Summary

It would be wrong for Professor John Smith to take advantage of a maid. It would be wrong for Martha Jones to take advantage of the Doctor's temporary humanity. Two wrongs make things complicated.

Notes

This fic was inspired by the moment when Martha realizes that John Smith has fallen for Joan Redfern and laments, "You had to go and fall in love with a human. And it isn’t me." I wanted to explore the consequences and complications that would have ensued if he *had* been interested in her.

This fic contains both sexual activities within complex power dynamics that make consent dubious and explicitly unwanted sexual contact, although none of the latter involves John Smith/the Doctor. Please tread carefully.

This chapter takes place in the immediate aftermath of the Doctor's transformation into John Smith. This version of John Smith is somewhat different from the show’s version; for one thing, he teaches maths, not history, and isn't involved in the school's shooting instruction. Other differences will become apparent as the fic progresses. Events will not progress exactly as they did in Human Nature/Family of Blood.
Transformation

The first time Martha watched the Doctor's video of instructions, he was lying unconscious on the TARDIS grating beside her. She hadn’t actually seen him record them, even though he’d been right there the whole time; somehow, he’d managed to turn about thirty seconds of holding onto the console and making his deep-concentration face into about five minutes of video of himself talking. Well, it was less weird that time travel, she supposed.

She paused it when she got to “Ten: If you go into the wardrobe room while I’m recovering from the arch, that should be enough time for the TARDIS to pack us some bags with clothes and things. Probably money, too, if we’re in the sort of time and place where you need that. Make sure I change clothes before we leave the TARDIS so the perception filter will keep me from noticing anything odd about them. I should be pretty suggestible at first, so it shouldn’t be hard.”

God, he was such an alien. Probably hadn’t seen anything remotely suggestive about telling her to make sure he got his clothes off while he was ‘suggestible.’ Well, he wasn’t going to be an alien for a while, but obviously she wouldn’t take advantage of that, since she wasn’t a terrible person. Actually, she felt a little bit terrible for even thinking of it.

She managed to get rid of those thoughts when she retrieved the bag of clothes from the wardrobe room and found that they were clearly historical in origin. Seriously? She was going to be stuck in the past for three months? Waltzing through it with the Doctor was one thing, but...oh, this was going to be really unpleasant, wasn’t it.

Worse yet, his clothes were much nicer than hers, she noticed as she quickly changed. Was she supposed to be some sort of maid? Servant she could probably put up with, but if she was meant to be a slave for the next three months, she was going to stay on the TARDIS and let the human Doctor take care of his own damn self.

He was still unconscious when she got back to the control room, but he began to stir when she checked his vitals. Breathing was good, heart (singular!) was beating normally, pupils responded to light as they should.

She went to watch the rest of the video.

“Eleven: If you get injured and you don’t trust the doctors whenever we end up to take care of you, use the TARDIS medbay. Taking care of something like that is more important than keeping our cover, got it? Twelve: Don’t let me turn back within four hours of taking aspirin. Or eating pears. The aspirin’ll make me very sick, pears I just don’t like.”

“You have the weirdest sense of priorities, Doctor,” she muttered.

She hoped she’d be able to figure out how to rewind it and play it again. There were 23 things on his list, way too many to remember after one viewing, and she was pretty sure that she was going to want to see the way he looked at her when he said “Thank you” at the end again.

The Doctor was starting to stir. Was she even supposed to keep calling him that? She went through the bag of his belongings, looking for any kind of paperwork. There was a wallet with what looked like a good quantity of unrecognizable banknotes, and an open envelope with a handwritten letter, which she skimmed.
Apparently, Jonathan Smith had been accepted for a position as teacher of mathematics somewhere called the Farringham School for Boys. There was a brief footnote to the effect that they would be willing to engage his servant as well. No name was mentioned for the servant. She hoped she wasn’t supposed to just know to answer to something other than Martha.

How had the TARDIS managed to create that letter, anyway? Was there a real Jonathan Smith out there whose job they were stealing? She’d make the Doctor explain when he was himself again.

“Oof...Martha?” The Doctor’s accent had changed. No, she had to start thinking of him as John Smith. “Why am I on the floor?”

“You hit your head...um, sir,” she said, reluctantly adding the honorific. “How are you feeling?”

“I feel like one great bruise,” he said, not drawing out the ‘oo’ sound of ‘bruise’ the way the Doctor would have. “And rather disoriented. We were on our way to Farringham, were we not?”

“That’s right,” Martha said. “Soon as you’re feeling up to it, and you’ve changed clothes, we’ll move on.”

The D--no, John Smith accepted this with a nod.

“Get me a glass of water, will you, Martha?” he asked. “And lay out my clothes for me.”

Three months, she thought grimly as she went to fetch the water. That was nearly as long as they’d spent together, she was pretty sure--it was a bit hard to keep track. She could probably get through three months without murdering him herself.

Probably.
Farringham

Chapter Summary

Martha settles in and gets to know some of the other servants.

Chapter Notes

I did my best to make things historically accurate when it comes to things like the differences between theoretical sexual mores and actual sexual behaviors. Also, John Smith is casually racist.

Farringham School for Boys was home to one hundred twenty-seven students, seven professors (including one Jonathan Smith, maths teacher), four maids (including Martha Jones), one cook, two kitchen girls, three groundskeepers, one housekeeper, one nurse, and one headmaster. That added up to seven women and one hundred forty men, or to one black person and one hundred forty-six white people, depending on how you divided it.

It was going to be a very long three months.

The headmaster had sent her to the housekeeper without so much as glancing at her when she and John arrived at the school. The housekeeper had looked at her like she smelled bad and sent her to Jenny, one of the other maids and her new roommate.

“It’s not such a bad job, this,” Jenny told her brightly while they worked on the boys’ piles and piles of laundry. “The pay’s reasonable, and we get Sundays off, and the headmaster is quite strict with the boys if any of the professors catch them not keeping their hands to themselves. And the Matron’s willing to treat us, even for female troubles.”

“Wow,” Martha said, trying to sound impressed. “That’s great.”

“Lots of work to be done, of course, boys being what they are, but the professors aren’t too demanding on the whole. Housekeeper’s a bit of a witch, but aren’t they always?” She grinned at Martha. “And you’re going to have it easier than most, coming in with a professor already.”
“What do you mean already?” Martha asked.

“Oh, well, a lot of us do take up with the professors, you know,” Jenny whispered conspiratorially. “The rest of the men won’t bother you if they know you belong to someone; it’s all very gentlemanly. My fellow’s only the groundskeeper, but none of them bother me anyway.”

“Oh--Mr. Smith isn’t my, we’re not...it’s not like that,” Martha stammered. “I’ve just worked for his family for a long time, is all.”

“Oh, come on, you can tell ol’ Jenny,” Jenny teased. “Unmarried young man like your Mr. Smith turns up with a pretty young thing like you? It’s only natural. Everyone’s thinking it. And why not? Little extra spending money for you, little less boredom for him, everyone’s happy.”

“Well, it’s not like that, anyway,” Martha said firmly. Extra spending money, what?

“Really?”

“Really.”

Their next task once the laundry was hung up to dry was scrubbing the floors, and they couldn’t chatter while they did it, since they were in a public area. Martha was left alone with her thoughts. Did everyone really think Mr. Smith had brought her there to be his, what, his mistress? She could see how it might make a sick sort of sense, from an outside perspective.

“Well, if it kept the other professors away from her, that would be a good thing. It wasn’t as if she cared what a bunch of people in 1913 thought of her anyway.

The bed in the garret room she shared with Jenny was uncomfortable, but traveling with the Doctor, Martha had gotten pretty good at sleeping when and where she could. It was better than that bed in Shakespeare’s day, at least. That was four hundred years of progress for you, when the servants’ beds were marginally better than the guest beds in inns had been.

Jenny woke her up while it was still dark out. Apparently she was to get up, dress, grab a bite to eat, and then bring Mr. Smith his breakfast.
“Housekeeper brings the headmaster his breakfast, cook brings Mr. Phillips his because she’s sweet on him, and then between the four of us and the kitchen girls, every professor gets individual service,” she told Martha. “That way everyone gets fed at the same time. Academics are very keen on food and schedules.”

Martha nodded and tried to remember who Mr. Phillips was. The English teacher, maybe? Something like that. Jenny had told her all their names yesterday, but they sort of blurred together.

Of course, the maids got hard rolls left over from last night for breakfast, and the professors got a full English on a silver tray delivered to their bedrooms. And then the professors would spend all day on intellectual labors while the maids did hard physical work.

Hopefully at some point she’d be able to sneak back to the TARDIS and get a stash of protein bars and multivitamins, or something.

“Ah, Martha,” Mr. Smith said when she entered with the tray. “How are you settling in?”

“Very well, thank you, sir,” she said. She’d have to get used to the servility. “And yourself?”

“Fine, fine.” He was giving her an inscrutable look, and she hoped that she hadn’t managed to completely botch the etiquette already. She busied herself with making his bed. God, this servant business was rubbish.

“Martha,” he finally said when she was finished with the bed, “We’ve known each other for a long time, haven’t we?”

“Feels like my whole life sometimes,” she said honestly. A few months with the Doctor had more weight than years on Earth.

“Yes, quite. And despite the difference in our positions, I have come to consider you a friend. And so it is as your friend and not as your employer—not that I am that, not directly, but you take my meaning—that I tell you this.” He put a hand to the back of his head in such a Doctorish gesture that she almost expected him to pull out the sonic next. “We’ve been accustomed to behaving...somewhat familiarly with one another. That cannot continue here. I must have the respect of the students, and if one of the boys should see me allowing impertinence from a colored servant...you understand what
I’m saying, don’t you?”

“Of course, Mr. Smith,” she said coolly, making an effort not to clench her teeth or her fists. At least he remembered being friends with her, that had to count for something.

“Good, good.” He began to tuck into the breakfast she’d brought him, and she finished tidying his bedroom before turning to leave.

“Oh, and Martha?” he said as she was almost at the door.

“Yes, sir?” she asked, turning back. She was surprised to see an almost beseeching look on his face.

“I do still count you as a friend, you know,” he said. “Even if it isn’t a feeling that I can show in company.”

“I consider you a friend, too,” she said. “And I do understand.”

She left his room to begin a day of backbreaking, mind-numbing labor. The other two maids, Rebecca and Eliza, weren’t as cheery or as chatty as Jenny, but they seemed to follow the older woman’s lead in accepting Martha as one of their own. Cook, who was never referred to by any name other than her job title in Martha’s hearing, was a small but formidable woman who would tolerate nothing short of perfection, but she was clearly careful to put aside food for all the servants equally. The kitchen girls looked through Martha as though she didn’t exist, and the housekeeper continued to make unpleasant faces at her.

When the boys and the professors had had their tea, the maids got a quick break for their own, and took the opportunity to fill Martha in on any of the gossip Jenny had missed the afternoon before.

“I heard that Beth in the kitchens has taken up with one of the boys,” Rebecca informed them solemnly.

“Don’t be daft, she’s a flighty thing but she’s not that stupid,” Jenny scoffed.
“No, really! I heard her telling the others that he’d promised to get her a position at his family’s house when he graduated.”

“A belly full of bastard and a dismissal’s all you can expect, taking up with one of them,” Eliza said darkly. “Barely more than children, those boys. Probably don’t even know to take it out.”

“Eliza!” Jenny admonished, mock-scandalized.

“I bet they learn that in them Latin classes,” Rebecca giggled.

“Why Latin?” Martha asked.

“My dear Miss Jones,” Rebecca answered, affecting a posh tone, “Don’t tell me you’ve never heard of coitus interruptus!”

All of them dissolved into laughter, Martha included.

“Ooh, I’ll bet she has at that,” Jenny said with a wicked grin. “That Mr. Smith looks like he’s interruptusted a few coituses.”

“I told you, I’m not messing about with Mr. Smith,” Martha said, irritated.

“Oh, come on, love, we’ll tell you ours,” Rebecca cajoled. “I’ve been with Mr. Stevens for nearly two years, I have. He’s the history teacher.”

“I already told you about me and the groundskeeper,” Jenny said. “Eliza’s not had a man since Mr. Pemberly left—he was the maths teacher before your Mr. Smith—but she’s got her sights set on the headmaster now.”

“Oh, I do not,” Eliza said, rolling her eyes. “The headmaster’s a right bore, and married besides.”
“As if that’s ever stopped a man,” Jenny quipped.

“His wife’s a right shrew,” Eliza said. “I’m sure he’s in need of the comfort, but I doubt he could get as much as a penny to me without her noticing, headmaster or not.”

“So that’s just...normal here, then?” Martha asked. “The money?”

“Well, of course,” Rebecca said. “Who’d have the time to be a mistress without getting something out of it?”

“You really aren’t with Mr. Smith, are you?” Jenny asked. “Don’t tell me you’re a virgin…”

“No, no,” Martha said. “I just...not with him. Don’t think he’s interested.”

“Course he is,” Eliza scoffed. “He’s a man.”

They had to get back to work then, scrubbing floors and waxing banisters, but Jenny pulled Martha aside before they reentered the “public” area of the school, the part that wasn’t servants only.

“Martha, once the professors realize you’re not taken, some of them might try something,” she said quietly and urgently. “Don’t take up with Mr. Dunway, all right? The girl who worked here before you, Mary, she took up with him and he got her pregnant. I think Matron would’ve helped her, but, well, she was Irish Catholic and all, and anyway she ended up getting sent away with nothing but the fare home. He wouldn’t even give her enough for a proper pregnancy dress. Shameful, it was.”

“I’ll remember,” Martha said. She rubbed her upper arm, where she’d had the implant done a bit over a year prior. At least that was one thing she wouldn’t have to worry about...but the idea of amorous employers was terrifying enough on its own. “Thanks.”

Jenny nodded, and they got back to work.
Sunday

Chapter Summary

Martha spends her first Sunday off on the TARDIS.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Martha had been afraid that “You get Sunday off” was code for “You’re required to sit through a boring church service,” but apparently no one was actually bothering to monitor the servants’ spiritual lives. She made the trek out to the run-down cottage where the TARDIS had landed instead.

God, it was good to get back on the TARDIS. Before she did anything else, Martha stripped off her period-appropriate clothing and took a long bath, in the big tub where the water never got dirty or cold. She stuck to unscented soap and didn’t use any bubble bath, but it was still heavenly. Once she’d dried off, she put on a thick, soft bathrobe and headed to the galley.

Hot coffee, fresh fruit, a ham and cheese sandwich, a dish of chocolate ice cream...she’d only spent five days as a servant in 1913 so far, and already these things seemed like luxuries.

Next Sunday, she promised herself, she’d go over her textbooks. She couldn’t spend three months without studying, but she could give herself this one day off, to rest.

When she’d eaten her fill, she sat back with a satisfied sigh and opened a bottle of a cider-like beverage she’d picked up on one of her more relaxing trips with the Doctor. Jenny and Eliza had gone down to the pub the night before, but she’d been too tired and had gone to bed early instead. Maybe next week she’d have gotten used to it a bit better.

Everything would be so much more bearable if the Doctor was still the Doctor, she mused. She could almost imagine him in the galley with her, expounding on something-or-other and trying to decide where they’d go once they could finally leave.

Since she’d come aboard for good they’d had some fairly intimate conversations in this galley, talking about her family or occasionally his lost world. The first night she was officially onboard as more than a passenger, with her name on her door and everything, had also been the first time he’d joined her there; before that, he must’ve eaten while she slept, or something.
She hadn’t expected to see him, so she’d let her guard down and was nearly crying, trying not to let tears drop on the pages of her textbook. It had been at least ten minutes since she’d turned the page, but she couldn’t have said what was on it if her life depended on it.

It was a surprise when the Doctor came in, and even more of a surprise when he didn’t turn and run the instant he saw the look on her face. Instead he quietly made tea, handed her a mug, and sat across from her with one of his own.

“More people would have died if we hadn’t been there,” he said once she’d thanked him and taken a sip. “Even Lazarus would’ve burnt himself out, in the end.”

“It’s not that,” she said. “Well, I suppose it is that, a bit. But...well, I should probably be less upset about being wrong than I am about people dying, but I’m not.”

“Wrong?” the Doctor asked, frowning. “Wrong how? You got everyone out, you figured out that Lazarus was on the roof...”

“I know, I know. I just...” She took a deep breath, trying to put her thoughts into words. “When I looked out the window of the hospital and saw that we were on the moon, I didn’t understand how it happened. And I still don’t, I mean, ‘hydrogen scoop’ is just words to me, but I can conceive of technology that could do that somehow. And I don’t understand how the TARDIS can be bigger on the inside, or how it can travel through time, but I can accept that there are things about space and time and dimensions that we don’t understand yet. I couldn’t build a time machine, but it makes sense to me, you know? I get the concept.

“But Lazarus...you said he used hypersonic sound waves to change his DNA, and at first that made him younger, and then it made him turn into a giant scorpion monster that could suck out people’s life energy, and he could turn back, and that just makes no sense! That’s not ‘I don’t understand yet but maybe I could someday,’ that’s just...that’s a part of the universe I thought I understood, DNA and the human body and all, and apparently I know nothing! No, less than nothing, because everything I thought I knew, everything in my textbooks, everything I’ve been studying, is just completely wrong! Changing his DNA shouldn’t have done anything, not right away. Maybe it would’ve given him cancer eventually, but making him younger? And there’s a template for a scorpion monster stored in human DNA, just waiting to come out? It’s nonsense! Complete nonsense, but I saw it happen, and that must mean that everything I know is nonsense, and I might as well have spent the past eight years of my life studying phrenology and the humors.”

“Now, you know that’s not true,” the Doctor said. “You lot may not have everything right yet, but
you have the scientific method down pretty well, at least. Most of what you’re learning to do for your patients does actually work, you know.”

“Well, yes, that’s true,” she said. “It’s just frustrating, realizing that I must be so wrong about so much. Not just ignorant, but wrong, and on such a fundamental level. I don’t know how I’m going to be able to keep studying when I know how wrong it all is. How do we look to you? Running about thinking we know how DNA works, and all.”

The Doctor grimaced, rubbing the back of his head.

“So...when I was explaining what had happened to Lazarus, I might have been guilty of a bit of...oversimplification?” he admitted sheepishly.

“What?”

“Well, you know, we were sort of in a hurry. Didn’t really have time to be thorough. Definitely no time to answer follow-up questions.”

“Sure, but if what you said was true, even if it was an oversimplification, I’d have so much to unlearn before I could even ask intelligent questions.”

“Weeeeell...yes. It may not all have been completely true, as such.”

“Are you serious?” she asked. “Which parts weren’t true, then?”

“There isn’t really a template for a scorpion monster in human DNA. And changing your DNA can’t make you look younger. And...all of it, I suppose. Pretty much all of it.”

For a moment, Martha was tempted to imitate her mother and slap him.

“So what really happened, then?” she asked.
He explained to her, in his long-winded Doctorly way, that as far as his people had been able to determine, someone had once gone back to the very beginning of time and changed things to make it more likely that any intelligent life that developed would look as much like Time Lords as possible—specifically Time Lords, because they were the only ones who had that shape who didn’t have traces of meddling in their timeline.

Apparently, while Lazarus may have thought he was changing his DNA, what he was actually changing was his timeline, resetting himself to an earlier state (which affected his DNA along with everything else, but that wasn’t the root cause). But he hadn’t taken into account the existence of other universes, including some where humanity had never been meddled with.

“So...wait,” Martha interrupted at that point. “Are you saying that if some Time Lord hadn’t messed us about, humans would be giant bony scorpion monsters?”

“Not exactly,” he said, tugging his ear. “He was some sort of hybrid. The human-ish face, the human-ish ribcage you could see...that wasn’t supposed to be there. Actually I believe the real, er, alternate human form was much smaller, about four feet long, with a rather striking dark green exoskeleton. Quite lovely, really. And they couldn’t suck out people’s temporal energy, of course, that was another result of the project going wrong.”

“And they were...are...would have been intelligent?”

“Oh yes.”

“So I’m supposed to be a scorpion?”

“‘Supposed’ isn’t really the right word, I’d say. It supposes that there’s someone to be doing the supposing. Studying what the universe would have been like without that change was a whole branch of science on Gallifrey, and most experts agreed that there would have been a good deal less interspecies cooperation and understanding.”

“Still, though. One of your lot mucked about with my entire species.”

“That does seem to be the most likely explanation,” he agreed. “That’s a big reason that my people were dead set against any kind of interference with other races for a long time. We’d already done rather more than enough.”
Martha took a moment to digest this information, sipping at her tea.

“Anyway, you’re not as wrong as you thought you were, so that’s something,” the Doctor said. “I mean, you still have a very, very, very long way to go before you’ll really understand much of anything, but you’re not completely wrong about how your own bodies work.”

“Well, thanks very much,” she said, only half-sarcastically.

Remembering that conversation made Martha want to hear the Doctor’s voice, so different from John Smith’s. She went into the console room and figured out how to replay his message to her.

“Four: You. Don’t let me abandon you. Number five: I’ve set the TARDIS to take us to a random time and place with plenty of humans, but knowing her, there’s a good chance that means England. If it’s anywhere near your time, don’t go looking up your family. Only leads to trouble, trust me.”

“Trust me,” he said. She’d just have to do that. Trust him and wait, even though she wanted to yell in his stupid adorable face that he already had abandoned her.

Chapter End Notes

So that’s my headcanon for A) the absurd pseudoscientific gobbledygook that is “The Lazarus Experiment” (fun episode, but the technobabble makes me wince) and B) why everybody happens to look just like humans/Time Lords.
The days went by in a dreary blur of work, punctuated by tea with the other maids, Saturday night drinks with Jenny and occasionally Eliza, and Sundays on the TARDIS. At the end of the first month, Martha had lost nearly a stone, and gained calluses on her hands and her knees.

On the first Monday of the second month, Martha headed down to the kitchen to get breakfast while Jenny was still slowly dressing—her day of relative luxury on the TARDIS gave her considerably more energy than any of the other girls at the beginning of the week, which had led to some good-natured grumbling and ribbing.

There was leftover chicken stock to go with their hard dinner rolls that morning, and Martha took her time, letting the bread soak as Cook and the kitchen girls, ignoring her entirely, finished making breakfast for the professors.

“It’s Martha, isn’t it?” one of the girls quietly asked Martha after they’d finished putting it on trays. Martha looked at her, startled; neither of them had ever deigned to address her before, although they were friendly enough with Jenny and Eliza. (Rebecca, being “a Jewess,” was nearly as snubbed as Martha.)

The girl who had spoke was thin and mousy, and to Martha’s eye, no more than eighteen. Beth, that was her name.

“That’s right,” Martha said warily. “What can I do for you?”

“I hate to ask, but do you think you could take Mr. Dunway his tray this morning?” she asked quietly. She looked terrified. “I’ll take Mr. Smith his.”

“Why?” Martha asked.
“He’s been touching me, lately,” she confessed in a near whisper. “I can’t get him to stop.”

“Can’t you tell someone?” Martha asked without thinking. Beth looked at her with contempt.

“If you won’t do it, just say so,” she said.

“No, no, I’ll do it,” Martha said.

“Oh, thank you,” Beth said. “Thank you, thank you, and I promise it’ll just be for today. Jenny said she’d do it when we were at the pub Saturday, but she’s not down yet, and he likes his breakfast on the dot, and I was worried I’d have to…”

“Just today, then,” Martha said. She wondered whether Beth would go back to ignoring her existence after today. Probably.

Mr. Dunway taught physical education and shooting. He was a broad-shouldered, red-faced man with a walrusy moustache. Like all the teachers (including John, when anyone else was around) he had a remarkable talent for treating the maids like they were invisible.

When Martha entered his room, she was startled to find him waiting for her nude and erect. He seemed equally startled to find that she wasn’t Beth.

Unable to think of anything appropriate to say or do, Martha averted her eyes and cleared a space to put the tray down on his desk as quickly as she could. Before she could leave, he put on a robe and moved to stand between her and the door.

“It’s Martha, isn’t it?” he asked.

“Yes, sir,” she said.

“You can’t leave yet, this room is a disgrace,” he said.
It was a fairly decent mess, considering that it had been cleaned on Saturday, but Martha was in no mood.

“I’ll come back and clean it when you’re at class, sir, it’s no trouble,” she said.

“Nonsense, you’ll clean it now or I’ll inform the housekeeper,” he said.

Heart pounding and adrenaline rushing, Martha began to clean. If he laid a hand on her, she told herself, she would knee him in the groin and run for the TARDIS. She could stay on board for the next two months, taking baths and stuffing her face and studying her textbooks, and John Smith could just fend for himself. The Doctor probably wouldn’t even argue with her decision...assuming he survived.

“Will you be bringing my breakfast tomorrow as well?” he asked when she finally finished.

“No, sir,” she said.

“Pity,” he said. “I’m certain I’ll see you around, though.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Run along now,” he said, and finally moved away from the door. It took an enormous amount of willpower for her to exit only at a brisk walk.

He swatted at her arse as she went by, and she clenched her hands into fists but didn’t stop.

For the rest of that week, he seemed to be everywhere. Passing her on the stairs, walking by when she scrubbed the floor, watching her over the heads of his students, his flat grey eyes and amused smile seemed to haunt her. Any time he caught her alone, there was a pinch or a caress or an outright grope. The Friday after she brought him breakfast, he caught her alone on the stairs and grabbed her by the wrist, pressed her hand against the front of his trousers for a moment, then kept walking as though nothing had happened.
“I don’t know what to do,” she told Jenny while they drank outside the pub that Saturday. “Before he ignored me, now I can’t keep him off me. Does he bother you?”

“Oh, no,” Jenny said, sounding sympathetic. “No, he leaves me alone. Because I’ve got a man, you know. That’s what you need to do, get yourself a man, let him know you’re unavailable.”

“What, so my options are sleep with him or sleep with someone else?”

“Or keep trying to avoid him forever,” Jenny said with a shrug. “That’s the way the world is, you know. Besides, it’s not that bad, being with a man. A good one can make it quite fun.”

“I know that, I’m just not really interested in anyone right now.”

“Not even your Mr. Smith?” she asked.

“We’re just friends,” Martha insisted

“Well, if he really is your friend,” Jenny said skeptically, “then he’ll help you out with Dunway.”

“I suppose it couldn’t hurt to ask,” she admitted.

“Well, it could always hurt, but probably less than Dunway would,” Jenny said.

Martha drained her beer and thought longingly of workplace harassment lawsuits and feminism.
Friendship

Chapter Notes

John Smith is not a bad guy, but he doesn’t quite grasp the implications of the power dynamic that he and Martha are living in.

Since their conversation on the first day, Martha and Mr. Smith hadn’t spoken much beyond general “I hope you slept well” pleasantries. Still, he always had a genuine smile for her (so different from the Doctor’s) and was never unkind. She was fairly certain that even if he declined to help her, he wouldn’t take it out on her.

Nevertheless, his breakfast tray shook in her hands as she entered his room on Monday morning. The idea of actually exposing a weakness, her fear of Mr. Dunway, was honestly terrifying. If he wanted to, Mr. Smith could rearrange things to make her spend more time around Dunway.

Hopefully there was enough Doctor in there to prevent anything like that, but still...she shook.

“Ah, good morning, Martha,” he said when she entered.

“Good morning, Mr. Smith,” she said, and her voice must have trembled, because he gave her a concerned look.

“I say, are you quite well?” he asked. “You look like you’ve taken a fright.”

As if it was the most natural thing in the world, he moved to clear a space for her to put the tray down--actually helped her do her job. Her hands and her breathing steadied.

“Actually, sir, I was hoping to ask for your help with something,” she said. Sometimes she noticed how natural the word ‘sir’ felt on her tongue now and resented it. “It’s a bit...indelicate, though.”

“Oh?” he asked warily.
“It’s Mr. Dunway, sir. Ever since I brought him his breakfast last week--the day that Beth brought yours--he’s been, well, behaving improperly towards me.”

“I see,” Mr. Smith said slowly. “And you’ve made it clear to him that these advances are unwanted?”

“Yes, sir,” Martha said, clenching her jaw. He wouldn’t be asking that if he’d seen the way Dunway looked at her, coldly amused by her fear.

“And he persists?” He looked like he was at a loss. “Perhaps if you took it up with the housekeeper…?”

“The housekeeper doesn’t listen to me,” Martha said. “And even if she did, she wouldn’t dare go against one of the teachers. No one listens to me who is actually in a position to help. I was hoping that you still considered me a friend.”

“Of course,” he said immediately. He moved to sit on the bed, and motioned for Martha to take the chair. “Of course I do. But I’m not certain how I can help, short of outright accusing one of my colleagues of gross impropriety.”

“No, I know you can’t just do that,” Martha said, sinking gratefully into the chair. “But the other maids have suggested that the teachers have ways of, well, letting one another know when one of us is...taken.”

“I see,” he said slowly. He was giving her an appraising look that gave her the oddest sort of chill. “What exactly are you proposing?”

“If you could just make it clear to Mr. Dunway that I’m off limits, sir, I would very much appreciate it,” she said.

He raised an eyebrow, and it hurt how much he looked like the Doctor.

“I assume you realize that the most effective way to communicate that information would be if you were seen leaving my room in the morning.”
“You can’t just tell him?” Martha asked.

“That is not how these things work among gentlemen,” he said condescendingly.

“So...what do you suggest?”

He stood up and paced, not meeting her eyes.

“I realize that attempting to solve your problem with unwanted advances by making advances of my own may not be ideal,” he said, “But if you would consider me as a potential alternative to Mr. Dunway, I shall endeavor to ensure you do not regret your choice.”

Martha was speechless.

“You don’t have to decide now,” he said. “But if you were to come to my rooms tonight, or any night in the future, I certainly wouldn’t turn you away. And while I am by no means a wealthy man, I think I could make your life noticeably more comfortable.”

“That’s...good to know,” Martha said, belatedly adding, “Sir.”

She left quickly after that, her head spinning. The Doctor had just propositioned her. Actually, not just propositioned...he was taking advantage of her vulnerable position to try to get sex.

In her own time, she’d have called him a monster, but in 1913...she knew he didn’t really deserve credit just for being nice about pressuring her for sex, but looking at it practically, it did make it more likely that he’d continue to be nice if she did sleep with him, right? He didn’t seem to be after her discomfort and unhappiness, not like Dunway was. He wanted to sleep with her, not to hurt her.

He wanted to fuck her. John Smith, who was and wasn’t the Doctor, wanted to fuck her. She felt fairly confident that Mr. Smith hadn’t been talking about spending a celibate night together, the way she and the Doctor had many times before. He was actually offering her what she’d wanted since she met him.
And if it had just been a proposition, she would have said no. Obviously. John Smith wasn’t the Doctor, not really, and doing that to the Doctor would be unforgivable. But he wouldn’t want her to continue to leave herself open to Dunway...would he?

She tried to think how she would feel if their positions were reversed, but it just made her more confused.

That night, Martha snuck out of the room she shared with Jenny and made her way to the TARDIS in the dark, her heart in her throat. Obviously the Doctor hadn’t foreseen this scenario when he left her instructions, but she needed to listen to them again, she if she could get any idea of how he would actually feel about this.

“Seven: try not to let me cut my hair, if it can be avoided.” On the screen, he ran a hand over his hair protectively. “Eight: definitely don’t let me amputate any limbs or anything. I’ve no idea what would happen if I tried to change back with an arm missing. Number nine, aside from that, I’ll be entirely competent to provide medical consent and so on, so don’t go getting twisted up about medical ethics if anything should come up.”

She paused, rewound, and listened to number nine again. It wasn’t quite “You have permission to shag me if it becomes unavoidable,” but...maybe it was close enough?

What were her options, really? She couldn’t continue as she had been, living in fear of Dunway’s escalating advances. She couldn’t just stay on the TARDIS and spend the next two months powerlessly hoping the hunters wouldn’t catch up with them. Maybe she could have propositioned one of the other professors, but that seemed like it had a great deal of potential to blow up in her face.

“I’m sorry,” she said to the Doctor’s paused face on the TARDIS screen. “If you were here, maybe you could think of another way, but you’re not. It’s just me, and I can’t think of anything.”

She made her way back to Farringham and collapsed onto her hard mattress. Tomorrow, she’d go to him.
This chapter contains explicit sexual content between Martha and John Smith. Consent is somewhat dubious on both sides. Proceed with caution.

As she climbed the stairs to Mr. Smith’s room with his breakfast tray once again, Martha worried that he would have taken her absence the night before as a rejection. Men who thought they’d been rejected could be dangerous.

But he had a friendly smile and his usual “Good morning” for her, and she relaxed. He was her friend. That hadn’t changed with his name or his species.

“I had to think last night,” she told him quietly as she tidied. “But I’ll be here tonight, when I’ve finished my duties.”

Eyes dark, he nodded.

The fact that he still wanted to go through with it—even though she was obviously reluctant, and obviously not making the choice entirely freely—made Martha feel sick. But she’d wanted to see a look like that on the Doctor’s face for so long…

Caught in a strange space between disgust and arousal, Martha quickly finished cleaning the room and went about the rest of her day.

It was like roleplaying, she told herself firmly. She’d have jumped at the chance to play “sexy maid” with the Doctor. Sure, she could have stuck to principle and reminded herself of all the reasons this was messed up, but the next almost-two-months would be a lot more pleasant if she concentrated on the good and just let herself enjoy it.

Mr. Dunway cornered her on the stairs again that day, and he actually licked her, dragging his tongue from the neck of her dress to her ear before pulling back to leer at her.
“Mr. Smith wouldn’t like you doing that, sir,” Martha said, hating the fact that she needed to invoke another man to get him to leave her alone.

“Is that so?” he asked. “Funny you haven’t mentioned it before now. Is it because you prefer my attentions to those of that scrawny boy?”

“No, sir,” she said. “Mr. Smith and I have recently come to an arrangement. Please excuse me.”

She rushed away before he could say anything else.

“So Martha, where were you last night?” Jenny asked at tea. “Got up to use the pot and you were nowhere to be found.”

“I took a walk,” Martha said truthfully.

“In the middle of the night?”

“It helps me think.” Hoping to change the subject before more questions could be asked, she hastily added, “Anyway, I’ve decided to take up with Mr. Smith.”

“About time, too,” Jenny said.

“Oh yes, none of us could have predicted it,” Rebecca agreed with an eyeroll.

“You don’t have to make fun,” Martha said, irritated. “I’m a bit nervous about it, really. I didn’t really want to do it, I just wanted that bastard Dunway to leave me alone.”

“Mr. Smith seems a decent enough sort,” Jenny said. “I’m sure it’ll be fine, love.”

“If he tries to do anything that seems worse than being sacked, you can always start screaming,” Eliza said matter-of-factly. “Otherwise, well, at least it’s better than being sacked.”
“Oh, don’t scare the poor girl,” Rebecca scolded. “Jenny’s right, Mr. Smith seems perfectly nice.”

“He’s a man,” Eliza said. “It’s not a question of whether he’s rotten, just of how much.”

Those words echoed in Martha’s ears as she climbed the stairs to Mr. Smith’s room last night, along with the first instruction from the Doctor’s video: “Don’t let me hurt anyone. We can’t have that, but you know how humans are.”

Mr. Smith wasn’t her Doctor, and he was willing to take advantage of her, and he very well might hurt her. She reminded herself of her “playing sexy maid for the Doctor” idea, but it didn’t help. The Doctor didn’t know he was playing...which meant that even though he was pressuring her into this, he wasn’t exactly consenting freely either. It was like some demented thought experiment.

She hesitated outside Mr. Smith’s door. Should she knock, or just go in? Should she go back to her room? Maybe telling Mr. Dunway that she was with Mr. Smith had been enough and he’d leave her alone. Maybe she should run back to the TARDIS and not leave for two months. Maybe she should go into Mr. Smith’s room and make him open the watch.

The sound of someone else approaching made up her mind for her, and she opened Mr. Smith’s door and quickly stepped inside.

He was sitting at his desk in his shirtsleeves, apparently marking papers, but he leapt to his feet the moment she entered. His hair was a mess, as though he’d been running his hands through it all evening.

“I wasn’t sure you’d come,” he said breathlessly, and for all that he wasn’t really the Doctor and she wasn’t sure she wanted this, he was adorable.

“Well, here I am,” she said, with a slightly strained laugh.

She wasn’t sure how this part was supposed to go. Not that she was a virgin or anything; she’d been with a few guys before, but with each of them, it had been a gradual progression from dating to kissing to touching to sex. She’d never come to the bedroom of a man she’d never even kissed (that one time on the moon didn’t count, for several reasons) with the understanding that they would be having sex.
Would he kiss her? Was she supposed to just...strip? She felt paralyzed by uncertainty as she watched him walk across the room to her, pinned by his dark eyes.

“You don’t need to be afraid, Martha,” he said, reaching out to touch her face gently. “I’m not going to hurt you. I’m your friend.”

“Yes, sir,” she breathed automatically. He chuckled.

“I think ‘John’ would be more appropriate at this juncture, don’t you?” he asked, sliding his fingers down the curve of her neck to her collar. His face slowly approached her own, his eyes moving to focus on her lips. “You are so very lovely.”

“Thank you, John,” she said, closing her eyes as his lips met hers.

She couldn’t help but compare it to the time the Doctor had kissed her. John’s lips were warmer, slower and firmer against hers, and she didn’t feel the coolness spilling into her mind that the Doctor had later explained had temporarily changed her brainwave patterns enough to fool the Judoon scanners for a moment longer. This wasn’t a ruse, wasn’t a “genetic transfer”; this was a kiss with intent, unhurried and purposeful, giving her enough time to respond in kind. This kiss was going somewhere.

In fact, it was going somewhere fast. Martha could feel John’s hands at her back, deftly undoing the buttons of her dress. God, she felt as nervous and horny and uncertain as a teenager, wanting to pull him close and push him away in equal measure. She settled for mostly-passively accepting his attentions, kissing him back without restraint but neither particularly helping nor hindering his efforts to disrobe her.

Soon she was bared to the waist, and he trailed kisses down her neck to her nipple, licking and sucking and biting just hard enough to add a sharp edge of pain to her pleasure. Martha gasped and clutched at him, one hand on his back and the other buried in that gorgeous hair.

For a moment she thought he was pulling away, but he tugged her along, walking her towards the bed. It was all ridiculously fast and she could feel her thighs sliding against each other with how wet she was and he was pulling her down to the bed, pulling her skirts and underclothes off, and she hadn’t realized that men in this time even knew about cunnilingus but there he was, the Doctor/not the Doctor, still fully clothed but with one sleeve rolled up to his elbow (when had he even done
that?) moving his agile tongue against her clit and curling his long fingers inside her and she was already so fucking close.

“Yes,” he hissed, pausing to nip at her thigh, “You’re going to get off for me, aren’t you?”

“Don’t stop!” she said, not certain whether she was begging or demanding, and he got back to it eagerly, driving her higher and higher until she had to bite down on her own hand to keep from screaming.

He kept it up as she came, prolonging her orgasm until she tried to squirm away, then brought her down with gentle strokes to her labia, running his tongue from her vagina to her clitoris and back.

Then he sat up and finished removing his shirt, and reality started to leak back into Martha’s mind. Somehow she hadn’t expected him to have body hair, but there was a rather attractive smattering across his chest. Maybe he grew it when he became human. He removed his trousers as well, and she could see a thick patch of pubic hair surrounding a semi-erect penis.

“Feeling better about things now?” he asked, laying back down beside her with a smug smile.

She wanted to say no, actually, the orgasm (fantastic though it was) hadn’t changed anything and she felt just as conflicted and confused as before, but she knew that wasn’t what he wanted to hear, so she half-smiled and ducked her head to kiss his jaw in what she hoped looked like shyness rather than confusion.

“I’m the first man who’s done that for you, aren’t I,” he said, and he sounded so self-satisfied and her whole life right now was a lie anyway, so she nodded against his neck.

“You deserve it,” he said, putting his arm around her and stroking her hair. His cock was pressing against her thigh, hardening as he rubbed it against her. “You’re a beautiful woman, and you deserve to feel good. I’m going to put it in now, but I promise I’ll pull out before I shoot, all right?”

“You...oh. You don’t have to,” she said. “I can’t get pregnant.”

“You’re sure?” he asked, raising an eyebrow.
“Pretty stupid thing to lie about,” she told him. “I...fell, when I was young. The doctor said there’s no chance.”

“Oh, Martha, I’m so sorry,” he said, leaving off humping her to put his arms around her. “That’s terrible.”

“Really, it’s fine,” she said, unable to stop herself from melting into his embrace. He might be comforting her for the wrong thing, but she’d take what she could get. “I’ve known for years, I’ve accepted it. And it does make some things easier.”

“Well, yes,” John agreed. “Still, though, I’m sorry.”

He kissed her softly, gently, and it really did feel like he cared about her. Then she felt him reach down and start rubbing his cock against her thigh, stroking himself hard, and...well, that didn’t necessarily mean he didn’t care about her, but it wasn’t exactly comforting. Arousing, but not comforting.

When he was fully erect, he moved her onto her back, lying between her legs. He kissed her as he guided her legs apart and slowly slid inside her.

“You’re so wet,” he whispered in her ear. “I love knowing that I did that to you.”

Then he began to move in her, one hand on her breast and the other holding up her thigh. She wrapped that leg around him and planted the other against the mattress for leverage, moving up to meet him.

“You love this, don’t you?” he asked. “Tell me that you love it.”

“I love it,” she moaned, not sure whether she was still lying. “Oh, I love it.”

He moved faster, his hip bones digging into her thighs with each thrust. She’d imagined that before, the skinny, bony Doctor giving her femoral bruises, and she clutched at John, moaning when he sank his teeth into the flesh where her neck met her shoulder and squeezing her pussy around him as hard
as she could, for the sensation and to please him and to make it end.

Then he was coming, the Doctor’s face twisted in orgasm only inches from her own, and even if she hadn’t wanted it like this, she had still wanted it, and she could feel him pulsing inside her.

He sagged against her when it had passed, and she stroked his sweaty back and pressed soft kisses to the side of his neck, and that was barely a lie at all.

Chapter End Notes

In case you're wondering, I did research to ensure that the sexual terminology John Smith uses is appropriate for the time period. People have been doing and saying all sorts of dirty things *forever.*
It was lucky that Martha had always been a wake-before-the-alarm sort of person, because she hadn’t set an alarm before she fell asleep in John’s arms. She woke before the sun, as usual, and was temporarily disoriented by the warm, softly snoring presence beside her.

For a moment, she thought of the first time she woke up next to the Doctor, in that narrow bed in Elizabethan England. He’d been wide awake; as she learned later, he didn’t actually sleep. She’d never quite worked up the nerve to ask him why he’d gotten in bed with her in the first place.

John was curled up tightly on his side of the bed, drooling into his pillow. Martha impulsively kissed his forehead before slipping out of bed and dressing as quietly as she could. She’d need to go back to her and Jenny’s room to wash and get her hair in order, then down to the kitchens to get John’s breakfast.

Mr. Smith’s breakfast, rather. It wouldn’t do to be too familiar with him in public. People might make correct assumptions, and that would just be terrible. Or rather, it might look like they weren’t making an effort to avoid letting people make those assumptions, even though in fact she wanted them to. Etiquette was confusing.

Martha ran into Rebecca in the hallway that ran from the teachers’ rooms to the servants’ quarters, and they quietly laughed at each others’ mussed hair and wrinkled clothes.

“So how was your Mr. Smith, then?” Rebecca asked in a low voice.

“He was…” Martha struggled to find words. “Quite good, if a bit full of himself.”

Rebecca snorted with laughter.

“How are you feeling?” she asked.

“Haven’t really had a chance to think about it,” Martha answered honestly. “But I think I’m okay.”

“Good,” Rebecca said, and hugged her. The two separated to go to their own rooms and prepare for
Jenny didn’t tend to be particularly verbal this early in the morning, so all Martha got from her was a mumbled “have fun, did you?” When they got down to the kitchen to hurriedly eat their breakfasts, Eliza was more forthcoming.

“So, how rotten was he?”

“He wanted me to be grateful for everything he did,” Martha said. “Even though he was making me let him. Not that it wasn’t good, but…”

“Oh, one of those,” Eliza said knowingly. “Thinks he’s God’s gift because he gets off on you getting off, eh?”

“Exactly!” Martha said. “Which I guess is better than a lot of things he could get off on.”

“Is he at least good at it?”

Martha blushed and nodded.

“There you go, then. It’s the ones who make you pretend they’re fantastic who are the most annoying,” Eliza said. “Don’t forget, we’re on laundry after we serve breakfast today. Don’t let him keep you up there for long, I’m not doing it by myself.”

“Of course,” Martha said, and went to collect Mr. Smith’s tray.

It was like there were three of him now, John, Mr. Smith, and the Doctor. She had to have a whole separate way of interacting with each one, waking up next to John and then delivering Mr. Smith his breakfast.

They exchanged their usual good mornings, but once she’d set his tray down, he pulled her to him and kissed her thoroughly.
“I slept so well with you beside me,” he told her. “Will you come back again tonight?”

“Yes,” she said, because he’d asked instead of telling.

He kissed her again, then let her get on with cleaning his room while he ate his breakfast.

“I have these dreams,” he told her as she worked. “These very odd dreams, where I’m a sort of adventurer, a wanderer. Last night, you were there with me.”

“I was in your dream?” she asked.

“Yes. You were wearing, well, frankly a shockingly indecent dress, but somehow in the dream I hardly noticed it. It seemed perfectly normal, the way things in dreams do.” He leaned back his head to take a sip of tea, and she remembered running kisses along that jawline. “We were trapped together in some sort of blindingly white capsule, and I was at your feet with an odd tool, trying to make an escape, I think. It was very strange.”

Martha remembered that moment vividly, when they’d been in Lazarus’ machine. At the time, she’d been too afraid to take notice, but later on she’d replayed the memory in private, guiltily and frequently. The Doctor in his James Bond tuxedo, pressed against her in that cramped space, pulling out his sonic and then sliding down her body to the floor…

“That does sound strange,” she agreed, quietly disturbed by the reminder that the Doctor was still in there somewhere. Would he remember John Smith’s life in dreams, when he was back to himself?

“Yes. It seems frightfully symbolic, but I can’t think what of,” John mused.

Martha tried to remember whether Freud’s writings had been popularized yet. She thought they had, but wasn’t certain enough to chance a reference.

“Well, I hope it doesn’t mean you want to escape from me,” she joked.

“Certainly not,” he said. “Even in the dream, I quite definitely wanted to escape and take you with me. It was probably just my subconscious wishing I could spend the next few days in bed with you.
instead of teaching algebra.”

“I think someone would be suspicious if we both came down sick at once,” Martha said.

“Yes, quite.” He kissed her again, a quick peck on the lips. “You’d best move along before I’m tempted to keep both of us from our duties. I’ll see you tonight.”

“Tonight,” she echoed, and went off to another day of drudgery.

The other girls teased her a bit during tea, but she could feel an undercurrent of genuine concern for her wellbeing. Jenny in particular was straightforward about it.

“I’m the one who suggested that you take up with him in the first place,” she said. “So if he does anything to hurt you, just you let me know. We’ll get you out of here, or get him sacked, or at the very least make sure his food’s cold and his bed’s dirty.”

“I don’t think he’s going to,” Martha said. “He’s sweet, for a man.”

Eliza snorted.

That night, she walked the hall to the teachers’ wing with far more confidence than the night before. She saw Mr. Dunway for the first time that day, sitting in his room with the door open looking out onto the hallway, and she very deliberately met his eyes before turning to open the door to John’s room.

She let the spectre of the Doctor and the temporary truth of their differences in station fall away, and that night, they were just John and Martha.
Sunday with John

Chapter Notes

Content note: John is really, really racist.

Martha didn’t get to sleep in that Sunday morning, because John rose early to dress for church, and she didn’t want to have to explain that she was from a time and place where atheism was perfectly ordinary and sleeping in on Sundays practically a right.

“I’ve some papers to mark this afternoon,” he told her as they dressed together (and wasn’t that strangely intimate—they’d undressed together before, but never dressed.) “But I thought you might join me for tea, and then...sew, or something, while I do my work. I find that I enjoy having you about. If you didn’t have other plans, that is.”


“At first,” John said with a condescending smile. Martha gritted her teeth but let it pass without comment.

She spent the morning at the TARDIS, eating and relaxing, before searching the library for period-appropriate reading material. She wished she could bring her textbooks, since this was normally her study day, but they were very visibly anachronistic.

When she went into the library, there was a small bookshelf prominently displayed in front of the door. When Martha flipped through the books on it, she found that they had all been printed between 1900 and 1912, and seemed to be in almost-new condition.

“How did these even get here?” she asked the ship, not expecting an answer. “Does he stop for book-shopping trips every now and then? Or do they just sort of...appear?”

Always a science fiction fan, she quickly zeroed in on a shelf full of H. G. Wells novels. She would have loved to reread The Time Machine, but the Doctor’s copy was autographed, which she felt was too likely to draw attention. Instead, she grabbed The Island of Dr. Moreau and The Invisible Man, which she’d read before, and The First Men in the Moon and The Sleeper Awakes, which she hadn’t.
It was always good to have options.

When she got back to John’s room, he was there with tea and biscuits and sandwiches. They talked as they ate, comparing stories about the troublemakers among the students, and it was pleasant to discover that she really did like John for himself, did enjoy just spending time with him even when they were both clothed.

When they had eaten the last of the sandwiches, John reluctantly turned to his pile of papers and Martha pulled out *The Sleeper Awakes*. She’d been reading for about half an hour and was thoroughly immersed in the story when John leaned back and sighed, rubbing his eyes with the heels of his hands.

“I despair of ever getting the most basic principles of mathematics into some of these boys’ heads,” he remarked.

“I’m sure you’re an excellent teacher, sir,” she said, only half her attention on him.

“Sometimes I think my colleagues have the right idea,” he mused. “Perhaps I would get better results if they had a few beatings for motivation.”

“I doubt it,” Martha said. “It might make them learn long enough for the exam, but I bet they’d forget everything by the next day.”

“Perhaps. What is it you’re reading?”

*The Sleeper Awakes*, by H. G. Wells. It’s all right so far—mostly a lot of nonsense about a man being in a coma so deep that he isn’t breathing and his heart isn’t beating, but somehow everyone can tell he isn’t dead—but I’m willing to suspend disbelief on that if the story turns out to be interesting, and Wells’ usually do.”

She glanced up from the page, and realized that John was staring at her in open-mouthed astonishment.

“What?” she asked.
“It’s…” He cleared his throat, collecting himself. “I’m sorry, I knew you were intelligent, I just didn’t realize how literate you were.”

“Oh.” She felt simultaneously complimented and insulted. “Well, I like to read.”

“So I gathered. It’s quite attractive, actually.” He smiled. “I don’t think a man could ask for a more perfect mistress—clever, beautiful, no risk of children, and supremely unlikely to be stolen away by marriage.”

“That’s quite a thing to say,” Martha said, bristling a bit. “I might get married someday.”

“Oh, I didn’t mean to offend, Martha, but—an overeducated colored maid, who can’t even have children? You must realize that marriage is not likely to be a part of your future. Certainly not marriage to anyone worthy of you.” He chuckled. “Forgive my bluntness, but I think you’ll agree that you’d find marriage to some negro brute considerably less pleasant than an arrangement such as ours.”

Martha’s hands clenched into fists, and her book dropped off her lap onto the floor. For a moment, she couldn’t breathe.

“It’s a strange quirk of biology,” John mused, oblivious, “The way that the white male and the black female are so well suited to one another in terms of carnal desires. Obviously a woman of my own class and color would never have allowed my attentions these past four nights in a row, let alone enjoyed them as you have, and of course a male of your race would be incapable of the delicacy and consideration that allows a man to give pleasure as well as to receive it.”

“You do realize that’s my father you’re talking about,” Martha snapped. “And my brother. Neither of whom are brutes.”

“Really?” John asked. “I had rather assumed you were the product of a liason much like our own.”

“My parents—both of whom are black—were married when they had me,” she said, furious. “And while obviously I don’t know the details of what went on in their bedroom, I do know that my father would have chewed off his own arm before he would have physically harmed my mother.”
“I’m sorry if I’ve offended you, Martha,” he said, holding up a hand placatingly. “I should have realized that such an exceptional woman would have come from exceptional stock.”

“The worst part is that you don’t even realize how terrible the things you’re saying are,” she snapped, reaching with hands that trembled with rage to return her book to her bag.

“Are you leaving?” he asked, bewildered.

“Yes. And I won’t be back tonight. You’ll be lucky if you see me with your breakfast on Monday.”

She marched out of the room before she could say anything worse, and half-ran to the room she shared with Jenny. It was empty--Jenny was off with her gardener, if she remembered correctly--so she went down the hall to find Rebecca.

“I can’t stand it!” she said without preamble. “He thinks he knows everything, but he doesn’t know a thing! And if something about me proves him wrong, that just means I’m an exception and he’s still right about everything, isn’t he? Because he’s the man, and he’s white, and what could I possibly know about black women just because I am one?”

Rebecca silently moved aside to let Martha into the room, making quiet noises of agreement while Martha paced and ranted.

“He didn’t even know why I was angry,” Martha said, finally winding down. She could feel the heat of tears beginning to displace the cold rage in her throat. “I don’t know how I’m going to face him again. God, I want--”

She swallowed her words, which may have been “I want the Doctor back” and may have been “I want to go home,” and burst into tears instead. Rebecca gently guided her to sit on the bed beside her and held her while she cried.

“I know it’s not quite the same,” she said when Martha’s sobs finally began to quiet, “But you wouldn’t believe some of the things I’ve heard gentiles--that’s people who aren’t Jews--say about us. To me, like it wouldn’t even bother me. They haven’t the slightest idea.”

“Did you ever manage to explain it to them?” Martha asked.
“I had a friend, growing up. I thought I’d explained it to her. Then she told me that her mother said
she couldn’t play with me any more because we killed Jesus.”

Martha gave a sob-laugh at the absurdity.

“Sometimes I try anyway,” Rebecca continued. “When swallowing it down would choke me, I try to
explain. But usually it’s not worth it.”

“I think I’ve got to try,” Martha said. “With John. I’ve got to try to explain it once, at least. Maybe
it’ll work.”

“Maybe.” Rebecca hesitated. “Can I give you some advice, Martha?”

“Sure.”

“Don’t tell Eliza about this. If I know her, she’ll say it’s okay to say that black men are brutes
because all men are brutes. It’ll just be an extra battle, and I’ve never once heard her admit she’s
wrong about anything.”

“Yeah, I can see that,” Martha sighed. “Thanks.”

“Of course.”
When Martha carried the breakfast tray to John’s room the next morning, she was surprised to find that it was already clean. Everything was tidy, the bed was made, and his desk had a space cleared for his breakfast. For a moment, she wondered if one of the other maids had meant to switch rooms with her and forgotten to tell her. Then she saw the way John was standing there, looking nervous and sheepish.

“I thought we’d have a little time to talk if I cleaned up before you got here,” he said, giving her a worried half-smile.

“That was a good thought,” she said. Impulsively, she made sure the door to his room was closed, then walked over and hugged him. She was still upset--furious, in fact--but the fact that he had actually put effort into making her life easier...she’d had boyfriends in the 21st century who hadn’t done as much, when they were trying to get back into her good graces. Saving her half an hour of work meant so much more than flowers or something possibly could have.

She realized then that while the TARDIS had programmed him with the attitudes of the day, as a sensible precaution, that programming didn’t work quite the same way that an actual belief would. He hadn’t really experienced a lifetime of looking at the world through the eyes of a turn-of-the-century white man. He didn’t really have the emotional attachment to his ideas that he would have if he’d heard them repeated over and over throughout his lifetime. If he had, he’d be angry with her for going off-script, not doing something as sensible and empathetic as helping her with her work.

She might actually be able to change his mind.

“I don’t seem to understand you at all,” John said, hugging her back, “But I would like to try.”

“Well, thank you for doing me the courtesy of assuming that there is an underlying reason behind my actions,” she said, stepping out of his embrace to sit at his desk.
“It would never have occurred to me to think otherwise,” he said. He went and sat on the bed, looking at her seriously.

“Really? So do you think that all women behave rationally, or is it just me?”

“Well, of course not everyone behaves rationally all the time…”

“But do you think gender is a factor? Are women less likely to be rational than men?”

“Well, yes,” he said. “The sexes are strong in different spheres.”

“You see, you have all these ideas and theories in your head, and you’ll repeat them when called upon, but you don’t actually act as though you believe them,” Martha said. “You’re confident that women as a class are irrational, but it never even occurred to you to doubt that I as an individual am.”

“Hmm,” John said, looking pensive. “I suppose I see your point...but surely you wouldn’t have preferred that I assume you were irrational?”

“No, no. I’m suggesting that if those theories don’t match up with the way you interact with the world, then you should abandon the theories.”

“But they’re more than just ‘theories,’ they’re...everyone knows that women are less rational than men,” he said slowly. He did not sound sure of himself.

“And a few hundred years ago, everyone knew the sun went around the Earth,” she said. “Sometimes everyone is wrong.”

“Everyone but you?” he asked, raising an eyebrow.

“I’m sure I’m wrong about a lot of things,” she said. Fewer now than before I met the Doctor, she added privately. “But I know more about women than you do, because I am one. I know more about black people than you do, because I am one.”
“Now, I have to disagree with you there—surely some measure of objective distance is necessary for getting at the truth,” he protested.

“But you’re not objective. If you’re trying to find the differences between men and women, then maybe someone who wasn’t a man or a woman would be in the best position to tell you, but a man isn’t automatically going to be better at it than a woman. Same with race—you’re not objective, you’re white. And when all the people who are coming up with all the ideas and writing all the books are white men too, that means the things ‘everyone knows’ are actually going to be incredibly far from objective.”

He took a moment to digest this.

“So tell me, Martha, with your relative objective distance,” he said finally. “What are white men like?”

“Not half as good as you, most of them,” she said honestly. “I need to get going soon, but I’ll see you tonight. You’ll think about what I said?”

“Absolutely,” he said, and kissed her.

She walked away smiling.

Her smile was quickly worn away by the repetitive toil of the day, but she managed to retain a sense of optimism and good spirits until halfway through the afternoon, when she was walking down a narrow stairwell balancing a stack of dirty dishes and suddenly found herself face to face with Mr. Dunway.

He didn’t say a word, just looked at her coldly, smirked, and tripped her. She and all the dishes went tumbling down the staircase with a crash.

It seemed like the housekeeper managed to teleport to her side in an instant, scolding furiously.

“Those dishes cost more than your hide’s worth, you clumsy girl!” she whisper-shouted. “And I’m
“I’m bleeding,” Martha observed. She tested her limbs methodically and didn’t find any sign of a break or a sprain, and thankfully she hadn’t hit her head, but there were gashes in her arms from broken dishes, and a particularly deep cut in her thigh where she’d landed on a knife.

“I expect you want to be bundled off to the Matron and leave this for me to clean up, don’t you?” the housekeeper fumed. “I’ll not have it. You’ll clean up every speck here before you go anywhere else, you understand me?”

“I’ll get blood on the floor,” Martha pointed out. She really ought to be treating herself for shock, not cleaning.

“And you’ll clean it off, too. Now get moving.”

Afterward, Martha had no idea how she managed to clean up the mess. There was simply a blank spot where the memory was, which she diagnosed as a sign of trauma. Her memory insisted on replaying the fall down the stairs over and over, then refused to show her anything else until she was in the Matron’s office, with the Matron clucking over the makeshift bandages she’d made of her apron.

“Why on Earth didn’t you come to me straightaway?” she asked.

“Housekeeper wouldn’t let me,” Martha said.

The woman didn’t seem to quite believe her, but she treated Martha’s injuries competently enough. Privately, Martha recommended bed rest and therapy for herself, but she was already behind on the rest of the day’s duties, and had to skip tea.

When her work was finally done, she climbed the endless-seeming stairs to John’s room without thinking. As soon as she’d entered, she fell into his arms and burst into tears.

“Goodness, Martha, what’s happened?” he asked, alarmed. “You look as if you’ve been through the wars.”
“He pushed me down the stairs,” she said into his chest. “Dunway pushed me down the stairs.”

“Oh, my. Are you certain he pushed you intentionally?”

She pulled back, furious. “If you won’t believe me about something as simple as that--”

“Of course, of course,” he said, raising his hands in surrender. “You’re right. I just didn’t want to believe such a thing of a colleague. I’ll speak with him.”

“Good. Thank you.” God, she was exhausted. And she was going to need to go to the TARDIS sometime soon to get antibiotic cream. She realized that by keeping her from having her injuries cleaned and bandaged right away, in a time before penicillin or even sulfa, the housekeeper could have been sentencing her to death.

“I’ll take care of you, Martha,” John said, cupping her cheek. “Lie down. I’ll make you feel good.”

“Oh, not tonight,” she sighed. “I just want to sleep.”

“I won’t make you lift a finger,” he promised. “It’ll be all about you. And you know how I can make you feel.”

“I’m too tired,” she snapped. “I’m tired and I hurt everywhere. I shouldn’t even have come here.”

She turned to leave.

“Martha, wait, please,” John said. “I can’t seem to do anything right, these last few days. I’m sorry. I won’t ask you to stay if you don’t want to, but at least let me walk you back to your room?”

Martha hesitated. She didn’t want him around, at the moment, but the offer was a real concession, and being back on that stairwell alone (or worse yet, not alone, Dunway could be there again)--
“Thank you,” she said.

“Of course,” he said, and took her arm. Then he hesitated. “Ah, where is your room, exactly?”

She didn’t have the energy for a laugh, but she smiled, and pointed him in the right direction.

Jenny was awake but in her nightgown when Martha and John reached the room, and she regarded John with silent suspicion until he left.

“Tell me he didn’t do that to you,” she beseeched Martha the moment they were alone.

“Not him,” Martha said. “Dunway pushed me down the stairs. I need to sleep, Jenny.”

“I’ll take Mr. Smith his tray tomorrow,” Jenny said as Martha changed. “It’ll be late, but he’d best not mind if he knows what’s good for him. You and me are on laundry tomorrow, so you come along and help if you can and sit tight if you can’t, got it?”

“Got it,” Martha said. “Thanks.”

She was asleep the moment her head hit the pillow.
Apparently Mr. Dunway felt that Martha had been sufficiently punished for her unavailability by her fall down the stairs; he restrained himself to glares and smirks from then on. The fact that she had to fight to keep from flinching whenever she was near him seemed to satisfy him.

Other than those occasional encounters, the rest of Martha’s second month at Farringham was better than any of her previous time there. She managed to get herself to the TARDIS to treat her injuries, and with those fully healed, it seemed that her body had finally gotten into the rhythm of menial labor. It was still exhausting, but no longer overwhelming.

Which was good, because she’d managed to add two additional duties to her list: having sex with John two or three times a week, and teaching him to be a decent human being.

The sex was amazing, particularly now that she knew he wouldn’t press the issue if she told him it wasn’t a good night for her. The decent-human-being lessons were more of a mixed bag, since they only happened when he inadvertently did something prejudiced, like attempting to compliment Martha on her “exotic” good looks or “helpfully” offering to teach her basic maths. Still, he listened to her when she patiently explained what he was doing wrong, and actually modified his behavior afterwards; as far as Martha was concerned, that put him miles ahead of the average 21st century white boy.

It was disconcerting when she remembered that John only had another month to...live? Exist? Before too much longer, he would revert back to the Doctor, who didn’t have a head full of 1913 biases to overcome, so in a way, she was wasting her time. But giving lessons was only annoying; keeping her mouth shut would have been unbearable.

Really, despite the high-quality sex she was getting from John, her time with the other maids was the highlight of each week. Rebecca, who managed to stay optimistic in spite of the constant sexism and anti-Semitism she faced; Eliza, whose black humor could cheer the rest up when nothing else could; and Jenny, who was protective and motherly without being overbearing. Martha wondered what could they have been in the 21st century. Artists, teachers, engineers...perhaps even doctors. She wished she could bring them with her when she left, but Rebecca wouldn't abandon the parents she sent most of her wage to, Eliza would never have trusted the Doctor, and Jenny wouldn’t leave the others, or her gardener, who she really was deeply in love with under the self-deprecating jokes.

Martha wondered if any of them would have children, and if any of those children would make it
through two World Wars, the Depression, and the Cold War to Martha’s time. She’d have to ask the Doctor whether he thought looking that up was a good idea, once he was himself again.

She’d gotten so used to thinking of John and the Doctor as two different people that it was always a shock when John told her about one of his dreams. Many of them she recognized from her time with him; others were clearly from before. She wondered which of the women he dreamed of was Rose, but he never mentioned names, only brief descriptions of their appearances and their anachronistic (and to him, shocking) clothing.

“I think you’ve made a suffragette of me, Martha,” he told her one morning after relating a dream about a female doctor who stopped his hearts and then kissed him. (Had Rose been a doctor?) “That must be why I dream so many women in trousers.”

“I suppose that must be it,” she agreed with a smile. “I hope it hasn’t made your life too much harder, thinking of women as people.”

“I can’t say I’ve noticed any side effects aside from the odd dreams,” he said. “Although I have had a few interesting conversations with Joan—er, the Matron—recently. She’s led a fascinating life, really. Do you know, I don’t think it would have occurred to me to ask about her experiences before we started talking?”

“I can’t say I’m particularly surprised,” Martha said, her thoughts churning. God, she’d made him a feminist man in 1913, and he was every bit as fit as the Doctor. Women would be lining up if they realized.

She had to go and attend to the rest of her day’s chores then, but she resolved to ask him that night whether he still saw her as an ideal mistress, and whether that meant he was still looking for a wife elsewhere.

That afternoon, Martha got to see John and Joan interact in person when she went to tidy up John’s classroom after classes. Unusually, John was still there; even stranger, so was Joan.

“Ah, Martha, good afternoon!” John said with a smile as soon as she entered the room. “Joan and I were just discussing the question of increased independence for India. I’d love to hear your views on the subject.”

Joan was looking at him as though he’d grown a second head.
“Well, I can’t say that I’m particularly well informed on the topic,” Martha said cautiously, “but it does seem to me that the Indians likely know what they’re about when it comes to ruling themselves.”

“Preposterous,” Joan sniffed. “No one can possibly deny the good that British rule has done for India. I can’t think what you hoped to gain by seeking support among the skivvy, John.”

“Martha’s very intelligent,” John protested.

“Be that as it may,” Joan replied skeptically, “While I can see merit to the argument that attempting to civilize a people who don’t wish to be civilized will only lead to bloodshed—history proves that readily enough—I cannot agree that increased independence would be in the best interests of India. At any rate, I have things to attend to in the infirmary. Good afternoon, Mr. Smith.”

“Good afternoon, Nurse Redfern,” John replied.

Once she’d left, he turned to Martha.

“Did she seem upset to you?” he asked.

“I don’t think she liked you asking my opinion,” Martha told him while she cleaned. He automatically came to join her.

“I just thought—it’s like you said, about all the books being written by white men. There weren’t any Indians around for me to ask their opinions, but at least you aren’t white.”

“I think that was a good thought. I don’t think she did.”

“Perhaps if I explained it to her.”

“You can if you like. I’m not sure it would go over well.” Martha decided that she didn’t need to be
overly concerned about the prospect of romance between John and Joan. “I need to get going, but I’ll see you tonight.”

John glanced around quickly to make sure no one could see them through the windows, then pulled Martha in for a quick kiss before letting her go on her way.

Chapter End Notes

Sadly, the changes to the story have made it impossible to keep Martha's badass "bones of the hand" speech intact, but Nurse Redfern is still around, and still racist.
Chapter Notes

A reminder: this is not the canon plot of "Human Nature/Family of Blood." Many things have changed, some of them off-screen.

The first thing Martha noticed was the sniffing.

First it was one of the students--Baines, she thought his name was--staring at her with his head cocked and taking an oddly deep breath. She expected some sort of comment, either racist or sexually crude or both, but he just kept staring.

Next it was Joan. The Matron stood in the doorway of the infirmary, sniffing at each student as they walked by. She spent twice as long on Martha, staring and smelling.

“Thirteen: The Family hunts by smell, so watch out for any weird sniffing,” the Doctor had said. It wasn’t a whole lot of evidence, but when she met those wide, blank eyes, she knew: they were here.

Martha suddenly deeply regretted having shared her anachronistic views with John. But the Doctor should be safe split between John and the pocket watch for the next three weeks anyway…right?

With the Family nearby, Martha decided that she needed to take the pocket watch. The perception filter (which Martha privately thought of as a Somebody Else’s Problem field, particularly when she felt in desperate need of a hitchhiker’s guide) should keep him from noticing that it was gone. She’d only left it with him in the first place because she was worried that it would be deemed too expensive for a maid and confiscated as stolen, but no one had made her turn out her pockets in the nine weeks she’d been there, and at this point, the risk felt worth it.

Of course, when she went to take the watch while cleaning John’s room, it wasn’t there.

“Something wrong?” John asked, seeing the stricken look on her face.

“Oh, no, I just…remembered I have to clean the WCs today,” she lied. “Hate doing that.”
“That does sound unpleasant,” John agreed. He came over and put his arms around her waist. “I wish you weren’t trapped in a job that gives you so little scope for your abilities.”

“Well, it isn’t for much longer,” Martha said without thinking.

“Oh?” He stepped back to look at her. “You’re not leaving, are you? I mean, of course it would be wonderful if you found something better, but...I would miss you a great deal.”

“I’m...looking into a few things,” she said, scrambling for a convincing story. “Don’t want to talk about it until it’s more certain, you know? But I wouldn’t leave you, John.”

Except that soon, she and the Doctor would be leaving John. Unmaking him, even. She hugged him tightly before leaving for the rest of the day’s work.

As she turned the corner to leave the teachers’ hall, she ran into Mr. Dunway--actually physically ran into him.

“Oh, I’m so sorry, sir,” she said, heart pounding. “I didn’t see you there.”

“That’s quite all right,” he said, staring at her strangely with his head cocked to one side. He wasn’t leering or gloating at all.

Then he took a deep sniff, still staring, not even blinking. Martha hurried away as quickly as she could, her skin crawling.

There were at least three of them inside the school. How had they figured out that here, out of all of time and space, was where the Doctor was? And where the hell was the watch? Martha had a sinking feeling that the answer to the two questions could be related.

All right, worst-case scenario. What if they had the watch? It was possible that it wouldn’t do them any good without the Doctor’s body. It was also possible that if they had the watch, the Doctor was functionally dead. He’d shown her how to use the emergency programs to return home, but that would mean abandoning him-as-John in 1913.
And of course the Doctor’s instructions hadn’t had any useful information, like whether he’d prefer to live a human lifespan as an ordinary man of 1913 or as a 1913 man displaced forward by a century. Presumably she’d have to ask John his opinion of the matter (and would telling him about the looming war be breaking the Laws of Time or something?). She’d be going back to her own time either way, obviously.

Hopefully, the watch was only lost, not taken, and she would be able to find it and restore the Doctor. It was very odd to think that the best-case scenario was the one where her lover died and was replaced by a man who didn’t return her feelings.

She couldn’t sleep that night, for the first time since she’d come to Farringham. Usually the exhaustion of a full day of physical labor had her asleep almost as soon as her head hit the pillow, but she couldn’t get her thoughts to settle.

John’s warm presence in bed beside her and the sticky feel of his semen on her thighs made the time feel stolen, a memory of the Doctor (almost) that she’d gained without his permission. He would be cold, though, not warm. Even if things changed between them, she would never see the Doctor’s face the way she saw John’s now, slack and relaxed in sleep.

Could she have tried harder to find another solution to her problem with Dunway? A solution that didn’t involve this...strangely mutual violation? She could too easily imagine the Doctor pointing out some retrospectively obvious course of action that she’d missed.

John turned suddenly, waking up with a gasp. When he saw her looking down at him, he reached out and pulled her towards him immediately, clinging to her in a way he never had before.

“What is it?” she whispered, trying to rearrange her arms so they went around him. “What’s wrong?”

“Just a dream,” he said, his voice muffled between the pillow and her neck. “Just an odd, mad dream. A sun...there was a sun in my head, and it wanted me to hurt people. Just nonsense.”

“Dreams can be like that,” Martha said, stroking his bare back soothingly. *Burn with me, Martha,* she remembered. “But there’s no sun here.”

“You were there. It was going to make me hurt you,” he whispered. “And it was my fault, because if
I’d spent more time practicing, I would’ve been able to keep it out of my head.”

“How do you even practice that?” she asked, trying to lighten the mood with a joke.

“I don’t know, but in the dream I knew I should have.” He pulled away from her just enough to look her in the eye. “I’ve been having lots of bad dreams lately, dreams about losing myself, losing you...losing everything. Sometimes I wake up and for a moment I don’t know who I am.”

Martha didn’t know what to say to that—how could she tell someone in the midst of an identity crisis that his life was, in fact, a lie?—so she kissed him instead. One more kiss stolen from the Doctor, one more of who knew how few before John Smith ceased to be.

He fell back to sleep easily, his head pillowed on her breast. She stroked his hair and stared up at the ceiling for at least another hour.
For a few days, there was an uneasy sort of truce between Martha and the Family. They suspected her and John, that much was clear in the way their unblinking stares followed them whenever they were around, but she supposed they weren’t certain enough to make a move, not yet.

Or maybe they were waiting for some sort of signal. Martha thought there had been four of them, but she only ever saw three. Had the fourth died? Was it in the village, following false leads? Or was it biding its time?

Martha was pulled from her thoughts by the sound of voices coming from inside a classroom she was supposed to clean. There shouldn’t be anyone in there at that hour, and the people inside were clearly trying to speak quietly. When she put her ear to the crack in the door, she could make out the voice of one of the younger boys. He sounded afraid.

It might be some of the older boys bullying a younger boy, or a professor preparing to deliver a harsher punishment than usual. It could also be the Family. Martha opened the door suddenly, and swiftly kicked the person on the other side in the back of the knee.

It was Joan. She fell to the ground in surprise, dropping a strange weapon she was holding. Martha dove for it before any of the others could react, then jumped to her feet, holding it in front of her like she pulled guns on people all the time.

The boy--Timothy, if she remembered correctly--was facing down Baines, Joan, Dunway, and Rebecca.

“Tim, come over here by me,” Martha ordered, keeping the gun up and her back to the door even as her heart broke for poor Rebecca. She had seemed like her same old self the night before; they must have taken her that same day. “The rest of you, don’t move.”

“Why, it’s lovely Martha Jones here to save the day,” Dunway said with a leer. “Do you think we’re afraid of you, Martha?”

“I will shoot you if you take one step closer to me or to Timothy,” Martha snapped.
“You don’t have the nerve,” Rebecca said in a voice that wasn’t her own. “You can’t even handle a little harsh language without bursting into tears. It’s pathetic, how easy it was to figure out that you’re out of your time, even if you don’t reek of Time Lord like Timothy here. As soon as I saw this one’s memories it all became clear.”

“Quiet now, sister of mine,” Baines said. “Here is what’s going to happen, Martha Jones. In two hours, the Time Lord will be in Potter’s Field, with whatever he’s done to hide himself undone. Otherwise, we will destroy the school and everyone in it. Another hour after that, we will destroy the village as well. I’m not sure what we’ll destroy after that, but there will be many, many deaths. You don’t want that, do you?”

“I say we send the boy to find the rest of the Time Lord, and keep the maid for insurance,” Dunway said, and lunged at her.

Acting on reflex, Martha turned and shot him square in the chest. She didn’t have any thought beyond stopping him, but he entirely disappeared, apparently vaporized.

“Father of mine!” Baines and Rebecca cried, and Joan keened wordlessly from the floor. Martha grabbed Timothy and pulled him out the door.

“Two hours, Miss Jones!” Baines called after them. “In two hours, we will have the Time Lord or there will be blood!”

A few students had come to see what the noise was about, but Martha pushed past them, not certain where she was going but sure she needed to get Timothy out of danger. What did they mean, he reeked of Time Lord?

“Martha, we have to get Mr. Smith and go to the TARDIS,” Tim told her urgently. “It’s the only safe place. The Doctor can figure out a plan once we’ve put him back together.”

“What?” she asked, stunned but still moving, now in the direction of John’s office. “Tim, how do you know about the TARDIS and the Doctor?”

“He talks to me through this,” he said, pulling the missing pocket watch out of his pocket. “He’s explained it all to me. Well, not all of it, but some.”
“What? Let me see,” Martha said, taking the watch from his hand. “I don’t hear anything. Do you open it?”

“No, I hear him when I touch it,” Tim said. “He said I have enormous telepathic potential, but I don’t know what that means.”

“Oh.” Martha handed the watch back to him, trying not to feel jealous. The Doctor had told her that she was unusually low in telepathic ability for a human. It had taken nearly a week after the first time he’d tried to make contact with her for her to even feel his presence.

Of course, once they actually had been able to make contact mind-to-mind, he’d complimented her on her spacious and well-organized mental library. But the idea of being deficient in something, even something she’d never heard of before, still stung.

Her brooding was cut off by their arrival at John’s office. He was inside with two other professors, discussing something Martha didn’t have time to be bothered about. The three of them looked up when she and Tim burst in, John looking concerned, the others looking affronted.

“John, if you have ever trusted me even a little bit, I need you to come with me right now,” she said.

“Excuse me, gentlemen,” he said, immediately following her out the door, ignoring the affronted complaints of his colleagues. It was bittersweet to see how far he’d come; soon, there would be no John Smith.

“I’ll explain as much as I can while we walk,” she said, leading him and Tim out of the building and towards the shed that held the TARDIS. “Remember those dreams you have, where you’re a man from space?”

John’s expression became more and more incredulous as Martha related their story to him, but when they reached the TARDIS, he stared at it in startled recognition. She unlocked the door, and he walked inside without hesitation, touching the console with reverent fingers.

Martha acquired the fob watch from Tim while John and the TARDIS got reacquainted. The small boy was gaping, running about the room trying to touch absolutely everything with an expression of awe on his face. She was trying to decide whether to break John’s reverie when he pulled away from
the console and sat down with his head in his hands.

“So the Doctor made me knowing that I would have to die for him to live again,” John said to Martha without looking at her. Apparently he believed her now.

“I don’t think you’ll die, exactly,” Martha said, guiltily rejecting her own thoughts on the subject. “It’ll just...unlock the Doctor parts of you.”

“What is he like, the Doctor?” John asked.

“He’s brilliant,” Martha said. She owed him the entire truth, she felt. “Brilliant and good and a little bit mad and a little bit lonely. Well, maybe more than a little bit. But you’ll still have me.”

“So you and he...?”

“No,” Martha said. “No, he...he doesn’t want me.”

“How can you say he’s me, then?” John asked, looking up at her for the first time.

“He’s my friend,” she said firmly. “That’s the same, and that’s more important than the fact that he doesn’t love me back.”

“You love him?” John asked.

Martha looked away and nodded, hoping that the Doctor wouldn’t remember this particular conversation.

“You know, I’ve been thinking these last few days that I might be falling in love with you,” John said. “Worrying about it, really, because what exactly would we do? I’m hardly independently wealthy enough to tell society to take its prejudices and go hang. And now I discover that I needn’t have worried about our future, because I don’t have one.”
“I’m sorry, John,” Martha said. “But in an hour and a half, everyone in the school will be dead unless you open that watch and figure out how to stop it.”

“And if that wasn’t the case?” he asked. “If no one was in danger, would you want him or me?”

“Him,” she said, not wanting to hurt him but needing him to know the truth. “I couldn’t stay in 1913 with you. I’m from nearly a hundred years in the future. My family is there. I’m studying to be a doctor. I couldn’t leave all that for you.”

“But you could for him?”

“I sort of...did. But he can take me back.”

John nodded, stood up, and kissed her hungrily, ignoring Tim’s presence.

“Do I get a last request?” he asked, his hands on her waist.

“We don’t have much time…”

“An hour and a half, you said.” He rested his forehead against hers. “Please, Martha. Let me die happy.”

She glanced over at Tim, saw that he seemed occupied enough, and took John’s hand, leading him to her bedroom. Maybe it was selfish of her, but she wasn’t going to pass up her last chance to be with him.

They tore at each others’ clothes with unaccustomed urgency. Having him here, on the TARDIS, in this room where she’d guiltily imagined the Doctor so many times...she was going to get him back and she was going to lose him and she couldn’t stop thinking about it, even as her body seemed to act independently, pressing desperately against John’s as he pushed her down onto the bed and thrust inside her, more roughly than he ever had before, pleasure almost to the point of pain.

“Let me never stop fucking you,” he panted in her ear as their bodies moved against one another. “I
don’t want it to end, I don’t want to die, let me never stop.”

“Never, never,” she moaned in response, hardly aware of what she was saying, “Never stop.”

But he was only human (for a little while longer) and before long he was coming, the last time she would feel him shudder inside her, the last time she would see his face contorted in ecstasy.

John lay against her for a moment, breathing heavily in her arms. Then he gave her one final kiss, sweet and hungry, and disentangled himself from her. Before she could stop him, he bent down to retrieve the fob watch from her pile of clothing and opened it.

Golden light poured out of it, surrounding him, and he collapsed back onto the bed, convulsing. He felt as if he was shivering very quickly, almost vibrating. At least he wasn’t screaming.

It only took a few moments for the golden light to fade away, and then he was lying nude across Martha’s bed, panting. He still looked like John, body hair and all, and for a moment she wondered if it had gone wrong somehow.

“John? Doctor?” she asked, gingerly touching his bare shoulder. “Are you all right?”

“Martha,” he said, and his accent was back to normal. He sat up, glanced at her, then flushed and looked away. “Yes, I’m fine.”

He jumped up and began to put on John’s clothes. Well, his own were elsewhere on the TARDIS, presumably. Martha pulled the blanket up to her neck, feeling embarrassed and relieved and overall miserable.

“Wait on the TARDIS with Tim. I’ll take deal with the Family,” he said without looking at her, and walked out the door.

For a moment, Martha could only sit in bed and fight off tears. Only a moment back as himself and he literally wasn’t even looking at her. Presumably he could remember what had happened, since he hadn’t asked her to get him up to speed. God, why did John insist on changing back when they were both still naked?
She was never going to be able to ask him. John was gone.

When she’d gotten herself under control, she put on her own clothes, Martha the medical student’s clothes, and shoved Martha the maid’s clothes under the bed. She’d deal with them later. Right now she needed to check on Tim.

“He does care about you, you know,” Tim said when she walked into the console room. God, no wonder the other boys didn’t like the poor telepathic kid.

“I know he does,” she said, her voice tinged with bitterness. “We’re friends.”

“I think it’s more than that,” he said. “But he’s afraid.”

“Afraid of what?”

“I don’t really know,” Tim said. “I couldn’t understand that part. I’m sorry.”

“That’s all right, Tim,” she said. “You’ve done more than enough.”

They waited on the TARDIS for nearly an hour before the Doctor returned. Martha taught Tim to play Flash Duel to pass the time, and he caught on alarmingly quickly.

Finally, the door to the TARDIS opened and the Doctor entered, looking grim but unharmed.

“You’re all right!” Martha said, jumping to her feet. “What happened to the Family?”

“Gone,” he said. “No need to worry about them.”

“And...the people they took? Rebecca, is she...?”
“Also gone. I’m sorry, Martha.”

“I know you would’ve saved her if you could have,” she said, closing her eyes in grief for a moment, then pushing it away. There would be time for that later.

“Tim!” the Doctor said, turning towards the boy. “Tim-Timmity-Tim. Thank you for your help.”

“You’re welcome, sir,” Tim said.

“Would you like to come along with us?” the Doctor asked. “See a bit of the future, maybe another planet or two?”

Martha wondered whether that was him trying to replace her, or him trying to get someone else aboard as a buffer between them.

“No, thank you,” Tim said. “I need to stay. I have to be here for what’s coming.”

“Take a souvenir, at least,” the Doctor said, and tossed the fob watch to him.

“I can’t hear anything,” Tim said.

“No, it’s just a watch now.”

Martha hugged the boy, who returned her embrace awkwardly, then left the ship.

“You’ll like this part,” the Doctor said to him, then closed the door and hit the dematerialization switch.

The sound of the TARDIS filled the air, then faded into awkward silence.
“I’m sorry,” Martha said finally, and the Doctor met her eyes for the first time since he’d changed back, looking startled.

“What are you…? Oh. Don’t worry about it. The situation was…anyway, I need to pop back a bit and post the letter applying for the job in the first place. Or I suppose I can do that next time you’re asleep. Unless…unless you just want me to take you home. Because I will, if you like.”

“No,” Martha said immediately. “No, I don’t want to leave.”

“Oh, good,” he said, clearly relieved, and she had to go and hug him. He squeezed her back, a familiar, friendly Doctor-hug, good but so different from the embraces she and John had shared.

Martha went to her room to spend a little time crying for everything she’d gone through, and for Joan and Baines and especially Rebecca (though not Dunway, she refused to regret shooting Dunway), and for John.

Chapter End Notes

Just the Coda left. After that, keep an eye out for "The Professor and the Physician: 1969."
Coda

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Half an hour earlier

The three remaining members of the Family of Blood sat dazedly on the ground where they’d been thrown by the blast from their exploding ship. The Doctor stood over them, coldly furious.

“I gave you a chance,” he said. “I ran and hid. You didn’t have to chase me. No one had to die.”

“No one but us, you mean,” Rebecca--the daughter--spat. “Why should you get to go on and on when we have so short a time?”

“You want to go on and on forever?” the Doctor asked. “You want to know what that’s really like? Because I can make it happen.”

“No,” Joan said. Her children looked at her, startled. “Not without husband of mine. I don’t want to live forever any more.”

“You should listen to your mother, children,” the Doctor said, and pulled out the sonic screwdriver.

He’d had the TARDIS working on a new setting for the screwdriver while he’d been stuck in human form, and luckily, it had finished in time. It was a precise setting that would force a noncorporeal entity of the Family’s type out of their host, and prevent them from joining with a new one.

They screamed when he turned it on, high, inhuman screams. The Doctor didn’t flinch.

“I’m not certain whether you can still hear me,” he said to the fading wisps of green fog left in the air, “But you’ll live the span you were supposed to and no more. And you have each other. I was much kinder than I could have been.”

He pocketed the sonic and walked back to the TARDIS, hoping that he hadn’t already lost Martha
and feeling almost envious of the Family.

Chapter End Notes

That's the end of Martha and John Smith's time together, but keep an eye out for "The Professor and the Physician: 1969," next in "The Doctor and the Dreamers."

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