the doors of the garage, already knowing where to go, when something crashed from inside. The initial crash was followed by several smaller ones as she approached the door.

She stood before it, gripping the sonic screwdriver just a bit tighter with her fingers. With a gulp of determination she bent down to pick on the handle, when something moved in her peripheral vision. Still leaning down, she turned her head sideways just as a shadow hid behind the corner of one of the buildings.

She straightened up. The Doctor said something was watching them. She took a few furtive steps into the direction of the stranger phenomena and stopped just a few steps away from it. She took a deep breath in and prepared herself for the worst. Well... she didn't expect a Dalek to be there. Or Cybermen.

Either way. She rounded the corner just to make an abrupt stop. She blinked and exhaled in relief,
one hand on her racing heart.

"Scared me to death." She chuckled a bit. Whacking him on the arm. "Don't do that!" She grinned at him, lifting her eyes up.

He watched her wide-eyed, his mouth falling slack and trying time after time to find words. "Rose..." he breathed in the most heartbroken and longing way she had ever heard his voice sound like. His eyes were full of anguish and desperation but she couldn't pinpoint the cause of that. They have just seen each other!

"Doctor?" Rose asked warily. "What is it? What's wrong?" She tried cautiously to extend her hand towards him. He visibly froze at that move, making Rose stop her hand mid-air. She blinked at his reaction, a frown creeping on her face. But then she noticed something. "When d'you change your suit? I've never seen you wearing a blue." She formed a small, amused smile on her lips.

Once she lifted her head up, the smile froze. The Doctor was tense, she could she him clenching his fingers into tight fits as he watched her with haunted, frightened eyes. He swallowed.

He opened his mouth, ready to talk when a sound reached her ears.

"Roooose?"

She stiffened. And she saw that the Doctor stiffened together with her, his eyebrows raising.

"Roose? You there?"

The voice called her again and she, with a gulp, glanced over the edge of the house to look at what she already expected was true. And it was! The Doctor, brown suited Doctor with his Janis Joplin coat was running, half skipping in circles around the garage where the scribble resided.

A loud bang echoed in the alleyway and the Doctor stopped his dancing around. He made towards the garage doors, lifting a hand to it. The sound repeated, making the Doctor retreat his hand and look at the doors with a frown on his face.

Rose ducked her head back before he could spot her and prepared herself to face the Doctor. Well. The other Doctor, you know. With a bit of a nervous smile on her face, she regarding him. "So, a future version, I take it, yeh?"

—to be continued...
And that was the moment when he was sure, no, in fact, he was absolutely certain that crossing his own timeline (even if only to check the disturbance in it) was a bad idea.

He really shouldn't have ignored the nagging feeling in his gut that the timeline was looking way too dangerously familiar. After all, it was not like he had been reliving those moments for the past months to keep himself sane. But he guessed that's how far rational mind could go. It was no match for a desperate hunger for a mere glimpse, for an echo of a voice.

He supposed it was both; universe's hidden blessing and a twisted way of humoring him, just one last time. Showing him what he could never have again. Mind you, he never actually did. He was a master if anything at pushing away everything that crept too close to his steel made shields. Still, when he lost it, he lost it all. The hope, the contentment, the simple joy of living each day.

It was even harder for him to bare when he had to admit to himself that she looked even more beautiful than he remembered. And he remembered her in absolute detail.

The universe was a bloody sick place.

That's what it was. Or else it wouldn't send him to relive everything he knew he could never really move on from.

He heaved a sigh.

Rose looking at him, waiting expectantly for answers and his mouth just felt dry.

He couldn't believe he was reckless enough to put the timeline in jeopardy by getting caught. And wasn't that the irony of his life that the most jeopardy friendly person he had met was standing not two feet away from him.

Only it couldn't stop there now, could it?

If Rose spotting him wasn't nerve-wrecking enough he had to then hear his own voice, a corner away, calling out for his pink and yellow human.

Great. His day of bringing the universe to destruction was eagerly leaning to the "destruction" side by each passing second.

He took in her nervous smile, her teeth biting her lower lip, where his attention drifted off (and that just added to one more regrets of his, of why did he never comment on that? She, after all, had a very well structured, pink mouth, which should have been have analysed more thoroughly. Of course, that's just one more thing he never done or ever have a chance for).

Her voice brought him back to the surface. Dear Rassilon, that type of thoughts would only assist him in self torture.

"So, a future version, I take it, yeh?" she asked with a small mischievous smile with undeniable curiosity in her voice.

He later blamed it as being one of the main factors why he did what he did. After all, a man could only take that much. And thus, when he heard another calling of her name, he panicked.
It crept upon him so unexpectedly that he barely registered it happening. All he could think of was that She's going to be taken away from me again and so, all rational mind out of the window, he grabbed for her hand, entwining their fingers together (the feeling of it increasing his blood pressure by a few tens) and made a mad run for it.

He might have noticed a slight hesitation in his companion's steps more, if it took more than a second but since it didn't...

He started breathing again only after the blood in his brain cleared a few minutes later. And that only happened when he registered that the TARDIS was already mid-flight in the vortex (if his hand on the console was any indication) and what he could hardly believe, one Rose Tyler standing in the flesh still by the doors.

She didn't appear to be uneasy, bothered or panicking but he did a pretty good job of that himself for both of them. "Rose..." he started in a thick voice. God, what was he supposed to say? Sorry? Sorry for... oh, Rassilon, had he really finally reached the deep dark end and actually managed to kidnap the one person he cherished most in the entire universe? Not that he never thought of a scenario where he would whisk her away from her wedding with some faceless bloke, but still. This, wasn't it.

He rubbed his palms harshly against his face. He had to get a bloody grip on himself. He was a Time Lord, not some helplessly heartbroken man (and he refused to think that he could be both; heartbroken and a Time Lord, obviously he was acting anything but a Time Lord).

He swallowed a lump in his throat and braced himself. He had to take her back.

He was already opening his mouth, when Rose beat him to it. "It's a bit dark in here." She looked around thoughtfully. "Still the same, mind, just feels a bit... darker," she whispered softly. Her hand came in contact with the organic strut and at once lights flickered above their heads, illuminating the console room in a familiar warm gold. She beamed at the sight. "Good to see you too, old girl." She patted the TARDIS lovingly.

If breathing was a problem before, it wasn't now. He simply stopped breathing altogether while watching the scene. It was true, the TARDIS was a lot darker nowadays. He didn't specifically ask for it but he felt it fit the atmosphere. It was TARDIS' own way of grieving. Much like his change in wardrobe.

But seeing it all come out alive was like a punch in a gut. How was he supposed to let her go now? How?

While he was battling himself internally, mentally, heck, universally even, it appeared his pink and yellow human had a whole other set of thoughts in regards of the situation at hand.

"So, how about a short trip?"

No, he was not kidding, his hearts really skipped close to his throat. "Wh-what?" he sputtered, hardly believing his ears.

She bit her lip in what appeared to be an anxious excitement. "Just you and me. Across the universe for old times sake. What d'you say?"

He just stared at her. Was she serious? Yes, the look on her face appeared to be telling him so, but...

His shoulders slumped in a sigh. Oh, Rose...if she only knew how much he desperately wanted it...
"Rose... I... that was not..." conscious. It was purely instinctual. Something his Time Lord self was not proud to admit. Even to himself.

"Well whatever it was, I'm here now, yeh? So let's just make the most of it."

And on that note he really thought Time Lords must be the weakest of species, because as far as restrain went (and he could certainly boast about it) it all seemed to evaporate in the warm pools of hazel eyes. He swallowed once again and turned towards the console, casually flipping switches.

"So, where do you want to go?" His voice sounded hoarse even to his own ears. He cleared his throat but he doubted it helped.

"There'll be time for that later. Now I think there's something else that needs attention."

He lifted his eyes from the controls, studying Rose. "Rose, what-" He didn't finish that sentence, when two warm arms enveloped him in a firm hug. He went stock still. His senses were on override.

The familiar scent, the touch. Oh, mostly the touch, which was proving to drive him insane right now.

He felt a hand brush soothing circles around his back and he had to stop himself from crying out.

"Just let it go, all right? Whatever it is, it doesn't matter now. Just you and me," she whispered in his neck, sending intense amount of shivers down his body. "Just let it go."

He closed his eyes tightly, trembling from within and the soft "Doctor" was the last straw.

He wrapped his arms around her like he knew they would fit from instinct and buried his face in her hair. "Rose..." he whispered in a broken voice and tightened his grip on her.

"Shh... I'm here. I'm right here."

He let himself be lulled by her comforting words as they stood wrapped in each other.

If only he could believe it would last.

On the other side of the universe, namely, down on Earth, long, hurried steps passed determinedly down the roads of celebrating London. His Janis Joplin coat was flipping to his sides as he went.

His other self must be insane, that's the only explanation he could think of on why he would be so reckless and cross his own timeline. Him crossing was probably the cause why they drifted off the radar in the first place.

If it didn't have any long-lasting repercussions, he would be tossing his other incarnation into a supernova this very moment.

Didn't he know how dangerous it was? And if crossing his timeline wasn't enough he just had to take Rose with him. Although, having in mind this was Rose Tyler here, she probably went along with it just fine or maybe even encouraged the idea.

She was really gonna be the death of him some day. Oh, that's right. She already was...

But that was not the point! The point was, him himself should know better. Should have known better than to take a person from their own timeline and expect nothing bad to come out of it...
Bad...

He suddenly blanched, stopping in his tracks. Was that... was that the reason he took her? Because he had to? Because he had to take her away before something happened to her?

*Rassilon, did they fail again?*

He closed his eyes tightly shut. He was not going down that road. Not just yet. He had enough of those thoughts to last him a lifetime and he was not wasting another second. He opened his eyes and continued his trip towards the TARDIS.

He was getting his Rose back. Other things could wait for their time.

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After what seemed a lifetime, the pair inside the TARDIS started disentangling themselves, granted, reluctantly, but they couldn't stay wrapped in each other forever. Even if the idea did sound not that surprisingly appealing to him.

His arms brushed against her shoulders as he locked his gaze to hers. No, having her here could be nothing else but a blessing. She might have been imprinted in his life deeply since the very first word he said to her but she stayed in his hearts by his own choice.

He didn't want to let her go.

He brushed his thumb against her rosy cheek and felt his hearts constrict. There was a time when a simple touch like this was allowed daily (something he didn't take advantage of nearly enough), now it was like a momentary salvation to a starving man.

He swallowed tightly and let his hand drop to his side. He took a step back from her. It was the only way he could start breathing again.

For everything they've been through, the situation seemed to put them both in a somewhat awkward place. They smiled shyly at each other.

His hand came in contact with the back of his neck as he inhaled deeply. "So... err..."

Rose grinned silently at him. "So, hello, then."

He froze momentarily in place, looking at her and then burst out laughing, finally feeling at ease. "Hello." He beamed right at her, standing in his full height.

She had her tongue between her teeth smile on her face and he could barely restrain himself. Everything about her seemed more radiant than ever. She was just everything...more than he remembered.

He blamed it on longing.

"So," she began again in a more casual voice. "Since we're past the awkward phase, should we go on with that trip?" She went to rest her left hip against the console, her fingers playing with the buttons. His eyes followed her movements until he caught her knowing smile and averted them.

"Oh, sure," he replied off-handedly. "Of course!" He shook his head as if to shake himself out of it and bounced on his heels. It felt odd, having that light energy in his body again. But the change was a good one, so he indulged himself in it. "All the universe is at your doors. Anything you'd like to see?"
She grinned at him more, if that was possible. All he knew, the smile was infectious and he found himself smiling more than he had ever done in the past months of his so called living. "I was thinking..."

The Doctor closed the doors of the TARDIS behind himself as he came out of it with his hands full of a cylinder-like and bleeping controller device.

He could excuse himself later why he named it the "TARDIS hijacking device", but one had to agree, it served its purpose. He could have done it the manual way, search for the TARDIS inside the TARDIS, but that took way too much time and he just happened to have the needed ingredient for his "TARDIS hijacking device" to work. The residual energy of another TARDIS.

He bent down, placing the device's tip towards the place. He pressed a button and watched how the device started sucking in the surrounding air, getting the so needed residual energy of the TARDIS.

"There you are!" he exclaimed in delight.

Then there was a short beep and it stopped. He supposed that was as much as he could get. He stood up and continued back the road while working manually on analyzing the particles.

It was on around 49% when the device puffed in smoke, blinking on a red alert bulb. "Oh, come on. Don't put this on me now!" He shook the device a few times in frustration when it fell on the ground with a loud crashing sound.

The Doctor nowhere in sight.

Loud laughter echoed deeply inside the TARDIS walls as the pair inside the console room could hardly come in for air.

"Huff, I still think we should go to Barcelona!" She had a happy grin on her face as she swung around in the jump seat.

"The dogs with no noses," the Doctor commented casually, desperately trying to conceal his grin.

"Exactly! How long do I have to wait for you to finally take me there?"

He turned to look at her mischievously. "Or I could always go and get you one noseless dog as a Christmas present." He winked at her.

Rose laughed out loud, her head falling backwards. "Get out of here."

"I'm serious, I could-" the Doctor turned back on the controls and stilled his laughter. Rose stopped herself, biting on her lower lip as she saw a shadow pass down the Doctor's features. She straightened up on her seat.

"What is it? What's wrong?"

The Doctor's forehead formed a well known worry line as he studied the readings on the monitor.

"Doctor?"

Well, at least he knew one thing. There would be no noses missing on this part of their trip. He
inhaled deeply. "There's a disturbance in a timeline."

Rose blinked, uneasy feeling passing down her body. "What?"

"And it's coming from your timeline," he whispered in a low voice, finally giving her a look.

She knit her brows together. "Is that because I'm here? 'Cos I went with you?"

"No!" he quickly assured her. "It appeared after we left, as a separate event. Different from a previous distress signal too," he muttered while flicking a few switches.

"Previous?" Rose came to stand on his right side, looking at him questioningly.

"Yeh," the Doctor agreed, though, still refusing to look at her. "That's how I crossed yours. I got a signal that something was wrong in my timeline. So I went to check it out."

"Okay... and did you learn what was it?"

He inhaled through his nose. "Yes and no."

"Meaning?"

"That's that for now," he dismissed the topic casually and pointed on the screen. "See that? It works as a model matter of my timeline. And that."

"That's a model for me. Now if everything was fine it would be moving steadily or jumping even, in some cases, but now it's blinking."

"And that's bad, yeh?"

"It could be. Because for one, it's the timeline entwined with yours, and for another, I'm not doing anything. And that only leaves one possible explanation..." He looked up at her, waiting for her to catch on. Her eyes widened.

"Oh, my God. The Doctor! The other...um, my Doctor. He's in danger, isn't he?"

"It's likely," he breathed gravely. "Hold on. We're gonna land."

He pressed the last lever down and the TARDIS shuddered.

A very determined Rose Tyler stepped outside the TARDIS and at once started scanning the area for any clues. The Doctor only smiled wistfully behind her. He then turned around to inspect his surroundings. Though, he shouldn't have been surprised when in a few moments he heard a call of his name.

"Doctor? I think I found something."

He turned to look and saw Rose crouched down near some glass, plastic and other elements bits of pieces. He skipped into a jog until he reached her and with a last hop crouched down beside her. He pulled his glasses out of his pocket and took one piece for a better look.

Rose had another piece in her hand and turned it over. "D'you know what that is?"

"Of course..." the Doctor muttered under his breath. Rose glanced at him.

"Well, then?"
"Of course it would be it," the Doctor repeated again and Rose was now sure that neither was meant for her. She sighed, gathering her patience.

"Doctor?" she asked once more. This time the Doctor looked up at her, saw her questioning eyes, darted his own back on the device then to her again and caught on. "Oh! Right. Right. What this is." He tossed the object in hand carelessly. "It's something from a TARDIS. Meant for the TARDIS."

Rose blinked a few times. "Wh-what?"

"It's a bit of a word play, yeh." He nodded in his silent agreement.

"Doctor..." Rose breathed in a warning.

"Right, yes. This is supposed to work as a... well, a "TARDIS hijacking" device to be precise." He narrowed his eye in distaste. What was he thinking thinking up such a name?

"A "TARDIS hijacking" device," Rose repeated in monotone.

"Yep," the Doctor popped the "p".

After a few moments he heard a snigger coming from her side. He glanced up.

"What?"

She shook her head at him with a smile playing on her lips. "No, nothing. 's just... very original."

"Oi!"

"Sorry." She pressed her knuckles against her lips to stifle her laughter but her whole body was still shaking.

The Doctor furrowed his brows, clearly starting to get insulted. "Stop it!"

Although, he supposed, he could forgive her, for the sole smile she gave him next. He stopped a moment only to look at her radiant smile, body shaking from mirth. Something which used to be normal on a daily basis for him, and now only a stolen moment he would treasure in his hearts when the real world caught up with him. He smiled warmly at her.

"Oh, you big baby," she chuckled once more and reached out to ruffle his hair lovingly. He stiffened, later cursing himself for not being able to control his body reactions because at once Rose's smile diminished and her hand stilled. It was retreating, when the Doctor caught up with it, and stilled her movements. His hand locked around her wrist.

She bit her lower lip nervously as he watched her with what he knew was intensity enough to make anybody squirm but she only stared back. His own emotions transparent in her eyes.

He wanted, needed and dare he finally say to himself... loved her as much as another being could love another. Maybe even more. All the things that were forbidden for him for as long as he could remember, she evoked in him.

And that was why he was still holding onto her hand. Still not breaking the dangerously intense eye-contact and was raising his other hand to brush a strand from her face.

He moistened his lips, opening them to say... he was not sure what would have came out of them if a loud cry from one of the houses wouldn't have broken the spell between the two.
"Chloe! Baby, please, stop this!"

Rose's head at once turned towards the sound and with a quick "That's her", she stood up and dashed towards the distress call. He could hardly believe that it took him a second to catch up with what was happening. The paralyzing feeling of loss of her touch was proving to be too much of a distraction. He shook his head and sprinted down the road.

What was he doing? No matter how many regrets he might be having, this was not the place or the time to right them. He had his time. And he wasted it brilliantly.

Now he was paying the price for his actions.

When he caught up, Rose was already in front of the house, ready for action. "Come on," she urged him and was beginning to walk forward when she done an abrupt stop, the Doctor nearly colliding with her.

"Rose?" he asked her softly.

She shook her head. "Right. Wait, you can't come inside."

"Why not?"

"Well, she already has a Doctor captured, doesn't she?" She looked at him with a small smile. His eyebrows rose up.

"Oh." He blinked a few times. "Right."

Her shoulders slumped a bit, seemingly frustrated with herself. "Well, nevermind that. I'll go up on my own." She took a deep breath and started to go when a gentle hand stopped her. She looked up at the Doctor who had a thoughtful expression on his face.

"Doctor?"

"I'll go with you."

"But..."

"No, I actually think it might be a good idea."

She narrowed her eyes. "How d'you mean?"

"Well, think about it. She's always sure of what she had captured, and now, having me at her own porch would put her off balance. Make her restless and maybe buy us some time to get the Doctor back."

She looked him up and down warily. "You think that's wise?"

He grinned side-ways at her. "Maybe. Maybe not. No idea. But that's the fun part, isn't it?" He then turned to her and extended his hand to wiggle his fingers in an invitation. A beaming smile spread across her face as she accepted his offered hand and they both linked their fingers.

When a ring on the door was not enough, the Doctor rapped on the letter box to get attention from Chloe's mother, Trish. Finally after what seemed forever, the doors opened.

Both, the Doctor and Rose, gave her friendly smiles in greeting.
"Hello!" the Doctor began casually. "I'm the Doctor and this is Rose. Can we see your daughter?"

The woman looked them up and down suspiciously. "No! You can't."

The Doctor smiled even more, nonplussed in the least. "Okay! Bye."

They walked away in silence, waiting - and sure enough -

"Why?" Trisha's voice rang out.

As if they have been practicing it for years, the pair turned in unison.

"Why do you want to see Chloe?"

"Well... there's some interesting stuff going on in this street, and I just thought-" He turned to look at Rose. "Well, we thought - that she might like to give us a hand."

Rose waved a hand dismissively. "Sorry to bother you."

"Yeeah, sorry," the Doctor agreed with a smile. "We'll let you get on with things... On your own. Bye again!"

They turned and started walking away again, but Trish didn't close the door. And after a few moments...

"Wait!" she called out, almost in desperation.

The Doctor and Rose turned again. The expression on Trish's face was helpless, vulnerable, even more so than they remembered last time, if that was possible.

"Can you help her?"

But the Doctor only smiled at her. "Yes, I can."

And only after he went inside, urging Rose to go first, did his brain start to register that they have never discussed the plan this time round, yet Rose knew how to act it out all the same.

His mind was still reeling from his latest thought, when Trish took his attention. "I'm sorry that she can't meet you here. I think it's better if you come with me upstairs."

Rose looked the woman up and down and noticed large bags under her eyes. She seemed more tired than ever. Her eyes narrowed a bit in thought, but then she looked to meet the Doctor's eyes who only shrugged.

"Oh, that's all right. Never refuse a bit of a work out."

The pair followed her upstairs. They were lead towards what they knew to be Chloe's room but what laid behind them, made them both come to an abrupt stop. As soon as Trish went inside, she rushed towards the table where the girl had her head laying still on the table, her forehead drenched in sweat.

"Oh, my baby. I told you to stop drawing." She patted her back and it seemed to rouse the girl. She blinked a few times, shook her head and started drawing again. "Sweetheart, please, stop it." Trish tried to take the pencil away but was swatted away.
"I need to keep drawing," Chloe only said.

The Doctor's forehead wrinkled at the disturbing sight. "How long has she been like this?"

Trish continued to pat her daughter's back, as she answered. "She had a fever two weeks ago. I thought it was gone. But then she started drawing day and night. She barely eats or sleeps. Just... drawing. It was only time before her fever returned."

The Doctor knowing full well that nothing would pull her out of her trance so easily, came to stand on one side of the girl. His gaze lingered on the drawing, half-buried by others, but still visible. His other incarnation standing in the middle of drawing paper. He swallowed.

"When did her fever start?" he asked instead. "For the second time."

Trish folded her hands against her chest, finally standing up. "Um... two days ago. I tried calling for a doctor but nobody can stop her from drawing." She shook her head. "And I don't want them to lock her up."

The Doctor looked up at her sharply. "Nobody is taking her from you," he assured and she could only nod.

"Doctor... she looks very pale," Rose said from the other side of the room.

The Doctor frowned in thought. "Isolus is already taking her strength out of her body, add fever to that and it's almost impossible on a fragile child's body."

Rose took a few deep breaths in. "What're we gonna do?"

The Doctor looked Chloe up and down carefully. "I need to speak to it." He gently gathered Chloe in his arms and put her down on the bed. The mother was silently looking at the exchange, not sure if she should start calling for help or let them help her. As if feeling her dilemma, Rose turned to look at her and gave her a reassuring smile.

"It's alright. She's going to be all right."

The Doctor knelt in front of Chloe, holding her head in his hands, fingers on her temples. Her eyes started to roll in her head for a moment before closing. He closed his own eyes before suddenly Chloe fell backwards onto the bed.

"There we go..." he slowly eased her on the bed.

"I can't let him do this..." Trish started moving towards them in her concern, until Rose stopped her.

"Shh, it's okay. Trust him."

The Doctor straightened up. "Now we can talk."

"I want Chloe," a strange whisper came out instead of Chloe's normal voice. "Wake her up. I want Chloe."

"I know," the Doctor agreed in a soft voice. "I also know, that you're Isolus. Am I right?"

After a moment of pause, it spoke again. "Yes."

"This child is sick. You're hurting her by staying inside," the Doctor continued.
"I'm also sick," it said.

"What d'you mean?" Rose asked from the sidelines. The Doctor had a concerned expression on his face.

"I'm dying. Chloe stays unconscious more than awake. I can't breathe."

The Doctor's eyebrows rose up. "You need help."

"Doctor," Rose started, her voice slightly shaking. "If it's sick. What does that mean for us? For... everyone?"

The Doctor only stood there with a grim expression on his face.

"I need another body," Isolus talked on.

"Oh, dear, please, release my girl. She's suffered long enough," Trish cried.

"If it leaves her, it dies," the Doctor said.

"And so will my little girl if that thing doesn't release her," Trish insisted, holding herself together with her arms around herself. "You said you could help me. So help!"

The Doctor came around the bed. "Release everyone from your pictures and I'll find you a body until we can take you back to your spaceship."

"I can't. I don't have enough energy. I need a body."

Rose's eyes light up at once. "The spaceship! We can just get it to her and she'll release Chloe, yeh?"

"No. It's too weak. It needs to stay for a few minutes at least in a strong host to recover before flying out on its own."

"Give me another body. You have one. I'll take her."

The Doctor frowned, not yet following. "What body?" He then turned around to look around the room and met Rose's gaze, his eyes widened at once.

"No," came out a flat reply.

"I need a body or I'll perish soon."

"Well, then. You seem to be in a bit of a pinch," the Doctor shrugged half-heartedly.

"Doctor..." Rose looked at him warily, taking a step forward. "It's all right. I agree-"

"No."

Rose stopped in her tracks, her mouth slightly agape. "What?"

"You're not having her and that's final," the Doctor said in a voice which held no arguments, while still looking at the laying still Chloe.

A silent cry echoed in the room, as the girl's mother started to shake. "What will happen to Chloe then?" she asked shakily.
The Doctor barely blinked. He rested his knee on the mattress as he put his fingers on her temples and pulled her back from the trance. He then stood up, his expression blank.

"I'm sorry. But we can't help you this time." He swallowed. "It's too late," he whispered and the mother nearly collapsed.

Rose took a deep breath in. "Doctor, what-" she didn't finish the sentence when she was grabbed by the hand and pulled outside.

As soon as they were outside, the Doctor was on a mission of getting away from that place. He still had a firm grip on Rose's hand and she frowned at his back.

"So, what's the plan?"

"No idea. But they're not having you."

Rose let out a humorless laugh escape her lips. "You're kidding me, yeh?"

"Not one bit."

"Hold on... no, seriously, stop." She stopped in her tracks, releasing her hand from his. Something she never thought would be necessary.

"What?" He turned to look at her, seemingly annoyed.

Her forehead wrinkled at that. "You're telling me you don't have a plan but simply refused for me to make the deal?"

"Rose, there's no question on that deal. You're not taking it."

"You do realize that it's possibly our only chance of getting the Doctor back, right?"

The Doctor only kept silent, not looking at her. Oh, she was having none of that. "Well, do you?" she pressed on.

"Yeh, I do." He turned to look at her with aloof eyes and she just stared at him, shocked.

"I can't believe we're even having this conversation right now," she muttered and averted her eyes, ready to march back inside. She only took two steps before she was propelled backwards by a firm hand on her wrist.

He turned her around, hands on her shoulders. "Rose, you can't. I can't let you. That's not what happened in the timeline. You're messing with things."

"You said so yourself. Time is a flux. Things can change. Besides, they need my help."

"It's not your place to do anything."

Rose felt like it was finally enough. "Oh, yeh? Then what is my place? Am I expected to do nothing? What's wrong with you, really, Doctor? They need help, so we're helping them. That's what we do." She stared at him deeply in the eyes, desperately trying to find where had his sense gone to. They were the Doctor and Rose. Stuff of Legends. Living off saving the universe on daily basis. So what the hell was going on here?

"You know better than that! You interfering now could mean radical changes in the following
"Well, is there a risk of the Reapers coming?" she asked. He only bit his lip. "Well, is there?" she insisted and he spat out a "No."

"Then we'll deal with the consequences as they come," Rose said back simply. "I know my own timeline and I'm not walking away from this." She huffed a laugh. "Besides, I still need to get back my Doctor. And this's the only way."

She relented a bit when she saw the Doctor swallowing tightly and look downwards, although, still gripping her shoulders firmly

"Doctor you should know me better than this," she whispered softly in desperation. "There's no way I'm ever leaving you behind."

He glanced up, clenching his jaw. His eyes glistened in pain. "You're doing so. Right now," he said in a hoarse voice.

"That's not fair." She finally stepped outside of his strong grip, looking at him with uneasy eyes.

"It never is."

to be continued...
The first rattle fell on deaf ears. It was easily dismissed as a sound of wind moving the things inside.

Inside the child's room, a mother held her daughter's head, cradled to her chest, in order to bring some comfort, which might ease the girl's suffering. She rocked them both in gentle, soothing movements until another rattle was heard. This time loud and clear.

Trish's head perked up at the sound and she saw another, more violent tremble of the wardrobe doors. She stared at it in rising anxiousness until it spoke.

...a haunting voice coming from within closed doors.

"What happened?"

Were the first words spoken out loud after what seemed like forever. It was as long as Rose could hold the silence between them. Everything the Doctor did up until now seemed so on edge of his character that she had to find the cause of it.

She watched him go rigid, his muscles tensing until a defeated sigh escaped him.

"I met something I thought I'd never have to see again," he spoke in a soft, low voice.

Rose pressed her lips together, brows furrowing in concern. "Something bad?"

The Doctor just stood there for a moment; his side facing her, jaw clenching. With a deep breath of air, he turned to face her. The look in his eyes was all that was needed.

"Doctor," she began again in a soft voice. "Just because we'd do something different in the timeline now, doesn't mean it has to change things for the worse later."

"You don't know that." He shook his head slightly.

Rose stared him down for a second longer, then nodded. "All right then. We'll just think of something else, yeh?" She stood up straighter. "What's that we need most right now?"

"Well, that would be… a body."

"Right. Anything else?"

"Not really, no," he sighed and rubbed his palm against his face. "Without a body, its consciousness will just..." He gestured. "Shut down. Float in the air... until the last charged particle stops. Only it's not the air it's gonna float into. It's Chloe's head. And all that residual energy is gonna cause a brain storm. Human brain is too weak to fight it off."

"Right. So let's put that on high alert." Rose nodded once more.

The Doctor knit his brows together in thought. "This's so weird... the whole timeline, from the moment I stepped outside the TARDIS, it felt off. Sort of... wrong." He slowly started to pace
around, watching his surroundings. "I don't understand, a timeline shouldn't feel like that," he muttered. He then came to a stop. "Something else must be going on here…"

"What d'you mean?" she asked softly. "Something like what?"

The Doctor, Her Doctor, said that too. But since meeting with the future-Doctor, she just assumed that it was him, causing the energy spikes. Was there something else at work here?

"I'm not sure. It's just… something there." The Doctor stood with hands in his pockets, a faraway look on his face.

"Okay, we'll come back to that later. Now about that body…" Rose tried to approach the subject gently but it still got the reaction out of the Doctor. He turned sharply, his eyes tense.

"They're not having you. Not even if its sick." He then turned his head side-ways, a frown creeping on his face. "And why is it sick right now anyway?" the Doctor continued on. "What caused it?"

"Maybe…" Rose began, a distant look on her face. She had her one hand curled around her middle and another, tapping fingers on her mouth. "Maybe we don't need a body."

"We do. Just not yours."

Her lips curled up in an almost smile. "No, I mean…" She shook her head. "It's like, um, we need some sort of processor, yeh?" She gestured. "Like… brain."

The Doctor inhaled, his head titled. "We need a central processor unit. Something which would hold over twenty billion neurons each connected by synapses to several thousand other neurons," he spilled in one breath. Rose just stared after him for a moment.

"That's… a lot of neurons."

"Yeh," he sniffed. "Found in average human's brain. The most complex organ in a vertebrate's body." He pointed on the word with his lips.

"But… that's just it. It doesn't have to be a body." When the Doctor raised an eyebrow at her, she hurried to add. "I mean, not necessarily." She uncrossed her arms, gesturing with them both. "You'd got all that stuff, maybe you have something like… um," she faltered, one finger on her temple. "I don't know… a mental box or a… consciousness incubator or something?"

"An incubator…" the Doctor whispered. Just then a light bulb clicked in his head. "Oh, yes!" he exclaimed, a full-on grin on his face.

"What, you've got such a thing?" she asked with a beaming smile on her own.

"If I can find it," he said off-handedly. "Rose Tyler," he said her name solemnly with a visible hint of affection. He then pulled her off the ground, squeezing her tightly that Rose even let out an 'omph' sound and a giggle from the suddenness of it. "Oh, I've missed you," he said to her back and then let her go. With a grin on his face, he entwined their fingers and pulled her together with him. "Come on!"

The Doctor rushed inside the TARDIS first, Rose hot on his heels. He sprinted up the ramp in just a few strides and pressed a few, only known to him alone, buttons and was already demanding attention.
"Rose."

She quickly joined by his side and stared at the monitor, once again showing the same line, which
assumingly showed the 'model matter' for his timeline.

"Keep looking for any changes," he instructed her while he himself pulled some sort of cable from
underneath the console and began walking with it towards the hallway. "If it starts blinking again,
changing color..." He span the cable around, gathering it together. "If it gets to mauve, call me
out." He stopped, looking distant. "Mauve is a universal-"


His eyebrows rose as he inhaled. "Right." In a few more spins, he had the cable ready. "There we
go then." He grinned at it and started jogging away. Just before disappearing, he spun around,
bouncing on his feet. "Keep position! I'll be back in a sec." He pointed and went off.

It was really not that surprising but it barely took a few minutes for the monitor to blink on all kind
of shades of 'mauve'.

"Doctor?" she called out but heard no answer back. Typical. She pondered on going after him but
then again, she had a finger on one of the controls and who knew what it actually did.
Or wouldn't do if she let it go.

She looked around for something to replace her digit but there seemed to be nothing. At last her
gaze fell upon a crack in the grating, which the Doctor forgot to close. And there, stuck at one side
were pliers.

She bit her lower lip. "Not gonna do it. Not gonna do it. Not gonna do it..." she started muttering
as her fingers twitched in place.

Another blip of a heavy 'mauve' in the screen, another, loud enough to ring in her own ears,
'Doctor!' and she bent down. Well, as much as was possible in her current position. It took a few
pulls and the pliers were off. She considered it in her hands but then with a deep breath pressed the
tips of it by one of the cables in the grating.

"Please don't be life threatening," she said and closed her eyes the same time the pliers cut off the
cable in half.

At once Rose was thrown out of balance, almost flying off, but she somehow managed to keep the
finger (which still held the button on the console) intact. No later, the console started ringing bells,
one she only heard just after the Doctor regenerated.

She stared at the sight. "Well, that should take his attention," she muttered with an anxious look.

Just as expected the Doctor came rushing in, a heavy, black box in his arms. He looked panicked,
checking for the cause of the bells. "What happened?" He put the object on the ground and looked
around. His eyes fell upon Rose's hand.

"What do you have pliers in hand for?" he exclaimed. His eyes then widened. "Hold on. Did you
cut the cable?!" he cried.

"Well you weren't responding and it's 'mauve'," Rose shot back, gesturing to the screen. The
Doctor at once was at her side, removing her finger from the button and pressing various himself.
"Will it…” Rose began, swallowing. "Will it cause damage?"

"What?" the Doctor asked absentmindedly.

"The cable. The one I cut off."

"Nah, she's programmed on auto-regenerating. Always ready to regrow her parts, in case needed." Rose just stared agape at him. The Doctor turned swiftly to look at her. "And don't go on telling people that! They don't need to know that. It's still not for anyone to play around."

Rose blinked a few times. "But… it went off; ringing bells and all."

"Well, it still hurts to be cut in half! What do you take her for? No-feelings-creature? She's sentient. All those feelings rushing about…"

"Ok-ay." Rose trailed off. She looked behind her shoulder. "So you've got the thing we need, then?"

"Yup," the Doctor agreed, flipping a few switches. "Tucked below a few hundred of history." He then pulled the lever, making the alarms silence down. With a few hops, he reached the 'incubator', gathered it in his arms and started moving towards the doors, Rose close behind.

The two were walking down the roads, Rose continuing to access the thing in the Doctor's grip. "So how's it gonna work?"

"Weell… just press this button here…” He lifted one side a bit to indicate it.

"What, this?" she asked, her finger hovering about a big, red button.

"Yeh, yeh, that. Just don't press it now." He smiled sheepishly at her.

Rose withdrawn her hand. "So one-button system, yeh? Got it." She nodded, serious expression on her face.

"Rose, I'll take care of it. You don't need to worry about it."

"Well, you can never be too sure with you," she sang under her teeth.

"Oi!" the Doctor exclaimed.

Rose laughed softly, smiling with tongue-between-her-teeth smile afterwards. "I'm just trying to always be prepared, you know."

The Doctor sniffed, feigning feeling put-out. He went off ahead only to stop in his tracks.

She looked up to see what the Doctor had his attention focused on. Bright, red light was coming out of the window in one of the houses. The house belonging to Trish.

"Is that the lighting?" she asked. She then took in the shade of the color and movement, comprehension dawning on her just as the Doctor muttered, "It's the dad."

"Come on," Rose urged him and both went off.

They had to stop when the doors remained shut after Rose tried to open them.
“Left pocket,” the Doctor said in a hurry. Rose rushed to him and took the sonic screwdriver from him, pressing the button and aiming it towards the doors to open up.

Once that done, she went in first, leaving the doors wide open for the Doctor to squeeze in with the big lump he was carrying.

They climbed up the stairs to a brightly red lit room and two humans cuddling each other in fear.

“What're you doing here again?!” Trish demanded indignantly.

“Wee…came back with the solution. Here. Look!” The Doctor lifted the incubator a bit to indicate its existence.

“CHLOEEE!” the voice echoed from within the rattling wardrobe doors.

“Doctor, the wardrobe,” Rose said urgently.

“Right. The nightmare-dad.” The Doctor stepped in more inside the room to settle the ‘incubator’ first. Just as he was spinning around to tell instructions, Rose was already at Trish's side.

“Listen, you've got to sing, okay? Just like you always sing for her to chase away the nightmares.”

Trish's look of anxiety was soon replaced by suspicion, directed at Rose. "How do you know about Chloe's dad? Who are you, people?" She glanced around to look at the Doctor.

"We're help," the Doctor said but then stopped. "But hold on." He shook his head and turned to Rose. "How on Earth do you know about 'singing'?" he cried in disbelief.

Rose blinked a few times. "W-what?"

The Doctor opened his mouth when another, stronger rattle of the wardrobe doors echoed inside the room.

He looked up sharply at the doors then back at the two on the bed. Chloe convulsing in tremors of fear. "Trish, you've got to sing. Now!" he commanded and that seemed to shake the woman into action.

"Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree, merry merry king of the bush is he..."

"Chloe... Chloe..."

"Laugh, Kookaburra laugh, Kookaburra, gay your life must be."

As Trish kept on singing, the banging and the voice eventually faded away.

"Laugh, Kookaburra laugh, Kookaburra, gay your life must be," she sang softly now, cradling Chloe's sleeping body.

"It's the first time she sleeps in days," Trish said through tears.

"And there'll be many more of that," the Doctor reassured her and went to buzz the sonic against the device.

"You said there was no way to help." Trish said, watching him warily.

The Doctor fiddled with the sonic's settings. "I found a way," he said in a low voice. The ‘incubator’
whined in protest.

"Is it broken?" Rose asked from the sidelines.

"No, it's fine. Just need to readjust a few settings and we'll be good to go. Rose? I need you here."
He put the sonic in her hand and instructed her what to do while he went to stand near Trish, who looked up sharply at him.

"I know you don't trust me but you don't have a choice," he began. "All the things you've seen, nobody else is gonna believe you. And nobody else is here to help." He took a breath in. "But me."
Trish stared him down.

"You've got to trust me. I'll do everything I can to bring Chloe back."

After a bit, Trish nodded. The Doctor smiled faintly at her. He then turned to walk away but his eyes caught on the desk.

Curiosity taking over, he went over the table where a pile of drawings were scattered about. He rummaged through a few until his eye fell upon the one he was searching for. His eyes almost bugged out of its sockets. The Doctor was standing on the edge of the paper; one hand tucked inside his pocket, another outstretched with a pointed finger. It going as follows – The Doctor – a pink rose – white flower (Isolus).

"Is he insane?!" the Doctor exclaimed, his brows furrowed deeply.

Rose's head perked up at his outburst. "What's that?"
The Doctor swallowed, leaving his eyes on the paper. "A drawing."

"Is that the Doctor's drawing? What's it say?"
The Doctor clenched his teeth, gathering himself. With a raised brow, he inhaled. "It says... that he's gone mad." He folded the paper in two and tucked it inside his breast pocket, walking back to the incubator. Rose eyed him suspiciously.

After a handful of arguments and a few dozen attempts on making it work, Rose was first to crack.

"Is this thing even meant for humans?"

"What? Of course it is!" the Doctor exclaimed at once.

"Doctor," Rose said waringly. The Doctor shifted uncomfortably, bringing his hand to brush against the back of his neck.

"Well... originally it was meant for the Mertians from the Grand Cove."

"And how similar are they to humans?"

"Oh, very." He swatted his hand away in a dismissive gesture. "Couldn't tell the different, really. Almost spot-on."

"Riiight," Rose stressed the word, not believing in the least. "Like with dark red-ish skin and... sharpened claws. That similar?"
"Claws?" The Doctor crunched his face in distaste. "Why would they have claws?!" he cried. "I can tell you, they're pretty normal. Very humanoid... ish, in fact. Just they have this... well, tail and... err... three eyes?" he ended in a faint whisper, looking sheepish.

"Are you trying an illegal experiment on my daughter?!" Previously only observing the pair, Trish finally exclaimed, standing tall above them crouched below.

"What? No no no!" The Doctor held his hands in surrender. "I know... I'm aware of exactly what am I doing. This could work!" He pointed at the 'incubator' sharply.

Just then, at his words, the incubator began blinking on red alert, gaining the Doctor's attention again. "No." The Doctor snatched the sonic screwdriver from Rose's grip and started 'bleeping' the thing. It giving no results. "No no no. Come on, come on!" he urged it to work but in the last attempt it released a spark. The Doctor's eyes widened at once. "Careful!" he cried and lunged for Rose. The 'uncubator' giving off a mini explosion.

"Uff," Rose breathed out, her eyes still closed, back on the ground beneath the Doctor. The Doctor propped himself on one elbow, checking up on Rose. "All right?" he asked in worry.

She blinked open her eyes. "Yeh, yeh, I am."

"Fire!" a loud shout echoed in their ears. The Doctor spun his head and saw the metal box in small flames. He briskly stood up, gathered the first at hand duvet and extinguished the flames.

He took Rose's one hand to assist her in standing up. The pair and the mother staring at the blackened duvet.

Rose bent down carefully to lift the material. It fell on the ground, showing what was left of the 'incubator'.

"Well, that didn't work out well," the Doctor exhaled. Rose took a moment to take it in.

"I want you two out of my house."

The pair spun around to find a furious look on Trish's face. "Right now!"

Rose crept slowly towards the woman. "Trish, you don't understand..."

"Oh, I understand. That was the thing that had to help my daughter, isn't it? Now it's gone. So what's left? You don't want to help that other way."

The Doctor felt his blood run hot. "That 'other way' is putting another life in danger," he said through clenched teeth.

Rose put a reassuring hand on the Doctor's shoulder. "You don't have to worry," she addressed Trish. "We'll do it now."

The Doctor turned to face her, eyes wide-open. "Rose."

"There's no other way. We've got to do it."

The Doctor shook his head. "No. There's gotta be another way."

"Doctor..." She placed her hand on his, rubbing soothing circles with her thumb. The Doctor's eyes followed the gesture. "It's going to be fine. You're going to help me through it." The Doctor's forehead wrinkled in worry.
She swallowed. "The drawing... Isn't this what the Doctor told you to do as well?" she asked softly.

The Doctor finally met her eyes and let out a shuddering sigh.

"All right."

Rose's face twisted into a beaming smile at once. "There we're then. That's what I talked about. Good ol' team."

The Doctor didn't appear to share the same enthusiasm but the fact that he led her towards the bed and sat her down was an improvement. He leveled her with a look.

She reached out once again to place her palm on the back of his hand and squeeze a bit in reassurance. The Doctor cleared his throat.

"Right. I'll have to access your mind to put you into trance. It's not going to hurt, just... keep it open for me. All right?"

She smiled warmly. "Yeh."

He nodded stiffly and raised his fingers on her temples. He spared her one last look and closed his eyes, making Rose close hers.

Trish watched how the Doctor's brows furrowed at one moment, then he lowered the girl on the bed and his eyes flew open. At first he was very still. Not moving at all. From the spot she was standing it was difficult to see his face, so she moved around a bit to prompt him. She blinked a few times when he saw his complete look of horror. Frozen in time.

"You all right?" she asked unsure. The Doctor blinked a few times, caught off guard and turned to look at her. "Wh-what?" he sputtered.

"Are you all right? She asked again.

"I..." his voice faltered with his words for a moment. But just as quickly he shook his head, pressed his eyes close, seemingly gathering himself and when they opened again he had the look of full concentration. He scooted himself towards Chloe, repeating the process of drawing the consciousness out. It took only a moment for Chloe's mouth to open up and a white flower, staggeringly float in the air. It struggled a bit but then went inside Rose, gaining a sharp intake of breath from her.

A gasp of air escaped Chloe, her eyes fluttering open. "Mum?"

Trish at once gathered the girl in her arms. "Oh, Chloe! I'm here."

The Doctor stood up, crossing the room to gather his left behind sonic screwdriver and turned to look at the rocking pair on the bed.

"Right," he spoke out loud to take their attention. Trish looked up. "So she'll be out for a few minutes. Once she wakes up, she might start drawing again. Let her but talk her out to keep drawing toys. In any way, Isolus is still a kid."

"Where're you going?"

"I need to finish what's started," he said.

His hand was on the door knob when the voice called him out. He turned. "Thank you. For saving
my girl."

The Doctor pressed his lips in a thin line. "Keep an eye on her," he instructed and went off.

His hearts were pounding wildly inside his chest as he belted down the stairs, the doors flying open.

He wished it being the cause of running.

It was one of the first lessons he learned in the Academy. How to discern your own mind from the other's. Every telepathic being had a different pattern, like a footprint they left behind after passing through someone's mind.

He never thought to find his own pattern in Rose's mind.

His mind was still concerned about the latest discovery but once he was outside the house, he put all things in the back of his mind. Firstly, he had to find the pod.

Last time he checked, it was somewhere in the street. Now he only needed to find where exactly in the street. He looked around and then spotted someone with a uniform crouched down by the road. He sprinted towards him.

"Hey, do you know anyone with information on roads down here?"

"Well, you've just got him." He spun around to stand. "Oh, it's you! How's Olympics going for you, mate?"

The Doctor blinked in confusion. "Sorry? Have we met?"

"Of course we met! Kel, remember me? We met just a few hours ago. With that blonde beside you."

The Doctor raised his eyebrows. "Right, yeh. Sorry."

"Everything all right?"

"Yeeh… straight to business. You're the greatest expert of tarmac in this area, aren't you, Kel?"

„Well, I try my best. All for the Olympics. Look at this finish." He crouched down to follow its path with his fingertips. "Smooth as a baby's bottom. Not a bump or a lump."

"Great. I'm sorry, I'm in a bit of a hurry, can you just-" the Doctor tried interrupting him but Kel seemed not to notice.

"I mean, you can eat your dinner off this. Beautiful. So you tell me why the other one's got a lump in it when I gave it the same love and craftsmanship I did this one!"

„Yeeh, well. When you've worked it out, be sure to put it in a universal encyclopedia of tarmacking, but now, back to business."

„Business. Okay. What're we doing business about?"

"I need to know which place down here emits the most amount of heat."

"Well, that would be this pothole, ain't it?" Kel gestured at the spot on the road. "Since the first time I was laying it."
"Hot fresh tar… of course!" the Doctor jumped up and crouched down to scan the area with his sonic screwdriver. As a blue light started shining out from the device, Kel perked up.

"Hey hey, be careful with that. I just made it beautiful again."

"Don't worry. I'm just making a few adjustments. All for the sake of Olympics."

"Oh, okay then." Kel relented until he saw the tarmac melting before his own eyes. "Whoa! Wait a… wait a minute, hold on, what in the world had you just done!?" Kel exclaimed. "I'm reporting you to the council!"

"Don't bother. I've been the president once."

"What? But… I don't remember you."

"You wouldn't. Thanks, Kel." The Doctor patted the boy on the shoulder casually. "I'll be taking this." He gestured to the thing in hand.

"What is it?" Kel cried out in desperation.

"A spaceship. And not a council spaceship, I'm afraid."

The Doctor jogged down the road. He stopped when a barrier of people, gathered to cheer for the passing through torch bearer, prevent him to go any further. He tried squeezing through to the front but the crowd kept pushing him back.

Just then, Kel caught up with him. "Look, I don't care if you've got Snow White and the Seven Dwarves buried under there, you don't go melting up-,

"Look, any chance you can do this later?" the Doctor rudely cut him short. Kel only blinked repeatedly at this.

"I need to get to that torch."

"The Olympic torch you mean? What for?" Kel asked, confused.

The Doctor shook his head in concentration. He absentmindedly got his hand in his pocket to take out the spaceship. "This thing is dying. It needs heat and love to keep on living."

"So you pass it on towards the Olympic torch and it's good to go once again?"

"Yeh," the Doctor agreed, putting the pod back inside.

Kel laughed. "Well, good luck with that, mate, no police officer is gonna let you anywhere near that thing."

"A police officer," the Doctor whispered. Then a grin spread across his face.

Kel was watching the cheering crowd when a familiar voice reached his ears.

"I need... I need everyone's attention here!" the Doctor shouted out. A few, standing in the last line turned around. "Yeh, you! I need you to step aside."

The people only eyed him suspiciously. "What the hell's he doing right now?" Kel muttered in disbelief.
Soon enough, a police officer approached the Doctor. "Sorry, you can't do that. You'll have to watch from here."

"I need to pass through," the Doctor insisted.

"Sorry, only the police got the allowance there."

"Yeh? Well, I am a police officer. I've got a badge." He rummaged through his pockets and showed the psychic paper in his face. "Look! See?"

The man stared at the object.

The Doctor saw how the man, carrying the torch, passed just right past them.

"I'm the police. And I say I have to get through. Any objections?" he said in a hurry.

"No, no, sir," the police man relented and whistled to take people's attention. Making them make way. The Doctor rushed past the crowd at once, Kel hot on his heels.

"I thought you were supposed to be a council president," he muttered once they were surrounded by the crowd, not outside it any longer.

"Ex-president. Now I'm a police officer," the Doctor replied off-handedly. He then took the spaceship from his pocket and saw it squirm inside his palm. He grinned at the sight.

"Go on, you. Go back home," he said warmly and took aim to toss it towards the torch. It span around in air, drawn to the torch. The torch bearer staggered slightly as it fell into the flames, but quickly dismissed it, carrying on.

"You did it!" Kel exclaimed in disbelief.

"Yeh." The Doctor smiled. He turned around when he felt something brush right through his cheek, flying at high speed. Just before it disappeared in flames, the Doctor saw the tiny Isolus flying in.

The Doctor spared himself a moment to sigh in relief before he sprinted down the road, back towards the house, towards Rose.

"Oh, you keep doing this. I can't keep up," Kel muttered under his breath.

"Come on! If you're coming," the Doctor's voice rang out through the street and it was all the prompting Kel needed. He hurried after him.

The Doctor came to a faltering stop, looking up towards the window which was flashing red in light.

"What's that then? Is that decoration?" Kel asked from the side.

The Doctor pushed himself at the doors, picking on the knob but it was not moving. He banged on the doors sharply.

"Trish? Open up! Trish?"

"I can't! The door's stuck!" she replied, her voice trembling with fear.

The Doctor stepped back, pulled the sonic out and bleeped them open. Then put the sonic back
inside his pocket. The doors swung open and a pair tumbled out from the inside.

"How d'you do that?" Kel asked, impressed. "What's that thing?"

"Olympic magic," the Doctor dismissed him, his full attention on Trish. "Where's Rose?"

Trish stammered for words. "I... I don't know."

"I told you to keep an eye on her!" he exclaimed.

Trish looked uncomfortable for a moment. "Last I checked she was still sleeping."

The Doctor nodded, circling his tongue inside his mouth. "No, you just can't do what I tell you to."

The Doctor perked his head inside, saw the flashes of red going from the upstairs and got back outside.

"Right. Now, you've got to listen to me very carefully," he began in a grave voice, looking at the trio. "There's only one weapon in the world that can stop him. It's your bond. The singing." He looked pointedly at Trish, who clutched Chloe closer to her. "I'll go inside. You stay here. But you've got to keep singing. You got that?" he asked sharply.

Trish nodded energetically. "Yeh, yeh."

"Okay. You can start now." He then turned to Kel, who looked up. "And you... you can join in the chorus," he said and turned to walk back inside.

"But I don't know words!" Kel called out.

"Then learn!"

The Doctor closed the doors after him and locked them with the sonic. He could hear the beginning of the words.

"... merry merry king of the bush is he..."

He climbed up the stairs, a few at a time, and flew the doors open to the brightly lit room. He bleeped the sonic at the imagine of Chloe's dad, momentary fazing him.

Gaining the upper hand, he then went further inside the room just to spot Rose, slumped inside the chair, on the table. It took a moment, when he just froze in place. The imagine too haunting and real for him. He swallowed tightly and finally willed his legs to move. With each step his steps grew quicker until with the last hop he crouched down beside her.

With a trembling hand, he reached out towards her pulse. It felt like an electric impulse inside him, forcing his hearts to beat once more when he felt the steady pulse against his fingertips. All the energy seemed to go out of him as he fell down on his knees, resting his forehead against his arm on the chair. He breathed in and out to calm himself down.

His calm was short lived, though. He was suddenly pulled out of it by a strong force of wind, throwing him right at the window sill. He winced at the move.

Suddenly the window flew open and the rush of air gained form of that of an angry red face. The Doctor clenched his teeth, bringing his arms to gain leverage against the window.

He tried to get a hold of his sonic once more but just as he had it, the force that surrounded his
throat, nearly choked him and thus made the Doctor drop the thing on the ground below.

A couple of gasps echoed from somewhere below. The Doctor tried to gain enough hold of his voice to wheeze out. "Keep...singing!"

"Laugh, Kookaburra laugh, Kookaburra, gay your life must be."

As their voices became stronger, the evil dad's became weaker and weaker. His shadow finally started to retreat, the light fading out. He roared with anger one last time and went silent.

The Doctor stared at the doors of the wardrobe, coming short in air, but just so happy to get it finally done and over with.

Rose rolled her head to the side as she came out of it with a pang of a headache. She frowned at that, reaching out for her temple. She blinked a few times, her eyes registering the gentle yellow, a hum all too familiar to ears and a shade of blue fabric in her vision.

"Welcome to the land of living," an amused voice reached her ears. She made an effort to give him a look. "How're you feeling?" he asked, now in a concern-full voice.

She sighed and slowly sat up in the jump seat more properly. "I'll be fine. Just... a massive headache." Her hand fell on her lap.

"I'm inside the TARDIS," she stated with a frown.

"Yeh."

"But that's not... this's your TARDIS, isn't it? What about the Doctor?" she asked in an urgent voice.

"Oh, don't worry. He's just off doing a bit of community service. He'll appear soon," the Doctor replied off-handedly and spun around to face her. He seemed to be struggling with getting the words out.

"I wanted to check something before you leave... I've done a few tests. I hope you don't mind," he spilled in one breath. "But I can't find the cause."

"The cause of what?"

He flipped the last switch and with a sigh came to sit beside her. He rubbed his face in his palms.

"Doctor? What is it?"

"When I was inside your head... I saw something," he said in a low voice.

She swallowed tightly. "Saw what?"

"You know that I'm telepathic being, of course you know that, and my kind... Well, the all 'telepathic kind'... when we try to walk through someone's head, we leave... a track."

"A track?"

"Yeh. It's like a kind of pattern, left behind by one's mind."

"Ok-ay." Rose nodded. "And what d'you see?"
He exhaled deeply. "I saw my pattern. Recent one too." He waited for the coin to drop or any kind of reaction, really, but Rose only blinked at him like asking him 'what's the big deal?'. He knit his brows together.

"Rose, I've been inside your head. Before today," he pointed the word to get her to understand. She only stared him down.

"I know that," she simply said.

"You what?" he exclaimed.

"Doctor, it's only been like, what... a day? After we left Impossible Planet and you got inside my head to check everything out. If you wanted to check if I don't have a brain damage..."

"What? And...a day?!" he cried. "But that can't be! What about... what about Absorbaloff and... and your mother. Jackie! Meeting that bloke with a funny last name. What was it again?"

"Pope."

"Right. That. He can't just have disappeared!"

"Yeh. You... well, the other you." She smiled sheepishly at him. "Anyway, you said there was a disturbance in the timeline too. He tried to find the reason we skipped ahead in the timeline."

"Hold on hold on." The Doctor held his both hands up to stop the movement and abruptly stood up from the chair. "You spoke with... me about this?"

"Yeh," Rose agreed. She then considered him warily. "Why? What's wrong?"

"But you can't know that!" he exclaimed.

"Know what?" Rose shook her head in confusion.

"If it hadn't happened in your timeline how can you know it's missing?"

Rose blinked. "Well, it only didn't happen in this timeline, yeh? Not in the previous," she sang with a smile on her face, in hopes to bring one from him. The Doctor didn't smile back. If what, his face only got a more terrified look than before.

"What?!"

"W-what?" Rose stammered. "Doctor, what's going on?"

"How do you know all this?" the Doctor asked in desperation. "And what does 'previous timeline' mean?" he cried in urgency which was rarely seen.

"Doctor, what-," Rose began but then stopped. A realization coming upon her. "Oh."

"'Oh' what?!" the Doctor exclaimed, getting more worked up by the second.

"I think we need to find the Doctor."

The Doctor and Rose were watching the computer screen, which was displaying Gallifreyan symbols for the past ten minutes now but any word was yet to come out the Doctor's mouth.
"Anything?" Rose finally asked, looking side-ways at the Doctor's profile. He had his forehead wrinkled in thought.

"Nothing!" he exclaimed in a whisper. "Just plain... nothing. I don't get it. Is he hiding?"

"How d'you mean hiding? Like... from us?"

"I don't know."

"That doesn't make sense," Rose persisted. "Why would he hide from us?"

"I..." the Doctor trailed off, inhaling. "Haven't the foggiest. But he's nowhere in the map. Only my TARDIS is seen." He stared at the screen. "You sure you don't want to tell me about it on your own?"

"Nah, I'll let the Doctor explain it to you."

"All right then," he agreed.

"So, what do we do then?" she asked softly.

"Wee-,he started but cut himself short. The readings on the screen made him pause. "Oh."

"What is it? What's it say?"

"Take a look at this." The Doctor flipped a few switches and a view of the camera was shown.

"That's... the TARDIS," Rose deadpanned. A full imagine of the console room was all that was seen on the monitor. "Why's the camera showing the inside of the TARDIS?"

"It's not the inside," the Doctor muttered.

"What?" Rose asked softly, brows furrowed.

Suddenly the doors flew open and to Rose's surprise the Doctor, her Doctor, all brown suit and Janis Joplin coat, came storming in.

"Oh, I've missed that trick!" he exclaimed in full delight, seemingly happy with himself. "Didn't know if it'd still work."

Rose beamed at his image. "Doctor!" Rose exclaimed. It took only a moment for their eyes to meet and matching grins to spread across their faces. Rose ran down the ramp, towards him, the Doctor taking a few rushed steps inside and swept her off her feet in a tight hug.

They both giggled from sheer joy to finally be reunited. The Doctor clutching her tightly to his body, leaving a soft brush of lips against her temple.

With the last desperate squeeze, he let her down on the ground, swiping a few strands of hair off her face, all the while smiling widely at her. "Rose Tyler. I've gotta give it to ya. Disappearing out of thin air? That seems like a new skill."

Rose laughed softly. "Oh, you know. A Doctor in trouble – couldn't leave it."

"Yeeh," an echo of the Doctor's voice reached their ears. "Speaking of trouble, what did you use the homing device for?"
Rose spun around to watch the Doctor by the console, then looked back at the one by her side. "Homing device?"

He sniffed. "Couldn't take the risk of you running off again."

The Doctor's by the console eyes narrowed. "I wasn't planning to."

"No?" the brown-Doctor asked nonchalantly. "Good. That's good then." He nodded.

"Doctor?" Rose asked the brown-Doctor in a soft voice. The Doctor blinked and turned his head to look down to her.

"I think I found the cause of the disturbance in the timeline."

A stretching grin appeared on his face. "Yeh? How did you do that then?"

Rose braced herself, swallowing. "Well..."

"It can't be," the blue-Doctor shook his head, his eyes staying wide-open still. Since the moment he heard the impossible coming from his own very mouth. "It's impossible."

"Oh, we love the impossible, don't we?" the Doctor in brown spoke with ease in his voice.

Million thoughts seemed to pass down the Doctor's in blue features. He would open his mouth time and time again, ready to ask the question, only to pull back at the last moment. Everything seemed just that bit out of his 'accepted rules' spectrum.

"All right," he started in a wary voice. "I'll accept the fact of you living the timeline again. But she can't be doing that!" He pointed rudely at Rose. "That would make her-" he faltered, swallowing the words.

"Not human?" Rose added in, both of the Doctors' eyes shooting to meet her. "I still appear human on every normal species scan."

"Normal?!" the Doctor exclaimed. "Then what about the TARDIS? What does the TARDIS scan say?"

The Doctor in brown and Rose glanced at each other, shifting uneasily. The Doctor cracked first. "I... didn't check yet."

"You what?" the other Doctor exclaimed once more.

"I will check!" the brown-Doctor raised his hands in the air, surrendering.

"Like when?"

"When I feel comfortable about it," Rose cut in, making the blue-Doctor stop with his mouth still half-open.

He swallowed. "Rose-"

"I'm not in a life-threatening danger, yeh? I know. 'Cos I lived the year and I'm still standing here. And I can think for myself when I want to change my status from human to something more... alien."
"Rose, that's not..." the Doctor began but Rose interrupted him again.

"I know," she said softly, nodding. "But just let us handle this, all right? When you'll be in his shoes, you'll be able to make all those decisions, but now." She inhaled. "We lived over a year more, Doctor. We know what're doing. So, just... trust us, yeh?"

The Doctor pressed his lips together and nodded. "All right."

With a grateful smile Rose approached him and enveloped him in a firm hug. His hands at once went around her middle, taking her in. He closed his eyes, grateful for the momentary peace.

The pair separated, Rose giving him a beaming smile, provoking one from the Doctor himself. "I'll see you later, yeh?" she asked. Something in his chest constricted. Part of him just wanted to grab hold of her and never let go. Just stay like that forever. It'd be, after all, a much better fate than the one he had ahead for himself. But he couldn't. She was not his anymore. And never will be. So he just smiled faintly at her. "Yeh."

She gave him one last smile and went towards the doors where the Doctor in brown stood, she gave him one squeeze on the shoulder and pushed the doors open only to stop with a gasp.

"W-what?" she looked agape at the sight ahead. "Wh-what's going on? Doctor?" She looked anxiously at her Doctor who only chuckled at her.

"Homin device. I put my Tardis inside his. Basically, the TARDIS inside the TARDIS which is inside the TARDIS."

Rose only looked at him, lost at words. He laughed good-naturedly at her and playfully pushed her inside.

"Go on, then. Settle down. I'll be back in a tick. Just let me have a quick last word with... myself. Meh, never a pleasant thing to do. But oh well. Needs must."

Rose finally relaxed enough to let out a soft laugh. "Don't kill yourself." She pointed playfully at him and went inside their own TARDIS, missing the two Doctors tensing at her words.

The pair stood in silence for a moment until their eyes met and the Doctor in blue wordlessly stepped aside, letting the brown-Doctor take his place.

"The homing device?" the blue-Doctor asked.

"I didn't lock it," the brown-Doctor said and pulled on a few switches, working around the controls.

He hated himself for what he was forced about to do, but he hated the universe even more, for being responsible for it.

The last flip of the switch pulled him out of trance he seemingly got himself into. The Doctor rested his both hands on the console, his gaze unfocused. Everything around them was silent, only the sound of the time rotor in the background.

"Is it scary?" he finally asked in a barely heard whisper.

"Not as much with the knowledge," the other Doctor admitted, making his incarnation cast his eyes downwards. "Don't tell her. Don't let her grieve," he continued.

"I know," the brown-Doctor whispered, fidgeting with the buttons on the console.
"Just do everything in order to keep her." The blue-Doctor raised his hand. It wavered a little but after a few hesitant seconds finally landed on his other self's shoulder, squeezing it.

"I should be the one giving comfort," the Doctor chuckled, his voice catching. He swallowed the lump in his throat.

"There's nothing you could do. I just... can't stay."

They stayed like that, in a haunting silence until a sharp intake of breath echoed inside the console room. "No. In fact, there is."

The blue-Doctor furrowed his brows as his incarnation span around to face him, a new kind of determined look on him.

"Tell her," the brown-Doctor said.

"Don't," blue-Doctor began in a warning. "We agreed-" he started protesting, but the other Doctor cut him off.

"Not about this." He frowned at him.

"Then what?!"

"You know what," the Doctor simply said, staring him down, daring him to deny to know what laid deeply in his hearts.

"I..." He swallowed. "I can't."

"Yes, you can. I already told her everything I wanted. Now it's your turn."

The Doctor's brows rose in wonder. "You told her?"

He contemplated on taunting him that it had already been over a year and it would be foolish of him not to take that chance but he knew himself better. And a year more or two didn't really mean anything if he decided against something. So he only settled down with a simple "Yes."

Rose was pacing around the console room when the doors opened up and Rose greeted the man with a wide smile. "Here you are then!" She rushed to his side only to stop in place. "Hang on. It's you!"

"Still me." The Doctor agreed, giving her a warm smile.

"What happened? I thought you'd be... gone by now. Did something go wrong?"

He chuckled silently. "No. No. I just... well, I remembered there was something I haven't finished yet."

Rose felt her heart thud inside her chest. "What is it?" she asked softly, looking him deeply in the eyes.

"Back on Bad Wolf Bay," he started solemnly, taking step after step towards her until he was a breath away from her. "I never really had the chance to finish what I was saying." He laughed at the irony they both knew that day held.

She smiled faintly. "A-and you'd want to... right now?" she asked, biting her lower lip in
anticipation.

"Well..." the Doctor began nonchalantly, sniffing. "I thought I could try." He then looked up more seriously at her. "If you want me to," he ended with a timid smile. An expression rarely shown by the Doctor.

"Yeh!" Rose exclaimed eagerly, then smiled sheepishly at her own outburst. "I mean..." She swallowed. "Yeh, go ahead."

He smiled tenderly at her and reached out to cup her cheek. He exhaled deeply in relief. From all the hundreds of years he had lived, all across the universe, just this second alone meant more to him than any other. His last moment with his beloved. "I love you, Rose. More than I ever should. Or you'll ever know," he whispered, bringing his forehead to hers.

"I love you too," Rose whispered back, tears already gathering in her eyes. "And if I won't know... you just have to keep on telling me, yeh?" she laughed through watery eyes, a few drops already on her cheeks. The Doctor wiped them away with his thumb.

"Quite right too."

The moment the brown-Doctor stepped back inside his own TARDIS, he was met by a tearful Rose. He quickly gathered her in his arms, clutching her to him and was just grateful that it was not the same thing they shared tears about.

_to be continued...

Chapter End Notes

Some Q&A for Fear Her Arc. (feel free to add your own if something else is unclear ^^)

"Is the blue-Doctor from the original timeline?"

Yes.

"What happened to the blue-Doctor at the end?"

He blinked out of existence. (hint words: brown-Doctor-"Is it scary?" ; blue-Doctor-"Don't let her grieve." ; blue-Doctor-"I just... can't stay."); brown-Doctor- He hated himself for what he was forced to do) but he's not dead, per se. (hint words: Rose-"Don't kill yourself!") He blinked out of existence. Why is that? Well, in complete logic, the blue-Doctor came into this 'reset timeline' by mistake. He's someone who wears blue suit, so he's somewhere past the Daleks in S3. Now, the 'new timeline' is a wholly new thing. It started at 2005 as a new being and its Peak is the present. Like, Fear Her Arc is as much as the 'new timeline' can go right now. To the brown-Doctor and Rose, the 'previous timeline' only serves as a memory. Something they can't get into but still remember. So. The blue-Doctor doesn't really have Anywhere to go back to. And the brown-Doctor had to 'help him disappear'.


"What happened to Absorbaloff"

Because the original and reset timelines collided, the Love&Monsters still happened from the universe's point of view.
The Doctor and Rose go to the asteroid number XXX7# to buy the weather predicting trinket and ready themselves for the upcoming journey.

So this chapter is like a one-shot to me to get back in touch, hopefully, with the characters. I have started to rewatch and reread the story so maybe Doomsday is not that far behind anymore... you didn't seriously thought I abandoned you lot, did you? Please tell me you didn't...

Thousands of miles away from the planet Earth, on the asteroid number XXX7# bazaar, the life was busy as always. A petite woman was standing by one of the stalls, twisting a tiny ornate bottle in her hand around. The locals of the planet were all around at least 10 feet tall and had a bit of a massive form. It was clear that she was not a local girl. Her features, though, were of a rare beauty. Ghrahaians (the name of the local species) were mostly dark skinned people, it was a rare sight to see a white woman, with golden hair and rosy skin. But Ghrahaians were nothing if not a good mannered species, so they refrained from ogling the exotic foreigner and went back to their own chores.

That didn't stop from other foreigners to look, though. Or try to win a favor of the woman. But they all were ignored. She had been staring at the trinket for the last thirty minutes and was yet to move from her spot or respond to anything around her.

The merchant could only sigh. He would hate to sound rude (Ancient Souls forbid) but he felt like he needed to give the woman a nudge.

"Shall I wrap it up for ya, dear?" he asked kindly. A crease on her forehead only increased. He sighed. Well, at least he knew he had tried.

"Don't even go down there."
"What? I haven't said anything."
"No, but you thought about it."
"Rose..."
"Hush. I'm serious. We're not talking about it again."
"It could save your life."
"And it could end yours."

Rose felt her tensed body slowly start to relax. She had been staring at this weather predicting trinket since her and the Doctor got here and he left her to go quickly check up on something. Which, obviously, was taking him more than a quick check. And Rose... Rose was left with the
task to buy the thing, intended for her mother.

"Doctor, it's Mickey. I'm not leaving him with Daleks on his own."
"Rose...
"God, we've met Daleks so many times now we're practically family. I can handle family. Besides... Shake wouldn't make a story without Shiver."
"He wouldn't, would he?"

Convincing the Doctor to let her be part of this adventure was not something she would like to repeat ever again, but somehow they had come up with a compromise.

She let a heavy sigh escape her lips. And with that she looked up, addressing the merchant warmly.

"Yeh, thanks. I'd like to take that."

Naturally the Doctor took another hour to finally get to their meeting place, but he was eagerly bouncing on his feet, a grin on his face and she couldn't make herself to complain.

"Everything all right?" she asked with a grin of her own.

"Yep. Perfect. Found the place I was looking for. Wasn't sure if it was on this asteroid or on the asteroid number XXX7.1#. But luckily I got it right."

She chuckled at him, entwining their fingers together as they began to walk together. "Well, that's refreshing."

"Oh, Rose. You'll like it once you see it. There's a lot of history on this asteroid. The whole civilization's worth. Different species, different traditions. And hear the best bit." He turned to grin at her excitedly. "The Ghrahaians here-"

"That's the merchant race, yeh?"

"Yep. The Ghrahaians here are telepathic."

Her eyes widened at that bit. "Really? I couldn't even tell. They all seem to talk… normally."

"Yeh, well. This asteroid has become a culture spot for foreigners. Many species come for a tourist vacation here. Can't have them all restricted to only telepathic ones," he sniffed while looking around.

"I guess that makes sense," she agreed, matching his pace as they walked further away from the shopping area. As they went, the scenery seemed to change. What was bursting with life before, now appeared to have less and less living being around. There were more of nature around. The dirty ground changed into an early grass, the wild flowers replaced by bigger and bigger bushes.

"So, where're we going exactly?"

"You'll see." He squeezed her hand and with a soft smile urged her to follow him through the thick part of the bushes, trying to get towards the clearing.

She stumbled taking the last steps and had to catch onto the Doctor's sleeve to steady herself as they reached their destination.

"Here we're then."
Slowly she lifted her head to look around only to widen her eyes. Before her eyes lay the greenest horizons she had ever seen, the air having a divine smell about it but what truly perplexed her were that the place was covered in bones. For hundreds and hundreds of miles ahead all she could see were white bones. Bigger than humans, but smaller than biggest animals on Earth. Just the right size of… Ghrahaian.

"Now I know why this place is called the City of Bones," she exhaled, taking a step further inside the clearing. "What is this? A graveyard?"

"This… is a healing place," the Doctor exhaled, taking a few steps with hands in his pockets. "Not literal healing, mind. More of a mental healing. A sacred place for Ghrahaian."

True enough, now she could spot some living Ghrahaian gathered around some of the bones. From the distance it appeared as if they were talking… to the bones.

"What are they all doing?"

"Mostly praying… talking with their dead."

"They can actually do that?"

As they went further, more and more Ghrahaian could be seen. Some were alone, some were with their families. But one thing connected everyone together here. Everyone looked so serene at this place. Despite it being a resting place for their dead, neither seemed to be mourning a loss. Some were more solemn than others, but in everyone's eyes hope seemed to shine.

"Ghrahaian are generally a very loyal race," the Doctor began to speak again. "Not many survive the loss of their loved ones."

"But… nobody seems to be… well, grieving. Is this what you meant by a healing place? Is it like… affects them to not stay sad forever?"

He smiled slightly. "It's more than that."

A tiny crease appeared in the middle of Rose's forehead. "How d'you mean?"

"Their spirits don't just go anywhere. They stay inside. Inside their bodies. Well, remains of them, really." The Doctor stopped by one of the remains, giving it a soft caress with his hand. "Those bones are not just empty shells. They carry the very souls of their ancestors. Giving wisdom to the younger generations."

Rose looked around at all those people gathered together. All seemed to have found peace with this place. Her brows furrowed in thought.

"But as you said… if they can talk with their loved ones again… How can they bear to leave this place? I mean, having a way to talk with someone dear that you lost… you wouldn't want to leave this place. Forever."

"Some don't," the Doctor said in a soft voice. Rose glanced at him with an open look on her face. The Doctor swallowed tightly before continuing. "See over there?" He pointed on the right side from where they stood. "It's not just remains of one Grahaian. It's a pair. If you look more closely, one appears to be laying down, probably a natural death, while the other is hugging its frame, staying huddled together."

"Oh no. This is so sad."
"They are not alone," he said in a voice which made Rose look up. He wondered what the Doctor was thinking while watching all this. She swallowed before speaking again.

"So, those two literally get to stay together forever."

"Yeh," he told her, turning to give her a tender smile. She gave one in return.

"Come on," he urged her while taking her hand in his. "Sometimes they sing in their minds. If we're lucky, we just might get to hear them."

They came to a stop near the pair the Doctor had mentioned before. No wonder Rose mistook it for a single being before, it appeared the other was so tightly wrapped around the other one, like he never wanted to let go. Her heart went out for them. But at least they had each other.

She missed to notice how the Doctor already took the place at one side of the bones structure, sitting comfortably at them. Rose's eyes nearly bulged out of their sockets.

"Um... Doctor?"

"Come here, Rose. It's pretty comfortable here." He grinned at her, patting the other side where she should sit on the bones. She worried her lip with her teeth as she regarding him.

"Is it all right to just sit there? Isn't it like... disrespectful to the dead or something? I thought this was a sacred place."

"And it is," he agreed eagerly, his eyebrows raised. "But despite those remains containing the living souls, they are still not flesh and blood," he spilled in one breath. "You can't actually hurt them physically. They were brought here for this very purpose."

"What, to be sat upon?" Rose frowned at the notion.

"Something like that."

Rose swallowed the retort she had on the tip of her tongue and sighed.

"All right then. Excuse my rudeness," Rose smiled nervously as she gracefully lowered herself to sit on the bones.

The Doctor chuckled softly. "They can't hear you like that."

"Oh."

"Hold on." The Doctor closed his eyes, concentrating on something. Rose followed his hand which was placed firmly against the bony surface. Rose narrowed her eyes in thought. Some sort of link probably?

She watched how the Doctor's face changed from concentrated to awed in seconds time. He inhaled deeply, his mouth parting slightly. "Oh... It's a lovers song. An ancient one too. " He smiled tenderly at that. "Oh... They have stayed together for such a long time.

"I wish I could hear it," Rose whispered involuntary and then realizing what she said tried to backpedal but the Doctor already had his eyes opened and only gave her a warm smile.

"Here. Give me your hand." He extended his right hand for her to hold onto and pressed their entwined hands together against the bones.
Rose felt a familiar rush of energy inside her mind. She gasped at the sensation she only had to experience a couple of times.

"Shh, it's all right. I'm here with you."

"Doctor...?"

"Hello."

"Hi."

*She chuckled in her mind.*

"Oh, I'm never going to get used to this. This is just so... overwhelming. I don't know how you do it."

"Well, there's one advantage of being born with it. Hold on. It's starting."

~Hmmm...nnn...mmm...~

A soft song started to play. Rose guessed it could be a woman's voice but it sounded more melodious than anything she had ever heard.

"It's... beautiful. What is it?"

"Universal sounds, accords, instruments...every sound in existence. Her words are literally being translated into sounds."

"Oh. So she's actually speaking to us?"

"To us, to the universe. Can't really tell. Ghrahaians are very private in their telepathy. Only the Ghrahaians can hear what each other say. On the other hand, travellers get to hear them sing ancient songs."

~Nanarara...nunutudurudu...~

After a while they both opened their eyes, coming back from their telepathy.

Their fingers still entwined together, Rose smiled at the Doctor in gratitude. "Thank you. This was a beautiful trip."

The Doctor smiled at her, but she could tell the smile didn't reach his eyes. "Something to remember by," he replied tightly. Rose bit her lips as he watched the Doctor looking so vulnerable to her.

"Are you scared?" she asked softly, meeting the Doctor's haunted eyes.

,,It's terrifying," he admitted. ,,The mere thought of loosing you again is paralyzing me. But there's no stopping you, is there? Even if I did lock you up somewhere safe until all the daleks were back to the darkest parts of the void, you'd still somehow come back. March into the front lines of the battlefield and it would be as if I've never even tried."

He didn't bother to tell her that this time his hearts really might stop beating if he were to lose her again. The feel of her hand in his was the only thing keeping him sane now. He squeezed their fingers together.
"We're going to be fine. You and me. We went thought all that together... I even repeated my own timeline, God. They can't keep us apart," she whispered with a broken voice while desperately trying to swallow her tears away.

The Doctor reached out for her with his right hand, cupping her rosy cheek in his palm affectionately. Almost immediately Rose leaned into his touch, bringing her own hand to rest against his, squeezing his hand with her fingers. His chest was hurting painfully in his rib cage, two hearts beating wildly inside. He knew better than to dwell on could bes now but oh he so wished for at least some reassurance.

Holding their eye contact together, he cut the remaining space separating them, capturing her lips between his own in a tender embrace. He swallowed her surprised gasp, pressing further in, caressing her lips with precise movements. *If there was only a way to keep her.*

He shifted his right hand from her cheek to cradle her head, tilting it to the side. He could feel Rose's hand wandering to settle on the back of his neck, sending shivers going down his spine, bringing him in closer to her. She hummed happily when he went willingly and settled his other hand against her waist, urging her to come closer still. *If only he was able to tell everything to her with a touch.*

Somewhere in the back of his mind he could feel a tingling feeling, urging him on. *Come on. Come on. Do it.* He clutched onto the fabric of Rose's jacket as he felt her tentatively reach out to him to deepen the kiss. He let her in freely. Into his heart. Into his soul.

It started with a tingling feeling inside his mind. Suddenly he felt a fleeting sensation of warmth inside. It felt so good to be wrapped around that warmth. He couldn't remember ever feeling something so soothing. He craved more of it. He tried to seek it further, to hold on to that before he realized what he was doing. And suddenly it was gone with the simultaneous gasps coming from both parties. The Doctor separated their contact between their lips and just stared at Rose with wide eyes.

He couldn't believe what he just nearly did. No. He couldn't believe what he *did* do. Even if it was only for a fleeting second he actually had lowered his always there steel shields and opened up his mind. *For Rose.* He could feel himself starting to tremble from inside. It was so selfish. Thankfully not as invasive as if he would have accidently intruded on Rose's mind (thank Rassilon for that), but even so. His mind wasn't a pretty thing to look upon. He could only imagine what she had seen there in those few seconds that he selfishly invited her inside.

He swallowed tightly, ready to go any moment now but before he could retreat, Rose cupped his cheeks between her palms and pressed her mouth firmly on his, not letting him go.

He could only stay frozen for a moment, unable to react. But Rose just wouldn't let him go. She showered him with love and affection, reassuring him with everything her fragile human being had and he was just too tired to think about it rationally.

He loved her. With everything he was. The Oncoming Storm. A Time Lord. The Doctor. She loved him. Despite being only but a human. So shouldn't it be all right to let himself go in this? To have this moment for himself. He sighed into the kiss.

After a few more caresses Rose broke the contact, her cheeks painted in a light blush. He swallowed, unable to meet her eyes.
„Doctor..." she tried softly.

„Doctor, it's all right."

He closed his eyes as a shuddering breath escaped his lips. „Rose... what I just did..."

„Thank you."

He froze, not sure he was hearing her right. But then he felt his head being gently lifted up, so he could meet the hazel eyes looking at him warmly. „I... I didn't really see anything. I mean... nothing concrete. It was just... a feeling. So you don't have to worry about it."

She could see him visibly relaxing at the words and she would be lying if she said that didn't bother her a bit. But this was not important now. „I still want to thank you for it though. Even if not consciously then at least unconsciously you trusted me enough to open up like that. I know how hard that is for you."

He clenched his teeth together and nodded tightly. He so desperately wanted to run. It was in his blood. That urge, to run when he found himself in extremely uncomfortable situations. But he knew he promised himself and her that he wouldn't do that anymore. So with every bit of restrain, he tried to settle himself down. To stay put. It was hard. Especially when he was feeling now so utterly vulnerable. Still, he tried to keep himself together. It was just bloody hard to do this now. Now, when the storm was still waiting for them, threatening their future.

„Doctor..." Her hands were still cupping his cheeks, as she brought her forehead against his. „I just want you to know that I'll always love you. No matter what."

"Always and forever," she whispered to him, making him wish with his very being for it to stay true.

„Rose."

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_to be continued..._
Doomsday Part One

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

#Doomsday Part One

A young man, not even in his thirties yet, strode through the streets of London. His steps were slightly shaky but he had a determined look on his face. He stopped just outside the entrance of a high building, preparing himself to take those few last steps, when suddenly the doors opened up and someone walked out.

"Excuse me," the new person said as the two collided. He paid him no more attention and walked off.

The young man lifted his head to look at bold writing, covering half of the building's wall. "Canary Wharf"

With a sigh, he stepped inside.

The time rotor was moving steadily inside the console room, an echo of a gentle hum going throughout the infinite walls of the time ship. The Doctor was prancing around the consol, pressing buttons and pulling levers in a mad dash he had set himself into. Rose was watching him dance around while waiting for him to pay attention.

Suddenly he stopped.

"It's weird. I thought I knew that song," he noted with a disappointed frown. His mouth moved in rhythm of some lyrics which Rose failed to catch the words of.

"Doctor."

He spun around with a jump. "Right. Where was I? Call the captain. He better be out of London by 1st of July." He leaned over to pull a lever on his right side. "With the void opened up, he would just be pulled right in." He sniffed. "Even his immortality won't help against that."

"What're you gonna do?"

"I'm going to set the coordinates for London, Powell Estate. Let's say 1st of May," He gave her a side-glance and pressed on another lever with his left hand.

Rose grinned at him. "You do that. I'll be back in a sec!" she called out while rushing back to her room where she had left her phone.

The Doctor watched Rose go all the way until she disappeared inside the hallway and then exhaled a breath he had been holding.

Turning back towards the monitor, he pressed a few buttons waiting for a reading to appear. He then dug inside his breast pocket to retrieve his sonic screwdriver. With a bit of quick adjustments, he picked the right setting, smiling briefly at his victory and then leaned over the console to press the faraway button. On the right side of the monitor a part of console opened up and a cylindrical tube appeared. Without wasting a second, the Doctor settled the screwdriver inside the tube,
pressing a button to close it shut.

The monitor started emitting a steady bleeping sound, it going for about a minute, until finally the Galifreyan symbols stopped changing and the Doctor could read the results. His eyebrows rose up in surprise, mouth going slack open. "Oh, Rose."

The readings worried him but also gave him a sudden idea. A possible solution if only in theory. He couldn't be sure if it would work, but he sure wasn't passing a chance for one more alternative. Without further ado, he pocketed that idea into his mind just as Rose emerged from the depths of the TARDIS and he quickly pressed the right buttons to close the program down while also not forgetting to snatch the sonic screwdriver back to his breast pocket.

He proceeded to appear busy and while having not much else to choose from dug his hands into his Janis Joplin's coat pockets.

He wasn't sure why he was trying so desperately to hide but his only guess was habit.

His hands went down deep into his pockets, pulling out everything he could find there and placing them on the console. One by one he took the things out: super glue, duct tape, hair band, gum, gas mask, scissors... "Scissors!?!" he cried out in disbelief, a frown crossing his forehead. "You could take an eye out with that." He then considered. "Or prick a finger." He tossed the offending item aside and continued rummaging through his infinite pockets just as Rose joined him near the console, one hand still clutching the phone tightly.

"Okay. I just got off the phone with Jack. Told him to stay out of London on the 1st of July," she told him and after pocketing her phone, came to a stop. She scanned all the stuff the Doctor had pulled out, reaching out for a pink hair band with strawberries on it and holding it between her two fingers with a questioning rise of eyebrows.

She gave him a look.

"What?" he only asked, and proceeded to scan his pockets further. He felt something wrap around his index finger and nudged on it to take out. A yo-yo appeared in his hand next.

"Oh! Look at you. It's been ages since I've seen this thing," he cried out in a bliss. He tried it out for a good measure. "Well, at least a decade or two." He let it spin out till it nearly reached the grating and then nudged it to spin back up. He giggled in delight. "Look at me. I still got it." He then caught the yo-yo in his palm, looking at it with deep wonder. "I thought I lost it under the console. How did it even get in there?"

Rose watched the Doctor in slight amusement for a minute or two, shaking her head at his antics before clearing her throat to get his attention. The Doctor whipped his head to look at her innocently before placing the yoyo carefully back on the console, feeling like a naughty kid being scolded by his mother. His body did a full length shudder from such thoughts, and Rose could only jump back a bit from the suddenness of it.

"So, what else do we need?"

"Right!" He jumped back on his heels, clasping his hands together. "Assets....Assets... Assets assets assets assets....assets!" His head tilted back with his rambling and then just as suddenly he straightened up. "Right. Did you get the ropes?" he suddenly turned to look at her, his face a mere inches apart from her face. If Rose wasn't so used to his eccentric behavior as she was now, she would have jumped back in surprise. Now she only stared him back in the eyes and asked calmly. "What ropes?"
"The 25.8 strengthened dragons' tail ropes we got from the asteroid XXX7#.

Her brows furrowed in thought. "You said you already took care of that."

He tilted his head slightly in thought. "Did I?"

"Yep," she confirmed, pursuing her lips slightly. The Doctor seemed to have followed the movement, now staring right at her mouth in an unwavering intensity. Rose had to gulp the sudden tightness in her throat while also trying to calm her racing heart. If he wanted to kiss her, he could just bloody do that. Somehow kissing the Doctor felt less nerve-wracking than the casual temptation of so-near-but-so-far-away kind.

"You're staring," he suddenly said and Rose had to blink herself awake, wondering if she heard him right.

"No." She laughed softly. "It's you staring."

His brows suddenly rose high in his hairline and he briskly leaned back. "Right. Yes. Sorry," he muttered quietly and turned back towards the console, his one hand pulling on his ear.

Rose had to bit her lip. What was he even sorry for?

"Everything all right?" she asked, just to be sure.

"Yep," he popped the p, his back facing her.

"Doctor-"

"Rose."

He suddenly turned around to look at her straight in the eyes. The look in his eyes seemed to have changed from just a few mins ago, there was something underneath that she couldn't quite pint point.

"Yeh?"

Something conflicting passed through his eyes at that moment, it was also slightly covered in reluctance she was so familiar in seeing all these years. He opened his mouth but nothing came out. He just stood there, running his tongue inside his mouth and then closed his lips shut. Rose's forehead wrinkled in worry but she waited patiently for him to continue.

"Rose," he tried again, his voice deep.

"Yes, Doctor?"

He swallowed tightly as his shoulders slumped slightly. "There's something…" He inhaled deeply and tried again. "Something that I might have an idea about. But it's too vague still. I need you to trust me and not ask about it, all right?" he ended with a quiet plead, as if waiting for her judgement. Rose stared at him for a moment longer to gauge his expression but after finding nothing but desperate need of understanding she quickly gave in, giving him a gentle smile in return.

"Okay."

His shoulders visibly relaxed at her words, his body gaining back the usual bounciness. "Right then. If you're quite done… we're ready to land." He gave her a side-way look to ask for permission
to follow. Instead of answering, Rose took a step closer to his side and placed her left hand onto his right one on the console, entwining their fingers together. This time it was her turn took look at him with all the intensity she had.

"Okay, then. We'll do it your way. But together, yeh?" she asked him with a grin on her face and the Doctor couldn't agree more.

"Yeh.

The TARDIS landed with a soft thud inside the living room of the Tylers' flat. Jackie was just finishing up the dishes when she heard the sound of the universe throughout her whole apartment. Her heart leapt in joy at hearing the sound. It meant her daughter's return and she couldn't be happier.

With hurried excitement she quickly whipped her wet hands on the cloth and came out of the kitchen just as the Doctor and Rose stepped outside out of the TARDIS.

But being Jackie, even having not seen her daughter for months, she couldn't stop herself from making a remark. „Oh, I don't know why you bother with that phone! You never use it!" she exclaimed, exasperated and pleased at the same time.

Rose was the first to gather her in a tight hug. "Shut up, come here!"

"Oh, I love you!"

"I love you. I missed you so much, mum!"

The Tyler women hugged each other with all they had, half blocking the Doctor from fully coming out, but he tried his best to squeeze himself past them, unnoticed.

That moment Jackie decided to break their tight embrace with Rose and after spotting from the corner of her eye the Doctor moving aside, she quickly proceeded to tell him what she thought about it. Clearly she was having none of that.

"Oh no you don't. Come here!" she exclaimed and then tried to grab onto him but the Doctor already knowing what to watch out for, made an effort to evade her.

"Oh no no no no no!" At Jackie's bemused expression he stopped her with an index finger. "There're… three… three very important reasons why you should never, under no circumstances, repeat that gesture on me again."

Jackie could only grimace at him. "What is he on about, then?"

Rose bit her lip, while trying to suppress her grin, clearly enjoying the Doctor's obvious discomfort of possibly again being smooched by Jackie Tyler.

But sooner or later the games had to end and Rose pressed her lips together in all seriousness. "Mum? There's something we must tell you." She hoped to not freak out her mother just yet and tried to thread gently but it was not Jackie Tyler who suddenly got a heart attack, all right, but rather everyone except her.

"Oh my god!" she suddenly exclaimed. "Are you pregnant?" Her words were followed by a very unmaly, high pitched squeal of the Doctor.
"WHAT!?"

"Wha- Mum!" Rose could only agree with him.

"Oh, I don't know. You stay all cooped up inside that box for months, don't even bother to call, what else am I s'posed to think?"

"WHAT!?"

"Oh don't look so scandalized." Jackie gave him a look.

"This is me horrified!" he shot back, his eyes still very much wide open in shock.

Clearly the Doctor was still too much in shock to function properly and would sooner start sputtering if nothing was to be done, so Rose took matters in her own hands. "Mum. I'm not having kids, possibly not ever. So can we just drop it, yeh?" she asked with a hint of exasperation.

"Fine fine. Not just yet."

"Mum! Please."

"Okay fine." Finally Jackie seemed to cooperate and straightened up to stand with her hands crossed on her chest. "So, if not an alien pregnancy, what are you two having this awful look for?"

Rose glanced at the Doctor, who just now was seemingly coming back from the bombshell Jackie Tyler just dropped on them, and sighed. This was looking like a long talk ahead.

After exactly two hours twenty eight minutes and thirty two seconds (the Doctor counted) the Tyler flat went eerily silent. Rose was anxiously biting her nail while watching her mother's expressionless face. If she would only say something...

As if reading her thoughts, Jackie stood up. "I think we all need a nice cup of tea." She turned to look at the two dumbstruck faces on the couch. "What would you like? Earl Grey? Yorkshire tea? Do you want one sugar or two?"

"Mum, didn't you hear what I just said? I'm repeating a timeline. We are repeating a timeline." She thought they explained her clearly, in as much detail as they could. Why was she acting like this?

"Oh, I heard you, all right," Jackie interrupted her before Rose could say more. "There have been all kinds of things happening sice the moment himself came into our lives. My daughter not coming back home for a year, aliens at my doorstep. The next thing we know, he brings a moon inside my living room."

"Weeell..." the Doctor started to speak but Jackie cut right through him.

"And I accepted that it's your life now. But I don't bloody want an alien inside my head." Jackie stared at Rose's pleading expression and her tone softened a bit. "But I have to, don't I? Because you're my little girl and I'll do whatever I have to to be there for you. So yes, I'm going to have that bloody tea ready right now, because that's what us British do. And it's the only not alien thing left for me."

The Doctor and Rose seemed to have a similar expressions of deep regret on their faces and guilt as they quietly listened to Jackie Tyler talking. "And I don't have anything really against you, you know?" she said softly and the Doctor had to lift his head up as if sensing it was meant for him. "I
know you'll take care of my girl for me, and I'm sure I'll understand this all better with those memories back. But now I need a cuppa."

"So how much sugar it's gonna be?" she pierced them with a firm stare to which Rose could only open her mouth a few times and close.

"One, thanks."

The pair on the couch watched Jackie disappear inside the kitchen. They both still had a sort of stunned expressions on their faces.

"Well, it could have gone worse," the Doctor offered lightly.

"You think?" Rose asked rhetorically, not really expecting an answer. "I don't know what am I doing... Do you think I'm doing the right thing? Forcing her to remember?" She glanced at the Doctor with a troubled expression on her face.

"I think... you wanted your mother to be on the same page as you." He squeezed their fingers which were tightly wrapped around each other this whole time, quietly giving support to each other even without words. "It might be a little bit overwhelming for her now but when she wakes up she will understand everything much clearer. You'll have Jackie with you." He smiled at her with such tenderness and affection, making Rose's fragile human heart soar in gratitude and love for this wonderful man, who became such an important part of her life. She could never imagine to be parted from him now. After everything they have been through it was just impossible to fathom.

It took another half hour for everyone to finish up their tea break. The Doctor tried to hurry the process up on a few occasions but was only given a dirty look from Jackie and quickly backpedaled.

Mothers.

He was quite surprised at himself for getting so domestic.

At the moment Jackie was back into the kitchen, doing their dishes while the Doctor and Rose were left with the task to make Jackie's rest comfortable. It would take at least several hours for memories to settle down inside her head so she had to stay put in one place.

Rose appeared from the main bedroom with a pair of pillows in her hold, placing them on the couch.

"So, how's this gonna work exactly? You being inside my mum's head."

The Doctor sniffed, while helping Rose to lay the baby pink duvet on the couch. "Every single person has an imprint of the previous timeline inside their mental hard drive. I could literally pick any person on the planet and push their memories from the previous timeline into the surface."

"Seriously? It's not just you and me?"

"Weeell, not so special anymore, are we?" the Doctor teased her with a knowing smirk on his face to which Rose bumped herself onto his side. She then sobered up, her hands momentary stopping in her work.

"But isn't that dangerous? The knowledge."

"Not if they're not aware of it," the Doctor said and with a spin plopped onto the couch, bouncing a
bit. Rose stared at him from her position beside the sofa, a slight frown on her face. The Doctor hurried to explain. "They can't probe themselves into awareness. That's not how it works." He gestured with his left hand. "Strictly speaking, any telepathic being with a strong telepathic and sentient field could do that, but it would require *them* knowing. And they don't." He looked at her meaningfully, holding their eye-contact. Rose worried her lips with her teeth and came to sit beside the Doctor.

"So, what you're saying is... you're the only person in the entire universe who can unbreak this curse."

"Exactly." The Doctor had a haughty grin on his face. Rose refused to stroke his ego. But she just had to ask.

"So, is that why you didn't want me calling this universe the "reset timeline" anymore?"

He only gave her a look.

"Right," she agreed and pulled her feet to the edge of the couch. "But... is there nothing we could do to... I don't know... like, prevent the leak from happening, no?"

"Well... there's a chance that the universe will work it out on its own." The Doctor then proceeded to straighten Rose's legs and placed them both onto his lap. Having stayed in one place for a long while now he thought it was a brilliant idea to be of some good to Rose and proceeded to give her a foot massage.

Rose supposed she should be getting used to the Doctor's closeness a little by now but each new initiate he took just threw her. She tried to dampen her hormones when she felt his fingers idly playing with her ankles. Adrenaline was something she wasn't very good at controlling. But you couldn't blame the girl for trying.

"W-ahat? How?" she asked in a slightly shaky voice. Her only hope was for her mother to not suddenly appear and drop another bombshell in regards what she thought of their relationship. Speaking of... she wasn't even aware of their suddenly progressed relationship yet.

Rose spared a quick glance towards the kitchen and had to exhale in relief when her mother was obviously on the phone, oblivious to the Doctor and Rose. When the Doctor spoke again, she shifted her attention back to him.

"When the timelines hit the landmark," he answered her previous question. "In theory, it should put a seal on the previous timeline, leaving only one active timeline," he said thoughtfully.

"But?"

"I don't have that much information about multiple timelines collision. No one really does. It's all kind of untested. Waiting to be seen... Rose, are you ticklish?" he suddenly asked when Rose reacted quite violently to him putting his fingers on the back of her foot. But before she could answer, and possibly protest with everything she held dear, the Doctor's face light up like a kid's on Christmas Eve. "Oh. You *are* ticklish." He grinned at her wickedly, obviously remembering a time on the New Earth.

Rose gulped and slowly tried to retrieve her legs, but the Doctor stopped her from going anywhere and you could see the swirls twirling inside his head, forming an evil idea which Rose was pretty sure she wouldn't like.

To her utter relief, before the Doctor could literally lunge at her, her mother, dear ol' Jackie
stormed into the room. "Oh, don't you start making babies on my sofa," she exclaimed in exasperation and the Doctor reacted like being hit by a bolting light. He sputtered, stunned in place for a second and then jumped back from Rose, dropping her legs and watching Jackie with wide eyes. Rose wondered how many times Jackie was capable of giving the Doctor a heart attack in one day. She scratched her forehead while watching the two interact.

"Wha- what? we… we were not!" he protested firmly. "I only had her leg!"

"Well I don't know. You're an alien, for all I know you could have your-"

"Don't," the Doctor interrupted her quickly. When she tried to open her mouth again, he repeated. "Just don't." He then turned towards Rose in desperate attempt. "Rose, tell her!"

Rose chuckled silently at him and stood up from the couch. "Mum, why don't you sit down so the Doctor could start?"

After twenty minutes, Jackie Tyler was put in a deep slumber, oblivious to the whole world around. Rose was sitting by her side, making her comfortable on their humble sofa (the Doctor had offered the TARDIS, even if with a bit of reluctance on his part, but hearing her opinion on him stranding her on some Moon he quickly retracted his kind offer. Everyone was happy after that). So now Rose was waiting for the Doctor to come back from the depths of the TARDIS with a vial for stimulating the synapses.

It was very quiet in the Tylers' flat with only her and Jackie being there until suddenly it was not. Like some kind of a wave, the voices of people in the streets suddenly pierced her ears. The shrilling screams.

She whipped her head towards the sound and hurried out to the window. Sure enough the streets were in the midst of chaos. People were running around with their heads in their hands, trying to get away from a sudden threat. Rose's heart picked a beat when she saw just what that threat was. Amidst the chaos and people, stood featureless, like shadows, but definitely humanoid figures, looking very much like ghosts. Only Rose knew better now.

She griped the curtain tight in her palm when she watched a woman freeze in the spot when the ghost figure passed right through her. The next moment the woman slumped on the ground.

Rose backed away from the window, ready to call out for the Doctor when she felt herself suddenly drowning, every pore in her body stretched as if trying to contain more than one existence in the same place. The uncomfortable feeling ended just as suddenly and she was met face to face with a not fully materialized Cyberman. In her living room.

She momentarily froze in place but then shook herself out of it and grabbed for the nearest thing at hand. That being the lamp. And aimed it at the alien. "Stay the hell away from me," she bit back harshly and then raised her voice in a shout. "Doctor!"

The next moment the Doctor's head peeked out from the TARDIS doors, a worried crease in his forehead. "What's wrong?" he asked urgently but then his eyes followed what Rose was seeing and his mouth opened up in understanding.

He stepped out of the TARDIS and slowly circled around the thing until he situated himself just a bit ahead from Rose, like shielding her. His hand rose in the air with the sonic screwdriver in it. He pointed it at the shadowy creature and bleeped it.

"What's going on? I thought we came before the shift happened." Rose asked, feeling more calm
now with the Doctor with her. She put the lamp back in place.

"And we did," he agreed and pulled his sonic back. He then took a few steps towards it, not forgetting to put his glasses on as he inspected the figure. It started to look around. "This is the very first shift," the Doctor said quietly and bleeped the sonic right into its eyes. It seemed to not approve of it and tried to swipe the sonic away but the Doctor only jumped back, watching it haughtily.

"Low signal. It's all right. It can't do anything in this form. Just don't touch it."

"Yeh, wasn't planning on repeating that, thanks."

After a few more seconds the time limit for the shift reached its peak and the figure started to slowly disappear, until it was gone completely. The Doctor and Rose both heaved a sigh with it gone.

"You all right?" the Doctor asked, looking her over but a small grin played on his face.

Rose nodded. "Yeh, fine." And chuckled in relief. Adrenaline wearing off.

They quickly drew each other in a tight hug, wrapping their hands around one another.

With the ghosts gone, the screams from the outside seemed to have settled down also, but panic was pretty much still there. The Doctor held Rose's hand in his as they both went to look out the window. He had a concerned frown on his face.

"They must be scared to death," Rose noted while watching the people trying to get away from one another in panic.

"And rightfully so. They got it right the first time," the Doctor duly noted. "Those human little instincts. Ever since you were primates and were still jumping from the trees. You already had that sense of danger. What happened to you for you to get so… dumb"? the Doctor grimaced distastefully.

"Being rude again?" Rose grinned by his side.

The Doctor ignored her remark and spun around, taking off his glasses. "I will tell you what happened. You were brainwashed by the media." Another high pitched yell caught his attention some more but then he turned back to her. "Come on. We don't have much time. We have to go." He then proceeded to drag her to the TARDIS but Rose came to a stop, making him look up at her in question.

"Doctor, hold on."

"What is it?"

"We can't just leave her like that." Rose told him softly and pointed at Jackie's prone form still laying unconscious on the couch. The Doctor inhaled deeply.

"Rose, we can't take her with us. The next time we land on Earth it will be two months passed while only minutes for us. And even with the vial for speeding up the process, her brain will still need time to process the information. At least several hours worth."

"Yeh, well, tough, because I'm not leaving her behind with cybermen going for a casual visit every Sunday morning," Rose said with a firm confidence in her voice, showing the Doctor that she
wasn't about to give up anytime soon. "We have to take her with us."

She could see the Doctor debating with the idea, probably finding thousands of mishaps Jackie would bring them if they were to take her back to the TARDIS but after a while he just exhaled in defeat.

"All right. But we're not taking her to the TARDIS. I have a better idea."

The better idea turned out even better than Rose had imagined. She couldn't believe she hadn't thought of that before. The Doctor instructed her to call Sarah Jane and in ten minutes they were at her doorstep, the Doctor carrying Jackie to one of the bedrooms in Sarah's flat.

They only needed Sarah to look after Jackie while she was unconscious but Sarah was eager to help as much as was needed. So having done that, Rose bid her mother farewell and the Doctor, after upgrading a chip in K-9 for a laser beam to work against daleks and cybermen, took her by hand in the TARDIS.

They set the coordinates for two months later.

_to be continued...

Chapter End Notes

Your thoughts are much appreciated ^^
The whole planet was panicking.
Families trying to hide inside their homes only to have them ripped apart by Cybermen.
An army of ghosts, they called it.
A war against human race. An internal war between Daleks and Cybermen. We just didn't stand a chance. Even with all the knowledge we had, there was no stopping it.
But never for the lack of trying.
This is the story beginning four hours ago.

Two months later, after leaving Jackie in Sarah's care, the TARDIS finally materialised inside the Tylers's living room. Having known they were coming, Jackie was already standing outside the rich blue wooden doors, waiting to be let in.

With a crack, the doors opened up and Rose's head peeked out of it. "Come on."

Gingerly Jackie stepped inside, closing the doors after her. At once she was welcomed in a tight hug by her daughter. Rose buried her face in her mother's shoulder as she could feel a small tremor going through her body.

"I'm so sorry. I just couldn't do this without you." Her voice cracked at the end while she tried to subside her unshed tears.

Jackie could only pat Rose's head, gently soothing her. "Shh, it's all right."

After a while longer, the two separated. Jackie looked Rose up and down, smoothing and getting her hair out of her face. "How are you doing, then?"

"Been better, yeh," she said with a bit of a smile on her face. "But I've got the Doctor. We'll make it work," she promised.

Jackie nodded tightly at her, not yet fully believing.

"I'm scared for you so much, sweetheart."

"I know, mum. I know."

The two women stayed like that for a moment longer when Jackie averted her eyes and they shifted to her side. She stared at the Doctor who was pressing various kind of buttons by the console. The
magnetic pull of her stare seemed to work because the next moment the Doctor's eyes lifted and locked with hers, a sheepish smile on his face.

"Jackie, hi," he exhaled, a bit unsure of himself. "Welcome on board. Again. Nice to see you."

More staring.

The Doctor had to suppress the urge to shift from the uncomfortable feeling of being stared down by one Jackie Tyler.

"Uh…” He pulled on his ear while waiting for her to say something.

"If we end up on Mars, I'm still gonna kill you," she told him with her hands crossed against her chest. The Doctor gulped and straightened up.

"Right. Jackie, I-" He was ready to launch a very lengthy explanation of how it was impossible to end up on Mars in this particular moment in time, not when timelines were in such a vulnerable state. The universe itself was pulling them in towards their destination. But before he could explain all that, Jackie's face twisted into a smile.

"Oh, don't be silly. I'm just messing with you," she said affectionately and opened her arms up in invitation. "Come here, you."

"Sorry?" The Doctor blinked at her, uncomprehending.

Jackie just turned to face Rose. "Was he always this daft?"

Rose pressed her lips together while suppressing a laugh from bursting out. "No, he's just sort of scared of you, mum."

"Oi!" the Doctor protested indignantly. "I'm not scared of Jackie." The urge to prove himself won out and he descended the ramp towards the pair by the doors. He soon found himself in an embrace of both Tyler women. When they parted, he had a big grin on his face.

"It's good to see you, Jackie."

"Oh, I don't even bloody want to know how is all possible, but you better make it work this time."

The Doctor and Rose shared a glance with each other and smiled.

"On that note, let's see what we've got."

The Doctor sent them into the Time Vortex while they were accessing the situation. The Doctor, Rose and Jackie - they were all gathered around the console. The Doctor closest to the monitor, the outside of Canary Wharf building shown on the screen.

"The last time we failed at element of surprise. Storage is just too open." He leaned in towards the monitor. "We need something better. Some way to ensure we get inside unnoticed. How do you get inside a building constantly monitored for alien signature?" he wondered out loud, his brows furrowed in thought. Rose was by his side, peering at the monitor all the same.

"Could you get the blueprint for Torchwood Tower?"

"I believe I can, Rose Tyler," he said haughtily. "What do you have in mind?" he asked with a suggestive grin starting to play on his face.
"Shut up," Rose whispered to him, but failed miserably at hiding a grin of her own.

"I'm still on board, you know," Jackie commented from the side.

The Doctor cleared his throat and stood up straighter. Rose began to speak again.

"Back in parallel world, Torchwood had this... well, area." She gestured with her hand. "It was mostly unused... Something about the signal not reaching out there. Maybe this Torchwood has the same one."

"That's a good idea when I hear it," the Doctor said with pride shining in his voice. "Allons-y, Rose Tyler," he exclaimed and pulled the lever with force, the whole console room shuddering from it.

In a gleaming white room, a scientist started to pull a lever down. Slowly the light dimmed down, and a woman with curly fair hair took off a pair of sunglasses.

Finally the lever was pulled down fully and the engines died down. The next moment the same woman, going by the name Yvonne, stepped out of her office, which was separated from the busy main office/rift chamber with a glass partition. Standing tall, she addressed the staff.

"Ladies and gentlemen... I'd like to announce: we've just measured the ghost energy at five thousand gigawatts. Give yourselves a round of applause."

She put her hands together, and the rest followed suit.

The sound of TARDIS engines filled up the small white room inside the Torchwood Tower. In a few seconds the blue police box solidified, the engines grinding to a halt.

"Oh. I guess nobody expects aliens coming out of this side," the Doctor commented lightly while watching the screen showing what appeared to be the WC room.

"Right, then." He turned away from the screen and ran down the ramp, while pocketing his glasses inside his breast pocket. "Jackie, you're coming with me. I need you to be a kind diplomat with Mr. Pete Tyler," he told her pointedly and then sprung around, nearly colliding into his pink and yellow companion. "Rose," he breathed out, her name rolling off his tongue a lot more breathless than he intended. He swallowed tightly and put a regretful smile on his face. "There's no point in me asking for you to stay behind, is there?"

"Nope," she popped the sound lightly, looking more determined than ever before. The Doctor's hearts soared at the sight. He wondered what a man such as himself, the killer of his own kind, could have done to deserve her. He was just so lucky to have met her.

He locked their eyes together, watching her without words. The next moment, he closed the little gap that was separating them, and took her in his arms, enveloping her in a tight hug. With his eyes closed shut, he tried to soothe himself by counting her breaths, just relishing in the moment of her being alive and safe in his arms.

Alive and breathing in the right universe.

He was just so scared of losing her again.

A big part of him died when Rose disappeared, lost for him forever. He thought he would never be able to go on again. Having survived Time War it was ironic, really, for him to be so weak against
one human being. But that was the reason for it. Rose was his strength. When he had her, he truly thought he was invincible. With her help, he came to terms with the Time War itself. But when he lost her, he lost it all. The universe was once again that bleak place for his sorry existence.

So having to let her go into that place with his own sane mind… The very place that was just right outside the wooden doors of his beloved ship… he had to dampen the unbearable urge to run.

Rose was so much stronger than him.

With great effort, the pair finally disentangled from one another, but still kept themselves close by, watching each other.

"I'll get you back," he promised. And this time his both hearts beat with the weight of the words. There was no alternative here. He was getting out of this with Rose in tow. Rose nodded to him in agreement, a grin forming on her face.

"You better."

They beamed at each other, giving each other all the strength needed. The sudden clearing of the throat, burst their happy bubble. The Doctor whipped his head towards the doors where an impatient Jackie Tyler stood, with hands against her hips.

He had completely forgotten she was there.

The Doctor swallowed heavily and stepped away from Rose, who only chuckled at his discomfort, clearly she wasn't having as much an issue as he was. She was Rose's mother. Her mother who had been hinting and judging their relationship of something that was not even there! He just couldn't handle that much of domestics in one day.

He picked on his ear, while trying to avoid Jackie. Even if not for long.

"I'll see you later, mum."

The Doctor could see Rose was taking Jackie's attention to herself. They hugged briefly with smiles on their faces.

"What're you gonna do, then?" Jackie suddenly asked. At once Rose's face twisted in the corner in discomfort but she quickly braced herself.

"Yeh. I um… going to where the void ship is," she ended quietly to which Jackie protested at once.

"No. Not to that sphere, Rose, please!" She grabbed for Rose's hand, like trying to stop her from going, but Rose only gave her a, what she hoped, reassuring smile in return.

"Mum. Mickey is out there. I've got to."

"But all the Daleks inside that thing…"

Having heard enough, the Doctor decided to join in. He situated himself between the two women, a palm's-wide device in his hand.

"That's why, I invented this little thing."

"What's that do, then?" Jackie looked the thing up and down suspiciously.

"Interferes with the magnetic field of the void ship."
Rose knit her brows together. "But I thought the void ship doesn't have a magnetic field. It has… nothing."

"Yeeeh," the Doctor agreed. "That's why you throw it when it does have the magnetic field."

The two women could only spare each other a glance.

The Doctor and Jackie were the first ones to leave. He urged Jackie to come out of the loo area first while he was dragging a yellow sign with bold black letters 'Out of order' under his arm. He looked around for any sign of trouble coming their way and after finding none, put the sign just beside the doors.

With that done, he urged Jackie to follow him towards the corridors.

"D'you actually have a plan?" Jackie suddenly asked after walking around a hundred of meters down the corridors.

"I have a few," the Doctor replied absentmindedly, not sparing her much of a glance. He was looking out the area, observing anything that might interfere.

"Will it work?"

"Jackie, not now," he said in irritation. Like he wasn't having enough of things on his mind. What had possessed him to take this woman with him of all things?

"What if those things are already there?" she asked fearfully.

"They probably are," he agreed. "The first shift was two months ago."

Jackie suddenly stopped walking, forcing the Doctor to stop himself. He had an exasperated expression on his face.

"Then why haven't you done something sooner? You have a bloody time machine! Make it stop before it happens."

"Jackie, I can't!" the Doctor said harshly, making her flinch slightly. "If I could, I'd have ended it the moment that sphere hit this universe. But I can't. Anything too far from our original timeline is something we can't predict. The only advantage we now have. I can't risk it."

"Well, there still must be something we can do," she protested, determination shining in her eyes. The Doctor could see Rose in her at this moment. Or vice versa. Rose in Jackie. It made him calm down slightly. He put his both hands on her shoulders, squeezing them slightly.

"And we are. I'm not losing her again. Jackie." He locked their eyes together so she could see his sincerity. "Listen to me. I give you my word. I'll get you out of this safe, okay?"

With a bit of reluctance, she nodded. The Doctor heaved a sigh and turned around, quickly picking up pace in his stride.

"For now we have to reach the control room. The rift chamber, they called it... I think. He narrowed his eyes in thought, then shook his head out of it. "Anyway, I jammed their cameras but it won't take them long to notice. This lot is too persistent." His brows furrowed. "You think they have learned something from Sycorax invasion. Remember? Those big fellas on Christmas d-.." His voice trailed off in the empty corridor. He blinked. „Jackie?“ he called out, then turned in a
"Jackie!"

But just as the first time, there was nothing to be seen. Jackie Tyler was most definitely not together with him anymore. "Oh, come on."

Having let the Doctor and Jackie go first, Rose finally thought it was her cue to leave. She peeked her head out of the wooden doors, psychic paper in her hand (not like it would do her much good, though), a white lab coat on (good ol’ ship TARDIS providing her just what she needed) and stepped out. She pushed the white doors of the WC area and had to wince at the scrape of the floor, the Doctor's sign had made. She bent down to pick it up and let herself out before putting it back in place.

She looked around both ways for good measure and followed down the corridors where she knew the Sphere Chamber would be at. The months she had spent in parallel Torchwood finally bringing some good to her.

She rounded the corner and then quickly had to hide back in the corner when she spotted two men in white lab coats passing by. She waited until they were gone and proceeded to continue walking.

She pushed through the doors on the faraway end of the corridor and greeted the solders with confidence. At least they would have no idea of who she was.

"Keep the good work, boys," she told them with a big smile on her face and the two smiled in return, going back to their security work.

She then rounded yet another corner and finally spotted the black doors she had been looking for.

She came to a stop near it.

"There we're then," she exhaled.

She clenched and unclenched her fists a few times, trying to control her sudden nerves.

"It’s just the Daleks... just the Daleks..." she muttered under her breath and shoved the psychic paper against the digital lock, before she could think herself out of it. With a click, the doors slid open. Rose slowly stepped inside, the doors shutting behind her back.

At once her eyes found the enormous sphere, suspended eerily in mid-air at one end of the chamber. Bronze in color, it had a step ladder positioned just below it to provide easier access.

Rose felt hypnotised by it. Just staring at it, without breaking the eye contact. The strong ominous aura around it froze her in place. Everyone were affected similarly by it, always telling you in the back of your mind to run as far away from it as you can. But it was so much worse knowing what was inside it.

Having spotted Rose come inside, Rajesh, one of the scientists of Torchwood One, approached her.

"Can I help you?"

Rose swallowed tightly, still unable to look away from the sphere.

"Yeh, I was just..." She indicated towards it.
Rajesh nodded in understanding. "Try not to look. It does that to everyone." He then considered her suspiciously. "How did you come in here?"

Rose took a deep breath in and composed herself. There was no going back now. She straightened up and put a firm and confident look on her face.

"Never mind that. How's that thing? Any sort of readings?" she asked in an authoritative voice and then walked purposely towards the computers. Everything was still down to zero.

"Nothing more than the day before," Rajesh told her, following after her. "No heat, no radiation, no atomic mass... but hold on. I still don't know who you are. Where did you come from?"

"Torchwood One, part of operation delta six, if you want to be precise," Rose said haughtily while leaning over the monitor, her eyes running through all the stats.

"You can't be," Rajesh protested. "I have never seen you before."

"Yeh, must be tough," Rose said lightly and then grinned. "Blimey, this is kinda fun."

Back in the Rift Chamber, a dark skinned young woman, Adeola, was typing on her keyboard. There was a chat window opened on her screen. She looked across her desk at Matt, holding their gaze and then began to type a message.

"Hey Matt. Want to see something good?"

Matt looked up from his work in surprise, mouthing "what?".

She ignored him and only typed in return. "Come and see."

Matt's computer bleeped as he received the message. He was still debating with himself what to make of this when Adeola suddenly stood up and walked away from the office area. Matt could do nothing much but to follow after her.

"If you don't have your authorisation you must be fake," Rajesh tried to reason while looking Rose up and down. When Rose done nothing much besides ignoring him and typing something on the computer, he thought he have had about enough. "I'm calling in for security." He pressed his mouth into the comm.

"Seal the room. Call security."

Rose could only roll her eyes at him. With a press on a button something bleeped on the computer and Rose narrowed her eyes. Rajesh, on the other hand, was starting to panic. He quickly stormed his way towards the monitors, standing beside Rose.

"What're you doing? Get away from that!"

"Oh, would you shut up for a minute?" Rose said exasperated. "I'm working here."

"Working on what? This thing has no readings. It shows nothing for you to possibly work on," he reasoned while also peering towards the monitor in curiosity what was this strange girl doing.

"Not for long," Rose commented under her breath when suddenly she realized something was wrong with this picture. Rajesh had already called for security but he said nothing of checking the door locks. She straightened up suddenly, making Rajesh jump a little, and surveyed the room.
He was nowhere to be seen.

"Hold on. Where's Mickey?" She turned to look at the scientist intensely, her brows furrowed in growing anxiety.

The man only blinked. "Who?"

"Mickey," Rose repeated pointedly but then shook her head. "Um, I mean Samuel?" When the man was showing no signs of recognition, Rose was starting to feel uneasy. "Your assistant?" she tried again but still got nothing besides a blank stare from the scientist. "He must have been working with you for a while now," she tried to reason but his blank look said otherwise.

"How can you not know him?" she whispered but mostly to herself. Cause if he was out here... then where was he?

The Doctor was walking cautiously by the walls, stopping just outside the Rift Chamber. He pulled out his sonic screwdriver, ready to bleep it into the digital lock. His other hand found it's way into his pocket as he carefully pulled out a gas bomb into his palm. He clutched it in his grip and aimed the sonic screwdriver to open the seals.

With a click, the doors opened up and the Doctor kissed the bomb, pulled the trigger with his teeth and threw it into the room. He then walked inside, sealing the doors close with the sonic. Suddenly the whole room started to smoke, the people in the offices and the scientists near the levels all coughing and slumping on the floor. The Doctor put a gas mask on his face and looked around.

He surveyed the area when his eyes spotted a familiar figure.

True enough, besides one of the desks that control the shifts, Mickey Smith was coughing from the smoke, gradually leaning over the desk. The Doctor blinked a few times, not comprehending what was he doing here when he spotted something on the young man's ears.

The ear-pieces.

His hearts momentary froze in fear of what it meant for Mickey but then he noticed that there was no bleeping coming out of it and with a quick sigh of relief he rummaged through his pockets, finding yet another gas mask and throwing it to Mickey.

He quickly put it on and finally was able to breathe again. The Doctor briskly dashed to his side.

"Okey doke?"

"Yeh," Mickey replied, even if still a bit breathlessly. "You carry this in your pockets?" he asked in suspicion. The Doctor only shrugged.

"Comes in handy, doesn't it?"

"I s'ppose," Mickey agreed reluctantly. "What was that anyway? A smoke bomb?" he wondered with a frown. He looked around at all the people that were slumped on their desks or floor. The smoke was gradually dispersing but nobody showed any signs of getting up anytime soon.

"Yep," the Doctor popped the p. "Mickey!" he then exclaimed. "What're you doing here?"

"Oh, you know, sabotaging with the top-secret government organisation computers," Mickey said with a shrug.
"What? All this time you were on Earth... have you been off doing illegal work Mickery-Mick?"

"Not anything worse than I did in your care," Mickey retorted pointedly.

"Of all the things to learn..." the Doctor muttered and Mickey was clearing taking it as an insult.

"What, you can do whatever you like but when it comes to me, 'no, that's a no for you'?" he asked indignantly.

"No, I think it's brilliant," the Doctor said with a big smile on his face. "Good job, Mickey!" He slapped him on the cheek affectionately, causing Mickey to jump slightly.

"Thanks. I s'ppose. But something big and weird's going on here."

The Doctor's eyebrows rose as he exhaled a breath. "Well, that's for sure."

Somewhere on the opposite end of the Torchwood institute, a group of people were gathered inside a small, dim lit room. A woman dressed in black and with curly fair hair being in charge there, stood with her hands crossed on her chest. She was showing a disproving look on her face.

Just across of her, sat a very stubborn blond woman. She was having a similar body stance as Yvonne. Hands crossed and all.

"I'm not bloody telling you anything," she repeated for the n' time in the past half an hour. "It's your fault this is happening!"

Yvonne blinked in surprise. "My fault? No. I think you're mistaken. Mrs-?" she looked at the woman with an urging smile.

"Tyler. Jackie Tyler."

"Right. Mrs. Tyler," she began again, a fake smile plastered on her face. "We've found the Doctor's traveling machine. We know he's here. There's no point hiding anything." Her voice suddenly changed into something sinister, making Jackie tilt her head just a tad bit higher. "Not from us. Now tell us. What is he planning by coming here?"

But before Jackie could answer her, the comms. came to life.

"There's a breach of security in the Rift Chamber."

Yvonne pressed the button to speak into the device. "What's the cause?"

"We don't know. But nobody is responding in the room. There might be an intruder."

Yvonne couldn't contain her gleeful expression at the news. "It must be him. It has to be." With barely contained excitement, she turned around towards her soldiers. "Make him secure. Nobody leaves here."

"So how long have you been working here for?" the Doctor wondered curiously, while he busied himself by one of the monitors he knew he would be much in need of later.

"About two months now," Mickey replied. "What're you looking for?"

The Doctor sniffed. "No, nothing. Just checking something..." he muttered under his breath when
suddenly Mickey's voice reached him.

"How did I get in here?"

The Doctor blinked, before whipping his head only to find Mickey frozen to the spot, his eyes wide open, before they settled down to determined. His whole posture changed into something of a confident man. He turned towards the Doctor who still had his brows furrowed in concern and smiled at him confidently.

"Hey, boss, it's so good to see you. Bet you thought you wouldn't see me again..." he joked lightly but then froze once again, his face twisting in confusion. "Wait, what? But... I was aiming for the Sphere Chamber just now..."

The Doctor was cautiously moving closer towards Mickey, who was apparently on the verge of freaking out. "No, I was with you!" He shook his head. "We were talking about Torchwood's database and then... I was holding a gun while going through the void. Oh my God. What's happening to me?"

The Doctor had a frown on his face as he observed Mickey. "What? Is your memory lock wearing off?" He lifted his sonic screwdriver to bleep onto Mickey.

"My what?" Mickey asked in confusion.

"Oh, no," the Doctor breathed out while pocketing his sonic back inside his breast pocket.

"What is it? Is it bad? Is it Torchwood? Did they notice I was sneaking about and did something to me?"

"Void stuff," the Doctor said tightly.

"What about it?"

"Now, we all have been through the void before, we've all got void stuff in our systems. But yours..." he trailed off ominously.

"What about me? What is it?"

"The concentration of void stuff in your system is increased by 2.0."

Mickey could only breathe out in horror.

"Oh boy... that's like double, right? But how's it related to me seeings visions of myself being in two different places at the same time?"

"They're not visions, Mickey." The Doctor turned around in a circle as if searching for something. "Torchwood didn't do this. Two timelines are colliding onto themselves and there being two versions of you, you're being merged together."

Mickey was still looking very much confused.

"Merged? But I don't feel like two people."

"And you wouldn't. This universal timeline being the dominant one gave only you the awareness," he pointed the word with his mouth. "The other you, not." When he turned around only to find Mickey's blank expression, he hurried to explain. "It's like... with, uh..." He gestured with his hand, while searching for the right word. His eyes then spotted the devices inside the room. "The
computer data. You overwrite the old one to replace it with the most recent one."

"When you say it like that, it sounds like I've eaten myself." Mickey laughed lightly. His words made the Doctor snap his head to look at him. Mickey shifted uncomfortably under his gaze.

"The other me, I mean! Obviously not this me as I'm still here."

The Doctor wrinkled his forehead, giving him a disturbed look. "Please stop talking."

Inside the Sphere Chamber, Rajesh was sitting by the computers, while Rose had her attention focused solely on the golden sphere.

Where was Mickey? He should be here.

Her forehead wrinkled in worry. Maybe she should call the Doctor. She pulled her hand under her lab coat in search of her jeans' pocket but couldn't find her phone anywhere. She patted her both pockets but got the same result.

She could have sworn she took her phone with her-

"Looking for this?"

Rajesh's voice made her turn towards him. True enough, the man waved her phone in his hand.

"That's my phone," Rose told him patiently and started to walk towards him. Before she could reach him, he threw her phone in one of the drawers and locked it inside with a code. Rose just gaped at him.

"Prisoners don't get to have communication devices," he informed her in monotone, not sparing her a glance.

"Prisoner?" Rose asked with a frown. She shook her head. Okay, now what? She had lost her only means of communication with the Doctor, Mickey was nowhere to be seen and she was trapped inside the room with an unreasonable man, with Daleks sitting just around the corner.

Bloody brilliant.

Rose took a deep calming breath. Maybe if she could get on his good side somehow... She ran her tongue around her lips.

"So, Mr-,

"Just call me Rajesh," he spoke in monotone again, his focus solely on the monitor. Rose bit back a retort that was on the tip of her tongue.

"Okay, then. Rajesh." She walked over the desk he was sitting on and leaned on the back of the chair, keeping close. "There must be someone else you're working with, no?"

"No. It's just me."

"What, you're on your own?" she asked with a frown.

"I am, yeh."

"This massive..." She gestured at the thing. "Golden sphere comes right through space and they let
you work on it on your own."

Rajesh momentary stopped in his work to look at her.

"What are you trying to say?"

"That it's weird. You should be wondering why they let you on this alone."

"Because I'm the best expert in this area," he reasoned, getting back to work.

"Looking after nine zeros. Yeh, I'm sure you're an expert at that," she muttered under her breath, sarcasm clear in her voice.

He sighed, having about enough of this woman. "Why do you even care?"

"Because... that thing is dangerous!"

"It gives off ominous vibes but it's hardly dangerous. You saw the readings. It has... nothing."

She nodded to him, clearly losing hope of getting through to him.

"Yeh, well. I wish it was it."

Back in the Rift Chamber, the Doctor was throwing Yvonne's office upside down. All the drawers were opened, even the ones with the locks (with the help of sonic screwdriver, of course), a stack of papers was already on the ground as he pushed through them, picking one out to read it.

"...Doctor, you really should take a look at this," Mickey called out from the computer area. The Doctor lifted his head and walked over to Mickey in a few long strides.

"What is all that?" he frowned at the data presented to him. He put his glasses on.

"It's all the data I managed to contain of Torchwood," Mickey began, a bit of a pride in his voice. When the Doctor didn't react, he shook his head and continued.

"They're not just an alien researching group, they work with aliens themselves. I tried cracking a few codes and a couple gave in. Look at this, for example." He pressed a few buttons and a folder appeared. "This alien project. Remind you of something? They're sending the signals all around the place." He then pointed on the screen. "And this reading there. The power it consumes. I didn't know what that was at first, but it's happening all across the world. It's them, isn't it?"

"Cybermen," the Doctor said gravely.

"Yeh. Thought so. Well, I'm ready whenever for them."

"But you've got access to all this?!" the Doctor cried out in a stunned disbelief.

Mickey only shrugged lightly.

"Well, if I'm a technical support, I might as well be a good one."

The Doctor's face twisted into a full blown grin. He reached out to kiss Mickey's head on an impulse.

"Good job, Mickey!"
"Thanks, boss." Mickey smiled back at him, happy all the same. "It's so weird being back the tin-dog," he added as an afterthought. "I can reroute the next shift by half. Would that help to stop them?"

"Nope," the Doctor popped the $p$ and skipped away from the desk in a hurry. "But it will stall them." He ran back towards the monitor by the wall and grinned in delight. "Oh yes. It should give us about thirty extra minutes for them to restart the system."

"Can't you like blow the whole thing up, then?" Mickey suggested.

"No, it needs to be manually rewritten. We don't have that much time."

"I could do it," Mickey offered and the Doctor had to stop to look at him. His eyebrows rose up. "I'm not leaving you behind. Once they wake up, they'll send Cybermen at you. We gotta get moving. Come on," he called out to him, already running out of the room. Mickey hurried to follow after him.

They just managed to run a few corridors when suddenly they were met with an army of soldiers. Their commander smiling gleefully at him. The Doctor grimaced in distaste.

"That's as far as you go, Doctor."

An alarm signal reached the comms. inside the Sphere Chamber. Rose looked around and then back at Rajesh in question. "What was that?"

"They must have caught him," Rajesh shrugged.

"Caught who?"

"The Doctor."

Rose's heart skipped a beat at hearing his name. So they were caught... but did he get what he wanted before that happened? Rose bit her nail anxiously. If only she could phone him... Her eyes followed the drawer where the device rested inside.

Either way, they didn't have much time left. She rounded on the man, clearly gentle approach wasn't working on him.

"Look, you've to trust me. We can't stay here. We have to get out."

The man sighed.

"I can't let you out until they send the security."

"Never mind the security," Rose said in exasperation. "Once they administrate the quarantine we won't have a way out."

Her eyes anxiously shifted towards the far away side of the room. The sphere looming above their heads, mocking her.

If they won't get out of there soon, they will have to face her worst nightmares all alone.

"You lot, you're obsessed with things you can't possibly understand," the Doctor was talking while
"Stripping stars down and putting them on stamp. No wonder you bring your own destruction," he ended seriously, his eyes hardening. Yvonne only laughed at him.

"We're doing this for the great British Empire. We're not damaging it. We're creating it." Her gleeful smile was starting to give him indigestion but he was holding it in.

"Well, you might think that now. Yvonne, was it? But if you've heard of me. And I mean you must have. I know you have. Then... you probably know already that I travel through space and... time." He looked at her meaningfully, holding their eye contact until she broke it with a roll of her eyes.

"What are you trying to say, Doctor? That you have seen the future of Torchwood?" she asked with a laugh, a couple of chuckles from the soldiers accompanied her until the Doctor gave them a glare which shut them up.

They rounded the corner, walking away through yet another corridor. The Doctor rose his eyebrows while keeping close to Yvonne.

"And a very close future at that. Those ghosts you're making shifts for are no ghosts." He pointed towards the end of the corridor. ,,Not even close. They are a not fully materialised alien race."

He stopped in his tracks, everyone else following suit. Yvonne was waiting patiently for him to continue.

"They are Cybermen," he said darkly, his voice thick with emotion.

"And what are 'the Cybermen'?"


He clenched his teeth tightly together when he saw he was obviously not getting to her.

"Well, if that's true, Torchwood will make sure to secure them," Yvonne said in a light voice, giving him one of her trademark smiles. The Doctor rounded on her, his patience snapping.

"Thousands of them? Millions!?" he shouted angrily in her face.

"You can't possibly know that-"

"I have seen it happening, Yvonne," he told her with barely suppressed rage. "When the sphere came through it made a hole in the universe but it also cracked the world around it. Cybermen are using those cracks to get through." He pointed with his hand. "Add the Human Race hoping them into existence and you'll have Cybermen at your doorstep just in time for tea. There are millions of Cybermen passing through the void from the parallel world to this."

"And what's this 'Void'?"

"It's hell," Jackie cut in. The pair turned to look at her, blinking.

"What? You asked!"

The Doctor turned around to face Yvonne just as she began talking again.

"Even so, we've done this a thousand times, Doctor, nothing was wrong with it."
"Everything was wrong with it. Only now it's worse. You pushed too far. Realities can't hold on that kinda pressure. If you let that shift happen, every single Cybermen will come through to here. And when they come... there's no stopping it then," he breathed out with a shake of his head. If not convincing her then at least he now had Yvonne's attention. "The whole planet is gonna be full of them. So I'm telling you to shut that thing off!" he yelled out furiously.

"Oh, exactly as the legends would have it. The Doctor, lording it over us. Assuming alien authority over the rights of Man." Her face hardened in an unwavering stare.

"If I leave it to you, you'll just kill everyone off!" the Doctor yelled out angrily.

Suddenly Mickey's voice reached them from the Rift Chamber. When did they even get there?

"Doctor's it's too late. They have the ear-pieces on."

The Doctor rushed inside the room before anyone could stop him. All the people that were previously unconscious were working behind their computers. Like nothing had happened. He rushed forward, and came to stand behind a woman, who was working on the keyboard. He snapped his fingers in front her face just for the sake of checking but just as they thought – they were too late. He clenched his teeth together and then exhaled a heavy breath.

"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry," he said sincerely and pressed the sonic screwdriver against the ear-piece. Suddenly everyone were screaming in agony, slumping on their desks.

Yvonne looked around in confusion. "What happened? What did you just do?"

"Those people are dead."

"What?" She asked like expecting a joke to come out of it.

"They're already here," the Doctor said with gritted teeth.

"Oh my God." Jackie cowered her hands against her face in fear.

"What do you mean they're dead?" Yvonne asked, her voice finally showing some uncertainty in it. She looked around at everyone. „They were working. Gareth. Addy!"

"It's the ear-pieces," the Doctor said in a quiet voice. "They go right through their brains. Controlling them."

She shook her head, not believing and tried to walk towards Matt. "They're standard comms. Devices-"

"Don't," the Doctor warned her when she reached out to take the ear-pieces out. But she just wouldn't listen. "I'm telling you - don't."

She took hold of one of Matt's ear-pieces and pulled it - right out of his head. A trail of brain tissue was attached to it.

"Urgh! Oh, God! It goes inside their brain!" she exclaimed, revolted.

"There's nothing we can do," the Doctor said in a hurry and was just about to leave the room when his eyes caught something he purposely avoided the previous time he was there. Now, after being emotionally shaken, he just couldn't look away.

The white wall at the far away end on the room.
He swallowed tightly as his legs took control of themselves and steadily carried him closer towards it.

He momentary forgot where he was. Who he was. What was he doing. Just staring at the wall right ahead.

The noises around turning into the background.


His ears started to buzz, the remaining sounds leaving him. He couldn't move. Rotted to the place. Only gravity keeping him standing.

Until suddenly he was stumbling backwards. It took him a while to realise that it was Jackie who was pulling him on the arm with determination on her face. Her mouth was open, speaking the words but the Doctor couldn't hear them. He frowned while trying to concentrate.

"What?"

Jackie was still mouthing the words until he finally could hear her.

"Stop playing around! They are here." Her voice shook at the end, and he noticed that her eyes were full of anxiety.

His hearts skipped a beat and suddenly all the sounds rushed back in.

"We are the Cybermen. The Ghost Shift will be increased to one hundred percent." The cold metallic voice said. The Cyberman then clamped a fist to its chest and the lever rose, beginning the Ghost Shift. The computer announcing 'Online'.

"Here they come," Mickey said in the background, readying himself.

And then, rows and rows of Cybermen started to march out of the light.

Back in the Sphere Chamber Rose was struggling against the doors, trying to get them to open.

"It won't work. It's lock sealed," Rajesh said calmly from his position near the computers.

"You keep saying that…" Rose banged on the doors in frustration. "Just open the door, Rajesh!" she yelled out in desperation, finally loosing her composure.

"I keep telling you," he started saying. "Quarantine would only activate if-"

Suddenly the whole chamber shuddered violently – the disturbance coming from the sphere. Rose whipped her head to look at it with wide eyes.

"It can't be," Rajesh breathed out, stunned. "It's active."

The sphere started vibrating, the readings on the monitor going wild. "We've got a problem down here. Yvonne, can you hear me?" he was shouting inside the comm. while Rose watched in stunned fear the sphere crashing from inside.

"Yvonne, for God's sake - the sphere is active! The readings are going wild! It's got weight, it's got mass, an electromagnetic field - it exists!" Rajesh was shouting, frantic.
Hearing those words, Rose dashed through the room right near the staircase. She grabbed onto the railings and with one last deep breath hurried up the stairs.

"What are you doing!?!" Rajesh shouted at her from the side.

"Putting a stop to this." Rose dug her hand inside her pocket and grabbed the device the Doctor had left her with. Kissing it briefly she aimed for the sphere, the device getting stuck on its side.

When it reached the sphere's surface, it cracked, giving a electric spark which Rose had to dodge with a surprised yelp. She hurriedly walked backwards from the sphere, going down the stairs, watching the device spark and smoke. It sparked a few more times until it exploded altogether, stealing all Rose's hope.

"What was that thing?" Rajesh asked anxiously when he suddenly jumped and turned around to a crash behind him - the door closing before his eyes.

"The door's sealed. Automatic quarantine - we can't get out!" Rajesh was shouting somewhere in the distance but Rose heard him no more. Her heart was beating wildly inside her rib cage as she could only wait for things to unfold.

Another two violent crashes from the inside the sphere made the whole chamber shudder. Rajesh grabbed hold on the nearest surface to keep himself on foot while Rose continued to stare at the golden sphere.

"We're on our own. With Daleks."

"Achieving full transfer," A Cyberman announced in the Rift Chamber.

The Cybermen continued to march from the light, slowly becoming more defined.

"It's happening again! Why is it happening again!?" Jackie was shouting to the Doctor in a whisper, tugging on his arm.

The Doctor could only stare at it all happening again.

Suddenly there were millions of ghosts, materialising all across the world - around Big Ben and the Taj Mahal. The ghosts on the factory floor on Torchwood. Even the ghosts on the Powell Estate – all becoming defined as Cybermen.

People were still trying to run away screaming but only succeeded in getting themselves electrocuted. The mass of panic all around the world. Families cowering in fear at their homes. It was so horrible. The whole planet was taken hostage, with seemingly no chance at hope or much less victory. There was nothing they could do but accept their fate to the army of Ghosts.

The sphere inside the chamber gave a few strong crashes from inside when it suddenly stopped vibrating altogether. Rajesh went to join Rose by the sphere, looking at her anxiously like she was the answer to all. Rose braced herself, holding her head high as she prepared to face her worst fears.

"All right, then." She took a few breaths in, preparing herself. "Come and get us."

"Who are you talking to?" Rajesh asked from the side but just then the sphere split up, smooth
cracks appearing in the sphere as it slowly opened, light spilling from the gaps. Agonisingly slow the sphere unfolded itself, like shedding layers of itself, the light intensifying with each gap.

And then she could see them - the top part of a familiar looking alien emerging from the sphere, greeting them with a shrilling cry.

"Location: Earth. Life forms detected. Exterminate!"
Doomsday End

Chapter Notes

If anyone is still reading this, let me know. ^^

Doomsday End

Cybermen.

The Doctor thought he could get rid of them this time round, but logically he knew that there was ever only one way out of this. He might be a Lord of Time but he was no God. The universe was that much stronger than him…

With gritted teeth he watched everything unfold.

A Cyberman leader, which the Doctor deduced to be, suddenly approached Yvonne, who was back sitting at her desk. This woman just wasn't learning. Couldn't she see the universes collapsing? No, suppose not. That thick human brain was just that… too thick.

"You will talk to your central world authority and order global surrender," it announced.

She had the gals to scoff at a Cyberman. Well, he should give her that. Ignorance was her bliss.

"Oh, do some research. We haven't GOT a central world authority."

"You have now. I will speak on all global wavelengths."

The Doctor had a wrinkled line in his forehead, lost in thought. He could hear Jackie sniffing somewhere in the background but he had no time for this now. Mickey could do the comforting bit. Speaking of Mickey… that was a whole new level of weird happening in this new universe. This new timeline was becoming way too unpredictable. The fact which scared the Doctor to the core. The only thing they had left.

Prediction.

Yet everything they did till now went out of the window.

"This broadcast is for human kind." a Cyberman announced and suddenly there was a live show of Cybermen, talking to people on Earth. Telling them to willingly become identical to their own race. No, that was no talking. It was demanding. A demand for surrender.

But those same people, those amazingly human people, who had no means or strength to go against Cyberman, oh they were fighting. Cybermen barged inside people's homes, took their children hostage – of course they wouldn't go without a fight.
They were humans. The very race the Doctor adored most.

"I ordered surrender," a Cybermen said, as if unable to believe what was happening outside the Torchwood Tower. A war with humans.

"And they're not listening!" the Doctor said in fury, dangerous glint forming in his eyes. Oh how they would pay. He would make sure of that. He wouldn't be the Doctor if he just let this pass. "You've declared war against humankind. And take that from me. You just made your biggest mistake of your stagnant metal life."

"Are you threatening the Cybermen?"

"Oh I don't have to. Those people you're fighting, are so much stronger than you could ever imagine. And you know why? Because the very thing for that, imagination, it was stripped away from you together with your emotions."

The Cyberman stared at him, unmoving. Unblinking also, mind you, they had no eyelashes... not that they needed them.

"We are superior. Emotions are not necessary." it said and walked off, making further orders for the Cybermen to work on.

"It wasn't exactly smart to taunt Cybermen, was it?" Mickey asked, coming to stand by the Doctor's side. The Doctor himself stared after the retreating back of the Cyberman and heaved a defeated sigh.

"No, it wasn't," he agreed.

"Did that help?"

"Yes."

Mickey had a knowing grin on his face.

"Never mind that," Jackie said from the side, her one hand clutching the phone in death grip. "Rose's not answering her phone."

And suddenly everyone were looking at her, unable to say a word of what it might mean for Rose. A demise in battle? The end of journey?

The Doctor's eyes followed towards the monitor who was still blinking the eerie red sign of the "sphere activated", staring at it in unmoving silence. But Jackie wasn't done. Her breath picked up with her distress as her worries gripped everyone's fears as well.

"If Mickey is not out there then that means Rose is out there on her own with Daleks. What's happened to her? Is she dead?" she asked tearfully and the Doctor found himself answering her calmly. Where did this sudden calm come from? Somehow in the back of his mind he could feel it...

"Calm down, Jackie. Keep it together. She pulled through it before."

"How can you take her safety so easily?" she protested with accusation clear in her voice. It was her daughter, of course she would feel like that. But she was so so wrong if she thought even for a second that he would willingly risk anything to happen to her.
"I'm not taking her safety easily, Jackie!" he bit back through gritted teeth, while trying to not involve Cybermen in this conversation. "There's nothing on this Earth that could stop me from doing everything in my power to keep her safe. But there's only one reason why I agreed for her to be part of all this."

Jackie stared at him with blood-shed eyes, daring him.

"And what's that, then?"

And then it was clear, the sudden calmness of his hearts, the conviction that everything would turn out right. The reason he was still fighting with unwavering strength. He knew the answer all too well, way before he actually had to address it down the pit of something that should have been impossible to exist. Out of every God or Demon he had seen, out of every battle he might still witness, if there was one thing he was sure of. Just one thing.

"I believe in her."

"Daleks!"

Rose's shout rang out through everyone's ears, freezing the descended daleks on the spot. They camera-eyes were aimed directly at Rose, observing her.

"I know your name," she began. And with a reminder of her past memories, took off her lab coat, slamming it on the floor for show. "Think about it - how can I know that?" she intrigued, holding her eye contact with them. "A Human... who knows about the Daleks. And the Time War. If you wanna know how, then keep us alive. That's all I'm asking. Me and my friend."

"Yeh. Daleks and Time War. Me too," Rajesh added from the side, choosing to go for her plan. The Daleks' eye-piece swiveled around to look at him. The man froze on spot, not daring to make a hasty movement. Probably smart, that. Then the Daleks' swirled back to Rose, breaking the intense moment.

If only.


"Yeh, that's not happening."

"DESIGNATE-THE-LEAST-IMPORTANT," Dalek Sek cried with a shrill in its voice.

"This is my responsibility," Rajesh said and came to stand before the Daleks. Rose could feel her blood freezing and boiling in the span of seconds. How is this all happening again?

"No, don't!" She tried to grab for him but he was already surrounded by the four Daleks.

"I er - I represent the Torchwood Institute. Anything you need, you... come through me. Leave her alone."

"YOU-WILL-KNEEL."

The man furrowed his brows in confusion.

"What for?"
"KNEEL," Dalek sek repeated, his whole frame shaking.

Thinking he had no choice, Rajesh proceeded to do what he was being told, but before his knees could reach the ground, Rose grabbed onto his forearm, bringing him back on feet.

"No. Don't you dare kneeling for them." She stared at the Daleks right into their eye-pieces, her eyes unwavering. No way they were having their way.

"But they said-,

"Never mind that," she cut him off. "If you kneel - you die. They'll try to get information directly from your head. Sucking it in." She gestured lightly with her hand, Rajesh's face loosing color.

"Oh my God."

"Isn't that right, Daleks?" she addressed them, standing tall before them.

"EXPLAIN-YOUR-KNOWLEDGE-OF-THIS," Dalek Sek asked with a cry.

Rose raised her head a little bit higher, making her own muscles relax to appear nonchalant as she spoke with a casual authority. A good imitation of the Doctor, she supposed.

"Well, if you must know... I know a lot more than this. I've seen the future. For example... what happened to the Emperor?"

"THE-EMPEROR-SURVIVED," Dalek Sek said, every other Dalek remaining unmoving in the background.

Rose stared him down.

"'Til he met me... I met the Emperor. And I took the Time Vortex and I pulled it into his head and turned him into dust. With a wave of my hand," she added for good measure and wiggled her fingers slightly to imitate. "Do you get that? The God of all Daleks... and I destroyed him," she said proudly.

"YOU-WILL-BE-EXTERMINATED!" Dalek Sek cried in furry, just about to advance on her. But Rose took a step further towards them, instead of backwards, momentary confusing Daleks.

"But you don't really care about the Emperor, do you?" she asked with a glint in her eyes. "You're a secret order. Above and beyond the Emperor himself. Each one of you having a name of your own."

The Daleks stood frozen in place as Rose advanced further. Step by step.

"Daleks with names," she taunted them and then turned to each one of them. "Dalek Thay. Dalek Sek. Dalek Jast. Dalek Caan. The cult of Scaro!" she exclaimed with passion, making the Daleks roll backwards from the sheer force of her words. The sudden predatory grin on her face, didn't sit well with them either.

"D'you really wanna know what happens to you lot?" she asked casually while raising her hand in the air, wiggling her fingers slightly.

The daleks rolled backwards, hitting the wall behind them.

"Now you're scared."
"So what's the idea with this golden sphere, then?" the Doctor addressed one of the Cyberman as it passed by.

It stopped moving and turned towards the Doctor.

"The sphere is not ours."

The Doctor pressed his lips together with a nod.

"Whose is it, then?" he asked with interest.

"Its origin is unknown. The sphere broke down the barriers between worlds. We only followed."

"So you don't know," the Doctor exhaled, a faraway look on his face. "I thought you knew everything. But... never mind. Sorry, my mistake. Even for you lot some things are just tooo far out of reach," he continued taunting him, Jackie and Mickey watching him from the sidelines like he had lost his mind.

"The Cybermen control everything that's happening on Earth."

"Well... yeh, probably. Most definitely. But you still don't know what's down in that sphere." The Doctor looked at him with pity and understanding. He waited till the staring contest with the Cyberman ended and then watched how it pushed on its chest.

"What are the results of sphere scanning?"

"Scans detect unknown technology active within sphere chamber," an equally metallic voice reached inside the Rift Chamber. The rest followed suit.

"Cybermen will investigate."

"Units 10 65 and 10 66 will investigate sphere chamber."

"We obey."

The Cyberman the Doctor was conversing with marched away while the Doctor waved at him in parting.

Mickey came to stand beside him, hands crossed against his chest.

"Did you just bait Cybermen?"

"Yeeep," the Doctor agreed in a casual voice, popping the p.

Mickey watched a group of Cybermen marching out of the office area and couldn't help a grin forming onto his face.

"Knew you were good."

Just as with the Cybermen, the Daleks also felt a need to investigate after Rose subtly hinted them that the Earth was at war. They sent Dalek Thay as their representative, and soon a pair of visuals appeared in each chamber. One showing the Dalek's Thay perspective, another of the group of Cybermen.

Both species rounded a corner and came to a sudden stop, finally seeing each other for the first
"IDENTIFY-YOURSELVES," Dalek Thay started first.

"You will identify first," the Cybermen shot back, equally stubborn.

"STATE-YOUR-IDENTITY!"

"You will identify first."

"IDENTIFY!"

"It's like Stephen Hawkins meets the Speaking Clock," Mickey couldn't help commenting, the Doctor quirked the corner of his mouth while Jackie spared them both a hateful look.

"You're both mad," she hissed, her voice still slightly shaky.

"... illogical, you will modify."

"DALEKS-DO-NOT-TAKE-ORDERS."

"You have identified as Daleks."

"OUTLINE-RESEMBLES-THE-INFERIOR-SPECIES-KNOWS-AS-CYBERMEN."

It all ended, or one could argue 'started' with the Daleks killing a group of Cybermen, with little effort from themselves. The Cybermen tried to offer an alliance, but their answer was death fat no.

In the projection screen, the Cyberman addressed the Daleks.

"Daleks, be warned: you have declared war upon the Cybermen."

"THIS-IS-NOT-WAR-THIS-IS-PEST-CONTROL."

"We have five million Cybermen. How many are you?"

"FOUR," Dalek Sek announced, not in the least worried about that.

"You would destroy the Cybermen with FOUR Daleks?!"


"What is that?"

"YOU-ARE-BETTER-AT-DYING-RAISE-COMMUNICATIONS-BARRIER!" Dalek Sek cried and suddenly Rose could spot the Doctor passing through the screen, a tilt of his head making her wonder if he wasn't deliberately letting himself be seen. A full blown grin formed on her face at finally seeing his face.

The screen went static.

"WAIT!" Dalek Sek suddenly cried, and Rose had to bit her lip, knowing what was coming next.

"REWING-IMAGE-BY-NINE-RELLS. IDENTIFY-GRID-SEVEN-GAMMA-FRAME."

Suddenly the Doctor in all his pinstriped glory was back on the screen, in the background of the
"THIS-MALE-REGISTERS-AS-ENEMY," Dalek Jast announced, finally making an appearance. It then swirled around to Rose, spotting her beaming at the image of the man registering as an enemy. Rose shifted her eyes from the screen to dare the Daleks with a raised-eyebrow look.

"IDENTIFY-HIM," Dalek Sek cried.

"All right then... if you really wanna know... that's the Doctor," she said while looking them straight into their eye-pieces.

The Daleks rolled backwards sharply.

"I told you I came prepared," she said lightly, beaming at the sight.

The Doctor watched as the Cybermen leader started making orders of their upgrade. Suddenly the situation was getting a bit more out of control than he liked. Or ever wanted to be left in, really. He opened his mouth to delay them, but was cut off.

"Quarantine the Sphere Chamber. Start emergency upgrading. Begin with these personnel."

They started with taking Yvonne, who struggled and shouted as they were dragging her away. "No, you can't do this! We surrendered! We surrendered!"

Then they began to drag Jackie, Mickey and the Doctor away too.

"If only I had my gun with me. Without it, I'm useless." Mickey tried to struggle against the death grip of the Cybermen but it was useless.

"You said you had a plan!" Jackie shouted at the Doctor.

"Hold on a minute," the Doctor tried to take the Cybermen attention once again. "Just... just hold on a minute. There's no rush. Is there?" he tried to play it casual.

The Cybermen stopped for a moment, staring him down.

"Are you resisting the upgrade program?"

"Oh, I would never!" the Doctor cried out with conviction.

"Then proceed to the upgrade chamber," it said and started to once again drag the group of humans with them, but the Doctor wasn't nearly done. They might not have had the guns, but they always had one thing. The Doctor's gob.

"Oh, oh in a second! But there's one thing I'm missing here," he said with a wide-eyed look.

The Cybermen stopped once again. Oh the Doctor loved how he could get under their skin.

"What is that?"

The Doctor grinned, before answering them. "Hope."

"There's no hope for humankind. Everyone will be upgraded."

The next moment a group of people dressed in black suits, wearing helmets and carrying guns
appeared out of thin air. One of them shouted to the others and they shot at a row of Cybermen, immediately destroying them. The Doctor rolled out of the way and crouched in a corner of Yvonne's office and he could see Mickey cowering for Jackie while she yelled out in fear as the last Cyberman had his head blown off.

They Doctor couldn't be more happy at hearing the familiar voice.

He could come to like prediction. He thought… maybe…possibly not…not ever. Never mind.

"Doctor - good to see you again," Jake said with a big smile on his face.

The Doctor came to greet him from Yvonne's office, while also not forgetting to add. "See? Hope," he addressed the bits of the Cybermen at the floor. With a big inhale of air, he shifted his gaze, reaching Jake.

"Jake," he beamed at the lad.

Before he could say more, Mickey Smith rushed to his side. "Oh my God. Jake!"

The other man blinked in surprise at being enveloped in a hug.

"Mickey? I thought you were with Rose. And why did you leave your gun behind?"

"Oh, good. You have it," Mickey smiled at seeing his stuff back to where they belonged. By his side. Now he was ready for war. The Doctor watched him putting on a gun from the side with distaste.

"Defend this room. Chrissie, monitor communications," Jake ordered his group and everyone hurried from the room to do as they were told, leaving the group in the Rift Chamber.

"You're Jake," Jackie said with a frown on her face.

Jake blinked at the strange woman. "Sorry. I don't think I know you…" he trailed off.

"But you're Jake," Jackie protested until the Doctor pushed her aside with a soft whisper. "Wrong timeline. He doesn't know you yet."

Luckily before Jackie could say further, Jake addressed the Doctor once more.

"Doctor. We came to get you. Our side has their own Torchwood, except we found out what the institute was doing and the people's republic took control."

"Yeh, with dimension hoppers," the Doctor agreed.

"How..?" Jake trailed off in confusion but then shook himself out of it. "Never mind. You'll have to come with us." He took a yellow button device from his pocket and threw it at the Doctor, only to watch the Doctor dodge it. The device rolling down the room.

"Wha-? What're you doing?" Jake sputtered, uncomprehending while the Doctor stalked towards him.

"I don't have to go to Pete's World to know what's happening there. Now stop using that thing." He reached out for the device and harshly ripped it away from Jake's hands, pointing at the young man rudely. "You're breaking the universe apart."

Jake stared at him in stunned silence.
"But Pete Tyler sai-" he started protesting again but was shushed by the Doctor's finger.

"Mr. Pete Tyler can wait. Now, come on. We've got to get Rose."

Back in the Sphere room the doors opened up and Dalek Thay rolled inside, sealing the doors after itself.

"CYBER-THREAT-IRRELEVANT-CONCENTRATE-ON-THE-GENESIS-ARK."


Rose kept her attention on the Daleks as they struggled with their own internal war and fears. Fears, ha. Daleks fearing something. Now that was a sight to see. She grinned in the background while the Daleks prepared to do whatever they meant to the Genesis Ark.

"Not gonna work," she muttered quietly as the Daleks started to press their suction arms on the side of the stolen Time Lords' technology.

Rajesh watched everything play out in quiet. It was total madness, even for a scientist in an alien institute like him. He couldn't fathom, how could this ordinary girl show such strength in times like these? "Who are you?" he asked in wonder.

Rose grinned in return.

Meanwhile, the Doctor's team were running through the infinite corridors of Toorchwood institute. Oh, he hated the word team...

They rounded the corner and the Doctor dug inside his pocket, rummaging through it until he pulled out what he needed. "Ha!"

"What's that thing, then?" Mickey asked, running just beside him.

"Aah! Here it is! Bubble gum. From Galaxy Norpherra. 57th century. Banana flavor. Marvelous! Want one?" He casually offered the thing in wrapped paper to Mickey, but just as he began to respond, the Doctor pulled away, unfolding the paper and throwing the gum inside his mouth. "Nope. Sorry. Had only one."

Mickey frowned at him in thought.

"What're you doing chewing on gum when the world is ending? Are you gonna fight with it or something?"

"Yuuup," the Doctor dragged out the word with a popped p at the end.

"What, really? But... like you said. It's a bubble gum. What could bubble gum possibly do?"

The Doctor turned towards Mickey and gave him the look like all the others he threw at Mickey such a long time ago. "Never underestimate something for harmless."

Just then Yvonne pushed through the doors at the end of the corridor, with Jake by her side, only to scream in terror as a lone Cyberman shot out a laser beam right at her. She slumped on the floor,
dead.

The Doctor and everyone else stopped in their tracks, with a slight loss of breath when Jake took care of the Cyberman, its head exploding from the sheer power. Jackie yelped in the background while the Doctor stared at the woman on the ground with gritted teeth. She might not have been his most favourite person but they didn't have to kill her! He took a few calming breaths and abruptly turned to Jake then Mickey.

"Jake, take Jackie out of here."

"What about you?" Jake asked in concern but the Doctor only dismissed him.

"I'll be fine. Mickey, I've got you an important job."

He turned to face Mickey, an intense look on his face.

"What is it, boss?"

"Go get us two magnaclamps from the storage room."

Mickey frowned a little in thought until it downed on him.

"Those things you used to attach yourself to the wall?"

"Yeh, those," the Doctor agreed quickly.

"So you're still sending the Daleks and Cybermen to hell, then?" Mickey asked him and the Doctor only had one answer to that.

"Oh, yes."

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Rose stared down at the Daleks backing away from the Genesis Ark. Now for the main course.

"FINAL-STAGE-OF-AWAKENING," Dalek Caan cried out.

"YOUR-HANDPRINT-WILL-OPEN-THE-ARK," Dalek Sek addressed Rose, moving towards her. All the fear of her gone. She frowned in slight worry. She played all her hands already. Still, she wasn't Rose Tyler for nothing.

"Well tough, 'cos I'm not doing it," she shot back stubbornly, crossing her arms over her chest.


Rose stared at him in the eye-piece, trying to find a loophole out of this but the Dalek was unmoving, as the cold lump of metal it was. She sighed in defeat and rounded a circle against the Daleks.


"What happens when they open it?" Rajesh asked from the side.

"You don't wanna know," Rose muttered under her breath.

"PLACE-YOUR-" Dalek Sek started saying again but Rose cut him off.

"All right!" she exclaimed in frustration. She stopped by the Ark, staring at it. No way. There was
no way in the universe she was opening that thing. She exhaled a breath.

"PLACE-YOUR-HAND-" Dalek Sek began once more but then stopped abruptly when Rose lifted her arms in the air, eyes closed.

One beat.

Two beats.

There was a silence, when nothing happened. What was worse, though, was that there was no sound of the Daleks 'rolling away'. Rose peeked from her closed eyes only to find herself still in a perfect circle, the Daleks staring at her.

"All right." Her hands fell back towards her sides. With a grave voice, she addressed them quietly. "I can't let you open it. You'll have to kill me first." She looked at them, her body betraying her as suddenly fear started to overtake her. The Daleks advanced on her, Dalek Sek pointing its eye-piece towards her.

"YOU-WILL-BE-EXTERMINATED!"

Rose closed her eyes tightly shut, waiting for it to happen when suddenly a very familiar voice reached out from the doorway.

"Oh now, hold on, wait a minute."

Rose opened her eyes in flourish and whipped her head just to find the Doctor casually coming into the room, his mouth chewing on the gum, not even trying to hide the fact. Rose was just so happy to see him, beaming at him with delight, so put that thought to later.

"ALERT-ALERT-YOU-ARE-THE-DOCTOR," Dalek Sek rolled forward to meet the man.


"That's me. Always," The Doctor agreed lightly.


The Doctor frowned in confusion. "What, thisss?" He poked his tongue out briskly, pink gum on the tip of it, and then pulled it back in his mouth. "It's a bubble gum! Haven't you tried it before? No. I suppose you didn't. Living in a metal casket your whole life would make it a bit difficult," the Doctor conversed while casually walking around the Daleks, his hands in his pockets. He then walked over to Rose, greeting her with a smile.

"How are you?"

Rose grinned at him in return, just so happy to see him. She could kiss him now, if… you know, Daleks.

"Oh you know, same old. Just having a chat with the Daleks."

They both exhaled a short laugh.

Rose's face then sobered. "Doctor, Mickey is not out here. I dunno where he is."

"Oh, no, don't worry. He's safe. With me," he assured her with a smile.
Rose frowned in confusion. "Wha-? You mean parallel him?"

The Doctor sniffed. "Oh yes, both of them, actually."

"Wha-?"

"SOCIAL-INTERACTION-WILL-CEASE!" Dalek Sek cried out.

"IDENTIFY-THE-MATERIAL-IN-YOUR-MUSCULAR-HYDROST!" Dalek Thay demanded from the side.

"I told you! It's a bubble gum!" the Doctor cried out, clear exasperation in his voice.

"IT-IS-HARMLESS," Dalek Sek stated.

"Yeeh, doesn't kill, doesn't wound," the Doctor agreed nonchalantly. "Same as this other thing I have." He struck his hand in his pocket only to retrieve the sonic screwdriver, tossing it between his fingers.


"Oh, I'm full of them," the Doctor said with pride and pressed on the button of his sonic screwdriver.

Immediately, the doors exploded inwards. Jake, his men, and the Cybermen lept into action, firing their guns at the Daleks.

"Oh! You lot, you'd follow me anywhere," he commented lightly while watching the Cybermen firing at the Daleks.

"Delete! Delete! Delete! Delete!"

"ALERT!-CASING-IMPACT-CASING-IMPACT"

The Doctor, using the moment of distraction, spit the gum on the Genesis Ark. When it reached the surface of the Ark, it melted inside the Ark and suddenly the whole thing started to spark in blue lighting. Rose stared at it in awe and confusion, not yet understanding what was being done.

The Daleks and Cybermen were still too preoccupied in firing at each other so the Doctor and Rose had to flung themselves to the ground, while trying to avoid being caught in the chaos.

"Come on, we've gotta move," he told her and took her hand in his, dragging her out of the room after him. Rose stopped for a moment, when she remembered Rajesh, but when she turned he was already laying on the floor, unmoving. She grimaced at the sight. The Doctor noticing this, pulled her closer to him and urged her to move. "Come on."

"FIRE-POWER-INSUFFICIENT!-FIRE-POWER-INSUFFICIENT!" the Dalek cried in the background while the two stumbled away out in the corridor, breathing heavily.

When Rose spotted her mother outside, cowering behind one of Jake's men, she quickly made her way to her, embracing her tightly. "Mum!"

"Oh, Rose. You're safe!"

After restoring its power the Dalek then fired once at a Cyberman, immediately destroying it. Jake came rushing in through the doors, but Mickey was still struggling to maneuver between the
Cybermen.

"Watch your footing!" the Doctor called out for him from the doorway just as Mickey managed to right himself, and reached the others.

"CYBERMEN-PRIMARY-TARGET," Dalek Sek stated from the inside.

Just as the rest of Jake's men managed to slip through the door, it closed, the Doctor sealing both the Daleks and the Cybermen inside.

Everyone barely managed to spare a breath for themselves before the Doctor urged everyone to follow after him.

"What was that thing? What did you do?" Mickey asked, breathless by his side.

"I activated a magnetic field around the Genesis Arc. A permanent lock to the prison. They'll never open that thing," he said with a certain finality in his words and turned to look at Rose, sharing an enthusiastic grin with her. Rose squeezed his forearm from sheer glee.

"No way! It's brilliant!"

"Yep. But we've got to hurry up. They won't be very happy about this." He shared a meaningful look with her while he could imagine himself hearing the cries of the Daleks.

"THE-GENESIS-ARC-HAS-BEEN-COMPROMISED-THE-DOCTOR-MUST-BE-EXTERMINATED!"

Their quite big in quantity group of people ran through the N3 corridors, the path the Doctor could recognise at least. Mickey had his gun ready in case anything were to appear. Jake and his team on the other side. They were most definitely prepared what's to come.

But that's not right, is it?

When Mr. Pete Tyler suddenly appeared out of thin air before the very group, it was a lucky chance he hadn't gotten himself shot dead on the spot.

"Pete!?" the Doctor shouted out in question.

"It's good to finally see you again, Doctor," the man said, one hand holding a massive gun.

"What're you doing here?" the Doctor asked, still uncomprehending how everyone were just appearing out of nowhere. What was wrong with this timeline?

"My team wasn't coming back. I had to go check," Pete shrugged slightly but then his eyes fell upon one blonde in the group. She had an equally surprised look on her face, but it soon morphed into a gleeful one.

"Pete!" she yelled out for him and ran forward.

Mr. Tyler blinked in surprise. "Jackie!?"

Before he could say more the woman launched herself at him, stunning the poor man on the spot as he could only submit to Jackie's onslaught. When they parted, Pete had a slightly dazed look.

"What was that for?"
"I was happy to see you, of course." She beamed at him, but by then Pete's face had changed into an uncomfortable one.

"Jackie... uh, the thing is, I'm not your husband."

"Of course you are," Jackie said with vigor.

"No, Jackie. You don't understand-" he began to say again in desperation but then had to blink at the Doctor who suddenly appeared by the pair's side.

"Yeeh. Sorry. Didn't mean to interrupt your happy reunion but if we don't go now, they'll catch us. So, let me do the introductions. Jackie – parallel Pete. Pete – parallel Jackie." He indicated comically to both. "Now then, allons-y!" he yelled out and everyone were running again.

The whole building was in a state of chaos.

Just a few corridors away, the Daleks burst through the doors of the factory floor to meet rows of Cybermen.

"EXTERminate!"

"Delete!"

The two species continued to fire at each other time and time again. But one side was so much more at an disadvantage. The Cybermen's rays bounced off the Dalek's armour, the Dalek's exterminator beams just that bit more effective. Cries of 'delete!' and 'exterminate!' filled the air, along with the shouts of the surrounding soldiers who were shooting at both parties.

"THE-DOCTOR-MUST-BE-FOUND!" the Daleks cried while the Cybermen were starting to unite themselves against the Daleks, all coming in to Torchwood One.

Everyone burst through the black doors leading to the Rift Chamber just as Mickey came rushing in from another corridor, holding the two magnaclamps. The Doctor beamed at him in pride.

"Doctor! I got you these!"

"Good, man! Seal the doors!" he yelled out to the black-suited men, while he ran further into the room just to abruptly stop, facing the main group of his friends.

"Now you lot. I have a preposition for you."

He grinned at the dumbstruck faces.

"LIFE-FORMS-DETECTED-ON-THE-TOP-FLOOR," Dalek Thay shook as it spoke.

"INSTIGATE-LEVITATION," Dalek Sek ordered.

"This world's gonna crash and burn. There's nothing we can do. We've to go back to our world. It's safe there. As long as the Doctor closes the breach. Doctor?" Pete asked from his place by the window.

"Oh, I'm ready. I've got the equipment right here," the Doctor said with a grin, dashing to the
computer to check the last bits of information he needed. "Slam it down and close off both universes."

"Reboot systems," the computer announced.

"Yeh, but we're not leaving, are we?" Rose asked in a wary voice, staring at the back of the Doctor's head.

"We have to," Pete told her in regretful voice. "With all the Cybermen out there-,

"But that's it!" the Doctor announced in flourish, suddenly wearing a pair of very familiar looking glasses. "They're part of the problem. And THAT makes them part of the solution. Pete."

He tossed the glasses to Pete, the man catching them with a confused look on his face.

"What are these for?"

"Put then on. Come on," the Doctor urged him, until the man finally complied.

"See that?" He dodged about so Pete could see, with the aid of the glasses, that he was surrounded by floating green and red particles.

"What is that stuff?"

"Void stuff!" Rose answered with a grin of her own.

"The Daleks lived inside the Void. That's the dead space between the worlds, by the way," the Doctor added as an afterthought. "Anyway... Cybermen are bristling with void stuff. Daleks - all of them. I just open the Void - end of verse. The Void stuff gets sucked back inside," he ended enthusiastically.

"PULLING them all in," Rose seconded him just as enthusiastic.

"Pulling them all in!"
The two sharing a look.

"Yeh, sending the Daleks and Cybermen to Hell," Mickey added in, smiling all the same.

The Doctor walked back to stand by the group.

"And then – we close it. Done. Kaput. All Cybermen and Daleks tucked safely inside the void. This world safe."

His enthusiasm seemed to be lost on Pete, because the man only stared at him with uncertainty. The Doctor's smile diminished a little.

"You said you had a preposition. Or was that it?"
The Doctor's eyes widened as if only now remembering.

"Oh! No no no. Sorry. Right. I meant to say... I can reroute your dimension hoppers so you would get back right inside the TARDIS. Now."

Rose turned her head briskly at hearing the Doctor say that. It was the first time she was hearing any of this.
"How would you do that?" Pete asked in wonder.

"Well," the Doctor scratched the back of his head, looking a little uncomfortable. "I took some particles from my ship... there's really no time for that now." He quickly dismissed it with his hand.

"So we could stay here? On this side?" Jackie asked, her voice sounding hopeful for once.

"Yep. But I..." the Doctor began but then glanced at Rose, who was looking at him with those hazel eyes of hers, waiting, and he knew he had just lost his last chance at sending her away. "We will be sealing the breach from this side. You won't be able to get back to Pete's World after that."

The Doctor smiled in encouragement, because clearly gaining a wife back had to be way more rewarding than the price of it. What he didn't expect was that it was all starting to be too much for Mr. Tyler. Somehow the man was on the verge of backing away.

"I can-I can't do this right now."

Rose watched at the man, who she came to call her dad, with wide eyes. Jackie wasn't going down that easily, though.

"But you're my husband!"

"No, I'm not."

"But you are!" she insisted. "We've been through this before. Living in your world together."

Pete could only frown at her in confusion while the Doctor tried to somehow make them cut this short. Time wasn't exactly on their side right now.

"What're you talking about?" Pete asked.

"There're these memories of another life... the Doctor could give them to you." Jackie looked at the Doctor expectedly. The alien himself opened his mouth to reply, when Rose cut in, trying a gentle approach with Pete.

"It's like... parallel timeline. Where we lived through this before, just stayed on the other side. You've got those memories inside you. You could get them back."

"I..." Pete faltered, a wild, lost look in his eyes.

The Doctor stepped in.

"Except, it doesn't matter. Even if I did give you back your memories now, it'd take hours for them to fully subside inside your brain. That's why I did it days prior for you, Jackie. Now I've got nothing here. No synapses stimulating vial, no time. You've got to choose one of the two, Pete. And it's gotta be now."

"Now?" the man asked in bewilderment. "You want me to make my... lifetime decision in a minute?"

"We might not even have that," the Doctor said apologetically.

"Great. It's getting better and better." Pete turned around, his face in his hands.

The Doctor took a step to him.
"I'm sorry. But you've got to choose now. Once I access your dimension hopper, there won't be a turnover. Either you're going or I'm activating it."

The Doctor could really not understand what the problem was. If he was offered a second chance with his beloved (which, ironically, he was given) he would take it any day. Which… he did. Instead of pondering over useless things, Pete should just grab his woman and kiss her… urgh, now he was having visions of that. Better stop thinking about this. Jackie's voice ringing in his ears wasn't helping the situation either.

"Well, there's no choice here now, is there? What're you looking at? Press that bloody button and go. There's nothing keeping you here."

"Jacks, come on, don't be like that. You know that-"

"I don't bloody know anything! Not about you. I thought I did, but I was wrong. You know, my Pete might have not succeeded with all his daft schemes like you did, but at least he would never leave his family alone." She looked at him with all the betrayal she felt, making him see just what was he doing to her.

"How can you say that? Of course I want a family. With you. But all my life I only had Vitex. And now you want me to leave everything I ever had. I'd have nothing to give you."

"Oh, you daft man. I don't care if you're a millionaire or a shop assistant. I've lived a simple life for the last twenty years, I can live some more," she spoke softly with a smile on her face. The two gradually coming to stand up close.

"Then you're really alright with me going as I stand now?"

"Any chance you're gonna make up your minds today?" the Doctor called out with urgency. He checked the monitor, and the Cybermen were literally four floors down. Not to mention he had no idea where the revenge-searching Daleks were lurking about.

Luckily Jackie answered for all.

"Yeh, yeh, he's staying, all right. We all are."

"Good to hear that." Rose beamed in delight, just so happy to see her two parents together once again.

"Not everyone."

Rose turned around to look at Mickey in confusion. "Mickey?"

The Doctor inched closer, seeing where this would likely go.

"What do you mean?" Jackie asked, with the same confusion as Rose.

For a while it looked like Mickey would say something big and extraordinary but then his shoulders just slumped and he exhaled.

"My gran is still on the other side. She needs me."

Rose shook her head, a frown on her forehead. "But... you'd be on your own."

"That's all right. I've got Jake with me. It took us a while but we're friends now." He looked at the man in question and the two bumped fists together.
Rose still had a shocked expression on her face while the Doctor passed by her, squeezing her shoulder slightly in comfort and then addressed Mickey. "You're gonna be missed. Mickey the idiot." He tried to slap him affectionately on his cheek for old times' sake but Mickey successfully evaded him.

"Watch it," he chided with a smile. "I may take it once, but not twice."

The Doctor laughed softly in return, his eyes smiling. "Keep up the good work, Mickey the idiot."

Mickey smiled to him in return and went to face Rose who had a pained look on her face. "Rose."

She swallowed and looked up to him.

"Yeh."

"We've been through this before. Nothing new already." He joked lightly and Rose quirked the corner of her mouth. She nodded.

"Yeh."

"Come here," he urged her and the two met each other in a tight hug.

Mickey quickly embraced even Jackie and then just disappeared out of thin air.

Mickey Smith back to the parallel universe. Defender of the Earth.

Mickey, Pete and Jackie, Jake's team - everyone were gone back to where they were supposed to. That left the last two standing. The Doctor ran towards the computer as it flashed 'Reboot in 3 minutes'.

Finally reaching this point in time, he couldn't stop himself from moving. The urge to keep on moving was unbearable. If he stopped… he feared he would go mad.

"How long have we got?" she asked him and the Doctor's hearts nearly stopped beating from the sheer power those words held. It held everything for them that day. That fateful day when they lost each other, what they expected, forever. He swallowed, answering her in a tight voice. "About 2 minutes."

Rose exhaled a watery laugh and at once he whipped his head to look at her. He stared at her long and hard before he found himself asking one last time. "Rose, if you-"

"I'm not leaving you!" she shot back angrily, her voice holding on the conviction even more so than the last time. He nodded tightly at her and walked the last remaining space separating them. He took the dragon tail's ropes from his pocket and tied it strongly around each one of them. When he was done, he lifted his head to look at her in the eyes.

They looked at each other for a prolonged moment and the next found themselves in a tight embrace, clutching at each other like a lifeline. Rose sniffed into his shoulder and his grip on her only tightened.

"I don't wanna lose you again," she whispered brokenly.

He held onto her without answering, counting her breaths.

With a physical ache the two separated, the computer urging them on, the last remaining minute on
their side.

His eyes found hers, holding onto their contact as his one hand brushed her hair out of her face. With a deep breath in, he cupped her cheeks, gazing at her with an unwavering stare. He opened his mouth and poured out everything, if it was his last chance to say it.

"I was always too late. Never telling what needed to be said. Just running and wasting time. And this time I might lose you again… but before that happens. I'll tell you this properly. Not as a delayed message or a reply. But something I always meant to tell you myself." He swallowed tightly before continuing.

"I love you, Rose Tyler. The one thing I could never regret doing."

A choked sound escaped her lips as tears rolled down her face. "Quite right too."

He smiled sadly at the significance of all that were said today and bent down to capture her lips in one last attempt at desperation. He held onto her strongly, like willing the universe to dare to break them apart. It was urgent, fervent and heart-wrenching, not the kiss she ever deserved, but he supposed there was simply no other life for them.

Always running out of time.

He pulled apart from the kiss abruptly, sparing her one last glance, before rushing to take a magnaclamp into his grip and attaching it to the right side just as Rose rushed to join him on the opposite side.

They looked at each other for confirmation and both pressed the red buttons to activate the clamps.

"They're already here. Come on!" he yelled out when he saw the Daleks just outside the window. They ran towards the lever and simultaneously pulled them towards activation, his hearts beating erratically at the signs of wind reaching from the breach.

He cast a desperate glance at Rose just as her eyes found his and steeled his hearts to hold on. To hold on, until it was all over. One way or another.

They rushed towards the magnaclamps, clinging to them as the wind picked up and the three Daleks with the Genesis Ark went right through the window, straight towards the void.

More and more joined the first to go to the void, seconds later hundreds of Cybermen were being sucked in, without a chance of protest.

They held onto the magnaclamps as the pull got stronger and stronger, gripping them in death-white grips. The rushing bodies of Cybermen only increasing the struggle.

But they held on.

They held on strongly and when he would cast a glance at Rose he would see her holding on just as fiercely. And he started to hope. Letting himself feel that tad bit of hope in his life. Maybe this will work out?

Slowly, little by little, a smile started to creep on his face, Rose's face mirroring his. He looked at her and just thought they could do it. They could make this through.

And then a hole appeared in the universe.
In the middle of chaos that were Cybermen bodies, the Doctor could only watch in horror as a layer of universe ripped apart and through it went a Dalek on Rose's side, her face twisting into pure fright and disbelief. She cried out as it brushed her hand, and her grip slackened on the magnaclamp.

His hearts stopped for a moment.

He watched it in slow motion as Rose started to loose her grip on the magnaclamp, slipping by. He couldn't hear anything. Not the Cybermen screaming, not the rush of the void, he could only watch in terror as his second chance in life was slipping through his fingers once again.

The sudden noise that rang through his ears was nearly deafening and he only later realised that the sound came from him. "HOLD ON!" he yelled out, his voice and hearts breaking apart as Rose hang only by a string of rope, her body dangling in mid-air.

She struggled to keep her hold onto the rope, but it was no use. The pull was that much too strong.

And then he could see the rope starting to break down, little parts of it ripping and ripping. "HOLD ON!" he yelled out again, his hand reaching out for her uselessly.

It couldn't turn out like the last time. It couldn't. It just couldn't!

He cried out again in desperate attempt when he realised that this time there was no Pete Tyler to pull her from the void at the last minute.

The nightmare he had, was a warning for him. A warning he stupidly ignored for selfish reasons.

Rose's cry nearly broke him when he found her looking at him with all the regret she had. She was sorry for him while all he could do was plead for her to just hold on.

The wind pulled at her one time, two times more and then it finally snapped. The rope snapped, dragging Rose straight towards the end.

His mind short-circuited, unable to see anything properly but his very worst nightmare coming true. Rose being lost to him forever and at a fate worse than death. The ache in his chest was so strong that he only realised he had moved when he found his finger instinctively pressing on the sonic screwdriver, and the most wonderful sound in the universe surrounding the whole room.

Just as Rose was being pulled straight for the void, the TARDIS materialised around her, hiding her from the Doctor's view completely, making it unable to tell which way she went.

Moments later the breach was closed and he could only stare wide-eyed at the sight ahead, begging for all the universes that it had worked.

A familiar feeling of lightness and being carried away overwhelmed her. Suddenly all she could see was gold. Gold dust gathering around until she finally could feel her feet on a solid ground. She gasped, her lungs aching for oxygen as her eyes slowly started to focus. Slowly she could start to see and hear things and the familiar faces were looking at her in sheer shock and bewilderment.

She swallowed a big lump in her throat, gulping air when she finally could see. She was in the TARDIS.

She was in the TARDIS.
Her head whipped to the side – her mother, dad were standing there. They were here with her.

Somehow she had appeared in the TARDIS after nearly being pulled away into the void, the Doctor looking at her…

Her heart skipped a beat when her eyes followed the doors and the next moment she was running without looking back, opening the doors with sheer force.

He was just starting to regain the feeling of his legs, his both hearts still beating wildly in his rib cage when suddenly the doors to the TARDIS ripped wide open and he never thought he had seen a more beautiful sight ahead.

He stared at her tearful face, watching him in equal shock, not daring to believe. His legs started sending him towards her way before he realised what was happening but in a second he was running in a sprint, Rose dashing towards him all the same. By the time he reached her he was grinning so wide that he thought his face would split from the stretch. And then he really did reach her, gathering her in his arms as he swung her around, swirling in circles by the logic of physics that their fervent colliding of bodies created.

She clutched onto him with equal power, whispering words of promises that could finally be kept. And while he held her in his arms, one victorious thought repeated itself in his mind.

They made it. They really made it this time.

_to be continued... in Epilogue of Doomsday._
Epilogue of Doomsday

Chapter Summary

A short epilogue, it mostly answers some unanswered questions.

Chapter Notes

Soooo incredibly sorry for me being so late! And not even with a proper chapter, eek. Well, this just needed to get out in the open so I could continue on further. The next chapter is gonna be in an AU. Enjoy! And, if possible, leave me your thoughts.

#Epilogue of Doomsday

You know that feeling? The feeling you get when the darkness fades away and you open your eyes for the very first time? Or the feeling that goes right through your body, still tiny and vulnerable, but already capable of feeling that very first shift of the universe? Eh?

No, of course you don't know that. Because you're a human. Offended? My point exactly. Humans and their complexity of feelings. Which is exactly why they're so lovable.

Nothing could quite compare to a human's heart.

Mix that with a dash of millenia years old ship of space and time and you are left with a miracle.

A real, palpable miracle.

In all those nine hundred-something years there seemed to be nothing new left to surprise a Time Lord, but in that very moment, when he stood there on the threshold of the TARDIS, hand in hand – together, with Rose Tyler – that feeling right there was comparable to a birth of a new star. He would know.

His whole body was buzzing with a newly found energy like he had never felt before. It was the urge to jump, the urge to dance, the urge to hug every passing person in the vicinity (but the only two people besides Rose were Mr. Pete Tyler and the dear ol' Jackie – so he proceeded with them, shocking the hell out of Mr. Pete. Ha! Rose should've recorded his face on cam). And then… turning to watch the still astonished faces of the Tyler family members, bouncing on his feet and grinning like a madman, the Doctor couldn't help thinking that this was the day he had long since strived for.

"I'm living this! Ha!"

Everything after, went by in a blur. Or so he would've liked to say but in truth, everything after that one victorious moment was such hard work.

It all started with trying to find a suitable home for Jackie and her supposed-to-be-dead husband
It took three hours straight to explain to Jackie Tyler that the New Earth was a human-environment safe and the best choice besides Earth to live in planet, another two to try to (and miserably fail) explain to Jackie Tyler the perks of hPhone (short for – hologram phone), and one more hour for the Doctor to completely give up on providing Jackie a more comfortable home with her freshly baked fiance.

"You're just not making any bloody sense!" Jackie's enraged voice rang out throughout the infinite halls of the spaceship. The Doctor put his face in his palms, asking for strength from all the deities out there. If there were any. He guessed there wasn't any. Or else they wouldn't have been so cruel as to send him Jackie Tyler, out of anyone, as his mother-in-law. Which… was not a thought he could allow himself to ponder about just yet.

"I keep telling you, just swipe your finger in the air-"

"'Swipe my finger' he says," she parroted him, after cutting him off. "If I 'swipe my finger' while in the bathroom, does this invisible phone just miraculously appear?"

"What? Why would you even use a phone in the bathroom?"

"I asked you a question!" she shouted, loudly, not backing away. After sharing a glance with the Doctor, Pete took a step forward, gently resting his hand on Jackie's forearm.

"Jacks, love, why don't I help you explain the basics of the phone-"

"Oh, butt off. You don't know a thing about that bb phone."

"It's a hPhone…" the Doctor sighed miserably, leaning against the strut in the console room, with his hand against his forehead.

It continued on until finally Rose pointed out the obvious. There was just no way for Jackie to adjust to a life elsewhere than their own home planet Earth.

Thus started a period of tons of extra paperwork and innuendos – forged new identities, immortal captains and the independence run through an alien planet, stark naked, with only a blaster in his hand (thank goodness the later was only a story). All in all, it must have took more than twenty four hours for everyone to find their respective places - which were somewhere else besides the TARDIS.

After everything was over, and the ship was finally only left with him and Rose, the two were so ridiculously spent and exhausted that after stumbling together on the jump seat, they laughed for a good hour, until their throats had gotten sore.

Rose gulped a few gulps of air, feeling the heat in her own red-ish cheeks as she finally came to, settling down on the seat. She turned around just in time to spot the Doctor glancing at her with the same wonder in his eyes that she must have had in her own orbs – both still quite not believing that they were both staying in this moment right now, together.

A smile spread across her face, putting one of sheer glee on the Doctor's.

Being honest with himself, the Doctor wasn't very used to being happy. Not the emotion itself, but everything that comes with it. The slow moments. The no rush. The luxury of having actual time to stop for a moment to think that everything worked out and now you're free to do whatever you want. Well, reasonably 'whatever'. The potential destruction of the universe should always be
considered seriously. Maybe that's why, when Rose opened her mouth again, he was relieved to hear a question coming out of it.

The vast possibilities this day had earned him quite frankly scared him to the bone. He wasn't sure where to even start. But questions he could do. He was good with questions. Accurate answers not always, but he always tried.

"Doctor? How did I end up in the TARDIS?" she asked cautiously, gauging his reaction, to which the Doctor's grin slipped a little as he collected his thoughts. He knew he should be honest with her but he wasn't yet sure how Rose would react to it all.

He swallowed a slight lump in his throat and adjusted his position on the jump seat, his one hand resting behind Rose's back, slightly brushing her shoulder with his fingertips. "Remember how I told you I had an idea that could help us but I wasn't yet sure if it would work?"

Rose nodded in agreement. "Yeh. Was that what you did?"

"In a way. It didn't quite work as I expected it to, though."

"What d'you mean?"

"Well… before I tell you something, I'll let you know that I was doing it solely for the sake of not giving you false hope. If I'd known it would work, I'd have told you about it."

"What, like that you took a sample of my blood without my consent?"

"How did you-?" the Doctor gasped in shock, gaining a slight giggle out of Rose. She brushed her hand gently against his forearm, absent-mindedly picking on the dust there.

"I know you, Doctor. I knew you'd want to check all the possibilities, but I wish you'd told me. I have the right to know what's happening to me."

He shot her an apologetic look.

"I didn't do a genetic analysis yet. I only wanted to check if my hypothesis was correct. Which… was right – you do have huon particles inside your system."

"What's a huon particle?"

"An ancient power only thought to have existed in the Dark Times but with a tiny bit of amount left in the heart of the TARDIS. It's supposed to be deadly, but being in a suitable environment, it can stay dormant until used. Believe it or not, two wrongs make one right." He then put a thoughtful expression on his face. "I think this was first published in The London Magazine, in 1736… or not, was it 1734…? I can't quite remember now…" he trailed off, his fingers accidently brushing Rose on the back of her neck, sending her way a jolt of electricity from the sheer touch there and making her shiver involuntary. Her mind nearly took a turn elsewhere, getting distracted, before she caught herself and tilted her head to the side, letting the Doctor's fingers fall back on the back of the jump seat and leveled him with a questioning look.

"Doctor?"

The Doctor jumped a little, as if coming back from a short dream and shifted to look at Rose, who had a raised eyebrow, waiting for him to continue on the topic.

"Right. So, I think you still have a part of Time Vortex inside you," he finished fast, waiting for her
Rose straightened up in the seat at once, her face showing a look of concern. "What? But, it's bad, isn't it?" she asked in a slightly shaky voice. Why was the Doctor being so calm about this?

"Rose…" he tried to reach out for her, but Rose continued on. "I mean, you said so yourself. That Time Vortex would kill anyone."

She looked at him, waiting for him to deny but the Doctor only cleared his throat and continued speaking, threading it gently, but failing at it horribly.

"Yeh, well. It should. If it were the entire Time Vortex... then, yeh. Or not. Even smaller portions would..." He nodded, as if nonchalant, gaining an appalled look out of Rose. "But! You were left with tiny miny amount of it after the Game Station. It was not harmful or usable when you were in this universe. But once we opened the breach to the other side, it triggered the anomaly dalek to appear, that way sending you in the parallel universe by mistake. It wasn't supposed to happen. And as you stayed there the power was starting to grow. Stronger and stronger until it eventually... transported you back into this universe," he finished on a lighter tone, hoping against hope that Rose wasn't internally freaking out at this because in his mind an idea of how it could all be true was already forming, just that he wasn't sure Rose would be ready to hear it just yet.

"But…" Rose started, a deep frown on her face. "How did-"

Before she could ask a question the Doctor wasn't quite ready to answer, he hurried to add.

"My guess is… It was not the parallel universe who wanted to get rid of you at all. It was the energy surrounding you. Sending you a message." He held their eye contact for a moment there, and after getting a nod of her understanding, continued on.

"It's like when you catch a cold. You sneeze, you cough, your body starts to fight the bacteria and it's burning. You get a fever, your temperature rises and you're fighting it. That was you fighting with time. The Time Vortex inside of you, specifically. Well, the energy of it more like… how to name it… Eh. Never mind. Anyway, that same energy inside you wanted to correct the timeline, but you were still living in the wrong universe, making time pass on and on. And when you two crashed, they would cause incidents."

"So…" Rose swallowed. "All the time those things came crashing down on me in Pete's world was because of the Time Vortex I have inside of me?"

The Doctor pressed his lips together, nodding. "Yep."

After hearing that, Rose suddenly stood up from the jump seat and started pacing about. Her one hand flew towards her forehead, while the other rested on her hip.

"Rose…" the Doctor tried to get her to stop where he knew she was going, but she was already past that point.

"I have a… Time Vortex inside of me-" she breathed out, panting slightly.

"Only a tiny part of it. It's hardly detectable," the Doctor added in, trying for damage control. It was not helping much, though.

Rose swiped her hand in a dismissive motion. "Part of it, never mind." She shook her head. "I have the Time Vortex inside of me," she repeated, like trynig the words out with her mouth. "A Time Vortex which can kill literally anyone in an instant, which… killed you!" She pointed at him, her
voice breaking at the memories that day held for them. Suddenly she had a very dreadful thought, which she just couldn't shake. Her body started to grow numb as she shifted her eyes towards the Doctor, who was watching her in concern. She swallowed as her hands fell by her sides. "So how come I'm alive?"

Her voice sounded so small and broken there that for a moment he only stayed there, rooted on the jump seat and unable to move from her pleading eyes. He blamed himself. Of course he did. It was all his fault that Rose was hurting this much. He might have stolen her only chance at a normal life.

He stood up slowly, taking steady steps closer to the emotional human, but got stopped by her sudden question.

"Am I going to die?" she asked with unshed tears in her eyes, truly believing in what she was asking.

The Doctor took the last few steps towards his goal and places his hands firmly on her shoulders, giving them a squeeze. "Rose, you're not going to die. If you survived the years with it staying inside, that small amount of vortex is not going to kill you."

"But what if I… I dunno, what if I like… combust suddenly." She waved with her hands, gesturing. "Going off like some… some sort firework show and killing everyone around me or something?"

The Doctor narrowed his eyes at her, in wonder. "Combust?"

"Well I don't know!" Rose cried out, shrugging her hands with a chuckle coming out of her, like finding her own question silly. It seemed like a part of tension had left her body then. The Doctor joined in, smiling at her and reaching out to stroke her cheek tenderly.

"Rose Tyler, I can assure you, you're not going to combust in fireworks."

Rose closed her eyes, feeling momentary ashamed of her own outburst. "I'm being silly, aren't I?"

He tilted his head to the side, not really giving an answer.

"Rose, I know this was not what you signed up for, but believe me when I tell you that you're in no immediate danger."

He gently lifted her head to look in her eyes. "All right?"

"Yeh," she exhaled, giving him a tender smile in return. After the shared moment, they found themselves in a tight hug, wrapped around each other and just letting it all settle in. They exhaled together, letting some calm finally wash over them.

When they were ready to let go of each other, the two untangled themselves and greeted each other with spreading grins on their faces. Ultimately, the only real thing that mattered was that they had each other. That was simply enough for now. "I think we've got enough for one day," Rose spoke lightly.

"Quite right," the Doctor agreed with a smile of his own.

"Come on, then," Rose took a hold of his hand and tugged on it, letting the Doctor know when to follow her. "Fancy a cuppa?"

"That's so British." The Doctor faked a scandalised look. "Rose Tyler. Jackie must be growing on you."
"You're stuck with a British, mister." She pointed a finger towards his chest, laughing a little, until the Doctor got a hold of said finger, trapping it between them and leaned towards her face with a mischievous grin.

"Stuck with you, Miss Tyler, is not so bad. Not so bad at all. I quite like it, in fact."

There was a glint in his eyes that made Rose stick her tongue out of her teeth, giving him a look which made him weak to her. "Oh? How about you tell me all about it with a nice cup of tea?"

The Doctor grinned at her and straightened up, offering her his forearm. "Lead the way, my Lady."

With a big grins on their faces, the pair descended the ramp and disappeared down the infinite corridors, only a glimpse of their conversation could still be heard.

"Doctor?"

"Hm?"

"So what did you do with those huon particles?" Rose's voice echoed somewhere far away, which was followed by a momentary silence.

"Oh. Right. Well that story, Rose Tyler, requires an extra meal of fish and chips to tell."

The sounds of chuckling echoed throughout the walls of the spaceship, with a gentle hum accompanying them what sounded close to happiness.

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to be continued...
The Doctor and Rose finally decide to go to Barcelona (the planet, not the city). But dogs without noses are not the only thing they meet there.

Four-part AU arc, taking place in Barcelona. Leave me your thoughts bellow! Cheers.

#The Canine Kingdom

It was a silent night on a faraway planet. There were no sounds of animals howling in the dark. Only the night's breeze and the flutter of the leaves could be heard in this quiet night. The only light, was the scarlet moon, which shone brightly in the starry sky. It was only an inch away from having the shape of a fully rounded moon. Somewhere in the distance a lone figure was passing through the empty streets. His steps not faltering as he continued to walk straight ahead.

The lone figure was wearing a long, brown leather coat, which fit tightly against his waist with the help of a metal belt. He wore dark skinny pants, with a small pocket sawn on the side of his right leg, easily reachable by his right hand. From the distance, nothing could be said about his eyes. His face was hidden from view by an unnaturally big hood.

Two round eyes were watching him as he strode by.

It was a little girl in the middle of an empty kids' playground. Her hands were clutching a brown bear tightly. He noticed they were slightly blue. She looked small and fragile. Couldn't have been more than 6 years of age. It was not a time for a little girl like her to be out but he didn't stop to ask her why. For a brief moment their eyes met. Her hopeful orbs were looking at him in wonder before he broke the moment by turning away. The last of him she saw were his slightly wavy locks fluttering in the wind.

He passed a few blocks of buildings, turning towards a more narrow alley until he reached a middle-sized wooden inn. The lights from inside shone brightly in invitation.

He stopped by the doors. Not yet going in.

His shoulders got tense as he continued to stand there, watching the rings of the wooden doors in front of him. He took a shaky breath, briefly closing his eyes and with a practised resolve, reached out to knock four times (the second longer than the rest).

He waited for a while, standing unnaturally still, until the doors broke open. A massive in size figure came out of the place, closing the doors behind him. His heart made a sharp thud inside his chest, startled.
He cursed his luck.

"Who's it?" a rough voice spoke from above. The young lad tilted his head to show his face to the newcomer. That moment, something passed on the big-guy's face. Some sort of recognition sparked in his eyes before a side-way grin made its way, a golden tooth showing from the gap between his lips.

The boy intensified his gaze towards the man, steeling himself. When he finally spoke, his voice came out deep and clear.

"I've come to see Mr. Schultz."

He didn't say anything else, just merely lifted the side of his coat to reveal a full linen bag. The imposing man hummed in appreciation and the boy took it as a green light for him to go ahead. He put the bag back in place under his coat and took a step further, ready to go inside the inn before a muscular hand shot out to block his path. He lifted his eyes, frowning in question.

"Not so fast, Munchkin. The password."

The man stared at him with an unpleasant look that made his skin crawl but he suppressed a full body shudder and narrowed his eyes at him.

"You already know who I am-"

"Yes, I do. But I also love seeing that prideful face die in shame so much more." The man reached out to pinch the boy's cheek to which he got a slap of his hand and a glare in return. The man laughed at the younger boy, clearly enjoying his discomfort. "Spit it out, Jelly Bear. I won't let you see Mr. Schultz until you start begging."

The young guy soon felt his blood start to boil in his veins. He clenched his fists by his sides, desperately trying to calm himself down. He couldn't allow himself to snap now. Not when he was so close to his goal. He swallowed tightly, while practising a few deep breaths.

He could feel the burning gaze of the large man while he was not looking at him. Waiting for him in amusement.

It would be so easy to just reach out inside his pocket and end this. He could feel the itch of his weapon against his right leg. It would only take a second for him to reach out for it and then it'd be all over. This poor excuse of a man wouldn't see the light of day ever again. He could do it. He could do it.

He couldn't do it.

Not today at least. He needed to hold out for today. If only for a single day longer. He breathed out a shuddering breath, refusing to look at the man ahead. Just for today. He needed to hold out just for today. Just for-

"There you're. All the trembling in my hands," the man spoke in a rough, delighted tone. He could feel the hot air against his ear as the large man whispered to him. "Cute."

Forget tomorrow. He's just gonna bloody do it now!

He flinched back from the man. His fingers quickly found the clasp of the pocket against his leg, his eyes lightening up with fire when suddenly bright light blinded both of them. He shielded his eyes with his arm, momentary forgetting the pocket.
The other man wasn't as lucky. He frowned deeply at the suddenly blinding light.

"Damn it, my eyes. What the hell, Roger?"

Suddenly the doors to the inn were wide open and a lean man was standing in the threshold, bathed in a yellow light coming from the room inside. He eyed the two of them warily. Then his gaze settled on the bulky man, showing a disapproving look.

"What're you doing, Tommy?"

"Mind your business, Roger. I was showing the lad some proper manners. Can't have just anyone barging in."

The man cast a surveying glance at the younger boy, but after finding what he was looking for, averted his eyes towards his partner. "His identification has already been verified. The boss has been waiting for him. Let him in."

His tone was calm but commanding. The other man still tried to argue some but soon understood he wouldn't get his way.

"Tch. Fine. You got lucky this time, shrimp." He waved a dismissive hand at him, indicating for him to get inside. The young lad could feel relief filling his insides as he took those remaining steps towards the threshold. He could still feel the bulky man's eyes on him as he went inside.

He was led through a long hallway, located just behind the bar. The lean man leading the way in silence. Ever since he 'collected' the boy, he spoke a total of zero words to the guy. Of course, he didn't come here for a chit-chat.

After a few moments, he stopped behind a hard wood double doors, a roaring lion engraved in between. The man opened the doors and took a step to the side, indicating for the boy to go ahead alone.

Once inside, he found himself in a dimly-lit expensive room. There were leather couches with satin material, surrounding a round table. Sitting in the middle, while resting his hands on the black cane, was an elderly man in a black suit. After spotting the boy in the room, he whispered to one of his guards and one of them came to physically drag the lad to sit down on the couch, opposite of the man.

"All right, all right. I get it," the lad muttered in irritation but after one glance of a raised eyebrow from the man, quickly shut up.

"It's good to see you finally delight us with your presence, Alec. I was starting to worry you weren't coming."

The words were spoken in calm, but Alec knew when not to poke the sleeping lion.

"I apologize for my delay." He bowed his head in front of the man, until he was told to lift his head up.

"So? Do you have what I need?"

"Yes, sir. Here they are." The lad uncovered the linen bag from under his coat and placed it on the table. After getting a subtle nod of confirmation he flipped the bag, letting all the contents scatter on the round table. What came out of the bag were round bronze insignia with a rose engraved in the middle, surrounded by rubies. It was named the 'Red rose' among the folks. It hung by a hook
on brown striped rope with a ruby tied on with the frayed ends.

Alec proceeded to line the insignia up on the table. All the while he could feel the older man watching his every move. He tried to concentrate on the task, not to think about anything else but the slight tremble of his hands gave him away. He was just about to place the last of the insignia on the table when suddenly a hard fist landed on the table, freezing him on the spot.

"Are you making a fool out of me, Alec!? Thinking I'm too old to count, huh?"

Momentary regaining his wits, the lad swallowed and quickly retreated his hand. "No, sir. I would never-" he tried explaining but was sharply cut off.

"Then why I only see nine pieces on the table? Didn't we agree on ten?"

He swallowed, his heart beating fast in his ribcage. "I deeply apologize, sir." He bowed once again, clenching his fists in his lap.

There was a deep sigh coming from the other side of the table.

"You know, I've always liked you, Alec. You conduct business successfully and know your place. Don't make me change my mind about you now."

"I…" His words got stuck in his throat and he had to take a deep breath in to try again. "I know… I must be overstepping my boundaries here but please give me another chance. I promise you I can get another one for you within a week's time."

"A week he says," Mr. Schultz repeated tonelessly. Then there was a shift in the air and Alec found his head being harshly lifted by the end of the shiny black cane, pressing on his windpipe. He choked on the pressure, looking fearfully at the menacing eyes of his captor. "Do you think you're in position to ask me for a week, boy?"

"I… I…" the lad tried speaking but only spluttered against the pressure, his eyes watering.

The eyes of the man intensified as he spoke to him in a voice which held no compromises.

"Two days. I give you two days and if you won't deliver me the remaining insignia by then… you know who will pay the price."

The lad tried nodding but a sharp raised eyebrow told him he had to speak that he understood the man. "Y-yes, sir." He coughed a little but then carried on. "T-thank…you for your ….benevolence."

The man in a suit held his position for a while longer and then leaned back against his seat, the cane back on the ground. Alec wheezed from the released pressure and then barely registered two strong arms lifting him up from the seat, carrying him through the hallways like some rag doll and finally throwing him out in the rainy night.

He guessed he could only be glad they kept him alive. For now.

After leaving the inn, he found himself aimlessly wandering through the streets. He could still feel himself trembling from within. His steps were unsteady and suddenly he found himself tripping on the rock, falling on his hands and knees. He scrapped his skin but he could barely feel the pain of it. The fear he felt for almost failing, almost losing everything he worked so hard for those past two years kept his whole body shaking. Slowly he pulled himself to a sitting position on the back of his legs, fists clenched on his lap.
How could he have been so stupid?

He closed his eyes tightly shut as water continued to pour down his face, his dark hair glued together.

He stayed like that, rooted to the spot until a pair of small, red shoes appeared in his peripheral vision.

"Are you hurt?" the small voice asked and he just couldn't deal with it right now. He clenched his eyes tightly shut, barking out harshly. "Leave me."

The red shoes didn't leave. His harsh tone seemed to do nothing to make them leave and after a moment, the voice spoke again. "You look hurt."

Alec stayed silent. Only the sound of his harsh breathing and the rain hitting the ground echoed in the otherwise silent street.

Everything hurt. His whole body was tense and tired. He wanted to just pass out and wake up when it was all over but couldn't bring himself to move an inch. He stubbornly stayed rooted to the spot. His eyelids felt heavy, his eyes stinging as he continued to stare at the ground being hit by the rain, unseeing.

There was a shift in the air and then a pair of small hands were holding out a red candy on a stick towards him. "Here," the voice said, just as determined as before. Feeling too exhausted to argue, Alec lifted his head to look at the stranger who kept bothering him. But she wasn't a stranger at all. It was the little girl he saw in the playground watching him before as he passed by.

He stared at her, too tired to argue but clueless as to what could she possibly want from him.

She answered his question without being asked. "My mom used to tell me that sweets help you get over a broken heart. Does your heart hurt?"

He couldn't help himself. A breathy laugh escaped his lips at the irony. "Yeh. It hurts," he agreed.

"Then you can have it. I usually take one per day when my aunt is being mean to me but I'll give it to you."

He stared at her in wonder. She was a peculiar little thing. He tried speaking but his voice only came out ragged. He had to clear his throat and slowly try again. "Why… why're you being kind to me?"

Instead, the girl only gave him a big smile. "Because you seem lonely."

Her words froze Alec to the spot.

Lonely, huh?

He stared at her, taking in her now even more blue hands. How long did she stay in the rain like that? Her cheeks and nose were red, a trail of snot running down her nose, though, it could be mistaken for the rain. He didn't know. He opened his mouth as if meaning to tell her something but stopped short.

He wasn't in position to help anyone else. He couldn't even help himself.

He must have zoned out for a while because it startled him when suddenly the candy was thrust
into his cold hands. He refocused on the girl but she only gave him a big grin and with a wave ran away, leaving him sitting there. A sweet candy clutched tightly in his frozen grip.

Back in the TARDIS, the Doctor was moving restlessly in his sleep, plagued by visions of the Universe.

Something was changing.

Among the multiple time streams, something new had come into existence. The timelines were still in flux, needing at least another few months before the breach in the timelines could be sealed for good, but something was already forming itself into a fixed point. The tiny red thread of timeline was forming itself around the already there timelines, extending the pathways of all the others.

It was still too early to predict the outcome of this new phenomena. It was even less possible to tell the source of it. But one thing was clear. Something new was happening and it caused a ripple effect throughout the timeline.

Dark brown eyes shot open, followed by a gasp. The Doctor took a few deep breaths in as he tried to catch his breath. Funny thing. Although respiratory bypass let him live without air, the dreams always affected his body by a sudden shortage of air in his lungs, seizing them painfully.

After a few more moments of taking air into and expelling it from his lungs, the Doctor finally settled down on the soft material of sheets. His right hand instinctively reached out in the empty space, trying to grab onto the warm body that should have been there only to come empty-handed. Momentary stunned, he felt his hearts take a sharp beat in fear and then his head jerked to his side to confirm the fact – the sheets beside him were empty and cold. He was alone in the room.

He swallowed tightly and his mind was already starting to fill with worries about dreams and wishes to never be granted when a calming hum reached his mind, informing him that his pink and yellow human was in the kitchen and that they were both safe.

The Doctor mentally thanked the TARDIS and proceeded to get up and search for his shoes, which he took off after receiving a disapproving look from Rose when he was just about to take a spot beside her in Her bed with shoes still on. After being warned to never try that again or he would not be welcome here anymore, the Doctor quickly got the message and randomly threw the shoes somewhere in the room. Thus, now he was poking around various boxes (some more stuff Rose took from the Powell Estate to better settle in the TARDIS.) He couldn't lie, anything starting with - settling in – TARDIS – Rose - made him giddy and happy beyond belief. So even if he just banged his toe on one of those boxes "Ouch ouch ouch. What's in there!!?" and now had to skip on one leg while simultaneously searching for his shoes, the Doctor was okay with it. As long as Rose stayed with him in the TARDIS, he could live with a few boxes.

After a few more embarrassing incidents which he would gladly just go and forget about, the Doctor finally was striding through the infinite hallways of TARDIS with his converses on. In a few turns, he could spot the lighting coming from the arch which stood as a doorway to the kitchen and came to an abrupt stop at the sight ahead.

Her back to the Doctor, wearing a plain white t-shirt, pink pyjama pants and hair tied in a loose tail, Rose was bouncing on her feet, with a spatula in her right hand, flipping the pancakes in the pan. She was humming some kind of tune which the Doctor at first couldn't decipher but then he silently chuckled after realizing it was one of Ian Dury's. Rose still appeared not to have noticed him, so the Doctor took a moment to just take a moment and casually leaned onto the door sill with his arms crossed against his chest. Fondly watching her working in the kitchen. His kitchen. Their
kitchen.

The slow moments.

He was sure he could come to love them just the same as the excitement of adventures.

Even without make-up she looked radiant and beautiful, especially when her face lit up after seeing the Doctor in the threshold.

"You're awake. Come on, then. Take a seat. 'm almost done. Just gimme a sec."

She turned away from him again, taking a bowl with the last of batter and pouring it into the frying pan with a spoon. She put the bowl back on the counter and took the pan in her hand to make the texture of the batter in the pan smooth. The Doctor was still watching her from the doorway and something so utterly fond and raw settled into his hearts that it took him by surprise.

Rose was still busying herself by the counter, muttering something among the lines "That should do it." When two strong arms came up to wrap themselves around her from behind. She stilled in her movements, taking in as one masculine arm was tightly holding her waist, another – around her collarbone. Relaxing into his touch, Rose placed one of her hands against the Doctor's on her middle, extending her fingers to wrap them against his wrist and giving it a squeeze.

"Bad dream?"

There was a small shake of the head and then a firmer squeeze on her middle, followed by a burying of his head on her shoulder. The Doctor exhaled in contentment, feeling the warmth that was radiating from her and letting it soothe him. He could smell the remnants of soap on her skin which was still slightly damp. She should have dried herself off better. What if she caught a cold like that? The Doctor chided himself after catching himself. What was becoming of him? The last of the Time Lords. Completely smitten with one human being.

With one more squeeze he unwrapped his arms from her warm body and stood up straight. Rose turned her head to look at him but he refused to meet her eyes and with a clearing of his throat took a step behind.

Rose tilted her head to the side, giving him a scrutinizing look.

Without saying anything, the Doctor took a half circle around her and after spotting what he was looking for, took one pancake from the plate, ready to munch on it. Instead, he got a slap on the wrist, making him drop the pancake back on the plate. He turned his head to look at Rose sheepishly, who was shaking her head with a disapproving look on her face.

"I just-" The Doctor timidly indicated on the pancake to which Rose straightened up and crossed her arms against her chest. The Doctor gulped. He could clearly see where Tyler women genes ran. With a pinch on his earlobe the Doctor went to sit by the table, patiently waiting while Rose placed the food on it.

When the table was ready, the Doctor hurried to get a taste of them, the aroma of said food was nearly driving him insane. It would be a crime to let another minute pass by without tasting it. He was just about to take a bite when he realized something was missing. He scanned the table but it was not anywhere in sight.

"Rose, could you pass-" he started but then a jar of jam was already being placed in his line of vision and the Doctor had to blink a few times to confirm it really being there. He lifted his eyes to meet Rose's beaming smile and gave her a grin of his own in return. He took a hold of said jar,
"Is this one of your mother's? If there's one thing she can do, it's make a decent flavour of jam. Love it!" He giggled a little but then seemed to catch himself, blinking. "Don't tell her I said that."

Rose chuckled at his antics and proceeded to eat her own share of pancakes.

"Mmm..." the Doctor hummed in delight and Rose's eyes flickered to his face. "This is marvelous! I didn't know you could cook. Rose Tyler, you've been holding back on me." The Doctor pointed at her with his fork and then grinned at her.

Rose smiled timidly at him and then shifted in her seat, pulling a string of hair behind her ear. "I just thought with everything that happened, we could use a bit of celebration, you know?" Her eyes flickered to the Doctor's who's orbs widened a little at that admission and then she hurriedly dropped hers. "Not that I'm saying a pan of pancakes is equal to a proper celebration but still... you know..." She shrugged slightly. "Just wanted to do something." She bit her lower lip as she waited for his response.

"Rose Tyler."

The voice that greeted her was deep and slightly husky. "There could be no better celebration than a home-made pancakes."

"Yeh?" Rose asked him with a growing smile on her face.

"Yeh."

Soon enough the Doctor was back on devouring the pastry. Forgoing the kitchen utensils, he picked the flour pastry with his bare fingers and continued humming as he ate. Rose grimaced a little at his sloppy eating but most of the time it was amusing to watch. She watched him with a somehow fond smile on her face until she spotted a drop of jam by his lower lip.

"Doctor?"

"Mm?"

"You got a bit of..." she trailed off, indicating with her finger towards the Doctor's face. He looked at her questioningly and after seeing her extended finger, grabbed it in his palm, grinning like a child who's just received a candy. Rose couldn't help laughing at his obvious misinterpretation of her and with a shake of her head, freed her finger, leaned on the table to reach out for the Doctor herself. She swiped her thumb against the corner of the Doctor's mouth, not noticing how he stilled for a moment there, and then just leaned back in her seat, placing her thumb in her mouth to lick it clean.

In the middle of doing so, she froze. Wide-eyed she glanced at the Doctor who was looking at her with the same kind of astonishment. Both of them swallowed tightly, unable to move. The Doctor's widened eyes soon started to get back to normal and he swallowed (probably the last bit of his pancake). Rose took that moment to take her thumb out of her mouth and couldn't help noticing how the Doctor's eyes followed the movement until they went back to staring at the lower region of her face. She swallowed at the possibility of it being her lips. Suddenly feeling bold, Rose tried to test that theory by swiping her tongue to lick her lips clean of the remaining jam. True enough, the Doctor's eyes darted from one side to another, following. The corners of her lips quirked, the beginning of a smile.

She continued to look back at his eyes which were observing her intensely, without saying a thing.
His dark brown eyes were beginning to narrow, giving them an even more dark look and that set Rose's pulse racing. She sat patiently still, not daring to make any hasty movement in case that would spook the Doctor, but that seemed to not be the problem here. If anything, the Doctor appeared to be just content in staying frozen to the spot. Little by little Rose's racing heart started to calm down to a regular beating and a few frowning lines were beginning to form on her forehead. The Doctor was still pretty much only staring at her but now he had that thoughtful look on his face.

Did he seriously zone out in the middle of a moment there?

Rose swirled her tongue against her teeth, giving up on giving him a patient look. Only the Time Lord himself appeared to not even notice the lost moment of theirs. With a defeated sigh, Rose finally decided it was time to step away from this pathetic excuse of a moment.

The scrape of the chair against the floor seemed to finally do it and the Doctor blinked as if coming awake from a dream. "Eh? Rose? Where're you-" His eyes darted towards her as she passed by him but she only gave him a non impressed look and told him he could do the dishes himself.

The Doctor's taste buds were having a feast. He couldn't remember the last time he tasted anything so homey and warm. Well, he could. And if it weren't the same Tyler meal back on Christmas. He sighed in contentment as he let himself enjoy the given treat.

Then Rose started pointing her cute finger somewhere between them and the Doctor, never refusing to indulge her, just took a hold of said digit, marveling in the sound of laughter he gained from her. He grinned at her in return only to completely freeze on the spot when Rose leaned in to swipe on his lower lip (did he really eat that sloppily?) and took the same digit back in her mouth. The Doctor could feel his hearts make a thudding sound inside his ribcage.

If that weren't enough, then she just had to wet her mouth with her tongue, teasing the poor ol' him even more. The Doctor swallowed as he contemplated the possible variations of the actions that could be made from that moment on.

One. He could toss everything from the table aside, let it all shatter into million of pieces on the floor (he couldn't risk staining his pinstriped suit with jam, after all) and then crawl atop the table towards Rose before tilting her face a little to the side and snogging her senseless.

Cons of option One. Unless he was trying to imitate Racnoss before he even met them in this timeline, he would just make a fool out of himself, making himself look ridiculous crawling on that table.

Two. He could throw his chair backwards, the resonating sound would make her look up at his standing frame, make a half-circle around the table (it would take around three-four seconds for him to reach her), grab hold of Rose (lifting her up by her armpits) and then snog her senseless. Or maybe even lift her by her middle, bring her atop the counter where she just were making those pancakes and then have his way with her.

Cons of option Two. His sudden movements could very likely spook her and the moment would be shattered before it even started.

So that lead to option Three. Continue to stare at her and then it's likely that they both, by the cosmic energy of the TARDIS, would gravitate towards each other, meeting in the middle.

Cons of option Three. It never happened. Rose stood up and left.
He knew he was rubbish at relationships.

Left alone inside the kitchen, the Doctor could only sigh. He had some washing to do.

The Doctor finally reached the console room after whipping his hands clean on his pinstriped pants and simultaneously shooting the ceiling an accusing look. Somehow, conveniently, after doing the dishes for at least ten people (which should've come as a warning sign of powers from above (beyond and around, literally) being at hand there) he couldn't find a single cloth to wipe his hands dry.

He knew those two were working against him together.

He would've sulked a bit more, but after spotting the steady rise and fall of the rotor, the Doctor's mood took a complete turn towards excitement for a new adventure. With a joyous grin, he skipped the last steps towards the console and started putting the beloved ship in motion.

"Come on, you beauty. Let's give her a surprise."

The lights flickered inside the coral-themed room, a gentle hum showing approval of the driver's choice. The Doctor glanced at the upper region of the rotor, grinning proudly at himself.

Soon enough, there was a sound of steps against the grating and the Doctor momentary paused in his mad dance to greet her. In the moments the Doctor hadn't seen her, Rose had changed her cotton pyjamas to regular jeans and a hoodie. There was a moment of stillness, where the two regarded each other silently, but just like that, Rose's face split into an excited grin and she hurried to join him by the console.

"Now, it's gonna take another few weeks for the timeline to catch up. Lucky for us. We can use that length of time to go whenever we want."

The Doctor leaned in to bump his fist against one of the buttons on the console, grinning when he gained the response he needed.

"So, where're we going?" Rose asked just as excitedly.

The Doctor hummed, as if in thought. "I think it's time I finally made good on my promise to you." He pulled onto another lever and then kept shooting her looks to gauge her reaction. "How about it, eh? Still wanna see those dogs without noses?"

Rose's eyes lit up after hearing that.

"You mean... Barcelona?"

"That's the one."

Rose placed her one hand against the console to support herself as she leaned on it.

"Let's do it."

They shared a matching set of grins at that.

"Let's make it a bit earlier, shall we? Let's say... 4pm... Tuesday...October... 5006. On the way to Barcelona. Ha!" The Doctor pressed the last button with the side of his hip and then held out a hammer for her to take. "I think you gonna need this."
The TARDIS materialised on the top of the hill. A gust of strong wind blew past the wooden doors, but the box stayed put without moving an inch.

In a moment, the doors creaked open and the Doctor's head peeked out of it. He gave his surroundings an analyzing look before breaking into a smile. He straightened up and opened the doors wide open.

"Come on. The coast is clear." The Doctor tugged Rose by her hand, skipping backwards and laughing at her futile attempt at capturing her hair from going to all sides.

"Omph," she sputtered a little when her mouth took a bunch of blonde locks inside. "What's with this wind?" Instead of answering, the Doctor only locked their fingers together more firmly and began running. She barely had time to close the doors of the TARDIS.

"What's the rush?" she asked throughout the wind, after she spat yet another string of her hair that flew right into her face.

"We have two minutes. If we hurry, we might still catch it."

Rose blinked, not yet understanding. "Catch what?"

The Doctor chuckled in a knowing way and only tugged her along. "Come on."

They ran a few hundred of meters of distance more when Rose finally saw it. Just right up ahead the path, there was a trail of cabins being supported by cables. She squeezed his hand more tightly when she recognized the cable cars waiting for departure.

When they reached the spot, Rose, still a little bit breathless, the guard that greeted them was so heavily armored that Rose for the life of her couldn't tell what he looked like. She could only guess it was a he. Furthermore, then he only grunted for them to stand where the line started and went back to the control panel in the small box, pointedly showing that he couldn't care less about the duo. The Doctor and Rose both shared a look of confusion at what line could he have meant, considering they were the only people present there, when Rose suddenly exclaimed, pointing towards a white, painted line on the ground.

The Doctor sniffed and made a show of standing precisely by the line. Rose imitated him. The two only lasted a few moments before both burst out laughing.

"Hah." The Doctor took a breath in and turned in a circle, observing his surroundings. "I think we're about...uhh... twenty thousand feet above ground. The city is right bellow." He indicating with his finger and when Rose leaned in, he chided her to be careful. "That's our destination by the way. Hold on." He rummaged through his coat's pockets for a while and then took out two identical medal-like bronze things. "Here, take this." He placed one in her hand.

What she could tell from a first glance was that it was a round bronze medallion that was about the size of her palm. It had a loop with an adjustable knot (possibly to fit on one's wrist). But what really shined (literally) from above else, was an engraved rose in the middle, surrounded by multiple small emeralds. She wondered if those were real. Her mother would certainly love to have one of these.

"Well this looks posh." She turned the thing around in her palm. "What's this do then? Money? Identification?"

The Doctor grinned at her proudly. "The only acceptable identification on this planet. So make sure you don't lose it."
Rose continued to watch it in slight amusement. "No use for physic paper then," she muttered offhandedly and clutched the thing in her hand until it was time to show them to the guard.

The duo thanked the guard, the Doctor saluting him, before they both settled into the cabin, the Doctor having to duck considerably to fit himself into the small premises of the said vehicle.

Rose took in her surroundings to which the Doctor only smiled fondly at.

At the first sign of movement, Rose yelped in surprise but as she was still grinning, the Doctor chuckled at her antics. "I thought you'd be more used to this. Haven't you been to the London Eye before?" he asked her jokingly to which Rose took on a thoughtful look.

"Yeh, once. When I was like ten, I think." She chuckled but her mirth lacked humour.

The Doctor narrowed his eyes. "What, Mickey the idiot didn't take you?"

"Nah. He thought it was... too common, I suppose." She shrugged slightly, giving him a small smile.

The Doctor circled his tongue inside his mouth. "He's lucky he's away in another Universe," he muttered quietly to which Rose flickered her eyes to him in question but he only cleared his throat and scooted himself closer to her, leaning in to point at something out the window.

"That horizon over there... as soon as we pass these clouds, you'll able to see the heart of Barcelona. Oh, there it is." True enough, as soon as the clouds had cleared, a sight of a faraway castle opened up. The castle consisted of multiple levels of cylindrical towers, grey in colour. It sat on the mountain alone, like a king of the planet on it's own.

As they descended further, getting closer to the ground level, Rose could then spot a separate area, surrounded by rocks, isolated from the main part of the city where the lights were shining from. Somewhere in the middle of it, stood a tree as high as a mountain, its branches extending throughout the area and bellow it, on the ground, possibly some kind of big in size animals were grazing.

"Welcome to the Kingdom of Barcelona," the Doctor whispered quietly as Rose took it all in.

"This is... it's beautiful," she breathed out in awe. "Can we go visit the castle?"

The Doctor sniffed and straightened back on his side of the seat as the cabin came to an abrupt stop, indicating that they've arrived to their destination. "Nah. The King is pretty unsociable fella. And heavily guarded. They say, the walls of the castle are so strong, that only the power of the strongest elephant could ever dream to move them."

"Aww, I'd have loved to see it up close."

The Doctor then stood up, the guard on the other size of the doors opening them up, and stepped outside. He extended his hand to Rose and helped her descend the stairs out of the cabin. "Come on, we'll take a tour among the local folks. Look out for those dogs. Practically everyone around here has them. You won't be able to miss them."

Rose took her time to straighten her clothes up after sitting for so long in a cramped space, then hurried to help the Doctor with his coat's sleeves, adjusting the lapels as she wondered out loud.

"What sort of alien was that guard?"
"Hard to tell." The Doctor shrugged. "Barcelona is a heavily toured planet. All kinds of species come and go around here. Mind you, not all just pack their bags and go like that. Some stay. Why shouldn't they? When the planet gives foreigners equal rights as the native people, there's no reason for them to leave. I wouldn't be surprised if we saw one or two species that we..." he trailed off, then catching Rose's expectant eyes hurried to finish. "Well, that I, couldn't recognise."

He then proceeded to walk towards the double wooden gates, Rose close by.

"You mean like inter-species couples?"

"This's a 51st century Barcelona. You wouldn't believe the things this lot has seen."

"Well, if you go about it like that then we are the inter-species couple also," she muttered under her breath and found herself face to face with another heavily armored guard, whose yellow eyes were the only indication that he had seen her. Rose pressed her lips together.

"Hi. I'm just..." She shook her head, gaining an intense stare in return. She forced out a laugh. "A tourist... you know."

"Identification," it barked at her.

Rose blinked, startled at the tone and then huffed a laugh. "Right, yeh. Identification." She was just about to give the medallion thing to him when she was quickly propelled backwards by a tug of the Doctor.

"Wha-"

"Wrong gate, sorry." He quickly saluted towards the imposing guard and then led Rose towards another side of the gate.

Another, identical guard stood there.

"Huh," Rose exhaled not really getting it. Then her eyes travelled from one guard to another and the only difference she could spot was the insignia on their armor in the chest area. The one she nearly went to had a red rose stamped on it. She quickly pulled out her medallion and realized hers had a green one.

"Oh, okay." She shrugged and gave hers to show towards the guard.

When the duo finally passed through the gates and found themselves in the busy streets of the city, Rose gave the Doctor a questioning look. "What was that about?"

The Doctor held out his palm where the medallion rested in. "Green rose. It represents a foreigner. The red you saw is for natives only."

"Is the law very strict here or something?"

The Doctor's eyebrows shot up as he posed a guilty look. "They say that Barcelona's law is one of the strictest in the galaxy."

"Oh, I wonder why we always end up in such places."

"No other planet has dogs without noses," the Doctor told her in all seriousness like it explained everything.

Rose nodded, just as serious. "That makes sense."
"I know."

They took the nearest path, leading towards the market. Some human kids were running around, playing tag with one of a blue-looking alien children.

"So what's this city called, then?"

"Barcelona."

"Get out of here." Rose dismissed him with a hand, laughing.

"It is!" the Doctor cried out with a laugh.

"But I thought the planet is called Barcelona."

"True also. It's the capital of Barcelona. Barcelona of the planet Barcelona. It's a bit rubbish. Leads to a lot of confusion."

"Mn. I see a pattern there. New New York. Barcelona. All big cities getting their own place in time and space."

"Good market system."

"Yeh... I bet. Why haven't they named it New Barcelona, though?"

"I dunno. Maybe it wasn't good enough to be named twice."

Rose looked around in all directions, taking in the merchant area the two had come to. Different species. Different smells. The day seemed to be busy in Barcelona. She sniffed the air, only to wrinkle her nose. Somehow the air on the ground level was a lot more stuffy.

"Ohoho!" the Doctor suddenly exclaimed, taking Rose by surprise. "Rose! It's the Walking Footman."

"The what?" Rose gave him a look and then felt a hand against her back, leading her towards one of the vending stalls. Rose was even more appalled by what that particular stand consisted of. There were dozens of stuffed limbs. Similar to a stuffed Slitheen's arm back in Henry van Statten's museum, only these varied from humanoid to... was that a Sycorax head?

"Are these even legal?" Rose asked, in slight concern.

"Not to worry. These guys are hand-made."

Rose only gave him a non-impressed look.

"But what for? It's not exactly a cute or even practical thing to bring back home." Rose couldn't understand the appeal of any of it. "Someone clearly watched too much of Addams Family here."

"Hm?" the Doctor turned to look at her questioningly.

"The American series?" She hinted to him, the Doctor still looked puzzled. "With the Thing? You know, the walking hand?" she gripped her wrist to imitate a severed hand walking.

"Oh oh!" The light bulb in the Doctor's head tingled and he turned back towards the collection on the table. "Where do you think the story came from?"
"What, seriously?" Rose looked at him with a raised eyebrow. "It came from Barcelona?"

"Could be," The Doctor shrugged, taking a closer look at one of the hands. "Maybe it was even us. Buying a souvenir and dropping it in New York in 1930s. Giving the cartoonist a boost of inspiration."

Rose considered that possibility when the Doctor chuckled at something he remembered. "Mind you, maybe someone found my own limb and it got in a time traveller's hands."

Rose squinted her eyes at that. "Wouldn't it be bad, though?"

"Horrific," the Doctor hummed in agreement.

Rose turned around to search for a more human-friendly stall (no way was she letting their sort-of-date continue be the topic of severed limbs any longer). To her utter relief, she spotted a candy stall, just a few rows ahead and she eagerly tugged on the Doctor's sleeve, gaining a whine from him for still not having checked the eardrums of Cylox, and brought him to her wanted destination.

The Doctor still pouted for a few seconds but when Rose asked the vendor for a apple candy with a chocolate filling and brought it to the Doctor to try, he could barely stifle his happy sounds at the taste of it. A drop of chocolate started dropping past his fingers and he took upon himself to lick them clean. Rose, noticing this, asked the vendor for a few more tissues and helped the Doctor, all the way chuckling at him for eating like a baby. At those words, Rose got a mouthful of said candy and she quickly shut up.

Clearly she could see the appeal there.

The Doctor was munching on his last bite of the candy when someone patted him on the shoulder. The Doctor swallowed, trying to chew on it quickly and turned around only to take a step back, startled at seeing two humanoid-sized elephants, looking at him with eager eyes.

"Uhh..." the Doctor cleared his throat, his eyes darting from one to another. "Can I help you?"

The two newcomers seemed to light up at that. "So good you asked! We were just trying to take a picture by the deity over there-" He pointed at the separated area Rose saw from the cable car's window before. "But the people today..." He sighed with a shake of his head. "Did you see their heights? It's like today is a midgets' day or something. They barely reach the deity's knee!"

The Doctor raised an eyebrow at them. Rose was just finishing up her portion of food and came to stand by the Doctor.

"What deity is that, then?" the Doctor asked and gained a confused look from the two elephants.

"Avium sub elephantum, of course."

Rose leaned in to whisper to the Doctor. "Is that Latin?"

"Yep. It's Latin for 'Winged Elephant'" He cleared his throat. "Sorry, we're not local here. Could you tell me... what religion is Barcelona practising?"

The two elephants shared a look among themselves. "Elephasism."

The Doctor inhaled, an understanding coming to his face. "Right. Elephasism."

"What does that make you then? The children of deities?" Rose asked the two elephants, observing
them from head to toe. The two stilled for a moment but then an understanding passed on their faces and in a shift of a moment, they took off their heads only to reveal a pair of blue humanoid aliens in their place.

The Doctor and Rose blinked at the two, who only laughed at their reaction. "Happens all the time. I keep telling Mert that we should take our masks off until we're actually taking a picture."

"Right. So, sorry, what are you then?" Rose smiled at them politely but only got a dismissing hand in return and took a hold of the Doctor's sleeve. "Never mind us. We gotta hurry. The photo-spot is gonna close soon."

Rose opened her mouth to protest at their rude behavior but got cut short. "Don't you worry, sweetheart. We'll return your mate shortly to you. Just one pic."

And they were off, dragging the still flailing Doctor after themselves and leaving Rose watching their retreating backs.

"This planet clearly has a thing for 'long noses'," Rose muttered under her breath.

After following the Doctor with her eyes for a while longer, Rose decided to take another look at the vending stalls and came to a stop near one with accessories. There were various kinds of rings and bracelets but one thing they all had in common. They all seemed to be either holding a ruby or emerald. Rose picked one ring with the emerald stone. On a closer look, a snake appeared to hold the stone in its belly. She tried to try it on but then the medallion on her right wrist got tangled up with the accessory and she had to tug on its strings to untangle the two objects.

The medallion got loose from all her tugging and she had to loosen it up completely to readjust it around her wrist but just as she got a hold of the said knot, there was a pricking sensation in her arm. She yelped, feeling how her hand started to go numb and lost her grip on the medallion. It dropping on the ground.

The next thing happened almost in a blur.

There was a movement of dark lapels of a leather coat, then a change of air and a pale hand grabbing hold of said insignia from the ground. Rose barely took a glance at the dark locks and green eyes making eye contact with her, before the figure dived through the crowd of people, going further and further away with her only means of identification.

"My identification... Oi!" When Rose finally got her wits back, she started chasing the thief, but was momentarily stopped by a shout of the vendor, telling her to return the accessory that she stole from him. Rose took a quick look at her finger which still had the emerald ring on it and just yelled back to the man that she'd return soon.

From the corner of her eye, she could see the man speaking to a few guards and pointing in her direction but she knew if she stopped now, she would loose the real thief.

She bumped into a few passing people as she tried to weave through the mass of people. There seemed to be more and more of them as she went further. The lapels of the dark coat were going farther and farther away.

"Someone! Stop the thief!" She tried getting attention of the people around her, but nobody seemed to pay much attention to her. She took another few leaps before she was pulled back by two rough arms.

"You'll be coming with us," the harsh voice spoke to her and she had a feeling she already heard
that voice somewhere before. She took one look and yep, it was (possibly) the same guard (or at least of the same species) as the one by the gates.

"Thank god you stopped by," Rose exhaled in relief. "Someone just robbed me. Literally. Out of nowhere-" she tried explaining but was cut short.

"We got a report that you stole a valuable piece from the merchant in the market."

Rose could feel a misunderstanding already forming there.

"No, that's-"

"Are you denying having the piece?" another asked and then roughly took hold of her hand, showing the evidence on her finger.

"I'm not denying it, but I'm not the actual thief here. Someone stole my identification from me! You should be going after him. Not me." She pointed at the vague area where she last saw the guy ran off to, but the intense stares of the two guards only worsened.

"You're without identification?"

Rose sighed. "Yes, as I was saying, someone just stole it from-"

"You're unauthorised person then." There was a quick exchange of words between the two and Rose could feel her pulse starting to pick up.

"No. Hold on a minute. I was just telling you that I had an identification but it was stolen from me. Listen to me!"

A scene was starting to break out, but all the people seemed to conveniently avert their gazes and hurry away. Rose looked at everyone in disbelief.

All, except one.

When the guards were starting to drag Rose with them, the Doctor, down to only his pinstriped suit, skipped towards them, a wild look on his face. "Hold on. Hold on. Just a minute." He blocked their path, exchanging a look with Rose. She gave him a relieved smile after seeing him.

"What's going on here? On what grounds are you taking her?"

"This female has no identification. And she also stole from the local merchant. She'll be put to prison."

"What?" the Doctor sputtered, shooting a questioning look at Rose.

Rose swallowed. "Someone stole my identification. I was chasing him but I still had this-" She indicated towards her finger where the ring rested at, but was quickly silenced.

"Silence. Unauthorised people have no rights to speak."

They began to take Rose with them once more when the Doctor held up a hand and started rummaging through his pockets. "Hold on a minute. She has identification. Just a minute. She's...uhhh... my mate!" The Doctor nodded wide-eyed. Rose was shooting him looks of confusion but when she noticed the two guards still, that eased her nerves a little.

"What is your proof?" one of the guards barked.
"My... what?" the Doctor asked, suddenly lost.

"Proof of your association with this female."

"Riiight, proof. Of course there should be proof of something like that. Can't have going without proof, can we?" The Doctor was still pulling his pockets apart, but he knew it was futile. Everything even remotely useful was back in his coat pockets, which he so conveniently left at one of the railings back at the photo-boot. He tried indicating to the guards that he could go and get it but was quickly shot down.

Time was not on their side.

Rose shot him a searching look to which the Doctor only swirled his tongue against the roof of his mouth and then grinned at the guards.

Breathing heavily, Alec leaned against the cold wall of the building. He took a few sharp turns only to end up in practically the same area where he had come from, in case he needed to confuse his chaser. But that was proving to not be the case.

The young woman he stole the insignia from, seemed to have already been caught by the authorities.

He took a few deep breaths in, calming himself down. He could feel his hand clutching the insignia in his hand, almost painfully.

With this, he could finally achieve his goal.

He turned his head to take a look at the scene one more time only to frown when another man appeared in rescue of the woman. He seemed to be doing a lot of unnecessary talking which Alec quickly filtered out, being quite close to the scene and actually hearing everything fold out, until the man grinned at the guards and told them... no, more like insistingly advised them to take him with them.

"I'm a man without identification," he told them, standing tall against the imposing guards. "I have nothing to prove of my association with Rose, nor I have anything to prove my identification. By the law of Kingdom of Barcelona I should be put behind bars. Now then. When can we leave?"

The man in a pinstriped suit grinned at the guards while extending his hands towards them.

Alec watched how the crazy duo was hurriedly taken from the scene, and just refused to think more about it. That man was insane. And he wasn't going to stop by to try to understand him.

He shook himself out of it and unwrapped his fingers from the insignia, only his blood to ran cold.

Green rose.

It was the Green rose. Of course they would be foreigners. Nobody local in their right minds would act like that. He had grabbed the wrong thing. Green rose... Green rose meant... Green rose meant this thing was useless to him.

The next moment the insignia was thrown against the opposite wall of the building, the lone figure curling onto himself in despair.

_to be continued..._
Chapter Summary

The Doctor and Rose are caught by the guards of Barcelona. Things continue to unfold.

Chapter Notes

The second part to my four-part AU arc The Canine Kingdom. Please and enjoy your read and if possible, leave your feedback bellow. Cheers!

"Buzzed."
"Stoned."
"...wasted?"
"Three sheets to the wind."
"Uhh... under the influence!"

"Next," the Doctor sniffed. The smug look on his face was just the icing on the cake for her already frustrated mood. She should have known better than to start a Word War with a polyglot such as the Doctor himself.

"Ugh, seriously? I don't know any more words."

"Weell, if you want to surrender-" the Doctor started with a joyful tone in his voice that just asked to be silenced. Rose presented him with a hard look, showing him precisely what she thought of that. "I'm not surrendering."

"Well, we're already at 51st synonym, so you might as well." The Doctor seemed to be unconcerned either way. Confident in his own win, he continued to walk with a casual pace in his steps.

"And how many are there?"

"Early 21st century? Uhh, around three thousand?" At Rose's groan, the Doctor gave her a side-way grin. "It's a real fact. Lists of synonyms for being tipsy has been a pursuit of the literary set since Benjamin Franklin first assembled his Drinker's Dictionary in 1735."

Rose blinked at that revelation, considering. "That's... a lot of words for just trying to say someone has taken the liking to hard liquor." She laughed a bit. "Mind you, can't say the same about this lot. They seem to have never even heard the word alcohol." Rose rotated her shoulders, leaning in
towards the Doctor to whisper in a conspiring manner. "You think it's possible that under all that heavy armor, there's just a big fluffy teddy bear underneath?" she ended in a teasing tone, sharing a knowing look with the Doctor at which they both burst out into uncontrollable laughter.

"Quiet, you two."

The voice that grunted, or more likely barked at them belonged to the guard just in front of the duo, leading the path ahead. The Doctor and Rose had had been walking through the path deep into the mountains for the past couple of hours. Dehydrated and exhausted, sore and uncomfortable in their own shoes... well they have had worse. It would not have been so bad, if their company was on the more sociable side. As it was now, even the Doctor couldn't get more than a couple of words out of these two stuck ups. Yes, words - the one thing the Doctor was always good at.

"Always the grumpy ones," the Doctor grumbled sulkily while continuing to walk with Rose on his right side, "I wonder why can't we ever get guards who are actually nice. If we are going to be put down to prison," the Doctor put emphasis on the word are while contemplating the possibilities of them escaping before they even managed to reach the said prison, "We might as well have someone nice to escort us. Yeh? Yeh? Oh yeh." The Doctor nudged Rose with his hip to which she only awkwardly bounced towards the wall of the mountain before readjusting her stance by his side. Rose purposely ignored the non-impressed look from the guard behind them, shooting him a grin instead. She redirected her attention towards the Doctor before commenting, "Bit rich. Coming from you."

"Oi! What's that supposed to mean?"

Rose bit her lip in order to prevent it from trembling at the scandalized look the Doctor gave her in return of her remark. "Well, you're not exactly... nice," she told him in a teasing manner; batting her eyelashes and grinning with tongue-between-her-teeth smile while silently laughing at the Doctor's attempt to prove her wrong.

"I am nice! I'm very nice. I'm... oh all right, I'm not nice."

The Doctor rolled his eyes and walked past Rose, grumbling unhappily... that lasted a whole of four seconds when the guards finally announced the change in their scenery. At the far side of the mountain path, stood solid dark brown doors, piquing the Doctor's interest at once. He bounced the last remaining couple of steps with vigor.

"Ohh, it seems we have reached some kind of opening. Hardwood double-doors. Made from Oak, it seems." He swiped his tongue along the lines of the hard wood to further confirm the fact, satisfied by his successful deduction. By the time the two growling guards caught up with him, the Doctor had already measured the size, pattern and texture of the said doors. He barely gave them a second glance at being bodily shoved aside to stand and wait for their further instructions.

The Doctor titled his head to the side, changing the angle of observation as he let the guards work on opening the said doors. "The design is a bit old. Familiar. It's a bit... Earth-like, no? Don't you think it's a bit Earth-like?" He turned to Rose for help, grinning at the thoughtful look on her face.

"Like from um... middle-ages movies," she tried guessing to which the Doctor had to disapprove with a tilt of his head.

"Eh, close. Think more of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland."

He only had to take one look at her before a light bulb flickered inside her mind.
"Oh, oh! The werewolf, Queen Victoria uh... 1879!" At the Doctor's approval, she threw her hands upwards, spinning around her axis with a laugh. The Doctor joined in, giving her a high five before both sobered up.

"But that's weird. Why would Barcelona have nineteenth century Earth stuff?" she wondered, furrowing her brows in a cute frown. The lines against her forehead indicated the depths of her efforts made by thinking. Always trying her full best at giving the situation at hand the attention it needed, Rose, more times than not, found those little clues for him to further work on the problem.

More times than not, he simply adored her.

More times than he could count, he lost himself in thinking about her. "Hmm," the Doctor hummed in thought, not quite sure what was he agreeing to. He did manage to pick on the word human in Rose's musings though, so used it to make a full length sentence. "You're not humans by any chance, are you?" the Doctor called out for the guards, gaining a hard look in return. "No? Oh okay, we'll take that growl as a no then."

Sparing them no more second looks, the guard went back to work his? Hers? Its? (you can't ever be too sure) insignia against the control lock. On the right side of the doors, stamped deeply inside the mountain's surface rested a metal control panel which seemed to be regulated simply by insignia of Barcelona. It was a matching imprint of the medallion. One of the guards pressed the said thing against the controls, which resulted in a short high pitched sound and then a click of something inside the wooden doors.

With a creak, the doors opened up.

They found themselves in a dark, cold and very humid place. Judging by the acoustics and smell the Doctor determined it to be a tunnel inside the mountain. They could only assume it would somehow lead them towards the prison which they were supposed to be prisoners of.

Rose found herself clutching onto the relatively thin fabric of her hoodie. She tried to look around her surroundings but to no vain. It was all just pitch black. At one point she barely kept herself from tripping and face-planting on the ground before a reassuring hand gripped hers tightly. She exhaled in relief, giving it a squeeze in gratitude.

The Doctor cleared his throat.

"So, what's it's gonna be now then? You taking us to court? Putting us on trial?" Anyone else might have felt intimidated by the eerie and awkward silence that followed, but the Doctor went on, nonplussed, "Who's gonna have the last word? Hmm, let me guess. The tribunal?" He then stopped, considering, "Although, this planet being a kingdom for centuries, the king would probably suffice more. I've been on trial once..." he added as an afterthought, "Well, I say once but what I mean is a few times... well, I say a few but it's actually a couple more. There's really no use for counting that."

And as always, there was no response to that. The Doctor sniffed.


He was cut off abruptly by a sudden burst of light, blinding everyone inside the tunnel. The Doctor blinked a few times to adjust to the change of lighting and then was just about to take a step further. Before he could do that, he was blocked by a massive form of black clothed individual
with a metal armor.

"Oh." He blinked a few times more before tilting his head upwards. Covered in black, with a metal mask that disguised most of their face except for the yellow eyes, nose and a hole for a mouth, the giant was posing what was probably the closest to a grin he could muster. Just more... feral... and dangerous. "Oh. Your teeth is uh... quite nicely done. Could you recommend me to your dentist? I'd like to sharpen mine also."

"Yeeh..." Rose cut in to pat the Doctor on the shoulder. "I think he's trying to intimidate you to shut up."

The Doctor raised an eyebrow, not impressed in the least.

"Yeh? Well, that never stopped me. Oh, believe me - they tried." He chuckled at the hopeless shake of Rose's head, but they both knew – she was amused. That lasted another four seconds before the guards stepped aside to show them where had they been lead to.

They emerged into a clearing of the mountain - at least five hundred feet down, another hundred and fifty feet across towards the mountain on the other side, and bellow, the spindly suspension bridge that span the gap.

"Oh. Well, I think you've proven your point. This does make me speechless."

Meanwhile, the streets of Barcelona were full of clatter; the merchants having finished their work day, were busy folding up their business. There were still quite a few lingering folks, trying to get the last of the sales, so a few lower rank guards were put to regulate 'the traffic', also to take action if a sudden fight would ensue. After his failure in collecting the insignia that he needed, Alec was back in the streets, looking for his new victim. Just as he was about to follow one middle-aged blue-skinned citizen, rounding the corner, Alec nearly collided with a pair of guards near by the local dinner. Cursing his luck, he meant to just go his own way when something the two guards were talking about caught his attention. Well, more like one was hyper actively telling it to the other one who couldn't seem to be bothered.

"This is an opportunity! You know how much they pay you in the underground prisons? I hear it's an amount you can't dream up with your imagination alone. And all because they need more force in relocating a single prisoner," the hyper one continued to speak while the other one just grunted, either in agreement or not.

"That-that's a good one. You already sound like them! All you need now is the armor and you'd fit right in." He laughed at his own joke. The other sighed and then turned to spare one last look at his colleague. "And you don't look or sound like any of them." Surprisingly that was followed by a mocking grin, leaving the hyper one sputtering behind.

"O-oi! Do you think I'm not getting the promotion, then?" He flailed, but the other one already left him, disappearing in the crowd. Which was all the opportunity Alec needed. Lower ranking guards were easy prey not only because of their lack of armor but also for their poor sense of danger. He never saw it coming until a pricking needle was held against his throat. "Don't move. There's a poisonous needle against your neck. I stop the blood flow of your carotid artery and you die within minutes," Alec whispered in his prey's ear threateningly. The guard jumped, startled, nearly pinching himself in the process and only the good reflexes of Alec managed to avoid that. He pressed a grounding hand against the hyper one's shoulder, willing him to stay still.

Instead, he started sputtering. "Look, I just got promoted- Okay, okay. Oh my god. What do you
want? I'll speak, okay! Ju-just don't kill me."

Alec had to sigh. "No one is killing you." Then after a pause. "If you cooperate."

"I will I will!" the guard reassured him, his whole body vibrating.

"Good. Now tell me everything you know about the prisoner that's being relocated."

Back on the expanses of the clearing of the mountains, the Doctor and Rose stood with dumbstruck faces, watching the barely-holding-it-together bridge swinging from one side to the other. It was a rope bridge made of wooden planks held together by rope. The gaps between the planks were at least half the width of the wooden planks itself, stealing any kind of sense of safety from the already dangerous-looking bridge.

Rose flinched at the sound of wood against wood.

The Doctor took it upon himself to inspect the bridge with a closer look; he took a hold of the rope that held the bridge together - rubbing it against his fingers, tugging on it, until he was shooed away by one of the guards.

Rose would have been impressed by how the Doctor got away with half the stuff he did to get on the last nerves of those guards, if she wasn't still pretty much in shock at the sorry excuse of a passing bridge ahead.

"Umm… I'm just going to say the obvious and ask," the Doctor started, tugging on his ear, a sure sign of his discomfort. "You're not actually trying to make us cross this bridge, are you?" He pursued his lips at the blank looks on their faces. "Because if you are, and that's a bit if because that would imply that you had serious problems in various subjects at school; starting with math and ending with physics," he said it with a short laugh, that nearly made him loose an ear by a sudden swing of a fist, which he barely dodged. "Woah! Easy there." Holding up his hands in defense and walking backwards, he continued, "My point being – that bridge is not able to hold the mass of four people. Especially not those giant chunks of metal you got yourselves on." He then tilted his head in casual consideration. "Well, I suppose you could always strip down naked but still, then we'd have to call Jack Harkness here and I feel like a Tuesday evening is too early for a swingers party, so." He shrugged casually, gaining a low growl coming from one of the guards. The Doctor gave him a wink. Just for the sake of it.

"Unauthorised people with criminal record are to go first," another guard grunted. It seemed like it physically pained him to have any kind of conversation with the Doctor.

"Oh yeh?" the Doctor asked nonchalantly before Rose cut in, "So what you're saying is, we're the guinea pigs. If we don't fall, you get to follow. Pretty smart. And try inhumane," she ended with a whisper under her breath, only the Doctor hearing the last part. He looked at her in amusement before something else previously said caught his attention.

"Hold on a minute. Criminal record? There hasn't even been a trial yet!" he cried out, closing in on the guard, staring it down. "Innocent until proven guilty. That's an universal law, not just Earth's."

A vein ticked inside the guard's temple, pulsing. "Barcelona's law is separate from those of other planets," he told them in a low rumble.

The Doctor raised his both eyebrows in question. "So you're what, an autonomous planet, unbound
by the Shadow Proclamation, is that it?

"Yes."

"Oh really? I wonder why that doesn't surprise me." The Doctor nodded, running his tongue against the roof of his mouth. "And if I said… no?" he asked, but before the two could round on him, stopped them with a finger. "No no no no. What if…. What if the bridge disappeared, eh? You wouldn't have a way to transport us to the other mountain then."

In a few strides he was back by the main rope of the bridge, holding it in his grip. "Rope this thick, I wonder if it would survive my karate chop… probably not," he popped the p, sounding amused if anything. "We should find out."

"Defiance. Threats of destruction," the guard barked the words out at him, his eyes shinning bright yellow. The other seemed to be… writing it all down on some sort of white surface.

The Doctor frowned. "Did you… did you just put more charges on my case?"

"Uh, Doctor?" Rose called out, bringing his attention to her. "Listen to this - "If any property is destroyed by or while escorting the prisoners to the prison, they are held fully responsible. Punishable by death," she read aloud, holding out a piece of colorful paper in her hands.

"What!? Where did you get that from?"

"Um… they gave me this uh… pamphlet to read." She waved the thing in her hand. "It says "The basic laws of Barcelona. Dedicated to foreigners."

The Doctor blinked. "Oh." Then after a few seconds, "Why didn't I get a pamphlet?"

Rose rolled her eyes at him, then tried to communicate with the Doctor to cooperate with her. The guards were starting to get more and more restless and she could have sworn she saw something silver glistening in the light (possibly a weapon to restrain them?) Yeh, she wondered why that didn't happen yet. She heaved a sigh. "Whatever the case, I think we're gonna need to cross that bridge."

As the Doctor took his first steps onto the bridge, it didn't seem too bad. The bridge sagged a little, but otherwise remained steady. He steadily and precisely made sure for his steps to fit in the middle of the wooden planks, avoiding the gaps in between. The wind was strong and distracting, but Rose was slowly starting to get used to this planet's environment.

With a deep breath, she put her own weight against the wood, gripping tightly onto the poorly maintained guardrails. They had holes... big ones. And with no second protective guardrail. Of course not. Why would there be anything invented for safety here, right?
As she went further, watching her steps, they soon reached the point where the bridge started to sag more and more with each step they took. The wind also took a turn to worse – messing her hair, which sometimes obscured her view. It was also starting to get really chilly when it blew through her thin rich pink hoodie and straight to her bones. The only reassuring thought was being able to see the Doctor's back ahead through her peripheral vision.

Sometimes a violent gust of wind would make the whole bridge sway from one side to the other, freezing them on the spot to wait it out. The Doctor tried to reassure her by talking but most of the things would be left unheard; him walking ahead of her, the sound of his voice would echo straight ahead and there would be nothing left to reach her, who was walking behind. He then would try to change his tactic by calling out over his shoulder and Rose would yell out to him to watch his steps. He would only chuckle at her.

"What d'you say, Rose Tyler? A bit of humanly experience."

"Brilliant, yeh. It would be more fun if it didn't swing and bounce by each step we took."

He shrugged nonchalantly. "Eh. Suspension bridges are inherently a bit wobbly."

Rose couldn't help laughing. He just had that effect on her. Making everything seem less grave than it was, reassuring her.

Only this time it was a mistake on her part.

About two-thirds of the way across they realised that at one point the bridge broke (or was about to break) and has since been haphazardly fixed with a mixture of wooden planks and plastic plumbing pipes. But as with all their inventions, the job was not quite finished well.

Still chuckling with mirth, Rose miscalculated the width of the gap between the planks and put her whole weight on the edge of one such not-quite-fixed wooden plank. Unable to hold such weight, the wood snapped in two, opening a gap where it broke. Rose unbalanced, her foot going in the hole.

It was so sudden that even her scream got caught in her throat as her whole body froze in that position; half crouching, her whole weight on one foot, the other knee-deep into the freshly made hole and gripping the guardrails with white knuckles.

Her pulse quickened to the speed of a racing car as she stayed frozen in that moment. Rose had seen many things in her twenty-something years. Ghosts that were not quite ghosts, her planet being invaded by aliens (actually more than once). She also had a bronze in gymnastics (which was probably one of the reasons she could still hold her balance now) but that one moment when your grip loosens and you fall... she had too many to count but too little to ever get used to them.

She breathed in and out to calm herself and felt her hearing come back to her.

"Rose..."

She blinked at hearing the Doctor's voice so near. Glancing up, she found the Doctor staring at her, a worried look on his face which he desperately tried to conceal. He swallowed a few times before he found his voice again. "Can you get up? I'll hold the bridge's balance for you."

Rose frowned at him before she turned to look at the still slightly swaying bridge. It lost its equilibrium when Rose quite literally dove through that hole. She swallowed and nodded at first slowly then with more reassurance. "Yeh... um... I can do that, yeh."
She closed her eyes to get herself under control and only opened them when she was confident she could do it. Putting equal weight on the guardrails on either side, she slowly pulled herself up in a standing position. She stood very steadily on her one foot which held her whole weight until the other foot was out of the gaping hole. With a held breath she put her other foot on another, more sturdy plank and finally found her balance back. There was a deep sigh of relief coming from somewhere ahead and Rose looked up at the Doctor with a small grin. "Still got that bronze in gymnastics," she quipped to which the Doctor exhaled a breathy laugh.

After the incident, the two continued their path through the Shady Bridge (the Doctor christened it with a name), without any further concerns.

By the time Rose's feet reached the ground's surface, it seemed they both had aged a few years. But ultimately, what mattered, was that they did. The jump in the Doctor's arms was totally long time coming – both of them laughing happily at being safe and together. The matching grins was the bonus only the two of them shared.

"See? Wasn't so bad, was it?" the Doctor teased her with a smirk, Rose returning one in favour, "Easy as pie. Can't wait to see them crossing that thing." She shook her head in amusement, the Doctor soon following. He turned to watch the two left behind guards, giving them a slight mocking wave while they patiently waited for the show to start.

Only it never happened.

What started as a beginning of an amusing story, quickly disappeared before even giving fruit. The guards shifted around with their clothing and then seemed to press on something on their wrists. The next moment the duo of giants covered in the same metal armors as before, appeared in a flash of light, just a few steps ahead.

"Congratulations on passing the primary elimination round," one of them grunted. It didn't sound too happy, but not too concerned either. "Now move it."

The Doctor and Rose once again found themselves gobsmacked, watching their retreating backs. "You gotta be kidding me," Rose breathed out, incredulous. The Doctor watched the whole scene in pure horror, still not quite believing. The audacity of them!

"That's just... That's just not fair. I want my lawyer!"

Weaving through the crowd, Alec managed to sneak into a narrow alley which led to an abandoned bar. Having gotten all the information he needed, Alec left the guard where he found him (mind you, alive). Now all he needed was to get his equipment and leave for the mission. He ducked through the gap between two split wooden boards and found himself inside a dark, semi-dusty bar.

Grabbing for the drawer by the entrance, he opened it and took out a torch, giving himself a minimal sense of lighting. He then went towards the bar table and dropped the brown trench coat he had accidentally picked up by the photo boot(though, he had his suspicions about it belonging to that man who volunteered in getting arrested). He didn't want to think about it, but he felt guilty for getting those foreigners in trouble. That wasn't part of the plan. Maybe that was why he grabbed for the thing – saving at least one piece of them.

He shook his head. No point in thinking about it now. Rounding the bar, Alec crouched by the old squeaky mattress, pushing it slightly to the side until he found a loose wooden board on the floor.
He pulled on it until it got detached from the ground and dug his hand in the hole. He took out his
rucksack, pulling the zipper to rummage inside it, in search for tools he would need later on. He
pulled out an axe, a few meters of rope and took an extra pack of medical needles. Observing his
things, Alec wondered how was he going to bring an axe with him, without getting noticed.

Sighing, he stood up, poured himself a glass of water and took a seat by the bar. His eyes wandered
towards the brown trench coat. Maybe he would find something in the pockets he could use?

After a few minutes of drawing out things that should have been physically impossible to fit there,
Alec just sat there gobsmacked. "What on Barcelona?"

Well, at least he found a way to bring the axe with him without getting noticed.

Somewhere underneath the civilization of the planet Barcelona, surrounded by darkness and stuffy
smells, a group of four was marching throughout the dim-lit halls. The place reeked of something
dead and long since forgotten. It didn't seem to concern the two guards in the least, though. When
one of them finally lit up a torch, the view didn't seem any better. The whole place was divided
into two sides of holding cells. The bars were rusty and mossy. Rose wrinkled her nose, knowing
they would be put in one of those.

The guards came to a stop by one of such prison cages, and as before, lifted the insignia against the
controls. The doors clicked open and the Doctor and Rose were shoved inside. Well... calling it
shoving would be an understatement... throwing, maybe. They seemed to possess an incredible
amount of strength and easily lifted the two in air; the Doctor went flying towards a stack of... hay,
while Rose stumbled on the ground on all fours. She hissed at the impact, turning to glare at them.

Her complaint went unheard and with a click the doors were locked, the guards grunting a short
command before leaving, "Your trial is at four. Be ready."

Rose scoffed, "Yeh, I'll pad my nose, ta."

Patting her dirty and mostly ruined jeans, Rose gingerly stood up. The Doctor was soon at her side,
looking her over and offering her a hand. "Okey dokey?"

She answered him with a smile, "Yeh." She then narrowed her eyes, observing the place. "Where
are we?" she asked while holding onto the Doctor's hand for support in standing up. The Doctor
sniffed, shrugging slightly. "Some kind of underground holding cell. Probably private."

"What makes you say that?"

"It's mostly secluded. And you can't see any other prisoners in the near vicinity." His gaze traveled
towards the entrance of their cell. The dim lighting that they were provided with showed the empty
cages across of their own. "We should search this place. See if there's anything you can find. Take
the left corner."

That's how Rose found herself rummaging through stacks of hay to find anything resembling
anything but hay. Among her searches she found some old wet rags that she deducted were
probably the cause of the deathly smell in this place. Also some food. She also found a dead rat,
which made her wonder if Krillitanes weren't part of this shady underground business. She could
hear the Doctor poking at the things on the other side, before he called out, "Anything?"

Rose swallowed, deciding that a single pink flip-flop wasn't much of a finding. "No... uh it's
mostly just old clothes…" She picked onto them with a thin metal rod she found somewhere in the corner. "Old bloody clothes. Doctor, I think someone's been tortured here before."

The Doctor heaved a sigh. "Wouldn't put it past it those two. Anything else?" he asked, hopeful.

Rose shook her head, then remembered he wouldn't see it and cleared her throat. "No, um… no. It's just crumbs of old bread and hay. Lot's of hay. Did you find anything?"

Having had enough, Rose stood up, leaving her findings alone. The Doctor seemed to pose a similarly disappointed face as he turned away from his side of the cell.

"No."

Rose walked over to a more secure-looking packed pile of hay and made herself comfortable there. "All right then. We should come up with a plan. See what we've got." She picked onto the reasonably dry hay, attempting to cover herself up a bit. This humid environment wasn't too kind.

"Right. Assets." The Doctor ran his tongue inside his mouth, before casually leaning against the metal bars, hands crossed. "What do we know about this place?"

Rose gave him a pointed look. "Well, we know that we still haven't seen a single dog without nose despite coming to this planet for this reason alone. Suppose they've gone extinct by now," she sang under her breath, not really impressed by the Doctor's flailings.

"But it can't be!" he cried out in protest. "It's five thousand and six. Maybe you just didn't see it," he tried, sheepishly.

"You said I couldn't miss them. Clearly there're many things here – a herd of elephants for one - but no dogs without noses."

The Doctor frowned at that possibility. "A planet that was once famous for their dogs with no noses are suddenly infested with elephants? Could this be the direct cause of this New World?" he mussed to himself.

Rose sniffed, pulling down the sleeves of her hoodie. "Then there's also the whole classification system into natives and foreigners. Mind you, it's a bit extreme. Doesn't feel much like a tourist-friendly planet to me. They even had accessories sorted by rubies and emeralds. Like that ring I took-" As she was adjusting her sleeves, something got caught in the stich. Rolling up her sleeve, Rose saw the emerald ring still on her finger. "Oh! I still have it," she breathed out in wonder.

"Hold on."

Before she could further inspect the ring on a closer look, she found her hand in one of the Doctor's, turning it over for him to see. Rose tried to stay still, as she asked, "What is it?"

The Doctor had a worry line on his forehead as he observed the ring. "Why haven't they taken it? If they arrested you for it, why haven't they taken it back?"

"Maybe… the ring wasn't enough to get me arrested. I mean, it seemed to be happening a lot out there. People didn't even bat an eye," she said in a silent observation and took a string of hair between her ear. "They sounded pretty tough when I said my identification was stolen, though." She breathed out a laugh. "What d'you think is going on?"

The Doctor inhaled deeply. "I haven't the foggiest. We should find out." He winked at her, gaining a chuckle from her in return.
"So what's the plan?" she asked, watching how the Doctor got himself settled beside her on the haystack.

"For starters, we wait. They took my sonic screwdriver so we can't get out of here." He turned his head to both sides to check his surroundings before deciding to lean on his elbows. "But when they come back here, that might change."

They shared a meaningful look which got interrupted by a sudden sneeze coming from Rose. She apologized and went to gather up more hay to cover herself up. The Doctor narrowed his eyes. "Cold?"

Rose sniffled a bit, nodding. "A bit, yeh. The climate is just… it's freezing on the mountains, then it's stuffy in the market and humid inside the mountains. Can't catch up." She chuckled good naturedly. The Doctor shook his head at her, a fond smile on his face.

"Humans and their poor excuse of thermoregulation," he went to tease her.

"Still human, then?" she asked casually, biting her lip. The Doctor picked up on her worried look, turning his body more towards her. "Rose. You're always going to be human. An ounce of Time Vortex is not going to change that," he said softly and then reached out to cover her hand with his, giving it a squeeze. Rose followed the gesture with her eyes, smiling at their interlocked fingers. The Doctor then cleared his throat. "And it's physically impossible to overwrite your whole DNA into something inhuman."

"Okay." Rose nodded.

"Come here." The Doctor reached out for her, wrapping his hand around her shoulders to bring her into an embrace. Settling both of his arms around her back, he put his chin against her head. Little by little Rose could feel the warmth seeping through, warming up her chilled body. She interlocked her fingers against the Doctor's back where she had her arms wound up against his torso. She nuzzled against his rib cage, exhaling a content sigh.

"Better?" the Doctor asked in a quiet whisper.

Rose hummed before answering sleepily, "Yeh. I always wondered, though. How comes you're so warm to cuddle?" She could feel the vibrations of the Doctor's laughter against her ear, provoking a smile of her. "But seriously, though. I mean, your body temperature is like what, ten Celsius lower than human's? But when I hug you, you're very warm. How come?"

The Doctor shifted a little, rearranging their position to entwine their legs also. For better heat conservation. "Twenty one Celsius lower to be exact. And, well, I can manually regulate the speed of sugars in my body being converted into heat."

Rose blinked at that. Seemed pretty obvious and predictable. Why didn't she think of that? "Oh. So you do this all the time or?"

"What? No, not all the time. That would be terribly exhausting if I did." He laughed a little, squeezing her closer to him before he realized what he was doing and settled to rubbing absent circles against her back. "When hugging, there's an exchange of body heat between the two individuals. The energy is being channeled from the warmer body to the colder one. Your body heat travels to my colder body, thus making it seem less cold to you."

"So I'm like a free heating pad to you," she purred into his chest, exhaling a warm poof of air.

The Doctor suddenly went stiff for a moment, but before she could ask, he exhaled a shaky breath
and relaxed back into their embrace. "Close enough," he said quietly, his voice sounding a little bit husky. "But, now you need to conserve that heat. Not getting it taken out of you."

They found themselves tightly wrapped against each other in a somewhat cocoon. The haystack was low and semi-even so it was easy for them to find themselves laying horizontally on it. The Doctor's breath against her neck send a series of pleasant shivers against her spine. A sound of something akin to a breathy sigh escaped her. "Mm. You're nice."

The Doctor chuckled, his voice sounding strangled. "Careful. Don't let this confuse you."

Laying side by side with Rose, the Doctor had more mobility with his hands. His fingers reached out to twirl inside Rose's blonde locks, brushing them. He pulled a string of hair that was stuck between her eyelashes out of her face just to find her staring intently at him. His fingers froze against the side of her face, just gazing at her hazel orbs in wonder, before settling to cup her cheek. He brushed his thumb against her rosy cheek, reveling in the softness of it. His eyes followed the movement, making him exhale in exhilaration at having this treasured moment for himself. Something inside his throat blocked the air intake for him, water glistening in his eyes. He could only be glad that air wasn't a necessity for him.

He startled slightly, refocusing, when he felt Rose's hand, mirroring his, settling against his cheek… then against his sideburns. Her hazel eyes seemed intent on burning the image of him into the deep roots of her memory. Just like a mirror of his own.

His hearts beat wildly inside his chest, nearly squeezing the life out of him when Rose whispered to him in a tender voice, "I love you, you know?" and then balancing on her elbow alone, leaned up to kiss the tip of his nose with tenderness. His whole body shivered from the shaky breath he exhaled and he found himself whispering her name, filled with raw want, "Rose…"

His brain barely registered how his body took charge of him and rolled them over – Rose on her back while the Doctor stayed above, trapping her with the balance of his forearms. Their eyes locked together, shining with equal passion and need for each other. Agonizingly slow, the Doctor started to lean in, followed by a series of urgings coming from Rose in the form of tugging on his great big hair. He chuckled warmly at her impatience to which she huffed.

She soon forgot what she was even mad about, though, when the Doctor bumped their noses together, nuzzling - like imitating a pair of Eskimos. Outstretching her fingers in his hair, she gave it a slight scrape, eliciting a deep groan from the Doctor as it went straight to the nerves of his spine. The puff of hot air that the Doctor exhaled, sent her lips tingling in anticipation, making them fall apart. One more shaky breath escaped the Doctor before he started to dip his head with intent, both of their eyes dazzled and shutting close. His upper lip brushed against Rose's upper one, ready to take her mouth in his-

-when a loud bang on the other side of the bars split the two apart, startling them.

They both looked up at the sound of heavy boots against the floor, scrambling back onto their feet. A bit shakily at that. Rose smoothed her clothes to regain a sense of reality rather than a single thought of tackling the Doctor to the ground and finishing what they had started, consequences be damned.

The Doctor cleared his throat a few times, a faint pink of blush still marking his cheeks, just in time for a couple of guards to shuffle outside their cell. He narrowed his eyes at them.

The doors opened up noisily and one of the guards stepped in, looking them over. Rose shifted on another foot, somehow feeling exposed. She knew it was irrational but her heart still thudded
wildly against her rib cage. The Doctor seeing this, chided the guard, "Oi! Eyes off from her."

The guard exhaled noisily from his nose, looking straight at the Doctor. "You'll be coming with us. We need to analyze your mutations' level."

"What?" the Doctor cried out, confused. Rose made her way to stand by the Doctor, looking over the guards suspiciously. "What d'you mean mutations?" she asked, still a bit shaken. Of course, she wasn't answered and soon the Doctor was being bodily dragged out from the cell. When the Doctor tried to resist, he was passed to the other guard like a rag doll while another pushed Rose's protests aside, locking her back, alone, inside the holding cell. She gripped onto the rusty bars tightly, calling out to the guard. "Oi, where're you taking him?"

"It's none of your concern. We'll get back to you next," he told her in a gruff voice and Rose could do nothing more but watch their retreating backs disappearing into the darkness of the shadows.

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to be continued...
The Canine Kingdom Part Three

Chapter Summary

On the planet of Barcelona, Rose is left alone inside the cell while the Doctor, taken by the guards is nowhere to be seen.

Chapter Notes

I don't have any words of how sorry I'm for making you wait so long. I lost my inspiration and couldn't move forward from that. But something sparked in me, from the support I receive from you, from everything, and that's how this chapter was born.

For anyone that's still reading, and for the new readers, I sincerely hope you enjoy.

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In an undescribed part of the Kingdom, surrounded by dark shadows, a man was sitting, hunched over on the cold floor. His long arms were clutching tightly onto his blond greasy locks, pulling at the hair in frustration. The skin on his face seemed to not have been shaved in months – a long, bushy beard surrounded his prominent jaw, extending its path towards the moustache area and sideburns. Throughout his mid-sleeved white shirt, it was impossible not to notice his thin frame - ribs showing from where his robe had been cut, leaving a trail of shredded pieces in its wake.

His body held bruises all over the place – one still to be healed bruise could be spotted in his chest area, affecting his breathing in the process. Every intake of air, taking a lot of effort to perform. Still, the man held on – stubborn and determined.

“I’ll not give in. I… cannot give in,” a series of wheezing mutterings could be heard coming out of the man’s mouth. He kept on repeated them. Like a mantra.

A loud faraway bang momentary spooked the man, forcing him to look up towards the entrance of his cell, listening in. A pair of voices echoed somewhere in the distance, but were too far away for him to decipher what was being said. A frustrated sigh escaped the man’s lips. He ducked his head back towards his half-bent knees, taking some ragged breaths in. He could feel the pounding in his head increasing. The diziness starting to overcome him.

“I’ll not give in… I cannot let them win,” he continued mumbling until the last piece of his consciousness got swallowed by the darkness.
The worry gripped Rose tight like a nasty pair of claws of a Slitheen. Ever since the Doctor had been taken away, she couldn’t stop wondering about the words spoken by the guard. “The mutations”, they had said. What worried her most, though, was what it meant for the Doctor. Him being a Time Lord, the scientists here would have a feast day – scavenging him by bit of pieces, reveling in the complexity of his physiology.

Rose shuddered from the imagine of such thoughts. The second round of tremors that ran past her body came from somewhere within – an automatic physiological response to a colder weather. She had been feeling chilly for a while now. The thin hair on her forearms had been standing erect for quite some time now, accompanied by goose bumps on her blueish skin.

She kept thinking how should she keep herself warm, but her resources were pitifully scarce. The hay was not helping anymore – soaking up too much of the humid air - and the leftover bloodied clothes were just out of the question.

She shuddered once more, wounding her arms against herself on instinct, when a sudden thought came to her.

Wind.

All this time, she had been feeling chilly because the wind was creating a draught. And draught meant gaps – it could be a tiny one or bigger – but it would be an opening connecting her to the outside world, something she could benefit right now the most. With a renewed sense of enthusiasm, Rose darted her eyes around the cell, searching for anything to meet the eye. Looking up, she trailed her eyes along the walls, looking for a gap, until she spotted one. The upper left side of the wall held a small window. It was a rather narrow, rectangle window-like opening with metal bars dividing it vertically. After getting closer to it for a better look from below, it was clear that the window as it was, would not be wide enough to let her slip through but maybe she could do something about those bars and then decide.

Maybe.

Never to give up before trying, she scanned the area for what she had in mind – a solid, waist-high haystack – something that could lift her up to be on the eye-level with the window. With a bit of a struggle, she pushed the pack of hay along the cell floor until it bumped against the surface of the wall. Brushing the dust off her hands, she then proceeded to climb the thing – digging her fingers into the hay and hauling herself up until she was securely on top of it. She reached out for the window sill for balance as she slowly pulled herself up in a standing position, her face peeking out of the window.

A pair of emerald eyes blinked at her from the opening.

Her eyes widened and she leaned back, startled. Her body weight shifted towards the edge of the haystack that she had been balancing on, causing her to wobble on her feet – nearly toppling over in the process – only at the last minute to be saved by a brown-clothed hand that dove through the bars to steady her. She thanked her savior without much thought, and was brought back out of her daze only when the person on the other side of the wall blurted out, rather rudely, “Why did I grab onto her?”.

Frowning at the sudden change of heart of her savior, Rose put her focus towards said person while trying to gauge what or who was she dealing with. Peeking out of the window, she could clearly see that it was a who that saved her.

She blinked a few times, confused.
True enough, the person was a young lad. Judging from the first glance, couldn’t have been more than sixteen-seventeen years of age – green narrow eyes, full lips, smooth skin, all in all, a neat looking boy, except for the messy black hair and questionable living choices. Considering that… he was hanging by the rope that went directly by the window of her holding cell.

Frowning in confusion, Rose blurted out, “What’re you doing?”

The lad startled, as if only now remembering he was not alone, and focused back on her. For a moment there, his eyes seemed to have zeroed in on her and widened with a spark that looked close to the one of recognition, but only lasted a moment, before it got hidden away behind the mask of neutrality. “H-huh?” he answered, somehow shakily.

Rose wanted to ask more but then thought better of it (time was not on her side, she had to act quick) and dropped the subject that didn’t even start yet. “You know what? I don’t wanna know. Can you get me out of here?”

Her question seemed to put the boy in an awkward position as his right hand slipped a fraction on the rope, making him swing a half-circle before stabilizing his position by the wall.

He swallowed thickly, blinking at her owlishly. “You want me to do… what?”

“Get me out of the cell.”

The question seemed to physically pain the boy – his eyes closed tightly shut, forming a couple of deep lines on his forehead. He exhaled loudly. “Why d’you think I’m in any position to do that?”

“Well, you’re the one on the rope. On the other side of the wall, so…”

The lad gave her a steady look. “So you thought I could get you out with the rope too.” He wasn’t asking.

Rose nodded with a grin. “Yep.”

The lad groaned with a shake of his head. “Why do all foreigners have to be nuts?” he muttered in a quiet whisper, a rather rhetorical question to himself, really.

“The Doctor would say it’s a way to have more fun.”

The boy put her under a scrutinizing look after the last words she spoke, like trying to analyse which part of her didn’t have something wrong going on with her.

“Fun is not the word this planet knows of,” he remarked in a low voice. “At least not since the fall of the previous King’s reign.”

“Is there a problem with the current King then?” Rose asked, curious.

“Shouldn’t you know better? You foreigners come to this planet for this reason alone, don’t you - to meet the Great King of Barcelona?”

Rose frowned at that. Should they?

“Uh, no. Why? What’s so special about him?”

A rather humourless laugh escaped the lad. “You’re kidding, right? Why d’you come then?”

“Well, we… uh, the Doctor and I, we sort of wanted to see your planet’s dogs without noses. But
they seem to be gone. Know anything about that?”

“Yeh. They disappeared together with the previous King.”

Now that was the information Rose could work with. Disappeared, the lad had said. If something truly unnatural had been going on, among many other things that apparently had gone wrong on this planet, the Doctor and her needed to know.

“What d’you mean disappeared?”

The lad opened his mouth to respond, “It’s-“

—but got interrupted by Rose, rather abruptly, when her eyes registered the fabric that the light of the moon illuminated for her to see. Eyes narrowed, she asked, “Hold on. Is that the Doctor’s coat?”

Her hand shot out through the bars and grabbed onto the sleeve of the brown trench coat – the move disturbing the balance the lad had onto the rope and making him wobble from one side to another. “What are yo- Hey! Stop it!” He flailed, trying to escape her, yelling out to her to - cut it out - but Rose just wouldn’t let go. She was absolutely certain it was the same coat. The same coat Janis Joplin gifted to the Doctor herself.

“Why do you have the Doctor’s coat?” Her words sounded a tad accusing when she asked the lad.

“I-…” he hesitated, a sort of ‘deer caught in the woods’ expression passing through his features. There was something conflicted that passed down his features but then he seemed to shake himself out of it, a stubborn glint settling down on his face. “I don’t know what you mean. Now if you’ll excuse me-“ Shockingly, he swatted at her hand that was still holding onto the coat, making her loose its grip and started to slide down the rope in a hurry. Rose was left gaping at his retreating front before in the last ditch effort her fingers wrapped around the rope and she started pulling it back up.

“What’re you doing? Let go of the rope!” he yelled back while trying to fight her off but having difficulties with doing so since he needed two working hands to keep hold of the said rope.

“I’m not letting go until you give the Doctor’s coat back,” Rose shot back while simultaneously struggling with the sheer weight of the boy on her hands.

He tsked at her. “Look, this’s not the coat you think that it is.”

“Yes, it is.”

“What, does it have the initials on it or something?” he asked with a roll of his eyes, clearly exasperated.

“Yes, it does,” Rose gritted through her clenched teeth. The words seemed to freeze the lad, which was all the distraction she needed to gain the upper hand in the rope pulling match between the two. Soon enough she had him where she wanted him – back at her eye level –“Gotcha.” She grinned triumphantly, the move which gained a look of utter annoyance in return.

“What d’you want?” he asked her with a sigh. The fighting energy seemed to have disappeared out of him.

Rose licked around her upper lip before answering with an innocent look, her hand extending through the metal bars towards the lad. “The coat, for starters… please,” she added as an
afterthought.

He hesitated. “I… can’t. I need it.”

“What for?”

“Mission.”

She blinked in curiosity.

“Mission? What mission is that then?”

He closed his eyes, sighing. “Just a mission. You didn’t seriously thought I would answer that question, did you?”

He leveled her with a look. Rose held the eye contact before shrugging nonchalantly.

“Well, you could have. Considering it’s the coat that you’ve stolen from us…” she trailed off, then added more quietly, “Among other things.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” he replied defensively, eyes narrowing.

“Oh, you know… like stealing identification insignia out of people in broad daylight. I thought that was kinda your thing. No?”

He blinked at her in shock. Emerald eyes widening in a sort of comic way. He quickly averted them sideways in shame. A crease formed on his forehead as his fingers tightened around the rope until they went numb from the force.

“If you know already, then why d’you even bother asking me to get you out?” he asked through the lump in his throat. “I’m the one who put you here in the first place.”

“Yeh,” Rose agreed. “And that’s why you should be the one to get me out of here, don’t you think?”

He seemed to consider it but then he shook his head slowly.

“I… can’t.”

Rose nodded. Can’t say she wasn’t expecting that. “Okay then. Fine. Sorry I asked,” she said and turned her back towards him, leaning back onto the wall beside the rectangle window.

They stayed in silence for a while. Both of them. Not daring to disturb either one’s thoughts, until the shuffling of the Janis Joplin’s coat could be heard outside the window – a sign of retreat which Rose was already expecting. Swallowing tightly, but still not turning around, she spoke again, “Our execution time is at four in the morning.”

She was met with a silence, which lasted for a while. Finally, after what seemed ages, there was a sound of a loud sigh coming from the lad.

“I don’t know why you’re telling me this.”

Rose shrugged, though, she knew he wouldn’t see it.

“I guess I’m just that much of an optimist.”
The sound that left his parted lips could only be identified as exasperation.

It wasn’t optimism. It was foolishness. Putting faith in something that clearly had no interest in your well being was an act of someone naïve, someone who still didn’t have that childish hope beaten out of their system. That’s why he disliked foreigners. Their idealized sense of righteousness just didn’t fit the current system of Barcelona. And it would stay like that as long as nothing got changed. But Alec could change it all. Finally give the people the freedom they needed. The kind of life they all deserved. And if he had to sacrifice a few people in the process… well, it would be on his head. He could live with the guilt. What he couldn’t do was leave this planet continue to rot.

His eyes involuntary trailed towards the opening of the small window, side-glancing at the back of blond hair. True. It was disconcerning. He wished it didn’t have to come to this. He wished he could’ve done more but he only got tonight for checking the perimeter before he had to account for Mr. Shultz tomorrow.

It was a sacrifice he had to make.

At one moment he nearly opened his mouth to wish her good luck, but then again, who the heck does that? Like he already hadn’t insulted her enough.

With a miserable sigh, Alec closed his eyes one last time and disappeared down the rope, deep into the night.

Minutes that felt like hours were ticking by agonizingly slow while Rose stayed trapped behind metal bars inside a square like box. Without enhanced sense of time it was impossible to really tell how much time had already passed and how much was only a figment of her imagination. It was driving her mad.

She had thought up at least two reasonably workable escape plans, and the only downside to them was that they both included someone actually coming towards her cell. But of course, from the universe’s point of view that meant that, when needed, nobody would be coming anywhere near her cell anytime soon. The dim-lit halls stubbornly continued to stay dead-silent even after her several brief attempts on calling for somebody.

She began to think that she might be really trapped here.

The chilling atmosphere of the cell forced her to keep on moving to produce warmth for her cooled body. So when something finally did flicker in the shadows, Rose barely noticed. Only at the very last moment when her peripheral vision registered something silver shining in the near vicinity, did she finally turn around… and took a few hurried steps backwards. One of the guards was standing just outside her cell, ready to march inside.

“Wh-what did you do to the Doctor?” she asked in a raised voice, her voice shaking a little. “Where’s he? I want to see him. What’ve you done to him?”

There was a click and the metal doors unlocked.

Rose had barely few seconds to act. It was now or never.
With her resolve made, she lunged for the thin rusty metal rod that she previously found among the dirty things on the floor of the cell, spun around and aimed it at the heavily armoured guard who took the remaining steps inside.

Bad luck for him. He wasn’t taking Rose alive. Not if she had anything to say about that.

Back held straight, she clutched the rod in her fist, ready to swing it at the first moment of intent of coming near her.

Only that the guard seemed to hold no interest in going further. He simply stood there. Observing her.

Rose frowned, refusing to drop her guard. Was he laughing at her? Underestimating her, thinking she couldn’t take him? Maybe she couldn’t. But like hell she wouldn’t try. Not while the Doctor was still out god knows where, being scanned, probed or… worse.

She shook herself out of the shuddering thoughts, taking a step forward of her own. “Come on then, big guy. You want a fight? You sure as hell getting one, because in no way I’m going out there with you willingly.”

The guard huffed in amusement, a sound seemingly unnatural to a being of that size.

“What’s so funny?” she demanded in a raised voice, her eyes kept darting warily at the big guy’s frame who started to reach behind his head with his clawed hands. “Stop what you’re doing right there!” Extending the rod straight towards the guard, Rose tried to stop him, but he ignored her warning and continued twisting around.

“Ugh…” a gruttal sound escaped his mouth, leaving Rose bouncing on her heels while her eyes kept darting towards the bars, towards the exist, towards freedom.

“…should be a zipper somewhere…”

The muttering coming from the guard made no sense to Rose as she stopped to watch the guard nearly fold into himself, now both hands behind his back while he seemed to struggle with… something.

What was his deal anyway?

Thinking it was as good an opportunity as any to use for her escape, Rose inched towards the door, just as the low voice reached her, startling her.

“Hold on! Nearly got…it.”

The desperate plea in the voice confused her, if not put her at unease.

Any other time she would have dismissed the thought completely, but something about the possibility of that seemed almost believable, real enough for her stop and stay to confirm.

The figure struggled some more, the visible part of face (mainly the yellow eyes and the mouth) twisting in concentration until something seemed to click and a wide toothy grin appeared on the rough features.

Turning her body towards the alien, Rose slowly started to inch forward, albeit with caution, her hand still holding onto the metal rod, just in case, as she simply asked, “Doctor?”
Silence.

For a moment the cell was dead silent, the struggling of the alien stopping, the air feeling stuffy and uncomfortable while she waited, but just as soon there was a rough exhale of air and the armoured hand moved behind the alien’s head for the last time before a bob of unruly brown hair greeted her sight.

She sighed in relief, the rod falling from her hands.

The Doctor was still busying himself with the controls of the mask-like device in his grip when Rose flung herself at the Doctor, holding him by the neck.

“Doctor.”

The warm chuckle felt like a balm to her worried sick heart.

“Rose,” he breathed out and squeezed her against his firm body.

They separated with matching grins on their faces….the Doctor’s face soon transforming into one of pain when Rose punched him in the shoulder.

“Ow,” the Doctor yelped, rubbing his sore arm. “What was that for?”

“What was that for?” Rose asked incredulously. “What was that for!??” she asked him, pointing at the mask on the ground. “Gave me a scare. Thought I’d have to fight the thing.”

The Doctor hummed in amusement. “Seemed like you’d win.”

At Rose’s pointed glare, he sobered up.

“I was just going to get in and reveal myself to you, I swear! I just…the, uh, the zipper got stuck and it’s hard to talk properly in that thing… it sort of changes your voice.”

“Right,” Rose deadpanned.

The owlish stare of the Doctor was too good to pass on a good day, but sadly they had more pressing matters to attend to and Rose had to take pity on him, relenting. “Anyway, let’s just get out of here.”

Leading themselves through the hallways, side by side, the Doctor and Rose scanned the area for the nearest exist they could find, stopping to hide in a corner at the first sound of gruttal voices coming from the guards stationed further inside the prison.

Rose worried her lip at the two guards sitting by the table, a cup in hand, growling among themselves.

Speaking of guards… there was a nagging question in Rose’s mind that she still couldn’t figure out.

“Doctor? What about the guards that took you? What happened to them?”

“Oh, I tripped one into falling through the trap door and tricked another into locking himself in a cell. Easy. Lucky there was only two of them. Wouldn’t have known what to do with the third. “ He shrugged nonchalantly.

“Right,” Rose agreed, sighing.
As much as impressed she might have been, it wouldn’t exactly do much good to them in their current situation. There was no trapdoor in their near vicinity and the guards were located at a fair amount of distance away from the main hallway of the cells.

And there was just no way the Doctor and her held any chance against two of them in handcombat. They had to somehow evade them.

Shifting her gaze towards the Doctor, Rose zeroed her eyes onto the mask, still clutched in the Doctor’s hand.

“That thing…” she began in a soft whisper, catching the Doctor’s attention. “How does it work exactly?”

“Hm? Oh. A modelling clay. Bought it from the vending stall back in the market. This mask is but a modelling clay with a holographic chip hidden inside. With a little bit of help from the sonic screwdriver I can literally change the mask’s appearance at will. Classy. “ He tossed it from one hand to another, emphasizing on the lightness of it.

Rose nodded in understanding. “And we can use it, yeah?”

“Uh, nope. Sorry.”

Frowning, she asked. “Why not?”

“The battery died,” the Doctor said sheepishly.

“You got your sonic screwdriver for that,” Rose pointed out.

“Well the mask is not sonic.”

“You just said you can change its appearance at will with your sonic screwdriver,” Rose cried out in exasperation.

“Appearance, yes. Not the battery. The battery is not sonic.”

Rose just stared at him in bewilderment. “What kind of piece of c-“

“Careful,” the Doctor chided. “Wouldn’t want to turn out rude as me.”

At the Doctor’s teasing smirk, Rose huffed a laugh.

“Okay, so what do we do?”

“Weell, there’s always an option to run…” at his words, the growling intensified, followed by a loud smack against the table, the contents spilling all over. “Or not.”

“Distraction?” Rose offered.

“Ehh,” the Doctor titled his head to the side with a frown. “Wouldn’t work on them.”

“Then what do we do? We can’t exactly continue hiding here foreve-“

“Shh,” the Doctor shushed her as the voices started to get closer. “Let’s go back to plan B,” he said and continued to stalk by the walls of the hallway, his head slightly poking around the corner to watch the movements of the guards.
“What was the plan A?” Rose hissed in a whisper.

It was a second longer where the large pair of steps moved closer when the Doctor turned towards her with a challenging grin.

“What?”

If there was one thing Alec hated the most in this world, it was feeling responsible for others. And at the moment he had too much such thoughts.

Ever since he left the girl back in her cell, he couldn’t stop thinking about her last words filled with hope, with hope that Alec would somehow come through and rescue her.

What a ridiculous thing.

After going down the rope, he gotten to scanning a few more cells but it proved to be futile – the cells were empty and cold, leaving only the strong smell of death which seemed to never leave this place.

He ran a hand through his hair in frustration.

Did he have the wrong place? Did the guard lied to him after all? He didn’t seem smart enough to lead him to false information but he guessed you could never be too sure.

Not in this time and age.

He was going through the thick forest that surrounded the prison when a pair of voices put him on alert.

He hid behind a tree, peeking to see a pair of men dragging a clearly unwilling animal through the path inside the forest.

“Come on, you big lump, keep going, we don’t have the whole day,” one of the men huffed in frustration while the other, walking beside him, with a flask in one hand and a black lash in another sighed in exasperation.

“If you can’t handle it-“

“I can!” the man with the leash cried out, urging the struggling animal to move.

“Clearly,” the other man said, unimpressed. He tipped his head down to gulp the remaining liquid and after pocketing the flask, turned towards the giant animal, seemingly not intimidated at all by the sheer size or the warning sounds it was emitting.

“It’s time for your training lesson, holy deity,” he said with a sneer on his face.

A flicker of fear passed down the elephant’s eyes as the animal started to struggle with effort at the inching forward man.

The black lash rose in the air, the cries of the elephant echoing through the forest just as a needle flew through the air, getting stuck inside the man’s neck.
“What the…”

He swayed on his legs and barely managed to turn around before he crumpled on the floor, his colleague failing to react in time before an identical needle got stuck in his own throat.

Alec lowered the whistle, pocketing it inside his leg pocket as he came forward towards the spooked animal.

The Deity, Alec reminded himself.

The animal gazed at the young lad warily, gauging its intentions. Something seemed to click when Alec stared down into its eyes, gaze unwavering.

A rustling of wings echoed inside the forest as the massive snow white wings unfurled into the opening.

He stood there in awe, watching the Deity standing before him in all its glory.

Rose was sure it was a bad idea.

No, she was absolutely certain that getting separated was nothing sort of a horrible idea.

Once again she was wandering around aimlessly without knowing the Doctor’s immediate location. And while no guards seemed to be running after her, that didn’t exactly put her at ease, knowing that it could only mean one thing – the Doctor took everyone upon himself.

Sighing, she scanned her surroundings and hurried down the dimly-lit hallway, pressing her back against the wall as she listened for any alerting sounds.

A rattle.

Something rattled very near her, making her jump on her feet and look around for the upcoming danger only she then realized the sound was coming from behind her.

More accurately, behind the wall she was resting on.

Looking back she could see that it was not just a wall, but rather a well hidden entrance with sliding doors and, of course, a lock on the knob.

She tried it out just in case, but it didn’t budge.

Bitting her lip, she pressed her ear to the door, trying to listen in.

More rattling sounds….which were followed by a low growl.

Was something living inside there?

Stuffing her hands inside her pockets, Rose tried to find anything that might be able to help her pick the lock.

Distracted by her mission, she failed to notice someone coming up behind her until her mouth was covered to stifle her yell, hands gripping her roughly down the halls.
The Doctor was just in the process of adjusting a high frequency setting on the sonic screwdriver which, he could only assume, would pose as an annoying sound to the species of whatever aliens the guards were, when a pair of, surprisingly, humanly voices stopped him short.

“Is it down here?” one, a female voice, asked as a pair of steps stopped by a metal doors inside the wall.

A strongbox of sort?

“Yeah,” another, low and calm male voice answered.

There was a sound of insignia being pressed against the controls as with a click, the box opened.

Whatever the box contained seemed to be of interest to the pair as the male passed it down to the female, locking the safe afterwards.

“I saw how you flinched at the Emperor announcing the rise in taxes,” the female said casually.

The male sighed. “35% is a lot.”

“It is,” the female agreed. “But it’s not our problem to worry about the wellbeing of the citizens, is it?” the hint of wariness that could be heard in her voice seemed to put the male into silence for a moment.

“No, it’s not,” he agreed, his voice sounding calculated in what it was saying. He then added, in a somewhat calm and teasing voice. “That’s why I did all the work while you were wasting your time on prattling.”

The female laughed in mirth, the pairs’ footsteps growing more distant.

“You know, sometimes it makes me wonder. If you’re really smart or just cruel.”

“Probably both. Let’s go. The Emperor is waiting.”

The Doctor let them disappear before he came out of his hiding place.

It was high time he regrouped with Rose.

Whatever was happening down here, they should go hand in hand to investigate it together. They always worked best like that, after all.

A slight smile tugged at the Time Lord’s lips.

He looked around once more and pushed himself from the wall…

…coming face to face with a tall, lean man pointing a gun straight to his face.

“Oh,” he exhaled. “Hello.”
“...and I really do think you should let me see my lawyer. It’s just one call. I promise. One call and I won’t have to report you to the Shadow Proclamation. Now, there’s no need to growl at me..... I wasn’t threatening you! I was just...oh,” the Doctor stopped short as he was pushed inside the spacious room, the chandelier falling down low from the ceiling, a big throne, decorated with various sizes and shapes of rubies sitting in the middle, a snow white dog without nose sitting on it (he found one, ha!) while a few steps down, on the carpet on the floor sat his pink and yellow human.

A grin spread on the Doctor’s face. “Is this the Emperor’s room? Are we meeting the Emperor?” the Doctor cried out in delight.

Rose turned to look at him, tilting her head in one direction.

The Doctor seemed to be oblivious of that, continuing on, “Well then, where is the grand man himself? I can’t wait to meet him.”

He was nudged on his side by, what he noticed, one of the guards, (the man that caught him having moved towards the throne to stand by the woman standing beside it....who looked familiar....no, the Doctor was pretty sure he saw her somewhere before...ah, that’s right, it was the same man and the woman from before, the pair by the safe).

The Doctor was quickly showed onto his knees beside Rose, greeting her nervous chuckle with a wink of his own.

“Told you we’d meet some dogs without noses.”

“Yeah, no kidding,” Rose muttered under her breath.

Frowing at her, the Doctor tried to speak but was quickly silenced.

“Quiet. The Emperor will be speaking.”

The eyebrows rose into his hairline as the Doctor stared at the woman.

“Good work, Roger,” a deep voice, seemingly coming out of nowhere, spoke, silencing the whole room.

“Um...” the Doctor tried again but only got a glare of the woman by the throne in return.

The voice continued on.

“I shall reward you for your results. Kneel,” it said.

“Thank you, Your Majesty,” the man, Roger was it, bowed and proceeded to come around the throne and kneel right in front of it, right in front of the throne which held no other passenger than the canine sitting on it, with his long tongue peaking out of its mouth.

“No way,” the Doctor cried out, his voice breaking in an amused laugh, which soon followed him being hit in the ribs for his insolence.

With back held straight, and head bowed, the man accepted the key on a chain that was put onto his neck by the woman.

The Doctor blinked at the whole display. “Someone is having a good day. The guy just got
promoted.”

“Yeah. I wonder what that means for us.”

The Doctor hummed. “Probably nothing good.”

Standing up, the man spared a quick glance towards the pair before averting his eyes and returning to stand by the throne. A cane hit the ground, silencing the room.

“What are their charges?” the voice spoke again as a scroll was passed down to the woman by the throne. She unrolled it and began reading, “The female prisoner has been accused of theft and illegal trespassing of the planet Barcelona together with the failure to bring an identification when asked.”

Every part of Rose’s body itched to disprove of their accusations but knowing how well that ended the last time, she bit her tongue and stayed put. Not without directing a firm glare in the vicinity of the throne, though.

“The male prisoner has been accused of obstruction of justice, defiance, threats of destruction, harassment.”

“Oh!” the Doctor cried out from his spot but was quickly shushed.

“-failure to follow the procedure, unauthorised touching and tasting of the property of the planet Barcelona-“

“Oh, come on,” the Doctor groaned from the shadows. “Do you have to?”

“-rude behaviour towards the officials-“

“Well…”

“-and illegal trespassing of the planet Barcelona together with the failure to bring an identification when asked,” the woman finished, rolling up the scroll and handing it to the guard.

The room was silent as everyone waited the sentence of the two prisoners to be announced.

Rose leaned into the Doctor as she whispered. “What’re we going to do? Should we try to plead innocent?”

“Well, this lot seems to be hell bent on making criminals out of us, so I don’t think that’s gonna work. Especially when the Emperor is only but a puppet.”

“What d’you mean?” Rose asked, her neck twisting sharply in surprise.

“See that?” the Doctor tilted his head towards the throne. “With tongue that long, there’s no way for a clear voice like that to come out of its mouth. At bests it’s an intelligent highly trained dog, at worst, it’s just a heavily abused animal,” the dark tone in the Doctor’s voice made Rose frown in thought.

She glanced at the throne, then back at the Doctor.

“So that’s just a regular dog, then?”

“Yep.”
“But why doesn’t it… bark then?”

“It probably had its vocal chords removed.”

The pair shared a silent stare.

“The sentences of the prisoners will be now announced,” the woman said, a cane thudding against the floor following suit.

“Due to the state of risk these two unauthorised prisoners pose to the wellbeing of the planet Barcelona, the jury (“What jury?” Rose whispered to the Doctor as there was nobody inside the room except for the Emperor, the pair by the throne and a few guards.) has decided on executing the threat at the first hour of down. That is all.”

Rose’s breath hitched as she cast an alarming glance towards the Doctor.

Before they could as much as try to plead their case, rough pairs of hands seized the duo, forcing them to stand unsteadily on their feet.

“Doctor!” Rose called out as she was being dragged through the room towards the exist.

“Rose! Oi, keep your paws off her,” the Doctor tried twisting in the firm grip but his hands refused to budge. He cast a glance towards the throne, furry starting to burn in his blood, when he caught the eyes of the lean man staring at him in a calculating gaze. For a moment he thought he saw something in those eyes but just as quickly, the man averted his eyes, resuming his neutral staring forwards.

Gritting his teeth the Doctor opened his mouth, ready to bargain with them by any means he knew possible (and oh, there was a whole lot in his vocabulary), when suddenly the whole waiting room seemed to shake from the ground up; a series of tremors resonating from somewhere with a closing distance.


The shaking seemed to increase with each passing second, taking attention of the residents of the room.

“What’s going on-“ the sentence barely managed to leave the woman’s mouth before there was a large crash outside, no right into the large wooden doors as it came flying off from its hinges, pieces of plank flying through the air.

The Doctor ducked one such loose plank, using the chaos as a way of distraction to escape the clutches of the guard holding him and rolling out of the way.

He could hear people coughing from the sudden dust in the air but his eyes kept scanning the area for a single person.

“Rose?”

Before he could see her, he heard her delighted yell, “You came!”

Huh, well that was unexpected.

Following the direction of the voice, he weaved through the stumbling bodies of the guards, a couple of them nearly getting a hold of him in the process if not for his quick reflexes.
“Rose?” he tried again and this time got an answer.

“Over here!”

Another couple of steps and he came to an abrupt stop as he came face to face with his pink and yellow human standing right beside a massive body of none other but a Winged Elephant! The sheer size of the animal itself was impressive but nothing compared to the sight of those pearly white wings as they flapped in the air, one strong swing and the nearing guards came tumbling on the ground, the dust following suit.

The Doctor only managed to stay on his feet by the sheer luck of finding the trunk to grab onto, which he later realized had wrapped around his frame to keep him in position.

“What is this?” he asked, bewildered by the turn of events.

“Doctor, come on up.” Rose’s voice could be heard somewhere further ahead and true enough, the human was actually climbing the thing, turning her body to him in order to urge him to follow.

Still mostly confused the Doctor tried to argue but one quick look behind his back and he was hoisting himself up, with the help of the trunk.

Finding a young lad with a heated frown on his face wasn’t one of the things he expected to find once he was on top of the animal but then again, being rescued by the Deity on the verge of their execution also wasn’t one of the things he had expected out of this day.

He guessed stranger things had happened to him.

“Who are you?” the Doctor asked with a frown. “Nice save, by the way. And hold on, is that my coat?”

“Doctor, they’re getting up!” the urgency in Rose’s voice prompted the Doctor into action, getting him ready to take the rains, figuratively speaking, but before he could do that, the boy with his Janis Joplin coat already urged the elephant to rush through the doors.

He only had a second to grab onto something before they were flying through the halls.

They kept crashing into the walls on every turn and on one such turn where the Doctor banged his head against the standing torch, the Doctor yelled out in complain. “Oi, keep it steady.”

The boy tsked at him in irriatation. “I don’t exactly have a licence for this thing.”

“You don’t need a licence to drive a vehicle. You learn as you go.”

As one guard was running after them with a closing speed, (surprisingly agile for a being of that size and armour) Rose leaned from the side of the elephant and grabbed hold of the nearest vase, throwing it at the alien.

She felt arms circling around her waist as she was hauled up before she could slip.

“Thanks.” She smiled at the Doctor in gratitude and then turned her attention to the lad. “And thank you. For coming.”

“I didn’t do it for you. I just don’t like feeling indebted,” he muttered under his breath but Rose could have argued if the faint redness on his cheek was really coming from the exercise.

“I’m the Doctor, by the way, and you are?” the Doctor looked at the boy expectedly who in turn
only gave him a whitering stare.

“The thief,” he deadpanned.

The Doctor’s eyebrows rose into his hairline as he grinned in delight. “Well what do you know, we already have something in common.”

Rose grinned at their exchange but then, looking ahead, she found them closing in to the dead end and asked her fellow passengers for the direction.

“We go…up,” the Doctor declared as they increased their pace, rushing through the massive marble stairs.

They had to shield themselves as the trio smashed through yet another doors that led them into an opening. On the top of the roof.

“Why the roof… why the hell are we on the roof!?” the lad yelled out, his voice betraying a hint of desperation.

“What do you say, don’t you lot want to see a miracle bestowed by the Deity?”

Rose furrowed her brows thoughtfully. “I don’t really think it’s even a real Deity.”

“Oi, stop insulting him. Have some faith,” the Doctor cried out indignantly.

“I’m not,” Rose retorted. “But you can’t just wish ‘im into being something he’s not.”

“What a pain in the ass,” the lad sighed in exasperation. “Would you two stop bickering and focus on the matter at hand?” the lad huffed, his grip on the elephant tightening as he scanned the area with a wild look.

Anytime now.

Anytime now the guards would burst in through the made-hole towards the roof and they would be done for.

What was he even thinking getting involved in something as mad as this?

It was very unlike him.

“It’s called a brainstorm,” the Doctor commented casually. “Handy ideas might form while we’re at it.”

“Oh, yeah? Will it make elephants fly then? Because there’s sheer drop down straight ahead and a mob of furious grizzly bears chasing us from behind. We’re pretty much stuck.”

The silence that followed made the lad turn away from the stunned Doctor, cursing his luck and questionable life choices until with a high pitched yell, the man slapped him on the back. The lad swung around, glaring at the mad man who was grinning from ear to ear.

“But of course! That’s brilliant!”

The lad rose an eyebrow.

“What?”
“Doctor, you’re not thinking…”

The Doctor hummed happily. “Why’re we looking elsewhere when we have a perfect specimen right here.”

He patted on the rough skin of the elephant as Rose shook her head, a small nervous smile spreading on her face.

“Of course you are.”

“Thinking what?” the lad asked, feeling lost and a sense of doom coming at them any moment now.

The words that spilled from the man couldn’t have belonged to a sane person.

“Let’s try a bit of leap of faith, shall we?” the Doctor said with a wink and the next moment took the rains out of Alec’s hands, steering the animal towards the edge.

“You’re not…oh you…nutcase!”

The echo of Alec’s voice could be heard as they dived down.

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_to be continued...

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