Just Like That

by Dzuljeta

Summary

It all started with a lifeless body on the floor...
Surprises

Chapter One

Surprises

A panicked shriek could be heard from the console room. "Doctor!"

"What is it, Donna?" The Doctor was expecting anything from a broken fingernail to a disturbing headline from a newspaper she’d insisted on buying. "I swear, I won't be accompanying you to any of your shopping trips ever again!"

The woman was out of breath, speaking – shrieking - hurriedly.

"There's a girl on the floor. She's not breathing! I- I think she's dead! A corpse on the floor!" She continued to scream, overtaken by panic.

It took him less than a second to count the remaining days until Halloween. No, this can't have been the case. Which meant…

"Coming!" The Doctor tried his best not to allow his mind imagine dreadful scenarios, but failed miserably. Could it be a trick? By the Master, perhaps? That one, he'd somehow managed to survive everything… just like the Daleks. He shuddered.

"Quickly! Her shirt is soaked in blood! Should I try and move her towards the medical bay? Come!"

Blasted alien.

"Do nothing! You might hurt her further!" If she still lives. The Time Lord could not run faster.

The moment the Doctor burst into the TARDIS, he saw a shock of blond hair at once. Blond hair, belonging to- to-

He gulped back, feeling he was about to choke at the sight. So much of a happy reunion…

"Are you all right?" Donna dared to ask, seeing his face lose all colour the moment his eyes saw the poor woman.

He ignored her, kneeling down to the girl. "Don't you dare to die on me."

Donna was both terrified and terribly confused. "Do you… do you need me to fetch something? A Bible? Invite a priest, maybe?"

" Shut up!" He was hurriedly taking off – or tearing off – her once-white shirt, now sticky and hard to remove, even more so when his fingers were trembling. Leaving the girl in her bra and knickers – white – or whatever was left of the colour now - with a pink ribbon, he could not help but be amused about this tiny little detail –the Doctor dared to look at her wounds. What he saw both terrified and calmed him down a bit. Two gunshot wounds in her torso. This was bad, very bad, but not fatal. It seemed she had been on the run when these blasted bullets were fired.

He could do nothing but stare for a long moment. "I- I need to remove the bullets," he muttered. "To stop the bleeding, to-" The alien did not think of thanking the ship for immediately providing him with the needed equipment. Equipment much more advanced than what the 21st century could offer
but medical gloves were a necessity. "This is all so hi-tech," Donna muttered, in awe.

"Could you please shut up," he groaned, concentrating on his work.

This once, the ginger stayed silent, unable to look the alien in the eye. It was clear he was trying to stay strong.

It was only when the Doctor's body began shuddering violently with sobs she knew it was over. He has either succeeded – with the sight on the floor before her Donna believed he has – or, judging from his self-explicatory reaction- - -

"I've lost her." *Lost her again.* His eyes were unseeing.

"It's just like with your friend, Rose… you will get over it."

"No. Whoever's told you that? I've never." Donna put her hand on his shoulder. "It will be fine."

"No." It was *never* going to be fine again. Even with the encouraging vibes the ship kept sending him.

"Rose was supposed to be living safely with her family. Perhaps galaxies away from me, but *safe*. Not lying in a pool of blood. Her own, as it comes," he sobbed.

Donna gaped. This twist of fate was better than in a Shakespearean tragedy. Even if she had learnt to be ready for all sorts of things in this new life of hers, seeing the Time Lord like this was hurting her. "You are not telling me you are giving up, now."

The Doctor never took his eyes off the fair-haired companion. At least the TARDIS was not mourning her yet, which meant exactly what it should have. The ship was keeping her safe. Safe and *alive*. Alive! While he could never understand the connection between the human and his time-and-space vessel, the Time Lord could not thank her enough.

With the bullets removed, he needed to stop the bleeding somehow. Why has the ship not given him anything for that?

The ship has but rewarded him with a meaningful silence. Strangely, Rose did not seem to be bleeding any more. The TARDIS must have somehow found the way to stop it. There was no time for him to waste. Maybe now he could try to move her. *Save* her.

"She's the love of your life, yes? Do something, instead of tearing up for no reason! Kiss of life is what tends to save human lives, Doctor. In the meantime, I'll fetch water for you to clean the wounds."

He breathed out, as if awakened from shock. Donna's determination seemed to give him the much-needed strength. "Yes. Please. Hurry up."

They were in the TARDIS. The safest place in the universe! The most medically-equipped place in the universe (or so the alien liked to believe)! And still-

He had to brace himself. *Rose had* to live. Even if it took everything he had out of him. The Doctor was prepared to use some of his regeneration-energy. To take away as many years of his life as necessary to keep Rose alive and well…
Oh, the kiss of life. Of course. He was breathing air into her mouth, wishing for a miracle and planning all sorts of incredible things he- *they* were going to do the moment Rose was all right again... For she *had* to be.

"How is it going?" Donna spoke quietly, not quite believing there was a pleasant way out of this.

The Time Lord moved away from her. It seemed her face was just a shade more lively. "She'll live," he almost smiled.

This was when the blonde's eyes opened, startling both of them.

"What the *hell* do you think you're doing?!"

"Saving you," he was both laughing and crying at once.

Donna shook her head. This was not the reaction she'd expected. Needless to say, neither did she expect the girl – *Rose* – she needed to remember to address her by the given name – to go through such a swift recovery. This was *insane*.

Rose's following reaction was just as unexpected, as she spoke with tears in her eyes. "Doctor – how many years of your life have you just put to waste? Was it worth it?"
Mysteries

Previously…

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Chapter Two

Mysteries

"Rose-" the Doctor's voice was close to breaking. "Don't ever give me such questions." *I'd risk my life for you, without a second thought.* "I thought you were gone, Rose. What was I supposed to do? Stand and watch you die in front of my eyes?" *Then mourn you forever?* He was suddenly struck with the realisation it has been, indeed, a very close call.

The blonde inhaled deeply, an apologetic look on her face. "Of course not," her voice was barely audible. She was not going to get involved in a pointless quarrel about what the Time Lord should or should not have done. He has done the right thing...

"I'll ignore the fact I am still lying in a pool of blood." Barely wearing anything, too, but this was the least of her problems.

"Oh. Yes. Sorry. Do you need me to assist you?" The Doctor was aware it was unlikely, but asked anyway.

Rose grimaced, getting up effortlessly. "Nope." The fact he was watching her with sincere concern on his face has made her sigh heavily. "However, I need to-" she gestured around herself hopelessly, her eyes wandering towards the place she absolutely needed to go to as soon as possible. To clean up and make herself at least relatively presentable, for one. No less for the Doctor than for herself. She could distinctly smell both blood and dirt on her body – or on her clothes, it did not exactly matter at that moment, as merely the smell was already making her feel dizzy.

*"Bathroom is very likely the word you're looking for,"* Donna suggested, finally daring to speak and smiling at her encouragingly. She realised Rose had to be a very determined young woman… someone whose life was a very dangerous one, too.

It seemed the fair-haired companion has only fully registered the other woman's presence then. "Yes. And I must wash the blood off me. Fast. Excuse me," she nodded at the ginger uncomfortably, rushing away with unlikely speed. Both the Doctor and Donna could only watch her with a mixture of conflicting emotions.

"What have you done to her?" The more recent companion asked. "She seems to be perfectly healthy again."

"I have fixed her up," the Doctor said. "Completely. Rose is *supposed* to be all right now." *For many years to come.*

"Completely?"

"Yep."
The ginger was looking at him, her eyes wide with wonder. "Do you mean there will be no more bleeding? No infection? No scars? How does one do that so quickly?" *How is this even possible?*

"Time Lord," he shrugged, unwilling to return to the complicated subject. He hoped it would not take much time to reassure the fair-haired companion there was no other choice but to do what he had done.

Donna rolled her eyes, but gave up on the subject for now. Maybe Rose would be more willing to explain the mystery to her…

Rose was led to her room by the TARDIS. The familiarity of the chamber has made her want to cry. Mostly because of the impossible return. Back to the place once seemingly denied to her for good. But she knew better, suppressing the tears and hurrying to the en suite instead, welcoming the soothing sounds of encouragement the ship had sent her. Just as she had expected, she could neither see nor feel the smallest trace of the gun wounds. Naturally, knowing just how much he had sacrificed for her…

An uncertain knock on the door woke the girl up from her dream-like state. "Rose?"

"Allow me to get dressed, please…"

The Doctor held his breath. She was away from him for almost two hours, and he was agitated, to say the least. "Are you all right?"

"Yes. Thanks to you. I might have dozed off for a bit. Just give me two more minutes."

The Time Lord sighed in relief. "Take all the time you need," he spoke, no traces of previous unease in his voice.

Rose shook her head. Whom was she trying to fool? She had changed into a lovely sky-blue dress and put on a fitting pair of flats at least ten minutes ago… "Come in, Doctor."

The Doctor entered the room noiselessly, almost forgetting to breathe at the unbelievably familiar sight before him. "Rose-"

Before he could continue, Donna entered unceremoniously. "I hope I'm not ruining anything. I'm Donna, by the way. His… well-current companion. I have come to… well, check on him. All the panic on his face- you know, it tends to be contagious."

The Time Lord cleared his throat, but saw the amused look in Rose's eyes and shut up.

The girl rolled her eyes at him, directing her attention at Donna. "Hello. I'm Rose. Sorry for all this mess. But I was in a desperate need to reach the TARDIS, if I wanted to live."

The Doctor found himself by Rose's side the next moment. It was as if he was trying his best not to pull the girl into a mind-blowing snog. The ginger looked at him pityingly. Never before had he been so easy to see through. Even his firm posture was giving everything away. She decided to distract him a little bit.

"Rose? If I may ask- what were you running away from?"

"I might have done something to annoy someone from- from my working place."

"Torchwood." *Again. Always Torchwood.*
Rose allowed herself to sigh heavily, seeing the Doctor's face twitch. "He knows."

"You seem just like an ordinary human to me… Not someone to get involved in these shadowy things, yeah?" It was unlikely the Doctor would ever fall for someone like Rose if she were like that.

The blonde shook her head. "I used to be an ordinary human, once. Not any more, I'm afraid. Thanks to him," Rose giggled bitterly.

The Doctor winced. "I'm sorry. I couldn't-"

"I know," the fair-haired companion smiled. "You did what you thought was best."

"I'm sorry?" He sounded hurt. "There was no other alternative, Rose!"

Donna spoke, unable to ignore the conversation. "You were almost dead the moment we found you. Almost gave the Doctor a heart attack."

Rose bit her lip. "I'm sorry."

The ginger stared at her. "What did you say?"

. The blonde sighed. "I might have found some other alternative, of course… but there she was, calling me in… What was I supposed to do?"

"You… Rose. The TARDIS is the best place in the universe. Luckily, you have reached her in time, or else-" he gulped.

"It doesn't matter now."

"Rose?" Donna could not hold back her interest, seeing the girl's eyes encouraging her to continue.

"This alien man of yours- Spaceman, I call him-" The fiery ginger swallowed. "He had said to have healed- to have fixed you completely-"

"He has," Rose shrugged. *For better or for worse*… "As a Time Lord, he can do this."

Donna could not believe it, the girl's nonchalance only puzzling her further. "But what if the bleeding begins again?" The disturbing sight of the blonde lying in a pool of blood was still in her mind.

"It won't," both he and Rose spoke in unison, the latter chuckling. "For all I know, he could have made me live for centuries."

The ginger has almost sighed in relief at the smiles on their faces. Whatever it was that had happened… it seemed fine for now.
Previously…

The ginger has almost sighed in relief at the smiles on their faces. Whatever it was that had happened… it seemed fine for now.

Chapter Three

Closer

The almost persistent questioning look on Donna's face was making Rose – one with enviable patience - uncomfortable. "What is it?"

"I was not expecting this. Any of this," the ginger shrugged, uneasy. She realised she must have been staring at the fair-haired companion for quite a while now. "Sorry."

"This entire- happening must have been quite surprising, I admit," Rose shook it away. "And perhaps a little scary."

Donna's eyes widened. Perhaps? A little? This mysterious woman was puzzling her more and more. As if the Doctor alone hadn't brought her enough mysteries for a lifetime… "I was hoping you would clarify the situation some more for me, actually."

"What's there not to understand?" Rose was honestly surprised. "I was running away from those determined to get rid of me, because I kept openly disagreeing with some of their disturbing policies… and the TARDIS… she has kept me alive just so you two could find me." And save me.

The blonde, however, appeared to be slightly disgruntled. Which was no surprise to Donna, really. She has had every right to be. Almost-dying had to be a dreadful experience.

"Something feels strange," Rose muttered more to herself than to anyone in particular.

"What does? The TARDIS?" The Doctor, always on the border of crossing her personal space – which but amused Donna greatly - asked her.

"No. The TARDIS knows me, and I know her. To an extent," she added, meeting the Time Lord's searching look. "It's something else. Something completely different…"

"Good different or bad different?"

"Stop it," Rose said almost pleadingly. The past, however pleasant some of it might have been, was the last thing she needed to return to. "Just… stop, yeah?"

"Do you want me to run some tests on you, Rose?"

"No. I don't think it would be of any help."

"It might be?" He grinned at her encouragingly, causing a small smile to appear on her face. Donna was watching them quietly. It was only a matter of hours until they finally opened up to each other. Maybe less than that.

"Please, Rose? You are worrying me."
"The old girl and me... we share a connection," she spoke dreamily, a sincere smile brightening her face the moment she heard the ship hum in approval. Which you must know. The next moment, the expression was gone, as Rose sighed heavily, suddenly able to name the sensation. "Just tell me- tell me it wasn't intentional."

"What are you talking about?"

She rolled her eyes. "You must know. I know. Why, Doctor?"

"What?" Donna could not bear the riddles any more... but nobody paid any attention to her.

The Doctor paled, understanding the improbable possibility has been staring him in the face all this time.

"This can't be," he breathed out lamely.

"Can't it?" the Tyler girl spoke quietly, trying hard not to begin shouting at him. The sheer panic on her face was hurting the alien more than he would admit.

"We... I hadn't done anything to start the- wait, Rose. You'd been unconscious, your mental borders were down..." for however short a while. Oh. The worst thing was he could not make himself regret this.

The Doctor cleared his throat. "Our feelings... past or not, it must have started the process of- of-" he did not dare to finish the sentence, instead directing his look at Donna.

Rose bit her distrust away. "Why now?"

The Time Lord gulped, his eyes widening. "You wouldn't have allowed this to happen otherwise."

"Would you? If you knew this was happening, that is?"

"No. I have neither the right nor the intention to hurt you in any way, my Rose."

Too late, wouldn't you say? She grimaced. "A partial bond, is this it?"

"Er... yes." The Doctor breathed out, afraid to think of how much Rose knew about this particular kind of connection. Or of how it needed to either be broken off or strengthened eventually. "Does it make you uncomfortable?"

"Does it hurt, you mean? Not yet," the young woman spoke tiredly, clearly knowing more of the side-effects of an incomplete bond than any human was ever supposed to. Both scary and impossible, it was also somewhat... relieving.

Her voice was barely above a whisper now. "I wasn't asking for such a bonus, you know."

"I know. But this was beyond my control."

Rose was shaking her head in disbelief and eyeing him warily, yet not doubting him. "How?"

"Ah. You were – subconsciously, of course - looking for someone you trust. Which happened to be... me," the Doctor smiled, his expression – if a tiny bit smug – maddening the girl further. "Do you find this amusing?"

"Well-" The Time Lord was looking anywhere but at her.
"You don't need to answer this one." Rose could tell this was as big a surprise for him as it was for her. "Can it be removed?"

The alien gulped. "With consequences, but yes," the Doctor admitted, not adding the possible, however unlikely, consequences could include one of them dying in the process. "Do you want me to remove it?"

_Gods, no._

Being a part of something as powerful as Torchwood included access to all kinds of secret documents. _Including_ those of alien traditions. Being the only daughter – nobody knew the real story, anyway - of the most powerful person in the place has surely paid off… _In a way._ Rose shuddered.

"It's a very unusual feeling," she met his startled eyes. "But no. You can't have known this would happen."

"It wasn't _intentional_, I assure you. But, Rose Tyler, you should know I-"

_No. No. No!_ Rose's breath hitched. Why did he have to complicate everything? So soon…

_You think it's okay to tell me you love me after all this time, because?_

The words were not uttered out loud, but there was no need of it. This was not going to end well, both the Doctor and Rose knew it – but it was too late to stop now. "You're angry with me?"

"I'm _furious._"

"About what?"

With whom, more likely. "You could have- _should_ have told me this sooner." _Now… I really, really don't know._

"If I had… It would have been unsupportable for me. Breaking your heart like this, when I knew we were going to get separated sooner or later, and-"

"You have, actually. But that's long gone and forgotten now, yeah?"

The Doctor did not look away, but did not speak.

"And I thank you. I thank you, because you have saved my life. Because I am _not_ afraid of finishing my sentences."

"Rose, you know I couldn't-"

"I'm not talking about _Dårlig Ulv-Stranden._" She pronounced every syllable distinctly, her voice quiet, yet certain.

This had a startling effect on the Time Lord, as he had hoped to never hear the name again, and especially not uttered in this terrifyingly familiar way. "I dare to hope you… back then-"

"Of course," Rose said, her voice and face void of emotion.

Donna was about to slip out of the room quietly, but Rose stopped her. "You don't need to leave."

The ginger grimaced. "Why can't you two just appreciate the lucky event? Instead of quarrelling?"
The Doctor smiled at Donna, but the smile did not reach his eyes. Rose shrugged. "We are appreciating it."

It was simply too sudden. Too unexpected… and, if the fair-haired companion was being truthful to herself – almost too good to be true.
Doubts

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Previously…

*It was simply too sudden. Too unexpected… and, if the fair-haired companion was being truthful to herself – too good to be true.*

Chapter Four

Doubts

Donna cleared her throat. "Don't you want to have some privacy, or-"

"What for?" The Doctor looked at the ginger human, not understanding. If anything, he and Rose were *perfectly* companionable!

The woman threw an incredulous glance at Rose, who but shrugged, clearly familiar with such awkward misunderstandings coming from the Time Lord. Granting them privacy meant they would need to address topics the alien clearly was still not ready to face. She *could* wait.

"So…" Donna began uncomfortably. "Rose, eh? Do you know how much he-"

"Don't." The Doctor eyed his most recent companion with pleading and panic in his gaze.

"Oh, in no way will I miss the opportunity!" She shook her head. "He seemed utterly broken when I found myself on his ship."

"Naturally. It was less than ten minutes since I'd seen you last, Rose! I thought I'd lost you for good…"

"Lost you. That had been the word- wait. Did you just say-"

"Maybe even less. Yeah."

Donna gaped at him. "You should have told me!"

"You wouldn't have listened!"

Rose grabbed his hand without thinking. "It's okay. I'm here now."

The Doctor could not stop the following question from escaping his lips. "For how long are you going to stay with me this time, though?"

"I have answered this question already. Don't you remember?"

Oh, he *did..."I could never forget it, Rose. But- do you still feel like keeping that promise?" After all, she was a human. Human wishes had the tendency to change…"

"Don't you *dare* doubt me," she whispered, her voice bitter.
"Here you go again," Donna rolled her eyes. "I could go fetch you something to drink. Would tea be all right?"

"Yes," they spoke in unison.

The ginger grinned. They really, really needed to talk. And she could be slow when she wanted to. "Right... any preferences?"

The Doctor shrugged. "Tell her, Rose. I'll have mine as always."

"Still that much sugar?" The fair girl teased.

"More, actually. Ever since you— were gone."

Rose sighed heavily, pressing his hand encouragingly. "I'm sorry."

Donna ignored the seemingly never-ending guilt-filled need to apologise they both seemed to be into this time. "How do you take your tea, Rose?"

"Properly sweetened," she said.

"The Doctor's way of properly?" Donna looked at her incredulously.

"No. I prefer to still feel the taste of tea, rather than that of liquidised sugar," the fair-haired companion eyed the Time Lord, a meaningful smirk on her face. "Yes, I remember – superior physiology and all that nonsense."

"That, Rose Tyler, is no nonsense!"

Donna Noble breathed out, unsure for a moment about whether this should worry or amuse her. Very soon, she decided upon the latter. This bickering seemed completely natural for them. Particularly seeing how their eyes were sparkling. Without saying anything else, she left the room, hoping they would not notice.

They did.

All of a sudden, they fell completely quiet, not daring to even breathe. It felt as if the smallest noise were about to suddenly shatter the unspoken connection between them. The two minutes of utter silence felt like an eternity.

"Breathe, Rose," the Doctor's soft voice encouraged, the calm starting to worry him. "You can't have acquired respiratory bypass out of a sudden," he smiled.

"Maybe I have," she shrugged, teasing him softly.

At the alien's startled expression, Rose rolled her eyes.

"I wouldn't have managed another minute," she admitted. "I have no idea what exactly this partial bond has done to me. But the superior ability of holding my breath was not it."

"You're still human, Rose. The bond – even when it's fully formed – cannot change your nature so drastically." Hopefully.

"It does change quite a lot of things between us, though," her voice was quiet and sounded almost resigned.
"It does," the Doctor agreed quietly. Not as many as it would if they chose to go for the full bond – but even this unfinished one was strong enough to intensify many otherwise barely noticeable aspects concerning the other. Some of these were bordering on too personal.

"I'm sorry again, Rose… This was not planned, I assure you!" Fantasised about, perhaps.

"Isn't this basically the same thing?" The blonde smirked at him, allowing her tongue brush over her teeth.

"Rose-" Her flirting was complicating the situation greatly. He was trying to remain reasonable.

"It's not really my problem you keep forgetting to put your barriers up, yes?" Her words, albeit unintentionally, came out sharp and bitter.

The Doctor stared at her. He had never needed to put up any sort of mental barriers against any human before, least of all Rose. This was the last thing he wanted to do now. But if she wanted it…

The young woman inhaled deeply, trying her best in keeping her composure. "Instead of moping about, you should try and see something positive in all this. Better yet – remember my promise and what it gives you, my Doctor."

"Are you ready for this, though? Travelling across the universe again? With Donna?"

"Donna and you, Doctor." Rose was growing tired of all this. She needed to know. "Do you want this, Doctor? Finishing the bond?" Even if truly completing it required much more than mere friendship. More than the unquestionable trust they shared. The bond, albeit not forged completely, was giving her some very clear signs about what the Tyler girl wanted to know… still, that was not enough.

The Time Lord was dazed. All of this was hard to grasp – even for him.

"Yes, I do." More than anything in the universe.

She giggled. "Shouldn't you explain some of it to me first? We can't rush headlong into something even more intense than this."

There was but one question nagging in his head that very moment. The alien did what he knew best – pushed it away.

Am I ready? Am I strong enough? Am I willing? Am I brave enough?

Rose's intentionally and bravely transmitted thoughts took him by surprise.

"You know the answer to all of these is the same, my Doctor. But the real question is different, isn't it?"

Gobsmacked, the Time Lord could only give a weak nod. The effect her self-confidence in talking of this had on him was mesmerising.

However, Rose was suddenly uncertain. Perhaps even terrified. What if this was not what she believed to be seeing… as the Doctor was still allowing her to see bits and pieces of himself. Of his feelings for her. Its effect either did not concern the alien at all… or he was doing it on purpose. She hoped it was the latter.

"Rose. My Rose. "I am not doing this to tease you," he spoke softly. "Not doing this to prepare you
for some incredible ordeal. You still haven't told me if you wished to proceed with this."

Wrong statement.

"I want to stay with you forever. Thanks to some twist of fate and to our precious TARDIS we are doing just that now."

The Doctor knew – even without having fully bonded with his incomparable human – yet - he was not going to back away now. The real question was suddenly no longer burning him from within. The answer to it was always plain and obvious. Yes.

Chapter End Notes

I know at least one of my readers has found the ending of this chapter confusing. But it really shouldn't be. It's nowhere as bad as I could have made it, trust me.
Previously…

The real question was suddenly no longer burning him from within. The answer to it was always plain and obvious. Yes.

Chapter Five

"Of course I do, you utterly daft Time Lord. Of course the answer was, and is always going to be like this."

"Daft? Who's daft? I most certainly am not!"

She shrugged, seeing he still had something else to say.

"Rose… you must know. While the partial bond took hardly any time to create – much too little, if you ask me – the full bond might take weeks. Months. Years, even," the Doctor was forcing the words out of his mouth.

The girl's hazel eyes were now burning into his. "Has it ever crossed your mind we now have many, many years in front of us? Together? Forever?"

"That is, if we go for it."

"We could break it down? Is this what you are saying? Is this what you really want?" Her voice was terrifyingly even. "I thought-"

"I only want what is best for you, my Rose."

"Oh, no. This is not working. I am not your Rose. Not until you stop making decisions for me," she grimaced, seeing the hurt on his face. "I thought this was enough to help you see how I feel about you, no?"

The Doctor only nodded, not finding any words to say. He knew exactly how she felt about him. While it has made him incredibly happy, he was afraid for what the full bond would mean to them.

Donna entered the room uncertainly. They could have been snogging each other breathless… which would have been a hundred times better than the heavy silence she was met with.

"How is everything?"

"Oh, just fine, Donna! We have agreed to have everything finished as soon as possible," the Time Lord informed her.

"You are not exactly being very clear," Donna noted. She saw the blonde companion was not quite pleased, either.

"Have we agreed to it? When?" Rose could feel her annoyance rising. As incredible as the Doctor was, he did not seem like himself at that moment. "What have we agreed to? Strengthening the bond or abandoning it? Or perhaps you are not sure yet?" the words were leaving her without her own
"I am sure. I want this with you. But this is going to take time."

Rose's eyes went wide again. "We have plenty of it."

"No, we don't."

The ginger but shook her head incredulously, before leaving them as quietly as she had come. The two were too involved in their conversation to notice, and Donna did not even attempt to understand whatever they were so passionately into. She believed this was going to end in either blood or in an overdue snog. But maybe not so soon… Not for them.

"We don't? I am fairly certain we do. One can live with a bond that is not fully complete for months, at least. I know," the fair-haired companion bit her lip, fully convinced of what she believed was true.

Rose… What you'd read is valid for Time Lords. Not for-

Rose gaped, fighting to keep her emotions in check. Her breath hitched treacherously. "What do you mean, exactly?" She knew, of course. The Doctor must have thought she, Rose Marion Tyler, a human, could not possibly be good enough for him.

He shook his head. "You are more. Much more. Better than any Time Lord I used to-" he gulped – "used to know." Why can't you see it?

"Thanks," she smiled at him, but it did not reach her eyes. The Londoner was not about to let the important topics go. "Not valid for me? For humans in general?"

This was too much for the Doctor. He took both of her hands in his. This way, the meaning of what he had to say would not miss her. Neither would the feelings she was semi-consciously sending him go past him.

"It's days. Maybe a week, if we're lucky."

We. Rose breathed out. We! You and me...

"Obviously," he smiled at her softly. A bond never goes one-way. But- in order to complete it, or at least strengthen it for the time being to avoid unnecessary trouble-

"I don't know how to put this nicely," he shrugged, suddenly uncomfortable.

You don't have to. Rose's lips curled into a smile. Was the Doctor ashamed?

We- we must, so that-

"For the bond to be completed, we must become one. Mentally and physically. Yes."

"This is not something to be approached so simply," the Doctor fought the wish to smirk, trying to maintain a grave composure.

"It is not simple. Nothing about our relationship is ever simple."

The Time Lord almost let go of her hands, surprised. She started. Maybe using the word was not the best idea. Too soon?

Relationship is good. A good word. But not true enough.
Rose tensed. Were they about to resume walking in circles about the important things again?

They were not. "Are you ready for this? It might change everything for us."

"Will you stop loving me?"

This took the alien by surprise. He should have known – and has - the bonding, albeit accidental, albeit incomplete, allowed her to see such things. Personal things. "Er, no. Of course not- I couldn't-"

The blonde's eyes were glowing with happiness. "I have you. I need no-one else."

"No? "Doesn't this outcome frighten you?"

"Nope. But we can't just-" We are not exactly alone-

_Donna_. She would understand, all right. Would encourage it, very likely. But this was an act of intimacy. Merely knowing Donna Noble was somewhere aboard the TARDIS would increase the tension – both between him and Rose and with the ginger companion to an incomparable level.

"We could get her home. Just for a day or two. Then, we could- if you still wanted to-"

_Doctor..._ It was Rose who took her hands away then.

Donna Noble was not exactly wonder-struck to see Rose licking the blood off her lower lip with a wondering look in her eyes the moment she entered the room the next time.

"Hi," Rose turned her eyes away, her cheeks looking slightly flushed.

"Had fun, I see?"

The blonde turned her head towards the Time Lord. "This one's still too stunned by having broken down so unexpectedly." The loving gaze on the girl's face spoke volumes.

The Doctor cleared his throat before addressing the ginger human. "I remember you were saying something about tea, Donna?"

"Need more time?" she smirked.

"More tea," he glared at her.

"Sure. Be sure to fix her up until I return, Spaceman!" She gave Rose two thumbs up and left, a smug grin on her face.

_Ouch_. A snog _and_ blood. Or was it the other way around? Donna shuddered, content at the same time. She should probably reconsider her profession. A psychic sounded just right.
Previously…

Ouch. A snog and blood. Or was it the other way around? Donna shuddered, content at the same time. She should probably reconsider her profession. A psychic sounded just right.

Chapter Six

What Should Be, What Should Not

"My Rose," the Doctor spoke uncomfortably the moment Donna was out of sight. "You know I have never meant to hurt you!"

"I don't care," Rose breathed at him. "I don't care. It doesn't hurt." Much. As if wanting to prove it to him, she bit her lip… but it was done with utmost care, her upper teeth barely touching the bruised surface.

The Doctor smiled at her effort, but was not going to waste a moment more or cause more pain to the pink and yellow girl and reached for his sonic screwdriver at once, finding and activating the correct setting without a blink.

One second, and it was done.

Rose grinned. "Thanks. For a moment I thought you were going to kiss me again and the magical Time Lord saliva in your mouth would heal it," she shrugged.

The Doctor smirked at her, relieved. "My sonic is much more useful… and much more aesthetical to deal with this little nuisance, don't you think, Rose?"

"S'ppose," Rose agreed, happy about so many things all of a sudden.

The Time Lord was sharing her emotions, grabbing her hand excitedly, but saying nothing.

"Run?" Rose suggested with a grin.

"I'd prefer some tea first," he teased.

"Tea it is," the human nodded. "I wonder what 'properly sweetened' is for Donna, though."

The Doctor wondered how the companion could always remain so cheerful. "You do realise you have almost died today, love?"

"Yes." Getting used to it, really.

"You… what?" the Time Lord let go of her hand and wrapped his arms around her possessively. She did not mind.

"Torchwood?" The Doctor was only barely controlling himself from breaking something.

"That's a long story, Doctor. I don't feel like talking about it now, yeah?" We have all of time and space for that, remember.
"Forever. "Yes, my darling." They were almost married, anyway. He could allow himself this word. Particularly when it made Rose smile at him like *that*.

"Where is Donna when we need her?" The girl nudged him, never stopping to smile. She was good when it came to hiding things... from everyone *but* the Doctor, not when even the incomplete bond was dangerously helpful when it came to breaking every attempt of hers to do so.

"Does it matter, Rose? Should we go look for her?" After all, Rose might have wanted the company of another human.

"Not really, no," she smiled, for once feeling truly content and safe... but they were already out of her room and had no intention to turn back and return there. *Oh, well.*

This was not the right time to get involved in something as personal as kissing – not with the danger of Donna coming up on them, not so soon. Instead of coming up with some incredible idea, they were simply standing there, not yet used to the amount of wandering thoughts reaching their minds.

Rose exhaled, both joyful and slightly terrified of this new sensation.

The Time Lord could sense her puzzlement. "We could sit down first, don't you think?"

Rose looked around the console room in distrust. The cold metal floor did not seem like a good suggestion, even if she could feel the Doctor's well-meant intention.

"Not like *this*, my dear." He took off his suit jacket and spread it on the floor. "Like this," he met the sparkles in her eyes and smirked.

"Cheeky," Rose noted, not objecting to him helping her, already aware there was enough space on it for the two of them... barely. They had to remain *very* close to each other. The companion could not back an uncomfortable realisation she was enjoying it. It has not been the first time they had to fit in a very tiny space, no... Only then they had had no time to ponder upon it, wanting to survive and save the other... Now, though, it was different. Rose run her tongue through her teeth half-self-consciously. *Has this been your plan all along?*

The Doctor shook his head, not even trying to keep his hands off Rose. One, it was impossible wanting to still share the impromptu blanket with her. Two – *why* would he want to move away from her? Rose giggled.

*No! You know it hasn't.* Finding her barely breathing on the cold floor they was a sight that needed to be pushed out of his mind as soon as possible.

*I know.* The pink and yellow girl pressed herself even closer to him. *My Doctor.*

Donna was prepared for anything, not having found the Doctor and Rose in Rose's room. She knew they might have been untraceable if the TARDIS would have chosen to hide them.

The ship did no such thing, and Donna realised they were just in front of her, in a seemingly very, *very* intimate position. Having watched them incredulously for a moment, the redhead cleared her throat, rolling her eyes at the couple. These two... They might have been stealing each other's air with their *what-on-earth-is-personal-space* thing going on, for all she knew. She did not forget the fact Rose has apparently only barely survived and was not going to ignore it. "You do realise there are limits, yeah?"

"Hm?" the Doctor's mind has finally registered Donna was with them once again.

"I know you think it's okay to snog all the time, but-"
What is she on about? We haven't- Rose sighed heavily. She might have wished for her words to be true… But they weren't, not just yet-

"See?" the ginger was addressing the Doctor, who seemed utterly puzzled.

"We don't actually have to account to you, Donna," the fair-haired human reminded her good-naturedly. Her excitement reminded the other companion she should not have said anything at all.

"Sorry! I'm just worried about you, Rose!"

"You needn't be," she smiled. "I'm feeling better than ever, actually!"

It was impossible to doubt her words, Donna realised. Her joy was contagious. "I might have forgotten to get you your tea! Will be with you in moments!"

With that, she went out.

"Why don't we, Doctor?"

"Why don't we what, Rose?" Rose's grin couldn't have got any wider.

The Time Lord looked at her with insurmountable passion burning in his eyes. Really, why hadn't they?

Just you wait, Rose Tyler!

The human eyed him thoughtfully, then burst out laughing. "Funny how it was my almost-dying that has made you do the impossible," Rose's words were suddenly barely audible.

Are you unhappy, love?

I'm happier than ever," Rose said, echoing the words said to Donna. "I'm with you. This is enough."

The Doctor caught the look in her eyes. She was being honest. Rose, his pink and yellow human from London, England.

Earth, the Solar System, the soft voice added. "No, don't say anything. Don't do anything. Just stay here with me. I miss this feeling of simply being with you," she muttered.

The pleasant quiet was soon broken by the fierce ginger companion, who looked them over with mock concern. "If my understanding of sweetened is still too much – blame him."

Rose grinned, not at all upset about her loud entrance.

Then, she took a sip of the tea.

The cup fell from her hands.
Soon

Previously…

The pleasant quiet was soon broken by the fierce ginger companion, who looked them over with mock concern. "If my understanding of sweetened is still too much – blame him."

Rose grinned, not at all upset about her loud entrance.

Then, she took a sip of the tea.

The cup fell from her hands.

Chapter Seven

Soon

Rose manoeuvred herself out of the collage their bodies had formed effortlessly, getting up in a hurry, throwing an apologetic glance at Donna. "Sorry. Sorry. This has nothing to do with you. Nothing!" The girl threw a quick glance at the puzzled Doctor and hurried out.

The Time Lord was stopped by the ginger mid-step. "Now, you wait and listen. I am sure Rose needs some time to change her dress, or wait until it dries... And she needs to do it alone!"

"What makes you think you know what she needs? You don't know her!"

Donna sighed and spoke to him as if he were but a spoilt child. "I'm a human woman, Spaceman. Before you run to her like a lovesick fool, because you certainly look like one, answer me some questions. Okay? Good."

The Doctor glared at her, but allowed the redhead to continue.

"Was that about how I prepared the tea? She never said it openly, and I thought two sugars would be good. Was it too little? Too much? Was the tea too hot? Too cold? You must know!"

The Time Lord shrugged hopelessly. None of the passing thoughts from Rose's brilliant mind were of tea... However, Donna was not supposed to know. "I honestly don't know, Donna! Can I go to her?"

The human rolled her eyes, then grinned. "Find a proper suit jacket first. It lessens the impression of you looking like a paper straw. Slightly."

The Doctor looked at her knowingly, smirking. "Oh, she didn't seem to mind!"

"That's because she's a lovesick fool, just like you!" Donna rolled her eyes at him. "Why are you still here, I wonder? Run, I'll clean up. Go, go! But knock first!"

Maybe Rose was waiting for him in nothing but her underwear. Donna thought about pointing out the possibility for him, but changed her mind. Maybe Time Lords were not turned on by the sight of uncovered body, for all she knew. Not her business, anyway.

A shocked squeak could be heard next door. Rose. Donna sighed.
Rose glared at the Time Lord. "I would have returned in five minutes or so. Do you mind waiting outside my room until I put something more decent on?"

"I have seen you only clad in your underwear. Just several hours ago, as it comes. Have torn your decent clothing off you myself," the Doctor inhaled, remembering. "What do you think I might do? I can turn around and pretend I haven't seen you in this. Might just imagine you wearing a wedding dress instead, it could even be white and lacy, like your undies." Would this be better, Rose?

"You're right, Doctor. I'm sorry!" His lips curled into a smile. The next moment, Rose's eyes grew wide and she wrapped her arms around him, forgetting all about decency. "Sorry about the dress. Sorry about all this!" She backed away the next instant, panicking. I don't know what's wrong with me! Will you save me, Doctor? Will you?

Come with me, Rose.

Where to?

To the infirmary.

"What? No!"

The Time Lord could feel fear building inside him. No, it was her fear…

Trust me! You know I could never hurt you, Rose! I only need to see-

"Allow me to put a dress on first. You're not my- Well, whatever we are to become. Step outside."

Please.

Chastised, the Doctor stepped aside, turning away from her, yet refusing to leave the chamber. Aside was similar to outside, he reasoned.

Rose rolled her eyes, annoyed.

"Do you want me to repeat the request in your native language?"

"In Gallifreyan?" His interest was piqued. No exchange of air, blood, whatever could have taught her a language in moments. Least of all his language.

Rose sighed. "All I need is to change in private. Why can't you just-

"Something's wrong with you! I can't simply leave you like this, Rose!" He tried to assure her, his eyes full of genuine honesty.

The girl smiled at the Time Lord sadly. "You do realise I know what you're thinking, Doctor?"

He nodded. "There is one more thing I do realise, my love. You know just what is happening, don't you?"

Yes. Yes, her arms wrapped around him practically against her conscious will, the need to wear more clothes momentarily forgotten. "You know me. I know you… I love you. You-"

He nodded at her once again. You know what it is without my saying, Rose.

I do. She blushed. "I feel so- so- foolish. Brave. "Hell, why are we even bothering with this any more?" Rose has put her lips on his, connecting their mouths in a kiss which meant everything for them both. It required great self-control from the Time Lord not to place his hands lower on her
body… But he was capable of that just fine.

_You need to put something decent on,_ the Doctor reminded, never letting go of her pleasantly warm, incredibly enticing lips.

_Or?_

The Time Lord’s eyes sparkled with hope. _Or I might do this,_ he lit his sonic device and locked the door.

Rose’s breath hitched, but she tried her best not to give in to foolish expectations. It was very likely he would use it to dry up her dress, just so they could return to Donna and actually have their tea properly. Maybe even with the Doctor holding her the very same way. Rose smiled, remembering.

_Would you like that, my love?_ He managed to smile at her flirtatiously.

He knew this couldn’t be. Or it might just get more painful this time. They would not even need to wait for this long for the unfinished bond to remind about itself.

_Is this it, then?_ Rose’s voice sounded merely curious in the Doctor’s mind.

_We could wait!_ A howling sound, coming from the TARDIS, made him forget the suggestion at once.

Rose grinned blissfully, allowing the familiar golden glow overtake her. _She's calling me. We must._ The glow was gone just as soon as it appeared.

"What was it that's just happened?" The blonde eyed the Doctor curiously. It was clear this one instant was gone from her mind.

_Nothing of importance, my Rose._ If the TARDIS felt this was the right step to take, right away… The Doctor could not find any reason not to agree with his clever vessel.

_This is it, my love._

Rose smirked. _No need to change my clothes, then._

_None whatsoever, Rose Tyler. Heaven forbid you might want to put something on now._

_Off?_ The fair-haired human could not hide her excitement. They were together, in love, and _anything_ was possible.

_I believe I can help you with this, Rose._ He smirked back at her.
Previously…

Heaven forbid you might want to put something on now.

Off? The fair-haired human could not hide her excitement. They were together, in love, and anything was possible.

I believe I can help you with this, Rose. He smirked back at her.

Chapter Eight

Illusion

Maybe because of the unmistakable sound of the Doctor's sonic screwdriver locking them both inside, maybe because of the sudden unwillingness to even be close to Rose's room, Donna Noble found herself in one of the TARDIS gardens, a book placed beside her. The ginger rolled her eyes in response. "I really, really don't care, TARDIS. I am relieved to get some fresh air. Could I please get some tea?"

Donna avoided giving requests for the ship, preferring to do everything herself, but she felt confused and welcomed the ship's comforting vibes.

"Is Rose all right?" The vibes intensified.

"Are they both okay?"

No response.

"Not my business?"

Both tea and biscuits the ship knew she loved materialised in front of her, with the book open at the exact place she'd finished reading.

Donna nodded. "Understood." Soon enough, she was lost to the world in one of the most gripping novels she'd ever read.

"Rose," the Doctor breathed at her, not daring to look hastier than seemed proper… Afraid to utter more words than seemed acceptable in that situation.

"Doctor. Are you going to get these off me or should I?" The girl smiled at him crookedly.

"I have been thinking… Let's go somewhere else?"

The TARDIS gave away a sound of disapproval.

Yes, I know you think we can have anything we may want or need in here… And you're probably right, old girl. But what I mean is-
"We need to complete the bond as soon as possible, but we have forgotten to send Donna away," Rose explained softly.

"It wouldn't be fair if we did that to her," the Doctor continued, "besides-"

The TARDIS landed the next moment. "Do you at least know what you're doing?" The Doctor had forgotten the ship's persistence in making choices for him. This was different – they were not the only ones aboard the ship – but the curiosity was too strong. *We'll be back in minutes*, he assured both Rose and himself, grabbing her hand excitedly.

They have found themselves in a shining blue mist. It was impossible to say if they were inside a building or somewhere outside. There was no-one around… Only a door, marked 'proceed with caution.'

"Shall we, Rose?"

"Always," she grinned. The mysterious glowing mist was giving her a headache, but she was not someone to back away so soon. The Doctor pressed her hand more firmly and opened the next door, only to reveal there was yet another. The unpleasant sensation has suddenly enveloped them both.

"Should we leave?" He asked, worried.

"You can't," a sweet female voice echoed from somewhere inside the thick mist – suddenly more green than blue.

"Show yourself," the Doctor demanded. The voice sounded awfully familiar…

"No, I can't. Must save the two of you for further surprises," the voice faded, the mutual wish to open the next door seemingly making it open on its own accord.

The mist was red here. The voice returned. "No mauve in this place, Doctor. This is exactly what your lovely human pet would associate with red. Danger… and passion. So much passion! The Doctor's lips were on hers – the sudden need to feel her was impossible to control. Surprised, with her head spinning, Rose could not do anything but allow him in, welcoming the coolness of his tongue inside her mouth.

"Yes, kiss her."

The sudden need to feel Rose… To feel all of her – was driving him below the edge.

*I still wear next to nothing*, she remembered, his lips now reaching between her breasts, still covered in the lacy bra. *Is this proper?*

*Is teasing me with the unnecessary undergarments proper?*

"Yes, between the breasts, yes, kiss her there, yes!" The voice was growing sickeningly seductive. "Make her shout! Bite her, make her bleed!"

Luckily, the Doctor ignored this request, kissing her breasts through the white of her bra instead.

"Why wouldn't you just cause her pain?"

"Because I love her," he lifted his head and met the startled look on Rose's face.

"There is another one who'd claimed to have loved your sweet little toy. Only he was not against causing her pain. Because he says pain is what pleasure is all about, am I right, Jimmy?"
All of a sudden, the red mist was gone… Jimmy Stone was standing two steps away from them, the woman close to him looking awfully like a certain Reinette Poisson.

Rose was clinging to the Doctor, her eyes wide. His hands were wrapped around her possessively. *This is but an illusion, Rose,* he assured her.

Madame de Pompadour was the first to speak, her voice both hurt and somewhat spiteful. "You have never returned for me, my lonely angel. My Doctor."

The man Rose has hoped to never see again – as she could only associate him with trouble – *and pain, so much pain* – spoke next. "I know now how my little whore of a girlfriend kept spending her days and nights. Right, bitch?"

The Doctor sent him his most murderous of glares. "Think again before you speak, Jimmy."

"She is in her underwear! How have you even convinced her to wear this much?"

The woman from the past – it must have been her who had been speaking, likely taught by the disgusting Jimmy bloke – looked only terribly sad. "Have you left me because of *her,* Doctor?"

Jimmy grinned. "Will you make her bleed, or do you want me to help? He met the Doctor's eyes. "Let me give you a lesson, mate. You do whatever you want with your woman, then buy her flowers and whisper sweet nothings into her ear… Then, soon enough, you can do everything again," he laughed.

He did not reply, quickly leading his companion outside. Only when they were back in the TARDIS did Rose let go of the Doctor.

"None of this was real, Rose," he spoke soothingly.

"Your lips between and on my breasts felt disturbingly real, Doctor," she snapped. *And disturbingly pleasant.*

The Time Lord blushed. "About that- I might have given in to some wicked powers inside, or else-wait, haven't you been affected?"

"By the aphrodisiac? No. I am no 'never fall in love with a travelling companion' kind of person. Still human, as it comes," Rose grinned at the expression on his face.

The Doctor stared at her. "Has Jimmy really done all these things to you, Rose?"

"Has he made me bleed? Surely…" she rolled her eyes, dropping the subject. "Have you left her because of me?" Rose asked.

"Why haven't you told me about Jimmy beating you?"

She sighed. "All he could beat was drums. He's abused me psychologically, for sure. Nothing else. Mind if I go take a shower? This has been a devastating experience, and I-"

He nodded. "What did you mean, he's made you bleed?"

Rose eyed him incredulously. "You are free to join me the moment your daft Time Lord brain starts working, yeah? But I won't be waiting long, Doctor." She blew him a kiss and left for her en suite, amused.
Previously…

Rose eyed him incredulously. "You are free to join me the moment your daft Time Lord brain starts working, yeah? But I won't be waiting long, Doctor." She blew him a kiss and left for her en suite, giggling.

Chapter Nine

The good, the bad… and the unsaid

Her amusement was gone the moment the Doctor was out of sight. What have I done to you to be given such a blow, TARDIS? Madame de Pompadour she could tolerate. She has survived many things, even the Doctor's sparkling eyes after having snogged the courtesan... But Jimmy bloody Stone? Why? There were things she had buried deep inside her mind… and that man was one of them. He had caused her more pain than she would dare to admit. He had been the first man in her bed, that much was true…

Has this been the only time she bled because of him? No… But the Doctor did not have to know this.

Rose put up every barrier she could in her mind, turning on the water… But keeping away from it, sitting down on the bathroom floor instead, feeling devastated. The TARDIS kept trying to soothe her, which has only managed to anger Rose further. I thought you were my friend.

She knew she should probably just give in to her emotions. But tears wouldn't come. So when the Doctor entered her en suite, more than a little uncomfortable, he was surprised to hear the water running, yet Rose was not making any effort to get into the shower, her undergarments still on, the brown eyes completely blank.

"Rose?"

"Ah. Hi."

"Suppose you have changed your mind, then?" He smiled at her almost expectantly.

"I see no reason," she admitted quietly, her words barely heard through the loudness of running water.

"Can I help?"

Rose was frustrated. "Help how? Make me forget having been forced to relive-"

Sighing, the Doctor wrapped his arms around her. "Shh. It's gone. I'm here now."

"I want to- to-"

Tell me, Rose.

"I want to find us some place where nobody- nothing could reach us."

"Only the two of us," the Doctor spoke dreamily. "There is a place…” His eyes sparkled almost
dreamily.

Donna has chosen to appear just then. "Hello, darlings," she spoke in a bored tone. "I have been meaning to ask you – how long until you two grow tired of walking in circles around each other and do something?-"

The Doctor glared at her. "You do realise this is not- you should not have found a way to reach us! This is a personal-"

"I know! Tell that to your ship next time. She kept placing the bloody door to this room straight in front of me for hours!"

The Doctor exhaled, remembering once again his vessel has had a mind of her own. Bloody interfering-

Rose giggled. "Okay, since you're here anyway… How can we help?"

Donna has just interrupted our private- The Time Lord was shocked at her lack of reaction.

Calm down!

"Stop looking daggers at me," the ginger spoke, utterly composed. The water was still running. "The first thing you must do is stop the blasted water, unless you prefer drowning in here!"

"Oh, he wouldn't want to."

Donna's face darkened. By now, she was ready for everything from the Spaceman, however unbelievable. "You should ask your Doctor about that one time he almost-"

"Shut up," he hissed. "Rose doesn't need to know that."

Donna Noble did not think so. "I'm sure she would like you sharing everything with her. The good, the bad, the suicidal-" The woman stressed the final word, staring pointedly at the Time Lord.

The girl grabbed his hand, startled. How could he had almost done something so- Rose fought back a sob. "You- You what? What is it you are not telling me?"

"Donna knows," he muttered, uncomfortable.

The blonde eyed the Doctor meaningfully. "I don't need our friend to tell me-" You should tell me exactly what-

The redhead sighed in obvious relief. "You two need to let go of whatever keeps you hiding important things from each other. Do that. It will help. It always helps."

"Yeah? Must you really stay here?" Rose rolled her eyes at her, remembering herself. "We can deal with this on our own."

"Finally! I have always hoped you two would. With the sickening amounts of suppressed love you two keep inside yourselves-"

"Shut up, Donna!" They chorused.

Donna's eyes widened. "Okay, okay! I am leaving! I should never have come here!" She grinned and left them, pleased. Now, they had no choice but to talk, however painful the words might be. The woman shook an unwelcome thought about other things these two might end up doing away. If
they did, fine. If they didn't? How could they not? They were consuming each other with their eyes! As usual.

She made sure to get as far away from Rose's room as possible. Just in case. Luckily, the ship was willing to help this time.

"Bleeding?" The Doctor wasted no time, addressing the nagging subject as soon as Donna has left them.

"Attempted suicide?" Rose countered.

They stared at each other, lost for words.

"Shower first," the girl cut the tension. It was enough to make the two giggle hysterically, pushing the unpleasant revelations away, even if for a little while.

"Er. You go shower, I will go to-"

"You aren't going anywhere," her cooing voice stopped him mid-step. "If you feel sharing a shower is a bit too soon, Doctor-"

Of course it was too soon. The need to actually finish the bond kept reminding them both of itself constantly, but they could wait. Sharing a shower would undoubtedly mean- the Doctor knew neither Rose nor he could postpone it any more… But not in the shower. Not…

_Do you trust me, Rose Tyler?

Rose blinked at him. Of course.

"Take your shower first," he nudged her, pleased about her response. "You know I am not exactly allowed to see you naked, Rose. We are not yet-"

She rolled her eyes at him. Really? Her bra and knickers were off her in one moment.

_Rose!_ He was too late in pressing his eyes shut. Even with his eyes closed, he could still see her bare body in his mind. The pain of an unfinished bond grew stronger, as if to tease them.

"Ahhh," she moaned in pain after a minute, pain clearly caused by the same thing.

The Doctor could not help it but glanced at her, worry taking over. "Rose? Could I do something to ease your pain somehow?"

_Don't talk._ It felt as if the sudden headache were going to kill her there and then.

This was close to the last resort, but the Time Lord was ready for everything to make his future bond mate feel at least a bit better. She was naked, wet, the shampoo still unwashed from her hair… _So beautiful._ Ignoring his own discomfort, he grabbed her by the hand, forcing her to look at him. A quick relief of some of the pain… The Doctor pulled her into a deep kiss.

_Should be a bit better now, my Rose._

The girl stared at him. That had been jokingly named _the last resort_ for a reason.

"Thanks," she muttered, stunned, her hands trembling as she hurried to wash the shampoo out of her hair… Or to simply leave, more likely, as washing her hair properly has suddenly seemed like the
least important thing she could think of.

Let's go," the girl accepted the wide TARDIS blue towel the Doctor has given her. There was no way back now. If the ship has had some different intentions towards the two, it was unlikely they would address the dark topics as soon as the old girl would have liked. Not after some cheeky remark Rose has whispered into his ear.

Really?

Yes!

Their laughter echoed throughout the ship. At least for a few minutes.
Previously…

If the ship has had some different intentions towards the two, it was unlikely they would address the dark topics as soon as the old girl would have liked. Not after some cheeky remark Rose has whispered into his ear.

Really?

Yes!

Their laughter echoed throughout the ship. At least for a few minutes.

Just Like That

Chapter Ten

Possible

Both Rose and the Doctor knew this has only served as a temporary relief. No important questions were actually answered, and some of the tension could not be gone until they were ready to address the things they have, perhaps not fully on intention, been keeping from each other.

When they found themselves inside one of the unfamiliar rooms, neither was surprised.

"I can start," Rose breathed out, determined to get it out of her system. The pain was only increasing. "It's nothing out of the ordinary. A cheating, lying boyfriend."

"And the bleeding?" He could see how unwilling Rose was to remember such unpleasant things, but it was necessary for them to share it all rather than keep these unpleasant things under wraps for much longer.

Rose blinked away the tears threatening to appear. "He was never beating me," she spoke quietly. "Calling me all sorts of epithets. Treating me as if I were a thing, even throwing the heaviest things he could reach at me in fury..."

"It was nice for the first few months," she continued, her voice even. "Jimmy was caring at first. Even talked me into giving him my virginity," she spoke emotionlessly. "He was trying to behave kindly with me in bed the first few times, I can give him that," Rose exhaled. "But soon enough, his behaviour has changed drastically. I was his property, so I had to do whatever he wanted. You wouldn't want to know-" She bit back a sob. So much of her thinking having hoped these memories were behind her completely...

"Anyway, then, there were other girls he did not even try hiding from me, sometimes too drunk to even care about checking if I was still in the house before doing his thing with yet another of his-yeah, pretty much. I was no-one. The new girls were all told to treat me like a shadow, if even that."

She closed her eyes. "That's it. He's gone. In some local jail. I couldn't care less."

The Time Lord eyed her understandingly, unwilling to push it. "I am always here for you, Rose."
"What do you want to know first?" The Doctor spoke darkly, determined to spill it all out without wasting any more time. "How was I willing to drown myself and leave my torturous life behind? Because, because-

"Because he saw no reason to live once you were gone," Donna explained, not at all bothered. It seemed she was determined to be wherever they were all of a sudden.

"What the- Why can't you leave us alone for once?" The Doctor glared at the ginger. He was only starting! Well, if he was being completely honest with himself - the fiery redhead has just saved him from a subject he wanted forgotten, anyway...

"I can't just leave you," Donna pouted. "Your clever ship insists I should watch over you. Somehow, I think she may be right."

"What has she promised to you for it?" The Time Lord was not surprised about the old girl's overprotectiveness. "I'm sure whatever it is, I can offer you something better not to."

"Oh! Does this mean you are going to do something? Finally? I don't think I could tolerate another day of this tension," Donna rolled her eyes.

"We have talked," Rose sighed. "As you must be very well aware."

"Is this it? You two have talked and this makes everything fine again? Don't think so!"

The Doctor was ready to do anything to get Donna away, now that-

"What is it you want? A trip to Spain, everything included?"

Donna pretended to be thinking. "Spain is always a great idea, but no."

"Portugal? Italy? France?"

"What's up with you and Europe?"

"Anywhere else?" The Doctor was growing uneasy. He thought Donna loved travelling!

"Know what? I believe I could stay at home with Gramps for a few days. As long as you pay for my time spent there."

"For all the hats, you mean?" The Time Lord clarified.

"Naaah. Hats can get boring. I was thinking dresses. Shoes."

"And hats," Rose winked at the fiery redhead.

"Yes, all right. I don't suppose you are going to share any juicy information with me? After that happens?"

"Oh, no." Bonding was a serious business. Too serious to even talk to a friend about. "Besides, since when do you care?"

The Doctor's expression was very easy to read. Donna shook her head. "Since I met the two of you?"

"Just get me there already! I can practically feel the way you two are, well-"

"Fucking the other with our eyes?" Rose suggested with a wicked smirk sent the Doctor's way.
The alien eyed her curiously.

*Mickey's words, not mine,* she blushed, realising it might have been too much.

*It's okay, sweetheart.*

The ginger rolled her eyes. "Oh, wow. Can't you just wait for until I leave?" Donna was – or hoped she seemed that way - scandalised.

"We should," the Doctor nodded. *But as soon as she is brought home, Rose-*

"Just do it, won't you?" Donna grumbled. Thanks to Rose, her mind was now filled with disturbing pictures of the couple. She shook them away.

"If you are mad, we could always-" Rose tried to somehow placate the woman.

"No, Rose. You two need a shag all right. Preferably, as soon as I leave!"

The tension on board the ship was seemingly increasing every second. Donna was suddenly in need to leave. To breathe air not heavy with sexual tension.

"Don't mind me. Just take me back when you're ready."

"Are you sure?" Rose was doing all the talking. The Doctor must have been too busy planning something special for his beloved, Donna supposed.

"Yes, I am sure. I haven't seen my family for a while. Gramps is going to have the time of his life when I tell him about how this started."

"Okay. Off with you!" The Doctor opened the TARDIS door wide. "Your family awaits!"

Donna eyed Rose meaningfully. "Take every chance you get," she smirked, leaving the ship and watching the TARDIS dematerialise with a sad smile.

"Have you noticed how very much like Jack she behaves?"

"Does it need saying? Just like Jack, Donna sees us together."

"Only Donna wouldn't want to join us," Rose finished, grinning.

The Doctor smirked at her. "Is there anything you want, before-?"

At least the Time Lord was not postponing or asking her to reconsider this time.

"Kiss me first," Rose breathed into him. "Get me into the mood," she giggled.

He eyed her curiously, pretty certain she was just as ready already as he was, but attacked her lips without question.

*I need you,* the Doctor breathed. *Will you form a bond with me, Rose Tyler?*

*Yes.*

Everything happened quickly then. The oaths. The words neither was supposed to know, but they both knew exactly what they were supposed to say. Suddenly, the promise of *forever* seemed nowhere as distant.
Thank you, TARDIS.

May I make love to you, Time Lord?

Yes.

The Doctor was not surprised when only one clever smile on her lips has given him more information than any human or any part-human was ever supposed to be able to transmit. Only two Time Lords could ever sense and touch upon the most fragile, the least perceptible parts of the other’s mind, ones usually hidden so deep inside it was supposed to be unreachable.

He gasped, never doubting what this meant. "Is this the old girl's doing?"

"It's my doing as much as hers, Doctor."

Of course. It all made sense now. Torchwood staff wishing to destroy her, an abomination they knew they could never deal with in any way other than destroying her.

"But why, why haven't you told me?"

Rose bit her lip. The TARDIS was determined to block some parts of your mind, just so you wouldn't-

So that was why.

"Hasn't Donna noticed anything strange? Something?"

She thinks us strange already, Rose smiled.

"Aren't we, Rose Tyler?" The Doctor attacked her lips with ferocity, one so familiar and yet so different with the lover who has somehow, with a little help from his TARDIS, managed to do the impossible. No person, no being was ever supposed to fool him, the last of an extinct race. No-one, but here she was.

I think you need to have some of your past wounds healed, Rose, the Time Lord exhaled, never truly letting go of her lips.

She did. Rose Tyler, his bond-mate and the very last of...

"Do you mean I need a Doctor, Doctor? Maybe you do?"

He was stunned at the very open and straightforward pictures Rose Tyler, a woman with so many secrets, sent him.

"It's up to you to unwrap me. I am your patient… And I am your present," she smirked at him. My Doctor.

It was both terrifying and inspiring, this change. Rose was delighted all the same, knowing so was the Doctor, having just witnessed the impossible become possible.

The passion within them both was already driving them crazy. For once, Donna Noble was completely right.
Previously...

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Just Like That

Chapter Eleven

Bright and Beautiful

The Doctor was both excited and terrified all of a sudden. Some part of his follow-the-rules-at-all-costs upbringing has threatened to emerge here and then, but he shook it away. “Would you like something, anything, before-

Before my life changes? Rose giggled at him. I need you and only you, Doctor. Isn't this obvious?

The soothing vibes that surrounded him were now doubled. It seemed his future bond mate has found a way to take some of his worry away.

How do you do that? The Doctor's honest curiosity was the first step in proceeding with the eternal telepathic connection. She smiled at him lovingly.

That's a secret, Doctor. The TARDIS sent Rose some encouragement, and she sighed excitedly at the Time Lord.

He did not respond in any way, his eyes averted.

This can't have meant anything good.

Doctor? Is everything all right? She wrinkled up her brow worriedly, immediately concerned about him.

He has met her eyes and cursed at himself in Gallifreyan. You are not the problem, love. I- I simply can't believe this. Can't believe my luck.

“I'll make you believe it,” Rose breathed at him, her breathing uneven and shallow, as if she has just remembered what they were into minutes ago. No matter what it takes, lover.

“Rose. I am not asking for you to wear anything in particular, no matter how appreciated it might have been in our culture. I only need -”

You mean this? She sighed at the magnificent gown the vessel must have placed nearby for a reason in awe.
“It's gorgeous! And it's red! Of course I'm going to wear it, my Doctor!” She gaped at the all-too-obvious realisation.

"Now I understand why," the girl eyed him almost smugly. Your people must have been so full of themselves they have only wanted to wear the brightest, clearest, sharpest—"

“That's not exactly the case, Rose,” he smirked at her, no longer caring about finishing the sentence, because she has thrown the wide bath towel away, having never even bothered to dry herself up properly.

You are so beautiful, my love. Another thought has hit him then. The dress – are you sure you must wear it? I am certain we could avoid a lot of trouble if—

A pleasant blush has coloured the Doctor's cheeks.

“You know you want it!” She teased him lightly, her mind once again presenting him with some variations of how to make use of the gown while—

“Some of this is very creative,” the Doctor admitted, hoping he was not red in shame again. But, seriously, Rose? Is your mind really so twisted? He eyed her curiously.

She broke down in laughter. It's the old girl. I was not aware some of these were possible!

The Doctor looked at Rose, then up to the ceiling.

“You are not lying! Which means—” He blinked at the ship, puzzled.

Leave her in peace, Doctor! Rose eyed him with the unhidden need shining in her eyes, making him look at her with feelings, some - or most - of which were not approved of in his home planet.

Lust, they call it, Rose clarified helpfully, her amusement not affecting the remainder of her reason not yet clouded by the aforementioned sensation.

The girl shook her discomfort of being the one taking control away. It was just momentary, she knew. “I am not done with washing my hair,” Rose said matter-of-factly. “Have been, er- busy,” she winked at him. “Could you please help me? I am not marrying the man of my life while feeling dirty, thank you very much,” the Londoner shrugged at him.

The Doctor stopped her with the burning look in his eyes.

You, Rose Tyler, talk too much.

His hands were wrapped around her waist, his lips attacking hers feverishly. The Doctor recognised this familiar emotion and smirked to himself. She was nervous. His brilliant, brave Rose, always the first to defend those suffering, she was actually looking— Yes, he needed to get the unpleasant feeling of unease off her mind as soon as possible!

However, she did nothing to deny her lover the one thing he was ready to give her – himself.

Rose was about to teasingly remind him that he needed to remove at least some of his cherished clothes, but it seemed he understood the obvious himself once the water began falling onto them.

He did not even use some unfamiliar Gallifreyan curse words this time, kissing her face and appreciating the way Rose has seemingly understood everything without his saying.

So what if they have fully finished the bond in Rose's en-suite, with the warm water falling onto
them?

So what if the wedding gown was forgotten altogether?

So what if it required the ship's help to actually remind them that they needed to sleep occasionally instead of finding endless reasons to satisfy and be satisfied by their bond mate and that making out for hours really was no good substitute for food?

They were together. Bonded. Craving to be close to the other at all times in ways sometimes not understood by the so-called normal couples. But the universe was theirs, as was the one thing known to the Time Lords above all else. Even if the two Time Lords in question might have valued some other things just as much...

And if, several weeks later, they were found doing something much more than excessive snogging by none other than Donna Noble, she has only chastised them playfully, secretly unbelievably happy about how something starting as dark and dangerous could end up being so incredibly good.

The End

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