When the Bough Breaks
by nostalgia

Summary

Missy wants a baby. And what Missy wants, Missy gets.
A gentle, contented silence hung in the air in the TARDIS console room. Sitting in his favourite armchair, the Doctor was enjoying the peace and quiet that could descend upon the TARDIS when there wasn't a human around to liven things up. He sat with a cup of tea at his side and his attention on the book he was reading, not realising that this was just the calm before the storm.

The book was one of those citrus-coloured romantic novels that someone might buy in an airport when their flight was delayed. The Doctor had found it under the bed in one of his companion's rooms some centuries ago and had put it on his 'to read' list somewhere below *A Practical Guide to Quantum Crochet* but slightly above *101 Things You Can Make From Earwax*. The prose was somewhat mediocre but he was enjoying the plot, which was moving at a good pace.

He turned the page and read the paragraph-long description of the eyes of the protagonist's love-interest. He paused for a moment to recall whether or not human eyes actually came in that colour. Deciding that they didn't, he skipped ahead a few pages to get past the dull descriptive interlude.

“That's ridiculous,” he muttered, lifting his teacup, “humans just don't bend that way.”

He sipped the tea and returned the cup to its matching saucer. Not for the first time he considered the notion of writing his own novel, one that would meet his own specifications of what made good literature. He was sure there was a typewriter somewhere in the TARDIS...

An insistent ringing sound distracted him from this train of thought. With a sigh he marked his place with an old receipt and headed to the console to answer his phone. He really had to stop giving people his number.

It was only when he reached the controls that he realised that it was the *other* phone that was ringing, the one in the door of the ship. Hardly anyone had that number, which increased the odds that it was going to be someone worth talking to. He opened the exterior door and stepped out onto the surface of the empty planet he’d parked the TARDIS on the day before.

The ringing continued as he tugged on the panel marked *Pull To Open*. Lifting the receiver to his ear, he cleared his throat and spoke. “Hello?”

To his great surprise it wasn't Clara on line, or indeed anyone else that he wanted to talk to. “Oh, you answered your phone. I had a bet that said you wouldn't.”

“**Missy?**”

“Surprise! Before you ask, no, I'm not dead. I've got something for you, come and pick me up.” She sounded bright and cheerful.

“Where are you?” he asked, automatically.

“I'm on Mars, I'll send the coordinates to the psychic paper. Hurry, and don't bring any of your pets.” She hung up without another word.

The Doctor stared at the phone in his hand. He hadn't been expecting that. He replaced the receiver slowly and headed back into the TARDIS.

A set of space-time coordinates had indeed appeared on the psychic paper. He tried to decide what to do next. He didn't want Missy thinking that she had him at her beck and call, but he couldn't just
ignore her summons. She was one of his own people and he felt somewhat responsible for her. He wasn't sure what she'd do if he left her on her own and annoyed around innocent people. It wasn't that he liked her, or that he wanted to see what she was up to.

The TARDIS materialised on Mars in the ancient capital city several million years before humans had reached behavioural modernity. A cold wind blew in from the plains and the dark clouds overhead promised rain.

He caught sight of Missy standing with her back to him as she conversed animatedly with a local. Mary Poppins on Mars, he thought with bitter amusement. She pushed at her companion's chest and the Martian pulled its arm back as though getting ready to strike her. The Doctor hurried over to intervene in case a physical fight broke out.

“So you can shove your religious objections right up your -” She stopped, cocked her head to one side. “Oh, never mind, the boyfriend's here.”

The Doctor stopped abruptly as he reached them. “I'm not your boyfriend,” he said quickly in case anyone got the wrong idea.

The Martian looked down at him. “Please remove your mate from this planet.”

“She's not my mate,” he insisted. He glanced between Missy and the Martian. “I will take her somewhere else, though.” He stopped, frowned, wondered what troublesome detail he'd hadn't quite noticed. He looked back at Missy. He kept looking for some time. Finally he said, “You've put on weight.”

“It's not weight,” she corrected primly, “it's a baby.” She patted her swollen abdomen. “I'm pregnant.”

The Doctor stared at her, occasionally opening his mouth to say something and then closing it again because he didn't know quite what he wanted to say.

“You look like a goldfish,” said Missy.

“You're pregnant,” said the Doctor, finally deciding to stick to the known facts.

Missy looked around for the TARDIS, then took the Doctor's arm and started leading him towards it. “Don't look so shocked, it's a perfectly natural phenomenon. It happens all the time.”

“But... how?” He shook his head to clear it. “I know how. I suppose the real question is who?”

Missy stopped walking and smiled at him. “It's yours, silly, I do have some standards.”

“Don't be ridiculous, you and I have never... well, not recently... and I'd have been careful even if we did. So it can't possibly be mine.”

Missy smiled sweetly at him. “I knew you'd want to contribute, so I took the liberty of obtaining a DNA sample and doing the necessary manipulations in a laboratory.” She waved a hand. “Oh, don't look so shocked, you leave your genetic material all over the place. Skin cells, eyelashes, strands of hair... I was spoilt for choice.”

“You can't just... this is insane,” he said, “even for you this is insane.”
“I know, I know, it's more than you could ever have hoped for and you don't know how to thank me.” She started walking again and the Doctor had to follow.

“No,” said the Doctor.

“No?”

“No, this is not happening.”

“I think you'll find that it is.” They had reached the TARDIS and she stopped, snapped her fingers, and then growled at the ship when the doors refused to open at her command.

The Doctor stepped around her, taking the TARDIS key from his pocket as he moved. “You turned her into a paradox machine, remember?”

“So? It was an upgrade. The stupid machine should be grateful.”

“Well, she isn't.” He paused with the key in the lock. “What happened to your TARDIS anyway?”

“I misplaced it,” said Missy with suspicious dignity. She pushed past him into the ship as the door swung open. She crossed the console room and lowered herself into the crash seat with a long sigh. “Oh, it's good to get this stupid weight off my feet.”

“That stupid weight's a baby.”

“Who I love very, very much,” she said. She patted her belly gently. “Don't pay him any mind, my dear, he's still overcome with emotion.”

The Doctor leaned back against the control column and looked at Missy. “You hate children,” he said.


“Do what they're... ha! You really don't remember what they're like, do you?”

Missy shrugged. “That's why I need a supportive partner, like you. Someone who enjoys cleaning and midnight feeds.” She held up a hand to silence any protests. “You adore children, you'll be a wonderful father.”

“You do realise that I'm not actually responsible for a child created without my consent?” he said as if speaking clearly would penetrate her obvious madness.

It didn't. “Well someone has to be, the poor child's mother is quite bananas. I think this will be good for both of us. You need some sort of stability in your life and I need someone to stop me killing a defenceless infant when I get tired of the novelty value.”

The Doctor tried to remain calm and reasonable. “I could find someone to look after it. Nice, kind parents who aren't you and I.”

She drew in a breath and adopted a shocked expression. “You'll do no such thing! This is our baby, and don't pretend you haven't always wanted to settle down with me and raise a family.”

“I haven't.”

“Don't lie to me, I can tell when you're lying and I don't like it.”
He wasn't entirely sure why he was admitting to anything, but, “I may have idly considered it. Idly considering something does not necessarily mean that I want it to actually happen. I've idly considered being a horse, I'd still be upset if I woke up with a fetlocks and a tail.”

Missy yawned. “I could do with a nap. It's very tiring, you know, gestating the child of our love.”

The Doctor started to protest and then gave up with a small sigh. “I'll find you a room with a bed in it, but that doesn't mean I've accepted the situation.” She held out her hand and he helped her stand up.

“Tired now, talk later,” said Missy.

After what he considered a reasonable length of time for a nap, the Doctor returned to the room where he'd left Missy and knocked on the door.

“I'm decent,” she called, “you can come in.”

He opened the door and stepped into the room. Missy was sitting up in bed with her shoes off and her hair down.

“Have you been to see a doctor?” he asked, crossing the room and sitting in the old armchair at the foot of the bed.

“Do you think I should?” she asked, and for the first time he realised just how lightly she'd been taking the entire situation.

“Yes, of course you should!” He was quite shocked, and worried for both her and the unexpected baby. “I'll give Martha a call,” he began, moving to stand.

“I'm not having the Blessed St Martha Jones prodding me with antiquated medical equipment. Or even half-decent medical equipment. She hates me.”

“She's a professional, I'm sure she wouldn't hold it against you that you imprisoned her family, tried to kill her, and wiped out a significant fraction of her species.” Although, having outlined Missy's crimes in words, he wasn't that certain that Martha would agree to help.

“It never happened,” said Missy, unconcerned.

“She remembers it, it happened for her.”

“I don't care about the details, I care about not letting that woman near me.”

The Doctor sat back, admitting defeat. “Okay, maybe Martha isn't the best idea. I know plenty of other doctors, and some of them don't even know who you are. Okay, so Grace wasn't too good with alien biology on her first go, but -”

Missy shook her head. “If I have to be poked at, I want it done in a nice clean hospital with starched sheets and a lingering smell of disinfectant. I want people who graduated in a half-civilised century, and I want servants.”

“I don't think I can get you servants.”

“The rest of it, then.”
The Doctor thought over the options. “What about the Bi-Al Foundation? 51st century, the asteroid belt between Jupiter and Mars. They have a very good xenobiology department.”

Missy sniffed. “I suppose that will have to do.” She folded her hands in her lap. “You really are very good at this sort of thing, aren’t you?”

“It’s called caring about whether other people live or die, you should try it sometime.”

“Call me when we get there,” she said, ignoring the jibe.

The Doctor left without another word and headed back towards the control-room.

“Mr and Mrs Smith,” said the Doctor, leaning over the reception desk in the hospital. “We have an appointment.”

Missy glanced at the Doctor and smiled while the receptionist handed them some forms. “Please take a seat and fill these in,” he told them.

They sat down on blue plastic chairs with a white table between them. They weren’t the only couple in the waiting-area and the Doctor saw that the crowd of aliens was reassuringly diverse as he glanced around the room.

“You married me?” asked Missy, a satisfied smile playing on her lips.

The Doctor shrugged. “It seemed the path of least resistance.” He turned his attention to the form he was supposed to fill out, determined to ignore any possible significance of the convenient marriage.

Missy borrowed a pen and began to fill in the boxes and blanks. “Let’s see... ‘Sex’...” she looked at the Doctor, “Shall I say we do it frequently and that I’m very satisfied with your performance?”

He leaned across the table and marked an X in the box marked ‘Female’ then returned to filling in his own form.

“Spoilsport.”

“The more accurate the information you provide is, the better the treatment you’ll get,” he told her.

“Can I at least put my occupation down as ‘Queen of Evil’?” she asked.

“If it makes you happy,” said the Doctor, writing in some of his own details.

She leaned across the table towards him. “What if it’s twins? You know, a good one and an evil one?”

“I don’t think it works like that,” said the Doctor tiredly.

“I hope it’s not twins,” said Missy, looking down at herself, “it’ll be hard enough squeezing one out, let alone two.”

“If it makes you feel any better –”

“Mr and Mrs Smith?”
“Yes,” said Missy, cheerfully, “the very married Mr and Mrs Smith.”

They handed over their forms and followed the nurse along a sterile-looking corridor. The nurse glanced at their forms as they walked. “Gallifreyan? We haven't had any of those in for quite some time.” She looked sideways at them, probably wondering whether there was a polite way to ask why they weren't dead. “In here,” she said, gesturing towards a room with an open door.

Missy pulled herself up onto the examining table. “This is very nice equipment,” she said admiringly, “it looks expensive.”

The Doctor looked at her, trying to silently tell her not to steal anything.

The nurse pulled a scanner round and next to Missy. “So,” she said, looking at the forms, “it says this is your first visit to the hospital? You haven't seen anyone else?”

“We've been very busy,” said the Doctor, trying to make them look less reckless.

“I see.” The scanner lit up and the nurse started pressing buttons. Eventually an image appeared on the screen.

“Don't I have lovely insides?” beamed Missy, craning her neck to look at the screen. “What's that thing? Is that my liver?”

“That's the baby,” said the nurse patiently as she tried to get Missy to lie back and keep still.

“Is it healthy?” asked the Doctor.

“I haven't seen many Time Lords in the womb,” the nurse admitted, “but from what I can tell your baby is fine.”

The Doctor felt himself relax a bit and realised just how tense he had been. “Boy or girl?” he asked.

“It's a boy.” The scanner flickered a few times and the screen went black. “Excuse me,” said the nurse, “it's been doing that for a while. I'll just go and fetch a technician.”

The Doctor watched her leave and then turned to Missy. “How long have you been pregnant?”

“A while,” she said vaguely. “It should be about ready to pop.” She touched the Doctor's arm. “Be a dear and get me a glass of water?”

He was about to protest that he wasn't her servant when he remembered that she was heavily pregnant and that she'd been on her best behaviour so far. He nodded and went to look for water for her.

It wasn't that he was getting used to the idea of Missy having a baby, far from it, but he wasn't as worried as he had been when she'd first appeared. Maybe it would help her to have someone to care for, maybe it would calm her down.

“And then a flock of pigs will ice-skate in Hell,” he muttered to himself.

It didn't seem likely, no. Even so he'd never quite been able to shake the idea that he could change the Master, turn his enemy back into his friend. It was stupidly optimistic and he knew that, but hope never died.

He found a water-cooler and filled a clear plastic cup from it, then turned and headed back to the room where he'd left Missy.
When he got there, she was nowhere to be seen. He put the water down on a handy shelf and stepped out of the room. A tall man with a blue uniform was mopping the floor outside.

“Did you see a woman, dark hair, pregnant? She might have been with a nurse?”

The cleaner shook his head and the Doctor looked up and down the corridor. A horrid sinking sensation insisted that Missy had run off, bored with this game already. But someone would have seen her, and she couldn’t move that fast in her condition, surely? He went back into the room and considered the possibilities.

Then he noticed the tell-tale scent of ozone in the air, and the subtle metallic taste. A transmat beam had been activated recently. He swore and pulled out the sonic screwdriver, scanned the room for any more information. Then, trying not to panic, he raced out of the room back towards the parking bay where they had left the TARDIS.

He arrived in under a minute, having almost run into a tea trolley and a Silurian in a wheelchair. He could come back later and apologise, it wasn’t important right now. He entered the TARDIS and then carefully, working as calmly as he could, the Doctor traced the transmat beam back to its source.

There was a shrouded Dalek ship in geostationary orbit and it looked like it was getting ready to leave. With a slam of the dematerialisation lever he tried to hop the TARDIS onto the other ship.

The TARDIS rocked as it did the hyper-spatial equivalent of bouncing off a wall. Apparently the Daleks had upgraded their shielding system. Uttering a harsh Anglo-Saxon obscenity the Doctor watched on the scanner-screen as the Dalek ship raced off into space. The best he could do was follow at a distance until it lost him by doubling-back near Betelgeuse. He kicked the console viciously. The lights in the room flickered.

He stood back and tried to think of something to do. He was sure that Missy would try to contact him as soon as she could, and he had to assume she was alive because what was the point in kidnapping her otherwise? He tried not to think of what the Daleks might want to do with a pregnant Time Lord, and attempted to cheer himself up thinking about what that pregnant Time Lord might do to the Daleks.

He waited half a day before a set of coordinates appeared on the psychic paper in Missy's telepathic handwriting. Half a day of worry and sadness and anger and frustration.

*They want to talk*, said the note, and he wasted no time heading to the rendezvous point in deep space. When he arrived he found that the TARDIS was surrounded by ships, all their weapons primed and ready. Well, at least they still considered him a threat, which was probably a good thing. Another, more precise set of coordinates appeared on the scanner and, whistling to keep his spirits up, the Doctor moved the TARDIS onto the nearest Dalek ship.

He emerged in a smallish room littered with the remains of half a dozen Daleks.

“Sorry,” said Missy, “I never was very good at the damsel-in-distress thing.”

He turned to see her standing in the midst of the destruction, a broken eye-stalk in one hand. She looked shaken but otherwise fine. Actually she looked a bit magnificent, but he wasn't going to admit to that thought. “They haven’t hurt you?” he asked.

“They won't even defend themselves,” she said, indicating the destroyed casings. “The Supreme Dalek wants a word with you, I expect I'm going to be ransomed in some way.” She sounded almost bored by the idea.
“That nurse...” the Doctor began.

Missy nodded. “Her brother was in a Dalek prison camp. She wanted to make a deal.”

“Daleks don't make deals.”

“They killed her.”

“Of course they did,” he said, “of course they did.” A door appeared in the wall and three Daleks glided into the room.

“More toys for me to play with?” asked Missy. “That's very thoughtful.”

They ignored her and moved to surround the Doctor. “Follow” said the one in front of him, turning silently.

“Don't keep him too long,” called Missy as they left, “it's well past his bedtime.”

They led him to the Supreme Dalek's audience chamber and moved away only a little, gun-stalks ready to fire.

“What do you want for her?” asked the Doctor without preamble.

The Supreme Dalek moved forwards. “This is not a prisoner exchange,” it said. “Your mate will remain in our custody.”

“She's not my mate,” said the Doctor, defensively. “It's a long story, but I promise you nothing happened between us.”

The Daleks didn't seem very impressed by this.

“She can't stay here,” he went on, “you may not have noticed but she's about to give birth at any moment. I can't see any of you lot changing nappies.”

“The woman and her child will remain here,” the Supreme Dalek repeated, “as hostages for your good behaviour.”

“Good behaviour? I'm very good, you know that.”

“You will cease your interference in Dalek affairs.”

The Doctor scratched his head. “I don't know if I can, it's quite a habit to break. Can't you just give her back and we'll go away and we won't destroy your nice shiny fleet?”

“You care,” said the Dalek, “too much. We are aware of this weakness. We will use it against you.”

“You're not listening,” said the Doctor, “and you seem to be under the impression that you're at an advantage here. Don't you know who she is?”

The Daleks looked at each other silently. It was quite an amusing sight but the Doctor didn't really feel like laughing.

“I'm very kind,” he continued, “I'll give you a chance before I destroy all of you, but she won't. She's completely nuts. She thinks she's the Queen of Evil.” He took a step towards the Supreme Dalek.
“She was on the Cruciform during the Time War. She knows what you did.”

He was going to add more but was cut off when a section of the wall exploded. Missy stepped through the smoking gap, holding something that looked suspiciously like a dematerialisation gun. Her hair was hanging loose and there were scorch-marks on her clothes.

“Where did you get that gun?” he asked.

“Armoury,” said Missy. She gestured with the gun and a shot fired and the Dalek nearest the Doctor disappeared into nothingness. “Oops,” she said. She didn't seem at all surprised or sorry. “Now,” she said, ice in her voice, “which of you wants to die next?”

“Missy,” said the Doctor, “it's considered polite to give them one last chance to avoid destruction.”

“I'm not you.” She fired at another Dalek, vanishing it in an instant. “I,” she said clearly, “am not a bargaining chip. I am not some stupid little ape that you threaten to make the Doctor play nice.” Without pausing, she shot the remaining Daleks in the room. “Now,” she said, walking over to the Doctor, “I've set the engines to overload. It'll take the whole fleet with it. I suggest we leave.” She held out her hand and he took it.

When the TARDIS was finally in flight, Missy let out a loud groan.

The Doctor spun to look at her. “Are you okay?” he asked, worried that she'd been hurt without him having realised it.

“I've been having contractions for the last half-hour,” she said, gripping the railing that surrounded the console. “It's been quite painful.”

He rushed over to her. “Tell me you're joking.”

Missy glared at him. “Do I look like I'm joking?” she snapped. “I didn't want the Daleks to know, but since that crisis is over I think we should get me to a hospital. One with really good painkillers.”

Hours later, when the twin suns of Arbis IV were setting, the Doctor held Missy's hand as she swore in twenty languages and shouted for more drugs.

Later still, Missy looked down at the baby in her arms and examined him critically. “He's a bit small.”

“He's a normal size,” said the Doctor, soothingly. “Have you thought of a name?”

“Have you?”

“I thought we could call him Lucky. You know, considering what we had to go through with those Daleks.”

“You can't call a child Lucky,” she objected.

“Why not? It's a good name.”

“For a puppy.” She tickled the baby's chin. “I'm going to call him Omega.”
Yes, just like her to want to name her son after a notorious criminal. “You can't call him Omega,” he said. “What about a nice normal name? Jack, maybe? What about Harry?”

Missy glared at the Doctor. “He's not having a human name, and we're certainly not naming him after one of your pets. Omega is a good Gallifreyan name. It has style.”

“I'm not-” he saw her expression and swallowed. “Fine, we'll call him Omega.”

“I knew you'd see sense.” She handed Omega to the Doctor and lay back in her bed. “I think I'm going to enjoy being a mother.”
Chapter 2

The cottage was white and ivy-covered with a thatched roof. It looked almost suspiciously idyllic, as though it might be hiding a top secret nuclear bunker from the Cold War era. It wasn't, of course, but it certainly looked like it had been made to hide something sinister and/or classified.

The Doctor wasn't the biggest fan of such conspicuously-innocent buildings, but as someone who technically still worked for UNIT he had access to an awful lot of them.

“Where did you get the house?” asked Missy, emerging from the TARDIS with their son in her arms.

“It belongs to a friend,” he said, vaguely. UNIT didn't know that he'd brought company to stay with him, and he wasn't sure that Missy wouldn't gleefully rub her presence in their faces if she knew who owned the building.

“Hmm, perhaps they're not all useless strays after all.” She followed the Doctor up the path to the front door, treading lightly between the rows of pansies and tulips.

The Doctor paused for a moment to wonder just what he was getting himself into, and then unlocked the door. He held it open for Missy and she brushed past him into their new home.

It had already been furnished, and even in a vaguely tasteful fashion. The 1990s were not his favourite decade (though he had been accused in a previous regeneration of looking like Jarvis Cocker) and fortunately the décor didn't reflect modern trends too much.

Missy looked around the house as the Doctor breathed in some of the fresh countryside air that smelled only a little of manure.

“One bedroom,” she noted with apparent pleasure.

“I forgot to mention that I was bringing company. You can have the bedroom, I'll sleep on the sofa.”

“If you say so.” She looked into a small box-room by the kitchen. “This can be the nursery, the walls are already pink. That's traditional, isn't it?”

“It's usually blue for a boy,” he said, not the least bit surprised by her patchy knowledge of the local culture. When the Doctor had been exiled to Earth it seemed like she'd spent almost as much time on the planet as he had, either in prison or following him about trying to kill him.

“Oh. Well, it'll do, I'm sure. You'd better get started bringing his things in from the TARDIS, it's almost time for his feed and then he likes to have a little nap.”

“Aren't you going to help?” he asked, mentally calculating how many trips in and out of the ship it would take to move the nursery.

“My arms are full of baby,” she said, quite reasonably. “Do you want me to put him on the floor so I can help you heave furniture about the place? A big strong boy like you needs help from a tiny little woman?”

“You're stronger than you look,” said the Doctor, but he knew the argument was lost. Missy disappeared into the sitting-room and he hung his coat on the hook by the door so he wouldn't overheat with all the heavy lifting.
Finally the major items were moved from TARDIS to cottage. It hadn't been as much work as he'd feared, and Missy had even put the kettle on to make him a cup of tea when the nursery was almost done. She hadn't even put poison in it, which the Doctor decided to take as proof that she was willing to go along with their new life at least for the foreseeable future.

He made one last trip that evening, bringing an old cardboard box into the kitchen and setting it down on the table next to where Missy was reading a book.

“What's that?” she asked, closing her book without marking the page.

“Toys. From the TARDIS.”

Missy looked doubtfully at the box. “Did these belong to your other children?”

“Yes,” he said easily, “some of them.”

“Omega doesn't need hand-me-downs from your little bastards,” she said, witheringly.

“This is good stuff,” the Doctor insisted. “Look, hypercube building blocks. A model Eye of Harmony. A little robot dinosaur that evolves into a bird.”

Missy stood and examined the contents as he laid them on the table. “The robot dinosaur can stay.”

“He needs toys, Missy. He's a child, play is an important part of their development.”

“He's not even a week old, are you expecting him to -” she lifted a box and read from the lid - “grow his own carnivorous plants' already?”

“He'll grow into them,” said the Doctor. “He doesn't need to have all of them right away.”

Missy reached into the cardboard box and pulled out a teddy-bear with one eye. “And what's this?”

“Fergus! All children love Fergus!” He took the bear from her and walked to the nursery with it. Missy followed and watched as he leaned over Omega's cot with the offending article in hand.

Omega looked up at his father. He smiled. The Doctor smiled back and moved the bear closer to him. Omega started to cry.

“See?” said Missy, snatching Fergus from the Doctor's hand, “he doesn't like your stupid bear.”

“Give him a chance! Babies cry all the time, they're in shock at how new everything is!”

“I don't think so.” She dropped the bear onto the floor.

“When was the last time you looked after a child anyway?” asked the Doctor as he retrieved Fergus, annoyed at her undermining his claim to be the better parent.

“I don't remember,” she said, “but you never really forget how, it's like riding a bicycle.”

“It's really not.” He went to put Fergus in the crib with Omega, then thought better of it and deposited the bear on top of the dresser.
The Doctor woke not long after he had fallen asleep to find Missy standing over him.

“What?” he asked, sleepily.

“Time Lords do not sleep on sofas,” she said, hands on hips. “There's a perfectly good bed in the other room.”

“There's one perfectly good bed in the other room,” said the Doctor, closing his eyes again.

“With room in it for two people.” She poked at his arm until he opened his eyes again.

“I'm not going to sleep with you.”

“Why not?” she asked, apparently offended.

“You're evil.”

“That's never stopped you before,” she countered.

“You never stole my DNA to impregnate yourself before.”

“You're not still holding that against me? Don't you love little Omega? Hasn't he made you happier than you've been for ages?”

The Doctor sat up. “I can feel multiple emotions at the same time. And yes, I do still hold that against you. It means I can't trust you.”

“I won't try anything,” she said. “When you decide that it's time to lose your virginity I'll be ready and willing, but I won't force you into anything.”

“That's not what I'm worried about,” he lied.

“I'm still not letting you sleep on the sofa.”

The Doctor sighed. “Fine. But I refuse to have sex with you.”

“That's fine by me,” she said, offering him her hand.

The Doctor ignored the gesture and walked past her to the bedroom at the back of the cottage.

He woke again in the middle of the night to the sound of a baby crying. He lay confused for a moment before remembering where he was and what was happening. He looked across the bed to Missy, who was pulling a pillow over her head presumably to block out the noise.

Sighing heavily, he sat up and started to get out of the bed.

“If you go to them when they scream you teach them that bad behaviour gets attention,” said Missy, not moving from her place.

“You can't just leave a baby crying,” he said, standing. “He might be hungry, or lonely, or sick.”

Missy rolled onto her back, pulling the pillow down to her chest. “Once he learns that he can summon you like this he'll never stop,” she warned, but she rose from the bed and followed the Doctor to the nursery.
Omega – and the Doctor had to convince Missy to go with a less ostentatious name – didn't stop crying when the Doctor lifted him from his cot.

“I think he's hungry,” he said looking the baby in the eye and checking for a wet nappy with one hand.

Missy yawned. “So feed him and then we can go back to bed.”

The Doctor held the baby out to her. “I don't have mammary glands. And they do say breast is best.”

“Fine, but no looking.”

“What?”

“No eyeing my breasts while I'm feeding our love-child.” She unbuttoned her nightshirt and turned away.

“Missy,” said the Doctor tiredly, “I've seen plenty of babies being breastfed. I've seen you breastfeeding a baby, so I don't know why you're making a fuss now.”

Missy kept her back to him. “Why have you never been a woman?” she asked.

The question surprised him. “I don't know,” he said honestly.

“I know.”

He frowned at her response. “I don't know but you know?”

“It's because you know that your favourite planet is prejudiced and horrible, full of idiots and bigots.”

“It's not that,” he insisted. “Anyway, you've always been male up to now as well. You can't blame humans for that.”

Missy turned back to him, still feeding the child. “That was just force of habit. Sticking with what I was used to.”

“That explains the beards, at least.”

“I was very dashing,” she said with a faint smile.

“You were, and indeed are, a monomaniacal psychopath.”

“But am I still dashing?” she asked, finishing the feed and handing Omega back to him.

The Doctor looked her up and down. She was buttoning up her nightshirt, hair falling round her shoulders, with tired eyes and no make-up. She looked... “You look fine,” he said, before he could follow that thought any further.

“You always did prefer girls,” she said. She held up a hand. “Don't deny it, I'm not judging you. It's just a fact. I was the exception to the rule.”

“I've loved plenty of men in my life,” said the Doctor, not entirely sure why he was protesting to her of all people.

Missy smiled triumphantly. “Including me.”
“I'm going back to bed,” he announced, returning the baby to his crib. He could see Missy smiling even with his back to her.

Perhaps inevitably he woke in the morning to find that he'd slipped an arm round Missy in the night. Okay, fine, these things happened. He wondered if he could move away without waking her.

“I'm awake,” she said as though reading his mind. Her eyes opened as he recoiled as though she were acid. “My dear Doctor, it's nothing to be ashamed of. You're in bed with an attractive member of your own species. The only surprise is that you're not hard.” She moved her hand as if to check and the Doctor almost fell out of bed trying to avoid her touch.

“Piss off,” he said, angrily.

Missy affected a shocked expression. “Did you kiss your human mother with that mouth?”

“Shut up.”

“It's quite Freudian, you know, the way you keep falling for Earth girls. You should see a therapist.”

He rose from the bed, glaring at her. “You're sick.”

“I'm sick? I'm just pointing out the obvious.” She pushed back the covers and got out of bed. “We can change the subject if you like. What do you want for breakfast?”

“What do we have?” he asked, absurdly relieved.

“Cornflakes.”

“And?”

“Cornflakes. You'll have to go to the shops if you want anything else. Do we have any money?”

“Some,” he said, not wanting to hand out numbers.

“Then you'll have to cheat on the lottery as well, I refuse to live like a poor person.”

He sighed. “I'll find out where the nearest shops are, and we will not be cheating on the lottery.” Missy sniffed. “If you want our son to go without shoes and proper nutrition, then -”

“We are not poor,” he told her. “We have plenty of money as long as we don't go mad getting in solid gold plumbing.”

She opened the wardrobe and started looking through her rails of dresses, most of which had been liberated from the TARDIS. “If you're sure,” she said breezily.

“Quite sure.” He realised that she was waiting for him to leave so that she could get changed. It was peculiarly awkward, given all that had passed between them over the years. He made his excuses and went to eat a nice bowl of cornflakes.

The locals shops turned out to be a Tesco Metro about half a mile down the road. The Doctor walked back to the cottage laden with plastic carrier bags and a value-pack of toilet paper. It was a
bright sunny day and he used the time to wonder how long he was going to be able to keep this charade of domesticity going. He wasn't good at staying in one place, even when there was a good reason. They still had the TARDIS, though, and possibly he could persuade Missy to let him spend the occasional weekend away if he promised to return promptly and to do all the dishes when he got back.

He had just set his bags down to unlock the door when it swung open and Missy appeared in the open doorway.

“Thank God you're back,” she said, visibly shaken.

“What's wrong?” he asked, shopping forgotten.

She tugged his arm and pulled him into the nursery. “That,” she said, pointing at something on the floor.

The Doctor bent to examine the stain on the carpet. “It's a bee,” he said. “Or it was until someone stood on it in a pair of size six heels.”

Missy reached into the cot and swept Omega up in her arms, holding him against her chest protectively. “It was flying around, all venom and death. I'd forgotten how dangerous this stupid planet is.”

“It didn't sting him?”

“No, but it could have.”

The Doctor touched her arms rather awkwardly. “He's fine. See? Stop squishing him like that.” He took the baby from her and put him back in his crib. “It's summer, the flowers probably attracted it.”

“Then get rid of them!”

“We can put up a mosquito net or something,” he said, aiming for helpful and calming. He looked at her closely. “You're really worried about this, aren't you?” he said with some surprise.

“Of course I am!”

“Oh. I didn't think you... I mean, you don't usually...” He tailed off, not quite sure how to articulate what he was trying to say.

“You think I don't love him,” said Missy. “Well, I do. If anything happened to him I'd be inconsolable.”

“Sorry,” said the Doctor, feeling bad for having assumed the worst of her.

“So you should be,” she sniffed. “What are you going to do about the bees?”

“I'm not going to do anything about the bees. You'll have to get used to them.”

Missy poked his chest. “You don't care about Omega, you never have. Just because I borrowed your genetic material -”

“Stole,” he corrected.

“- borrowed it to make him, you think he's not a real person.”
“That's ridiculous! Who got us somewhere nice to stay? Who came to rescue you from the Daleks? Who made you go to a hospital in the first place?”

“You did,” she admitted.

The Doctor felt the need to hug her, so he did. He rubbed her back carefully as she pressed against him. “It's okay,” he said, quietly, “you just got a bit of a fright.”

“You left the shopping on the doorstep,” she said against his chest when she had calmed down a little. “It will have melted by now.”

“I can go back and get more,” he said, aware of how nice it felt to be embracing another Time Lord.

Missy stepped back from him. She wiped her eyes with the back of her hand and pulled herself up to her full height once more. The Doctor hadn't even realised she'd been crying.

“Go and see what's survived the weather,” she said, waving him away.

He was putting away the tinned goods when she entered the kitchen some time later.

“I found the nest,” she announced.

“What?”

“The bees' nest, I found it in the attic. Is it called a nest?”

“A hive,” he said. “We can call someone to get rid of it.”

“Don't bother, I've dealt with the problem.”

He looked at her, a horrible sick feeling insisting that something was terribly wrong. “What did you do?”

She shrugged. “I killed them all. Did you get any bananas?”

He stepped past her into the hallway and looked up through the open hatch that led to the attic. Nothing buzzed, nothing flew past the gap in the ceiling. With one more glance at Missy - who was by now unpeeling a ripe banana – he climbed up the ladder into the attic.

The hive stood silent in a far corner, and the floor was covered with dead and dying bees, their tiny legs kicking the air weakly. He headed back down the ladder.

“When you say you killed all the bees...”

Missy nodded, swallowing her last piece of banana. “All of them.”

The Doctor stared at her. “What did you do?” he demanded.

“They won't all die at once, don't panic. It won't look suspicious. They'll just... slowly die off. No more bees, no more danger. Maybe I should do the wasps as well,” she added, looking thoughtful.

“That was you? Colony Collapse Disorder was you all along?”

She shrugged. “I'm as surprised as you are. I always did wonder where all the bees went.”
“Do you even know what you've done? The entire ecosystem will collapse!”

“There are plenty more planets in the universe,” she said, unconcerned. Omega started crying in the other room. “See? I told you that you were encouraging bad behaviour from him.” She headed to the nursery.

The Doctor followed her. “Tell me what you did so I can undo it.”

“No. You're entirely too soft-hearted to do what needs to be done.” She looked down at her son. “Let's hope you take after Mummy, eh?”

The Doctor insisted on returning to the sofa to sleep that night, and Missy offered no objections this time. Perhaps she knew how far she'd pushed him with the bees. He lay in front of the silent television watching the dance of light and colour on the screen.

She obviously cared for Omega, and the Doctor should have realised how dangerous that could make her. After all, he himself had done plenty of bad things for good reasons. He'd never seen her protective side and he hadn't realised how close it was to the part of her that raged. She was no Professor Yana, anger and hatred locked away inside a watch. She was the Master, entirely, and even her best behaviour only hid how truly dangerous she was. He'd have to remember that from now on. From now on...

A sudden metal shriek shocked him from his thoughts. It was loud, very loud, and he was on his feet before he even knew he was moving. He ran into Missy as she entered the nursery to fetch Omega.

“What is that?” he shouted over the noise.

“Something's overhead,” she yelled back. “Sounds like Sontarans.” She held Omega, crying, against her chest and followed the Doctor outside.

A large spaceship was slowly shimmering into existence over the cottage. The noise began to die down as it solidified, and soon it was spinning silently above them.

“The TARDIS,” he told her, gesturing towards his own ship. “We can outrun them easily.”

“No,” she said, “I'm not running. I refuse to be chased around the universe by a bunch of potato-faced clones.”

The Doctor glanced up at the Sontaran ship. “It's not moving.”

“They're probably trying to decide whether to take the whole planet out or just us.”

He thought quickly. “I haven't done much to annoy them recently. Maybe they're just... visiting?” He looked at Missy, who shook her head.

“It might not be something you did,” she said.

The Doctor stared at her. “What did you do?”

She shrugged, still holding her baby. “I needed some equipment.”

“That's it? They're upset because you stole something from them?”

“And then I blew up a fleet to cover my tracks.”
“You didn't cover them very well,” he said.

“If they so much as touch my child -”

“I won't let them,” the Doctor promised. “Maybe we can reason with them.”

“They're Sontarans, they're not just going to chalk it up to experience and go home. They're going to kill us.”

“We don't know that,” said the Doctor, but then stopped talking when a hole opened in the bottom of the ship.

“Oh good,” said Missy, “they're going to wipe us out with a single shot. That's not humiliating at all.” She stepped up close to the Doctor and said, quite calmly, “You can create a feedback loop with the TARDIS, channel the blast back when they open fire.”

He looked at her and suddenly knew what she wanted. “No,” he said, “I'm not going to kill them without giving them a chance to leave peacefully.”

“They don't deserve that chance. They're everything you claim to hate and if you don't stop them now they're going to kill the closest thing you have to a family.” She held up Omega in front of him. “Go on, Doctor, prove how much you love us.”

He looked up at the ship, heard the rising-pitch whine of the weapons systems powering up. He looked at Missy, then at the child in her arms. Finally, after taking as much time as he thought he could spare to deliberate, he ran into the TARDIS.

He set up the feedback loop and then stopped just before he activated it. He took a breath and tried to harden his hearts. They're Sontarans, he told himself, they'll kill you and then they'll go off and kill someone else. They're not good, they're not nice, there isn't anything else you can do except kill them. He flicked the switch.

He’d set the TARDIS shields to distribute the blast when the ship went up, and the cottage stood undamaged under an empty sky. Missy met his gaze as he left the TARDIS, and she nodded, satisfied.

“How...” His mouth was dry and he had to take a moment before he could speak. “How did they find us?” he asked.

“Your guess is as good as mine,” said Missy easily. She turned and walked calmly back into their house.

The Doctor watched her go and tried not to let his mind start connecting dots. He stood under the stars and shivered. He was still in his pyjamas.
The number of people who would be able to find and cause problems for them on the TARDIS was vanishingly small. Their sojourn in the vortex was supposed to be brief, but as time passed after the Sontaran incident the Doctor felt no great need to go anywhere and quite a strong urge towards something like solitude. He spent a lot of time in the library, reading to take his mind off his worries. He felt Missy keeping her distance from him, as though his dark thoughts troubled even her. Their conversations had grown shorter and she had stopped pestering him to sleep in her room.

Omega was growing at the expected pace for a Time Lord, already onto solid food and starting to take an interest in the world beyond his cot. He'd even taken a liking to Fergus the unfortunate bear, who now watched over him as he slept and was cheerfully gnawed on by the teething infant during his waking hours.

The Doctor slowly became aware that he was being watched. He set his book to one side and said “I know you’re there.”

Missy stepped out of the shadows behind the bookcases. “Are you still sulking?” she asked.

“I'm not sulking.”

“You're upset about what happened, I understand that. But you have to move on, we can't stay in the vortex forever.”

“Actually,” he said, “we could.”

“Well, I refuse to.” She walked over and sat down in the chair opposite his. “You did what you had to do. And they were only Sontarans. Besides, hey, you've killed plenty of people and it never got to you like this before.”

“You're not very good at comforting people, are you?”

“No,” she agreed, “I'm not. I mean it about not staying here, though.”

“I just...” he looked at her for a long time and then said, “You're right. I'm being ridiculous.”

“Of course you are.” She stood. “Come on, let's go and check on Omega.”

He followed her out of the library. “You're not a bad mother,” he said, realising suddenly that he'd never told her this before.

Missy tried - badly - to hide her obvious joy at this. “I told you, it's like riding a bike.”

“It's not quite the same as being Queen of Evil, though, is it?” he ventured.

“You'd be surprised,” she said, and the Doctor decided not to follow the train of thought that suggested itself.

“Checkmate,” said Missy triumphantly.

“It can't be,” said the Doctor, shivering.
“I think you'll find that it is.” She held out her hand. “Pay up.”

The Doctor examined the state of the game, realised that she was right, and then started to unbutton his shirt. “Why did I let you talk me into playing Strip Chess?” he asked.

“Because you're an idiot.”

“Can we at least turn the heating up a bit?” he asked, working on his cuffs.

“If it's not cold then there's no incentive to win, is there?” she asked with a smile.

“I don't want to play this game any more,” he said.

“You still owe me that shirt,” said Missy, who sat fully-dressed with most of the Doctor's clothes piled neatly on the floor beside her.

“Well you can't have it,” he said, redoing the buttons. “I used to be able to beat you at chess,” he added.

“There must be something on your mind,” said Missy. “Or maybe you subconsciously want an excuse to get naked for me.”

“It's definitely not that,” he said, putting the chess pieces back into their box.

“Shall we play Strip Twister instead?” she suggested.

“No,” he said, “the clothes are staying on.” He reached across with his foot and moved the pile of clothes to his side of the table.

“You're no fun,” said Missy.

“I'm plenty of fun,” he said, starting to get dressed again.

“If you say so.” She glanced at her watch. “Time to feed the product of my loins,” she announced, standing.

“You know,” said the Doctor, “this really isn't going too badly. All things considered.” He bent to tie his shoelaces. “I mean, we haven't killed each other yet.”

“I'm saving that for a rainy day,” said Missy.

The Doctor sat on the floor opposite Omega, helping him play with the Old High Gallifreyan alphabet bricks.

“That's a rude word,” he said as the boy completed a stack of five blocks. He took off the top letter and replaced it with another. “There, that's a much more appropriate word.”

Missy sat reading in the armchair in the corner. “Let him experiment,” she said without looking up.

“I don't know where he gets it from, I never say words like that.”

She smiled indulgently and turned a page. “You have quite the foul mouth when it suits you. I remember what you said when Borusa caught you copying my homework. You turned the air quite blue if I recall correctly.”
“I'm a grown-up, I'm allowed to swear. You,” he said to his son, “are not allowed to swear until you're a hundred years old.”

“And you won't let him date until he's six hundred and three.”

“I just don't want him to pick up any bad habits,” said the Doctor.

Omega gurgled happily and threw a vowel at him.

“Now he's throwing things at me.”

Missy glanced over at them. “He's just trying to manipulate complex spatial relationships,” she said.

“Is that what you're doing?” the Doctor asked Omega, who blinked at him. “I think it's time for his nap,” he went on as the child stuck his thumb into his mouth. The Doctor lifted him up and carried him over to his cot.

Missy watched the scene before her. “We should have done this centuries ago,” she said.

The Doctor nodded absently as he set his son down to sleep. “It's working out quite well so far,” he said without really thinking about it. Then he added, “I'm still waiting for the other shoe to drop though.”

“You think I have an evil plan?”

“I wouldn't put it past you.”

Missy smiled and went back to her book.

“And then,” said Missy to the child on her knee, “Mummy and Daddy had to work together to stop them destroying the planet with us on it! Silly Mummy, eh? I was so young and naïve!”

“What's the story?” asked the Doctor from the doorway.

“I'm just telling him about the time I tried to take over the world with plastic.”

“I hope you remember that there's a moral to the story,” he said, leaning against the door-frame to watch them.

“He's a bit young for morals,” she said dismissively. “At this age he can't even follow a basic narrative.”

“Maybe I should take over story-time,” said the Doctor.

Missy bounced Omega gently on her knee and he started to laugh. She smiled down at him, the image of a caring parent. “It doesn't really matter what we say to him,” she said. “It's more about tone of voice.”

“Can I ask you something? About those Sontarans?”

“Stop dwelling on it, it won't help,” she said.

“I just need to know. How did they find us?”
Missy looked up at him. “Why are you asking me?”

“Because I think you told them where we were.”

“Why would I do that?”

“I don't know,” he said.

Missy seemed to turn the idea over in her head. “Did I tell them where we were?” she asked rhetorically. “Do you really want to know?”

The Doctor nodded.

“Yes,” she said simply. “You needed to see what you're capable of. You needed to understand.”

“Understand what?” he asked, voice a whisper.

“What I like about you.” She stood, Omega held close. “He needs his parents to be... more in sync. He'll just get confused otherwise. I did it for him. And for you.”

The Doctor turned from the room and headed off down the corridor.

“You'll thank me some day,” called Missy as he left.

He didn't talk to her for three days after that. It wasn't difficult to avoid her in the TARDIS, and when he felt her getting too close he simply moved to another part of the ship. And yet, strangely, the deaths of the Sontarans stopped bothering him so much. He felt himself calming down and coming to terms with what had happened. Not because Missy was right, he was fairly certain that she wasn't, but somehow, for whatever reason, he didn't mind thinking about it as much.

On the fourth day he let her find him in the kitchen.

“Oh, good, you're back. It was getting quite boring without you around.” She went over to the counter-tops. “I'm going to have a little snack before bed, do you want anything?”

“I'm fine.”

“At long last,” she said, putting bread into the toaster. “Omega has missed you terribly.”

“He's six months old, he doesn't even know who I am.”

“He's a very bright child,” said Missy. “You'd be surprised what he knows.”

The Doctor walked over to join her. “What have you been teaching him?”

“Nothing you wouldn't approve of.” She smiled at him. “I missed you, even if he didn't.” She placed a hand on his chest between his hearts. “And yes, you can kiss me if you like.”

“How did you-”

She pulled his head down and kissed him quite thoroughly on the mouth.

The toaster popped.

“Your bread's cooked,” said the Doctor when they parted.
“I'm not hungry any more,” she said. She took his hand. “Come to bed, Doctor.”

He followed her from the room.
“We should go somewhere,” said the Doctor, “just you and me.”

“What about Omega?” she asked, lying with her head on his chest.

“We can get a babysitter.”

Missy lifted her head to look at him. “I’m not sure who I’d trust to look after him. Everyone hates me.”

“I don’t hate you,” said the Doctor.

“You don’t count.” She moved onto her back and then sat up. “Which of your strays did you have in mind?”

“Any of them, really. Jo has about a hundred grand-kids, she must be good with small children. Or maybe Clara.”

“Not Clara. And not Miss Grant.”

“Mrs Jones,” the Doctor corrected. “She left me for a younger man, remember?”

“What about Captain Jack?” asked Missy.

“You tortured him to death over and over for a year.”

“But he can’t die, which has to be an advantage if there’s any sort of trouble.” She seemed quite taken with the idea. “Besides, I read somewhere that early exposure to Fixed Points can be beneficial for a time-sensitive.”

“Seriously?”

“Yes, seriously.”

“Well, if you’re sure...”

The TARDIS materialised in the Torchwood hub a few months before the Doctor was due to have met Jack again in his own personal past.

Jack was there to meet them when the doors opened. “Doctor, I didn’t hear that you’d regenerated.” He looked the Time Lord up and down. “I think I approve, though.”

“I’m crossing my own timeline a bit,” said the Doctor, stepping out of the TARDIS with Missy following along behind.

“And who’s the sexy lady-friend?” asked Jack, flirtatiously.

“Hello, Handsome Jack,” said Missy.

Jack’s smile disappeared. “No way.”

She shrugged. “I’m afraid so.”
Jack looked at the Doctor. “This had better be good.”

“You... you had a baby with the Master?” asked Jack.

“Not the usual way,” said the Doctor defensively, “I know what you're thinking but it's not like I planned it.”

“But you are sleeping with her?”

“I didn't come here to be judged,” said the Doctor, turning to leave the conference room.

“Why did you come here?” asked Jack.

The Doctor gestured in the air, exasperated. “To find a babysitter.”

“Well, I'll take care of your baby, but I can't guarantee I'd give it back.”

“I can understand how this must look to you, but really -”

“She's evil!”

“Well it's not like it's genetic! You'd be surprised how good she's been these past few months. She finally has someone to care for and she's good at it.”

“What do the rest of us do while you're playing house with the Master?”

“You could try to be supportive,” the Doctor suggested.

Jack was unmoved. “You've finally flipped, Doctor, haven't you?”

“Forget it. Just... forget it.” The Doctor stormed back into the TARDIS. When he reached the console Missy appeared behind him and put her hands on his shoulders.

“You're so beautiful when you're angry.”

He set the ship in flight and then turned on her. “Why on Earth did you think Jack would be understanding?”

She remained calm. “I didn't.”

He stared at her. “What?”

“None of your little friends are going to like what's happened. You need to realise that. They don't understand what you and I share. They don't see that we're the same.”

“They just don't know that you've changed.”

Missy fixed him with a penetrating look. “But I haven't.”

He moved away from her, stunned. “What have I been doing all this time?”

“You've been having the time of your life, and don't deny it.”

“Well it's over,” said the Doctor. “I shouldn't have let you drag me in to all this in the first place. I should have found a nice, boring person to take care of Omega for you.”
Missy looked sad. “I suppose you will, won't you?”

“I'm sorry, Missy. I've let you down, I've let you manipulate me into being like you.” He really did feel like he'd failed her.

“It's all right, darling,” she said. She kissed him rather chastely on the lips. “I know you meant well.”

Then she punched him and knocked him out.

When he woke he tried to move and found that his left wrist was handcuffed to the control column. He spent several minutes freeing himself and then stood to find that someone had taped an envelope to the console. He tore it open, shaking slightly. He read the note once quickly, and then again more slowly.

_I can't let you ruin everything. I tried my best but you're stubborn and you'll never be able to see things as clearly as I can. Omega and I are leaving now, and don't think you'll be able to find us. You can see him again once he's old enough to know right from wrong. I think you'll agree that this is for the best._

_Love,_

_Missy_

He dropped the note on the floor and went to the nursery, already knowing that he would find it empty. He checked Missy's room as well, just in case.

He sat down on the edge of a bed that still smelled of her and then he didn't move for some time.

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