The Seeds of Darrowby

by Fishpaste

Summary

The Fifth Doctor was a blond, amiable man with a penchant for cricket and celery. Tristan Farnon was a blond, cheerful student vet with an eye for women and drink. Nothing in common. Except they look identical. Shame the Master caught the wrong one. Poor Peri, she didn't sign up for this!

Notes

A crossover between two fandoms completely unrelated except for the wonderful Peter Davison. Co Written with WhovianAlison, the best co author in existence and an absolutely fantastic person to boot. :}

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at https://archiveofourown.org/works/3381572.

Rating: General Audiences
Archive Warning: No Archive Warnings Apply
Category: F/M
Fandom: Doctor Who, All Creatures Great and Small - James Herriot
Relationship: Peri/Tris
Character: Fifth Doctor, Peri Brown, Tristan Farnon, Siegfried Farnon
Stats: Published: 2015-02-17 Chapters: 5/? Words: 12399
Chapter 1

Stuck! In the TARDIS! Again! Peri couldn’t believe it, honestly, did the Doctor think she was some kind of kid who couldn’t keep up with him, or listen to what he said or something.

It’d now been two hours since the Doctor had rushed out of the TARDIS, coat flapping along behind him, shouting over his shoulders about how he ‘shouldn’t be long’ and that she should just ‘stay there’ and Peri was bored out of her mind. She was also rather worried about the ridiculous guy, after all what if he ran into some alien who had promptly kidnapped, or worse killed, him? What would she do then? She couldn’t fly the TARDIS and she was fairly sure that, while it was sentient, the old blue police box couldn’t fly itself.

She sighed, and thought ruefully to herself ‘Sorry Doc, but for once I’m gonna have to be the one to get you out of trouble.’ With that thought in mind, she walked around the console and pulled the big red lever that opened the doors. They slid open and Peri grinned at what she saw outside.

What she had expected to be an alien planet was in fact a small rural village, in what she assumed to be England because there definitely weren’t any places like this in America. All around her were farmers and sweet looking old ladies, it almost looked picturesque. The houses were neat and tidy, there was no litter and even the air smelled clean. ‘Well one thing’s for sure’ she thought ‘There’s no way this is anywhere near the eye of Orion’, which is where the Doctor had been planning to take them when they’d first got the weird readings.

Peri shook her head it was no use thinking of what they could have been doing. Right now all she had to concentrate on was finding the Doctor. Surely it couldn’t be too hard, it’s not like there would be two cute blond guys running around all over the place and besides that fact, the Doctor stood out from a mile away, so there’s no way she could miss him.

Just as she was thinking this she saw a familiar blond head walk past and she grinned, before remembering that she was supposed to be angry at him. So scowling she walked up to him and tapped him on the shoulder, saying in her most irritated voice.

“Don’t you ever do that to me again or I swear I’ll kill you myself.” The figure turned, looking confused, before he gave a boyish grin,

“Me?” he asked “Do something horrible to you? I wouldn’t dream of it once, let alone again!”

*****

Tristan had to admit it wasn’t the most usual conversation starter he’d ever heard. But then, nothing about the young woman scowling darkly at him struck him in any way as ‘usual’ or ‘normal’. He gave her one of his brightest smiles over the bottles of Universal Cow Medication in his arms. Whoever she was, she didn’t seem too impressed by his charm.

“Oh really?”

The sarcasm was thick enough to spread sandwiches with. Well, she was clearly an American, the accent was unmistakable. Not exactly dressed like most of the young ladies in Darrowby either, though Tristan gave his full approval to the shorts and tight shirt she had on. He wondered what she was doing in the heart of the sleepy British countryside; there wasn’t exactly much glamour or excitement here.

At least she had good taste though, Tristan decided and made a mental note to keep her away from
Siegfried, he’d spotted her first! He shifted the bottles in his arms.

“What is that stuff anyway?” She said, peering at the stoppered bottles filled with thick crimson liquid.

“Oh, just some excess medication. Let me just put it back in the surgery and I’ll be ready, willing and able to assist you!” He tried another boyish grin. Still no effect. She shook her head vehemently.

“Like I’m letting you out of my sight! I’ve been waiting hours for you!”

“Hours? For me? I’m flattered!” Tris started back to the surgery, the peculiar but attractive American following closely. Her high heeled shoes were giving her difficulty on the uneven pavement. Tris solicitously lent her an elbow which she accepted with an air of slight puzzlement. Well, his opinion of American men was going down, didn’t they know how to be chivalrous?

They arrived at Skeldale house and Tristan was surprised when the girl followed him straight into the surgery, she was taking the whole ‘not letting him out of her sight’ fairly seriously then! He put the bottles in the cupboard and turned to his guest, who was examining the equipment with open curiosity.

“What’s this for?”

“Oh, dehorning young calves.”

“It looks very heavy.”

“It is! Takes strength and determination to use this lot!” He grinned at her again and she rolled her eyes at him, smiling.

“Of course.” She changed tack. “Where have you been anyway?”

“Where have I been? What, today?” He frowned, had she been expected him? She certainly was acting like they’d made arrangements, but Tris was positive he would have remembered meeting such a striking American girl before! Had she confused him with Siegfried? No, she’d recognised him by sight…ah well, no harm in going along with it! “Just up to Hill Farm, Tamfern’s rather worried about some of his cows there.”

“Have they been acting oddly then?”

“No…just a touch of milk fever. Look, do I kno-“

Tristan was interrupted just then as Siegfried breezed in. He dropped his bag off on the table and turned to see who Tristan was talking to. He did a double take at the sight of the strange American girl, before switching to his most charming manner.

“Hello, my dear. Who are you then? Can I be of any help?”

“Oh, hi, I’m Peri. Sorry, is this your surgery?”

“Yes, mine, my brother’s and my partner’s. Peri. That’s an unusual name, American is it?”

“Yeah, short for Perpugilliam.” She seemed charmed by his brother thought Tris sourly, though at least he knew her name now. Peri. Peculiar but it seemed to suit her anyway. He cleared his throat pointedly.
“Don’t you have that calving to head to Siegfried?”

“Actually, I just came to ask if you would mind taking it, I’ve just got a phone call from James, he’s got a horse he needs a second opinion on.”

“What? But Siegfried!”

“Must dash!” Siegfried swung out of the room before Tris could protest further. He sighed.

“Sorry about this Peri, I’ll have to take the job, it sounded pretty urgent. Will you be alright here? I’m sure Mrs Hall could make you some tea or something.”

“Can’t I come with you?” Tristan blinked.

“Well, if you want, I suppose. I’m sure it won’t be very interesting though.”

“Oh that’s alright. Besides, I can’t wait to see you trying to deal with an angry cow!”

“I’ve dealt with plenty of angry cows in my time!” He said amusedly as he gathered up the needed instruments.

“Sure you have, Doctor!”

“Veterinary, doctors are for humans, remember?” For some reason that made her laugh. She had a nice laugh, he decided, even if her sense of humour was rather bizarre. “Come on then, I’ll give you a tour of the Dales on the way!”

“I thought you said it was urgent?”

“There’s always time for admiring beauty!” He grinned, making sure to look at her pointedly as he said that. She frowned, looking confused. Good grief, didn’t American men give out compliments either? Idiots. Well, it was to his advantage he supposed.

She wasn’t too impressed by the car, commenting on the slow speed and the general mess of the interior. He pointed out that it was a vet’s car, odd smells and stains were, sadly, par for the course. Though when he got his own car he was determined to treat it a little better than this one had been!

They had just passed out of the village and were headed into the true Dales when a black clad figure appeared from nowhere. Tristan slammed on the brakes, coming to a halt just inches from the man. He leapt out of the car furiously, was the man trying to get them all killed?

“What the devil do you think you’re playing at!”

“Ah, there you are Doctor. I’ve been looking for you; I didn’t think it would take this long for you to get yourself involved.”

“What? Involved?”

“You.” Peri said, appearing by Tris’s side. “Didn’t you burn to death or something?”

“And the delightful Miss Brown with you as well. Dear me Doctor, you are getting predictable.” Tris could only stare in bafflement as Peri and the stranger glared at each other.

“Erm, sorry but-“

Tristan never got to finish his sentence. The black clad man raised his hand, there was a flash of
silvery light and then everything went very dark.

*****

“Peri? Peri…Peri, are you alright?” The Doctor’s voice pierced through the darkness.

Peri groaned and turned her head away, mumbling incoherently.

“Go away Doctor.” Apparently he didn’t understand her, as he now placed his hand on her shoulder and shook it gently, saying in an anxious voice;

“Peri, come on. Please. Open your eyes.”

She groaned again, this time more audibly and slowly started to open her eyes, her eyelids flickering slightly as they did so. This action though, caused a sharp burst of pain to hit her right temple and she winced, hissing. Her hand shot up to clutch at her head and she shut her eyes tightly, hoping to clear the pain and be able to focus properly. Slowly she tried again, her eyes opening just a fraction and feeling no additional pain, she opened them fully and took in her surroundings. She seemed to be in some sort of cell like room, which actually looked vaguely familiar, but she couldn’t put her finger on it. Above her though was a familiar sight, the Doctor was looking down at her wearing an expression of deep concern.

“Are you alright Peri?” She nodded and winced again, a faint twinge of pain passing through her head again. “I’m fine. But w-where are we?” she asked, her voice rough, as if she had just woken up.

“Haven’t a clue,” he replied scratching the back of his neck and shrugging. “I’ve only just woken up myself. All I can remember is that man in black stopping the car when we were on our way to deal with that calving and after that everything is just blank I’m afraid.”

Peri slowly started to sit up and the Doctor slipped an arm around her waist to help. She smiled gratefully at him, rubbing at the side of her head thoughtfully. A man in black? Yes, she could remember it now but that wasn’t any random guy dressed in black, that was;

“The Master!” she exclaimed out loud.

“Yes, I think that’s what he said his name was.”

“You think? Doctor the guy’s your worst enemy and if I can remember exactly who it was, I’m pretty sure you can. I mean you’ve met him like fifty times already.” Peri said, looking at the Doctor with a confused expression, which he returned.

Peri turned away from the Doctor, what was wrong with him? He’d had been acting weirdly ever since she had found him earlier on.

Firstly, there had been what she was sure was flirting, which admittedly wasn’t so bad, after all she did think the Doctor was cute. But still it was totally out of character for him seeing as generally he was about as flirty as a rock and definitely as oblivious as one.

Second, there had been all that nonsense about being a vet and all the ‘I’ve dealt with angry cows before’. That definitely couldn’t be true, unless of course there was a planet of angry alien cows that looked exactly like earth ones.

Thirdly, there was all that banter with that other guy, oh what was his name, oh yeah, Siegfried. Anyway, the two of them had argued like they had known each other their whole lives, it was almost like they were brothers or something. She frowned, now that she knew was impossible, the Doctor had told her about his brother, apparently he was called Irving Braxiatel (“Brax for short...
Peri” and he was a Time Lord who lived on Gallifrey. Not a somewhat handsome British vet who happened to be extremely charming.

The fourth odd thing was the way he seemed to know his way around, he had genuinely known the exact route to take, and had even wanted to take her on a tour. There was no way he could’ve learnt how to navigate through the entire countryside; heck he couldn’t even fly the TARDIS from one end of space to the other.

And now, there was this, not even recognizing his self-proclaimed worst enemy. Something was definitely wrong with the Doctor, unless…

She looked at him again. He was slumped against the opposite wall, looking around the room curiously, as if he’d never seen anything like it before. He looked completely lost, like he didn’t have a clue what was going on or how he’d ended up here in the first place. Obviously sensing her gaze he turned towards her, once again showing that boyish grin. Peri rolled her eyes, as cute as it was, she didn’t have time for flirting British guys, because she knew that that was who he was, all he was.

She stood up and walked over to him, causing him to positively beam at her, and sat down next to him. He was just about to say something; most likely flirtatious if the grin was anything to go by, when she cut him off. Looking him dead in the eye she whispered;

“You’re not the Doctor are you. You’re the brother Siegfried mentioned, the other vet.” As he nodded Peri sighed. ‘Well, this is great,’ she thought sarcastically ‘I am stuck. In the Master’s TARDIS. With a guy who looks exactly like the Doctor.’ She let her head fall back against the wall and gazed hopelessly at the ceiling and ignoring the curious looks the ‘not Doctor’ was giving her, she groaned in frustration. She was stuck inside another TARDIS, and this one she couldn’t escape from on her own.
The silence dragged on uncomfortably for a few seconds. Tris looked at Peri. She was sitting slumped against the wall of the odd little chamber they were currently locked in. It was a sort of metallic grey with odd round impressions over the walls. There was no windows, no furniture and, slightly more worryingly, no visible door. Contrasting it was the brightly coloured American who seemed to have mistaken him for this ‘doctor’ she’ mentioned earlier. And so had the…the Master? Rather an egotistical title there! Peri was scowling at the floor, obviously highly irritated by the entire situation. Tristan sighed inwardly and shrugged.

“Well, I guess I should probably introduce myself properly. I’m Tristan Farnon; I work as a vet in Darrowby.” Peri glanced up at him.

“Tristan? That’s an odd name.”

“Coming from you?” He laughed, “My father was a lover of Wagner, Siegfried and I suffered the consequences.”

“Oh, right.” Peri was smiling again now, Tris was pleased to see. He liked her smile. “Well, I’m Peri Brown; I’m a…traveller I guess you could say. Me and the Doctor, we travel everywhere, exploring.”

“And I look like this doctor?”

“The Doctor, that’s his name. Yeah, uncannily like him.” Peri cocked her head to one side thoughtfully. “Actually…”

“And who was that…Master? guy then?”

“He’s the Doctors ‘best enemy’.” You could hear the quotation marks as she spoke. “Far as I can work out they went to school together but now the Master spends his time trying to conquer planets and kill the Doctor while the Doctor runs after him trying to save lives.”

“Planets.”

“Yeah. Look, this might be a bit hard to believe…”

“Planets?” Tris felt like giggling hysterically. “Am I still asleep? This can’t be real. It’s too ridiculous.”

“Sorry Pretty Boy, but I think you need to know everything if we’re going to have a chance of getting out of here.”

“Pretty Boy?” Tris considered being offended but decided to take it as a compliment. He smiled at his odd companion. “Fine, tell me. Honestly, I doubt anything could throw me right now.”

“How are you on aliens?”

“…” His expression must have said it all. Peri stifled a grin and continued.

“The Doctor’s an alien, called a Time Lord. So’s the Master. We’re right now inside the Master’s TARDIS, it’s his space ship, it can travel anywhere in space and time.”

“You’re joking. You must be joking. You’re not joking are you?”
“‘Fraid not.”

“Oh. Right. Aliens. Space ships. Right.” Tris breathed in deeply and considered the problem logically. This was unlikely to be an elaborate prank, Siegfried wouldn’t go to this much trouble and James didn’t have the imagination. The Master had knocked them out with some sort of weapon he’d never seen the likes of before. It could have been alien. This room too, it was like nothing on Earth! Therefore it could be alien. Therefore the whole story could be true. And seeing as Peri was the only person who seemed to both know what was going on and didn’t want to kill him, he’d better just trust to her judgement.

“You okay Tristan?”

“Call me Tris, please. Yes, I think I’ve got a grip now. Right. So we’re in the Master’s alien space ship. Fine. Now, what does he want with us and how do we get out?”

Peri smiled at him, this was where it was going to get slightly complicated, she only hoped Tris would see things the way she did. “Well, you see…”

*****

Meanwhile the Doctor, unaware of his companion’s whereabouts, was whistling cheerfully to himself as he strolled back to the TARDIS, reflecting on the day’s events. He and Peri had been on their way to get some well needed rest in what he considered one of the most beautiful and peaceful places in the galaxy, the Eye of Orion, when a loud beeping from the console had attracted their attention. It seemed to be nothing but he had decided it would be better to make doubly sure and plotted a course for the small town of Darrowby in England, mid 1930’s. He hadn’t told Peri any of this of course, no reason to worry her or give her another reason to complain about not ever being able to have a holiday after all.

Once they had landed, he had told her to stay inside the TARDIS while he sorted everything out, it wouldn’t do to have her be captured or injured after all, and then that was that, he had run across the village, ignoring the protests of the frankly charming people who lived there and to an empty field behind a barn. Immediately he had known he had come to the right place, even if it hadn’t been for the eerie green glow that the clearly alien seed pods had been giving out, the pair of thuggish Ogrons would’ve given it away. He had groaned and hidden himself from their sight, he’d dealt with Ogrons before, quite some time ago actually, when he had still been exiled to Earth, but back then he had had the back up of UNIT and the Brigadier, and the invaluable help of Josephine Grant. As it was he would have to come up with a plan to defeat them on his own because he would not risk Peri’s life against them. So recalling what he knew about Ogrons he had formulated a simple yet very efficient plan, involving an abandoned broomstick, an empty bucket and the roof of the barn which had ended up with the two guards being knocked cold. He had then dragged them, with difficulty, to the barn and propped them against the wall, slamming the door shut and locking them inside.

All his attention had then been on the deactivation of the seeds, he hadn’t a clue what they were or which planet they came from, or even what they did for that matter, but he had known that they must be stopped, for the sake of all the people in Darrowby. He had only hoped it wasn’t too late.

And so for the next hour and a half, the Doctor had examined the plants, studying them from every direction. Then it had hit him; Galeptic seed pods! Of course! He had taken out a very complicated looking piece of scientific equipment from his pocket, that was strangely shaped like a cricket ball, and had waved it about a bit, occasionally pressing hidden buttons on its surface. Slowly, the glow had faded and the plants wilted, pathetically falling to the ground. Then it was simply a matter of getting back to the TARDIS.
‘And there we have it’ he thought cheerfully, ‘a simple matter of having the right equipment at the right time, and I’ve barely been gone two hours.’

Ahead of him he could see the familiar dark blue of the TARDIS, but even from far away he could tell something was wrong. The grin slid off his face, one of the doors was open slightly, and he could just see inside the console room. His eyes widened in concern and he ran as fast as he could towards the TARDIS.

The Doctor wrenched the door open, his eyes darting left and right, trying desperately to find his companion. He forced himself to breathe, making full use of his respiratory bypass system, as he counted to ten in his head. He had to think about this logically, after all Peri may simply be having a bath, or relaxing in her bedroom and soon she would come out looking refreshed and happy and beau- No, he would not go down that road, not with Peri, she saw him as a father figure, a replacement for that poor excuse of a step-father. He shook his head, and waited, ten, twenty, thirty minutes after forty however, his panic returned. He hurried down the corridor to her room; that too was empty, as was the bathroom, the garden and any of her other usual haunts.

Desperately he called out “Peri?” and predictably he received no answer.

He sighed, she must’ve gone out to look for him, why couldn’t his companions ever understand that when he told them to stay in the TARDIS, he meant for them to do so? So, grabbing his coat from the coat rack in one hand, and placing his hat on his head with the other, the Doctor stepped out to look for her, reassured in the knowledge that in this sleepy little pre-wartime town nothing too bad could happen to her.

*****

Back in the Master’s TARDIS Peri had just finished explaining her plan to the bewildered Tristan.

“So, if I understand correctly,” he began. “You want me to pretend to be this Doctor, in order to trick the Master into letting us go and therefore getting the two of us back home.”

Peri nodded for what felt like the thousandth time, it really wasn’t easy to explain something like that to a guy from the 1930’s, but she had finally got the general idea through to him. “That’s right Tris, you see he already thinks that you’re the Doctor, but in some kind of disguise, so it’ll be easy to convince him to let us go. Just let me do the talking and it’ll be a piece of cake. All you have to do is stand there and look really annoyed at him, you know like this is the thousandth time this has happened to you or whatever.”

Tristan looked thoughtful for a moment, before smiling. “Alright then Peri, I’ll do it.”

She grinned triumphantly, oh he was brilliant, she could honestly kiss him right now, but she restrained herself, after all it wouldn’t do to assault him, he might not like being kissed by strange Americans from the future.

Her musing was cut short by the sound of footsteps coming towards them, and she and Tris exchanged looks. ‘Well, here it goes,’ she thought grimly ‘time to see if I really am as good as the Doctor says.’

The door slid open to reveal the black clad figure of the Master who was smirking down at them, looking incredibly smug. Clearly he thought he had won.

*****

The Master was having a wonderful day; plans running smoothly, no interference from the locals and best of all, a captured arch nemesis and his pet. He finished assembling the Omni-
Transindental-Expandor and decided to take a short break from mechanics to gloat. After all, it was so rare to have an audience capable of truly understanding his genius. He simply had to show the Doctor the sheer elegance and sophistication of his latest plan. Making a token effort to conceal the smug expression on his face the Master pressed the palm of his hand against an innocuous point on the TARDIS wall and watched as part of the wall slid aside smoothly, to reveal the hidden chamber he’d stored his guests in.

The Doctor, still wearing that ridiculous outfit of his leapt to his feet as the door opened. Well, on reflection most of the Doctor’s outfits were ridiculous. The human, Peri, moved to stand next to him and the Doctor reached out an arm to keep her behind him.

“Well Doctor? Awake at last I see.”

“Yes. Quite.” The Doctor glanced behind him at the American.

“And Miss Brown as well of course.”

“She has nothing to do with this.” That response came quick as lightning. Typical Doctor, always so protective of the primitives he picked up. Well, it was a useful weakness at least.

“And how would you know that Doctor? You don’t even know what this is!”

“Well don’t you enlighten me then, Master?” The Master blinked. The Doctor never called him by name. Not to his face at least. He must be very desperate indeed to protect the human if he was playing that hand this early in the game.

“Well don’t I indeed? Follow me!” He strode out into the corridor, not needed to look to know the Doctor would have exchanged glances with his companion and then followed him obediently. So predictable. They reached the console room and the Master tapped at the controls, lowering the scanner. The Doctor stood to one side, gaze flickering interestedly around the room. Peri was too busy glaring at him to look around. He suppressed a smile at her helpless fury.

An image of the seed pods flickered to life on the TARDIS screen. The Doctor stared at it, puzzled.

“These are Galeptic Pods, Doctor.” The Master explained. When there was still no recognition on his enemy’s face he elaborated further. Good grief, had the Doctor forgotten all his basic flora knowledge? “Galeptic Pods originate in the Kasterborus region. They have a few interesting features I know you’ll appreciate.”

“Somehow I doubt that!” Peri cut in.

“Perhaps, Miss Brown. You see Galeptic Pods are incredibly virulent. Once they have matured enough they burst open, scattering tiny seeds to the wind. These seeds are virtually indestructible and grow astonishingly quickly. An exponential growth rate even, if my calculations are correct it shouldn’t take them longer than a week or two to entirely cover this miserable little planet. Crushing all other life before finally dying itself as it removes all the useful minerals.”

“That’s monstrous!” She cried.

“More than that, it’s pointless. What do you get out of it?” The Doctor frowned.

“What indeed Doctor! Well, besides the sheer pleasure at thwarting your endless attempts to protect this unworthy ball of rock, the mature Galeptic plants contain a rare mineral I wish to acquire. Unfortunately they are banned on most planets. Therefore I had to become inventive.”

“And of course you just had to choose Earth for it!” The American girl was furious now, though
the Doctor seemed to be holding back a bit, he kept glancing over to her.

“Where else could I gain such…satisfaction?” The Master practically purred. Peri’s eyes flashed and she lunged forward with her hand raised. The Doctor moved to stop her but was a second too late as she leapt towards the dark headed Time Lord. The Master waited a beat and then, using reflexes faster than those of a mere human, backhanded her across the face, sending her flying into the TARDIS wall. The Doctor started forward at that, anger plain on his face but was thwarted when the Master calmly raised his TCE and pointed it between his foe’s eyes.

“Give me a reason Doctor.” The blond gritted his teeth and looked away. The Master lowered the weapon triumphantly. Peri was sitting up now, dabbing at her nose which was bleeding quite substantially. The Doctor shot a look of loathing towards the Master and crouched next to her.

“Easy, let me see Peri.” He pried her hand away and checked her face. “Okay, it’s not broken. That’s good, resetting a nose is a painful business! Here, take my handkerchief. Pinch your nose shut and breathe through your mouth. No, don’t tilt your head back or the blood can run down your throat. I’d give you some ice but…”

Bored with his captive’s behaviour the Master turned back to his scanner. He adjusted it to show his seeds and their Ogron guards and froze. The seeds had reverted to their withered, dried inert state and the Ogrons were nowhere to be seen. He whirled around furiously.

“Doctor!”

“What?”

“What have you done? Where are my…!” He growled, realising he was unlikely to get an honest answer out of the Doctor and pressed the control to open the TARDIS door. Striding back to the Doctor and his human companion he grabbed her roughly by the wrist and pulled her towards the door.

“Come along Doctor. We are going to my seeds and you are going to undo whatever it was that you did. If you refuse, well…a broken nose isn’t too bad. A broken spine however…”

“Threats. The refuge of a cowardly man.” Spat the Doctor furiously.

“But effective. Move.”
With that the Master pushed Peri in front of him, holding her wrist firmly between her shoulder blades, causing her to whimper in pain. Tristan stared on helplessly, watching as the Master forced the poor girl out of his TARDIS and into the open countryside. He glared venomously at the black clad figure’s back before following on, after all what else could he do, if the Master put only the slightest bit more pressure on Peri’s arm, he would break it.

The Master glanced over his shoulder and smirked at the sight of the Doctor’s anger, the meddling fool was utterly helpless with his precious human pet’s life in danger. In front of him Peri was struggling wildly, desperately trying to get him to loosen his grip. This caused his smirk to grow further; he did so enjoy watching the little creatures suffer. He bent down and whispered in her ear, his cool voice sounding even more menacing.

“No my dear Miss Brown, you wouldn’t want to worry your precious Doctor unnecessarily would you? No? Well then, I’d suggest you stop your incessant moving or my hand shall accidentally slip and who knows what could possibly happen to your arm.” Peri looked up at him and glared.

“You’re not gonna get away with this you know, the Doctor will stop you,” she hissed.

“Your faith is so touching,” the Master replied sardonically. “Now move.” He shoved her forward, not missing the desperate look she threw towards the Doctor.

*****

The real Doctor however, had set out from the TARDIS and ran up and down the crowded Darrowby streets several times, searching for his missing companion, as a dozen different scenarios of what could’ve happened to her played through his head, each one worse than the last. He groaned, pushing them out of his head, Peri would be fine; after all, he had dealt with the danger, the Galeptic pods had been dealt with and their guards neutralised. She was probably out shopping somewhere or had found someone to talk to and just lost track of the time. Yes that was it. But what if she had chosen to talk with the wrong person? His worry doubled and he ran off calling her name out loud and tearing round a corner, accidentally running straight into someone.

“Hi…” the Doctor began, highly confused by this man’s mood swings. Siegfried cut him off.

“And where’s that charming American girl gotten to? Scared her off already? Really Tristan, you must try to…” The Doctor stared. American girl? That must be…

“Peri!” He exclaimed out loud. “Where is she? Have you seen her?” He looked desperately down
“Peri!” He exclaimed out loud. “Where is she? Have you seen her?” He looked desperately down at the elder Farnon.

“Since you took her out to assist you with that injured cow down at the Henderson’s? No I’m afraid not.”

Injured cow? Henderson’s? The Doctor shook his head. He had no idea what was going on, but this was the closest he’d come to finding Peri. He shot the other man a smile.

“Ah, thank you. Well sorry old chap, must dash,” and with that he turned on his heel and rushed off down the street leaving a highly confused and annoyed Siegfried behind him.

About halfway out of the village he stopped dead, staring with horror. In front of him was Peri, only she wasn’t alone. Behind her, an aura of supreme smugness emanating from him was the Master, who seemed to be hurting her. He gritted his teeth; he should’ve known that the Master was behind this whole despicable scheme, only he would be able to get a hold of the illegal plants. And he, the Doctor, had dragged poor Peri into the midst of it all.

Tristan, it seemed, was just as frustrated about the whole thing as the Doctor was. If only there was some way of distracting the Master’s attention just slightly, then Peri might just be able to get free and run for help, or at least run to Siegfried for safety. After all, he thought bitterly, his older brother would be absolutely delighted to protect the girl. Oh he could just see Siegfried’s smug face smiling at her, telling her how she was the most beautiful girl he had ever met and all that nonsense he spouted out to the women he took a liking to. He huffed a sigh of irritation only to hear the Master’s silky voice calling

“My dear Doctor, there’s no use in frustration, I shall let go of dear Miss Brown once you have reactivated the pods, nothing else but that will make me let go.”

That coward, he didn’t dare let Peri go, he needed the Doctor. ‘Well’, Tris thought with no small amount of satisfaction, ‘that’s very unfortunate, because the Doctor isn’t here.’ Of course there was the possibility that the Master would realise he wasn’t the Doctor, and then kill both him and Peri before the real Doctor had even had a chance to show his face. No, he would have to be Peri’s doctor, if only for her sake, he didn’t know what it was about the girl, but she made him feel, well if he was honest, she made him feel like he felt when he had still been with Alice. Which was odd considering they hadn’t met that long ago, but there was just something about her that made her different from any other girl he had ever met, and it wasn’t just the fact that she was apparently from the future. Peri was fun and curious, incredibly kind, witty and of course she was downright beautiful. He sighed again, now was not the time to be having this sort of inner thoughts, he needed to find a way to reactivate those pod things before the Master did much worse than give Peri a nosebleed.

“I might have known I’d find you hanging about.” A voice called across the empty stretch of moor. The Master whipped around in shock, Peri felt her heart leap with joy and relief and Tristan, towards the back of the little group was just confused. The Master stared at the advancing figure in disbelief.

“You? But…what?!”

“Peri, are you alright?”

“I’m fine Doctor.” She called, relieved to see the familiar figure standing there in his cricketing
gear and celery. What was with the celery?

“You’ve got blood down your top.” He noted unhappily.

“Just a nosebleed. I’m fine Doctor, stop fretting.”

“About you? Considering the amount of trouble you get into when I turn my back for any length of time?”

“I could say the same about you!”

“Enough!” The Master shouted. He redoubled his grip on Peri’s arm and she gasped at the increased pressure. “Doctor. How did you get here?” The Doctor raised an eyebrow.

“Walking.”

“But you were, I mean…he was…” The Doctor had never seen the Master lost for words before. He found he quite enjoyed the sight, even if he had no idea what had caused it.

“I was what?”

“I think he’s referring to me.” Came a voice from just behind the Master. The dark haired Time Lord snapped his head around, glancing back and forth between the two identical figures. In his disbelief and confusion he loosened his grip on Peri’s arm. Just a fraction but it was enough. Reacting instantly, the American girl drove the heel of her boot hard into the Master’s foot and yanked her arm loose savagely. White hot pain flared along her wrist but she pulled free and ran swiftly to where the Doctor was staring in open mouth shock at Tristan. He caught her automatically and pushed her behind him, out of the reach of a furious looking Master.

Tristan grinned awkwardly at his Doppelganger. He’d known what to expect, the Doctor, presuming that it was him, looked completely baffled. They stared at each other for several long seconds, during which Tris was vain enough to decide if the Doctor and he were identical, he was definitely rather good looking. He pushed the thoughts away quickly; acutely aware of the alien dressed in black velvet standing nearby.

The Doctor ran his eyes up and down the blond chap standing a few metres away. As far as he could tell the two of them looked eerily similar. Difficult to tell for certain without a mirror though. He nudged forward telepathically but there was no response from his lookalike. Probably human then. Or possibly an advanced android of some kind… His musings were cut short. The Master had recovered from his surprise.

“So Doctor, it seems your obsession with this pathetic race has reached new heights, if you’re actually modelling yourself after them.”

“I take it then the Galeptic pods were one of your little toys,” replied the Doctor, refusing to be baited.

“Of course. And I take it that you were the one to disable them. Rather than this imbecile here.”

“Of course. And I’m not so sure about your opinion on his intelligence; after all, he had you fooled.”

“Mere surprise my dear Doctor, I hadn’t expected such a simple trick from you. It seems I’ve credited you with rather too much intelligence.”

“Sometimes the simple tricks work best.”
Tristan and Peri watched the verbal sparring between the two with interest. Tris stuffed his hands in his pockets as he did so, not noticing how the Doctor had adopted precisely the same stance. Peri bit back an incredulous giggle at just how similar they were. The Doctor put a calming hand on her arm; she felt the familiar coolness of his skin and was comforted by it. This was the real Doctor, now everything would be sorted.

“It would seem I have the upper hand for once.” The Doctor remarked mildly. “Your hostage has escaped, your Galeptic pods are deactivated and you’re surrounded. You don’t appear to have that many options left to you.”

“Au contraire Doctor. You always did underestimate me.” The Master replied, pulling out his iconic TCE. “Brought words to a gun fight Doctor? I never understood your avoidance of weapons. In the right hands they can be a useful little tool.”

“The right hands are rarely yours.”

“Petty insults will get you nowhere Doctor. And they might just get your companion…well, let’s not be crude shall we?”

At the implied threat to Peri, Tristan felt a sudden fury descend upon him. Hadn’t the poor girl been through enough today? He saw the Doctor take a careful step in front of his companion, shielding her from the TCE with his own body. The Master’s attention was on the Doctor, the Doctor and Peri’s attention was on the Master. No one was watching Tris as he took a slow, cautious step towards his enemy. Then another. Then a third. The Master raised his TCE a little higher to emphasise his seriousness.

“Back to the barn Doctor. Those seed pods won’t reactivate themselves.”

“I am not aiding you in ruining this planet.”

“I’m afraid you don’t have much choice Doctor. After all, I am the one in control here.”

Tristan tackled him from behind with all the force of one who’d played rugby at an English school. The Master was flung forward, slamming hard into the parched ground with Tristan on top of him. The Time Lord was stronger and faster but Tristan was taking full advantage of his leverage and height. The Doctor darted forward and snatched for the TCE before the Master could bring it to bear on his opponent. He managed to force the Master to release the instrument and tossed the nasty thing over to Peri who caught it and began frantically looking for the trigger. Deprived of his weapon the Master redoubled his efforts to get free. He managed to twist and fling Tristan off his back and pushed himself up to his knees, only to be pushed down again by the Doctor. He snarled and kicked out in anger. Physical fights were almost unheard of on Gallifrey and even between the Doctor and Master; they usually chose swords or words over brute strength. Leave it to a human to drag them down to this level. Managing to push the Doctor away he was immediately tackled by another blond idiot.

Losing track of who was who in the ridiculous fight the Master drove a vicious elbow back into someone’s face, heard a cry of pain and followed it up by kicking at the noise, causing one of his attackers to fall back. He pushed the other one away, leapt up and sprinted for his TARDIS. Discretion was the better part of valour here!

The Doctor grimly raced after his foe, aware of the other blond person following at his heels. Together they chased the Master towards the large standing stone, or rather towards his disguised TARDIS. They were very close, the Master couldn’t possibly make the TARDIS now could he? The other person, his lookalike, gave a shout of warning and skidded to a halt. The Master
swerved and hopped nimbly away from the muddy river hidden beneath the short rise, using a few strategically placed rocks as stepping stones and harrying off towards his TARDIS. For the Doctor however, the warning came too late and the stepping stones were just out of reach. He plunged into the cold brown water with a cry of dismay.

Tristan peered over the edge of the bank and suppressed a smile. The Doctor, in his clean white cricket gear was now completely mud splattered, from head to toe. He sat in the chest high water, looking up at Tristan with an expression of bewildered surprise. His celery had been knocked loose and floated away downstream.

A wheezing, groaning noise from across the stream alerted Tristan to the fact their quarry had escaped. He dismissed the matter and fought back a chuckle as he reached out to the Doctor.

“Need a hand?” The alien sighed.

“Please.”

Tris grasped the Doctor’s wrist and pulled him upright. The Doctor lifted one foot out of the thick mud at the bottom of the river, overbalanced and fell in again, dragging Tristan with him. Tristan landed face first in the water and pushed himself up onto his knees, spluttering. His doppelganger stared at him in dismay.

“Sorry!”

Tris looked at the Doctor. Then he looked at himself. Two identical beings, sitting in a cold, muddy river in the middle of the Yorkshire dales, completely coated in mud. This was just too ridiculous, he couldn’t help himself. The vet in training burst out into a peel of laughter, giggling helplessly at the idiocy of their situation. The Doctor tried to keep a straight face, but as the reality of their predicament set in, and in the face of his companion’s uncontrolled merriment, he surrendered to laughter too.

That was how Peri found them a few minutes later, both sitting in a waist high river, completely mud coated and laughing like a pair of hyenas.
Chapter 4

She stared at them, trying to hold in her own laughter at the ridiculous sight they made, but the urge was too strong and she in turn found herself giggling helplessly at the mud-covered blonds.

After a while the laughter died down and the two struggled back up onto the bank, occasionally slipping on the mud and falling back in, dragging the other down accidentally. Eventually though both the Doctor and Tristan had made it safely back to dry land and both were now trying futilely to rid themselves of the mud which caked them from head to toe and was drying uncomfortably under the sun. It was now more impossible than ever to differentiate the two, as both wore equally annoyed yet amused expressions. Peri couldn’t help but grin, the pair of them looked absolutely ridiculous, and they were even more difficult to tell apart, even to her. She was fairly sure that the more uncomfortable looking one out of the two was the Doctor; after all he wasn’t as used to mud as Tris was, but she couldn’t be sure. Oh this was going to be impossible!

One of them suddenly let out a whimper of pain and two pairs of eyes shifted to him concernedly, Peri a bit moreso as she actually knew both of them properly.

“Are you alright?”

He reached up and gingerly touched his lower lip, wincing slightly as he got even more mud into a rather nasty looking cut that must’ve been due to their scuffle with the Master.

“Hmm, ‘m fine Peri. Just seem to have a bit of a split lip, nothing to worry about. Apparently the Master managed to hit me a lot harder than I thought he had, before he managed to get away.”

Peri frowned, remembering one of the two crying out during the fight, though she couldn’t tell whether it’d been Tris or the Doctor. Either way, she winced sympathetically and began to walk towards him, fishing in her pocket for something. He looked down at her curiously, wondering what she was searching for and grinned as she pulled out the blood-spotted hankie Tristan had given her to stop her nosebleed. She smiled up at him, noticing his gaze and carefully lifted the handkerchief to wipe the mud off his lips so that she could see how bad it really was. He watched her in silence, occasionally letting out a low hiss when she pressed down on a particularly painful spot.

Behind the two, the other mud-coated figure was observing them, an almost sick feeling pooling into his stomach as he watched Peri gently dabbing at his doppelganger’s lips, not liking their proximity or the way his twin was looking at her one bit.

Pretty soon, Peri’s patient’s lips were clean, the cut completely mud free, though she could see it was slightly red and swollen around the edges, which was quite possibly a sign of infection, or just because it had been bleeding.

“Well Peri. How does it look?”

“Er…Well, it’s not bleeding anymore, but it’s a bit swollen. Does it still hurt?” she asked concernedly.

“Not so much now. At any rate I doubt it’s infected so you’ve got nothing to worry about there. Besides, I’ve just had a most excellent nurse taking care of me, so I should be fine. But,” he paused, bright blue eyes shining through the mud. “I believe I know a very good way to make the pain go all together.” Peri cocked her head to one side in confusion.
“Really? How do we-“

She never got the chance to finish her sentence as the mud-coated figure leant forward, pressing his lips to hers, kissing her softly. Peri turned to an unresponsive statue; her eyes flew open in shock. Whatever she had been expecting it was definitely not this. Her mind was racing, what should she do? Dimly she felt him starting to pull away and she reacted instinctively, grabbing the front of his mud covered jumper and pulling his mouth back down to hers, kissing him back. His hands reached up to cup her face, covering her cheeks in mud as he stroked them gently, as he deepened the kiss slightly. Peri was all but pressed to him and he could feel her steady heart beat through the thin material of her shirt, which was slowly starting to resemble his own as the mud that had been coating him rubbed off on her. The two of them were completely oblivious to their surroundings, too preoccupied with each other to notice the third member of their little party’s venomous glare as he cleared his throat loudly.

This apparently had the desired effect as the two sprang apart, Peri’s face red as she panted slightly taking in the air that had been lacking in the kiss. The other figure on the other hand looked extraordinarily pleased with himself and was positively beaming at his doppelgangers murderous look.

“If you’re quite done kissing my companion Mr…?”

“Farnon. Tristan Farnon.” Tris replied cheerfully.

“Right well, Mr Farnon then. Anyway I do believe it’s time for me and Peri to get going. After all can’t have the Master escaping and getting away with all of this. So, thank you for your help but we must dash. Come on Peri.”

“Oh, but Doctor…” Peri started, mind still reeling from her kiss. She didn’t want to go right now, not so soon after that. Besides the Doctor couldn’t go off adventuring looking like a mud monster from planet whatever. The TARDIS probably wouldn’t even let him through the doors. But it seemed his mind was set as he turned away from the two humans and briskly started walking off towards the village. Peri looked sadly at Tristan and sighed.

“Sorry, Tris, but I gotta go. I’ll miss you.”

“Must you really leave? Couldn’t you stay; I mean I’m sure Siegfried wouldn’t mind lending you a room. In fact I’m sure he wouldn’t mind and…”

“Sorry, but I really gotta go. He needs me Tris.” Sadly she smiled at him, and leant up to press a kiss to his muddy cheek before turning on her heel and racing after the Doctor, leaving Tristan to stare sadly at her retreating form.

*****

The Doctor strode across the grass towards the road, brushing angrily at the flaking mud still covering his coat and trousers. Behind him he heard the distinctive hurrying tread of his companion and felt a level of relief he wouldn’t even admit to himself. She had come back to him. He slowed his pace until they were side by side, unwilling to let her out of his sight in case the other young man should suddenly appear and try to take her away again. What nerve. Stealing his companion. No, they were far better off without Tristan Farnon with them. He viciously pushed down the small voice that suggested he was overreacting.

They reached the road without either of them saying a word. The Doctor shot a quick glance at Peri and was surprised by how unhappy she looked to be leaving the other man behind. She’d clearly met him earlier, formed some sort of bond with him. A brief candle of guilt flickered to life.
Never mind, she’d soon forget him. He clearly wasn’t good enough for her anyway. Still, she looked so sad…

A car pulled up beside them as he contemplated the situation. A young man leaned out and opened the door. He looked frazzled but cheerful. A vet’s bag was flung carelessly on the back seat.

“You look like you need a ride back to town.” The driver said, gesturing to the Doctor and Peri. “What happened? Did you fall in the river?” The Doctor smiled at the offer.

“Well, yes actually, simply didn’t see it. A ride would be wonderful, thanks.” He helped Peri into the front and settled himself into the back. The young man smiled hesitantly at Peri, clearly off balance with such a beautiful woma-no! He had to stop thinking like that. He was not some silly human, to be ruled by his emotions. He refocused on the conversation.

“Peri Brown, I’m just passing through really.”

“Oh. How did you meet Tris then?” The Doctor felt his hearts sink. The man, James Herriot, clearly thought he was Tris. He should have foreseen this, in a small town like Darrowby, everyone would know everyone else. Unsure of how to correct the assumption he decided to let the matter drop. Hopefully James would drop them off near the TARDIS and they could leave and forget about everything else. Well, after a quick trip to drop those two Ogrons off somewhere. Mustn’t leave loose ends like that here! Unfortunately it transpired that Tristan and James apparently lived in the same house. Without wanting to admit that he wasn’t Tristan, which would be too awkward and complicated to explain, the Doctor found himself entering the house of his rival and being hustled upstairs by the housekeeper, a Mrs Hall, he thought, to take a bath and get some clean clothes on.

*****

Peri sat in the living room, looking around with interest. Everything was old fashioned and so very very English. Exactly how she’d often pictured the country when she was growing up. All tea and crumpets and tweed jackets. The other young vet, the partner Siegfried had mentioned she supposed, sat down opposite her.

“You never did say how you met Tris,” he commented.

“Oh, we just ran into each other,” she said evasively. The Doctor hadn’t challenged the mistaken identity, she certainly wasn’t about to. She hoped he’d be back down soon, what if the real Tristan turned up while they were still here?

“I’m sure he was very pleased to meet you.” James said wryly. Peri laughed.

“He’s a very charming man, let’s put it that way!”

“He’d be delighted to hear it. More tea?”

“No thanks.”

Just then the front door slammed open, James jumped, slopping tea over his wrist. He was dabbing at the brown liquid stain on his cuff in annoyance when the living room door opened and Siegfried stuck his head into the room. He looked furious, red faced and scowling. He did a double take on seeing Peri sitting there and frowned even harder.

“James, have you seen Tristan? I want a word with him.” The tone of voice left no doubt as to the sort of word Siegfried wanted with his brother. Peri felt her stomach knot up in apprehension. The
Doctor wouldn’t take being shouted at by a stranger, of that she was sure. And equally, what had Tris done that had so upset his family? She’d been with him the whole time…

“He’s upstairs, in the bath.” James said.

“No I’m not.” Came a voice from the hall, a moment later the real Tristan Farnon appeared behind Siegfried. He was still rather muddy, though he’d clearly stopped at a stream or something and washed the worst of it off. He saw Peri and his face split into an absolutely delighted smile. She couldn’t help but smile back, he looked so happy to see her.

Siegfried however, looked anything but pleased. He grabbed his brother by the collar and pulled him back into the hallway and through another door, presumably for privacy’s sake, though he was shouting so loudly Peri could hear every word that was said. James looked embarrassed at his partner’s behaviour.

“You useless idiot! Do you know what you’ve done Tristan? I’m ashamed of you! Ashamed to have you in my practice!”

Tristan protested, Peri couldn’t make out the words but it only seemed to rile Siegfried further.

“Don’t go making excuses! Your behaviour was disgraceful! I can’t believe any brother of mine could be so callous and irresponsible! Chasing women when you should be doing your own job! Abominable behaviour! And thanks to your gallivanting little brother, Henderson’s cow is dead. Died in pain and Henderson is furious! And then I find out you’ve abandoned the car in the middle of a road! Were you asking for an accident? Tell me, what was so important it required you to abandon the car, your job and your duties!”

There was no reply from the younger Farnon.

“No excuse. That’s unlike you. But I’m glad. I fail to think of any excuse that makes up for such abysmal failure of your work as a vet and as a responsible human being!”

Peri looked uncomfortably at James, who was staring at the closed door, frowning slightly.

“I am not having anyone who can act in such a callous and untrustworthy manner working in the practice I’ve built up from the ground floor! In fact I don’t even want you in my house! Get out of my sight!”

Footsteps down the hall and a moment later the living room door opened again and a dejected looking Tristan wandered in, heading straight for a drinks cabinet against the wall. Peri felt utterly embarrassed, the argument was not something she should have been listening to, but then again, what choice had she had? She glanced away from the young vet, staring at the empty fireplace.

“What happened, Tris?” James asked. His voice was hard. Peri looked at him in dismay, a feeling Tris seemed to reciprocate. He paused in pouring out a drink.

“Not you too, James? Haven’t I had enough from Siegfried?”

“I’m not about to tell you off for chasing women Tris, but you let that good cow die. Can you explain it?” Tristan looked frustrated; he shot a quick look at Peri which James picked up on immediately. “So you were out chasing women, neglecting your job.”

“No! It wasn’t like that!”

“Then what was it like Tris? Explain it, please! Because I can’t think of a good reason!”
“I can’t! Just trust me!”

“Can’t? Really?” James was rather red in the face now. He clearly cared a lot about the animals in their care and Tris’s inability to explain his apparent neglect was upsetting him.

“Yes, really. Would I lie to you James? Something came up that I had to deal with.”

“What thing? Tris? What thing? What on earth is so important you dropped everything, abandoned the car and let a good cow die unnecessarily but can’t talk about?”

“I… I can’t explain.”

“Really?” There was a level of anger and disgust in James’s voice that was obviously upsetting Tristan. He swallowed and rubbed the back of his neck.

“Really James. I’m sorry, I didn’t mean this-“

“You’re sorry?” James cut him off scornfully. “Tell Henderson you’re sorry. You can’t even explain yourself.” He stood up and stalked out of the room, leaving Tris standing in the centre, hands spread in mute appeal and Peri sitting, stunned, on the sofa. She stared at Tristan, he looked lost and unhappy. His hands were shaking slightly she realised as he lit a cigarette and sat next to her. He managed a ghastly approximation of a smile.

“Hey Peri. Didn’t expect to see you again. Sorry you had to see that.”

“Sorry? Tris, I’m sorry. I forgot you’d have to explain it.”

“It’s alright. Shame about Henderson though.” She looked hard at him; yes he was actually upset at the loss, though trying to hide it.

“What will you do?”

“What?”

“Well, if Siegfried’s chucked you out…”

“Oh, don’t worry about that. He’ll forget eventually, he always does.”

“This has happened before?” She asked in outrage. He seemed taken aback by her vehemence.

“Well, yes. Not the whole alien invasion of course, but the throwing out bit certainly.”

“Why? What did you do?” He shrugged.

“Last time was when I failed my exams.”

“And he threatened to throw you out for that?”

“Yes? It is his house, and he does let me live here. I’m supposed to help with the surgery and everything while I’m studying but…” He trailed off. “I’m the black sheep of the family, the one who always messes up.” There was a look of faint surprise on his face, as though he’d never really noticed it before himself.

“Well I think it’s awful. He shouldn’t treat you like that. You’re his brother.”

“He’s not usually so bad.” Tris protested half-heartedly.
“Would you have anywhere to go if he did kick you out?” Peri demanded. Something seemed to close behind Tristan’s eyes, a door to an old memory.

“No,” he said shortly.

“But he still threatens you with it.”

“Not often,” Tris said defensively. “Usually he just shouts at me or gives me the really awful jobs or forbids me from going out or something.”

“What?”

“Well, I mess up a lot of the time! I know I’m not as skilled as Siegfried is, or as dedicated as James. I’m just the lazy, irresponsible one who drinks and smokes too much.” He froze. “I’m sorry; I didn’t mean to shout at you…”

“Don’t apologise Tris! If anyone should be apologising it’s Siegfried and James. I mean, they’re threatening to throw you out your own home because a cow died.”

“It is Siegfried’s house…”

“You live here don’t you? Right. So it’s your home too.”

Tristan looked confused. Peri felt her heart break for him. It was clear he didn’t believe her, didn’t seem to believe in his own worth at all. Her blood boiled at the thought of Siegfried so casually using the threat of homelessness to keep his brother in line. Today Tris had been brave and clever and had saved her life and possibly the world and he was getting nothing but grief for it. He didn’t deserve it.

“Where’s the Doctor?” Tristan asked, obviously trying to change the subject.

“Right here.” A voice replied. Peri jumped, she hadn’t heard him come in and she wondered how long he’d been there. He was leaning against the door and frowning at the two of them, clean now, but still dressed in the mud splattered outfit.

“Oh, hey Doctor.” Tris said. He sounded tired now, as though he couldn’t be bothered to fight any more. “What brought you here?”

“You did a good thing today Tristan.” The Doctor said honestly. “You shouldn’t be punished for it.”

“It’s not as though I can explain what happened, not without being considered insane,” he retorted.

“You could come with us!” Peri said. “Doctor? Can’t he? You said he did good today, I’m sure he can help, and it’s not fair to leave him here.”

“He might not want to come, Peri.” The Doctor pointed out, but he hadn’t said no and Peri
pressed her advantage where she could.

“But you’d let him if he did? Please Doctor?” Tris was looking between the two time travellers as though he was at a tennis match. The Doctor looked uncomfortable.

“I suppose,” he said reluctantly. Peri grinned triumphantly and turned to the vet sitting opposite her, cigarette in his hand long forgotten.

“Do you want to come with us Tris?”

“Come with you, where?” He asked warily.

“Everywhere! The Doctor’s TARDIS, it’s his space ship remember, we can travel anywhere in time and space!”

“But…”

“It’s true! Come on Tris, after today you doubt that?”

“Well, no. Not really.” An incredulous smile worked its way across his features. “You’d let me come?”

“Of course!” Peri cried.

“What would I have to do in return?”

“Nothing,” The Doctor said, voice very firm. “I’m not putting any onus on you to do anything for me. If you come, it’s your choice, and I will never threaten to throw you out.” Tris stared at him.

“Really?” He asked, voice suddenly small. He hesitated then shook his head. “No. I can’t leave Siegfried. I know he’s not always the nicest person but he is my brother. I can’t just leave him.”

“You don’t have to,” The Doctor said gently. “The TARDIS is a time machine. You could travel with Peri and I for months or even years and return five minutes after you left.”

Tristan gaped briefly then snapped his mouth shut, a small, almost shy smile spreading across his face.

“I can come?”

“Yes.” Peri said. At the same time the Doctor nodded. Tris beamed at them both and leapt to his feet, flicking the cigarette end into the fireplace.

“Come on then! Wait, do I need to bring anything? Clothes, that sort of thing?”

“No, the TARDIS provides all that.” Peri laughed. She jumped up too and linked her arm with him. The Doctor took her other arm and led them out towards the waiting police box.

“There’s just one question actually,” Tris said as they left the house, still three abreast.

“Oh?” replied the Doctor.

“Why are you in cricketing gear?” The Doctor suddenly smiled, Peri felt a sudden dread.

“You play cricket?”

“Not much, but I do follow it.” Tris replied. Peri groaned. The Doctor looked delighted.
“Finally! Peri doesn’t think much of the sport! It will be nice to have someone to talk cricket to!”

“I’m doomed.” Peri muttered. Tristan laughed at the expression on her face. He stopped laughing abruptly as the Doctor opened the TARDIS door and gestured them inside. He stepped in dubiously and came to a halt in amazement. Peri sidled past him and grinned at the expression of open mouth astonishment. The Doctor strode in and shrugged off his muddy coat.

“Well? Aren’t you going to comment?” The Time Lord asked mildly, a glint of humour in his eyes.

“It’s…bigger on the inside!” Tristan exclaimed. Peri giggled.

“They all say that.”

“But…that’s impossible?”

“Is it? You try telling her that.” The amusement was audible in the Doctor’s voice. Tristan switched to staring at him instead. He nodded once slowly.

“Right. Witchcraft to the ignorant, science to the learned.” The Doctor looked impressed.

“Leigh Brackett?”

“I’ve always enjoyed science fiction.” Tristan admitted.

“You’ll love the TARDIS in that case.” Peri said. “Come on, I’ll show you to a room.”

“And a bathroom please? I’d like to get the remains of the river off if possible.”

“And a bathroom. And the wardrobe too, you’ll need some clean clothes. You too Doctor.”

“Yes, alright. I’ll just take off first.”

“Take off? Are we going to fly?”

“The TARDIS doesn’t travel through the atmosphere. We’ll dematerialise and travel through the time vortex.”

“…Right.”

“Don’t worry,” Peri said cheerfully. “You’ll get the hang of it.”
Epilogue

It’d been about 6 months since Tristan Farnon, former Darrowby vet and younger brother to Siegfried Farnon, had been asked to join the TARDIS crew and he could, in all honesty, say that he’d never felt more at home anywhere in England, than he did in this strange spaceship. Despite the fantastical world he found himself in, where running for his life and encountering aliens happened on an almost daily basis, he had finally found a place where he could be himself and no one ever judged him. He also had two wonderful friends, who were perhaps even better than James had been.

Firstly there was the Doctor, in whom he’d found a kindred spirit and had almost the same relationship as he had with Siegfried, except without the constant nagging and shouting. And then there was Peri, wonderful Peri, who was impossibly kind, brave and loving and who was currently sharing an embrace with him on the very comfortable screening room sofa.

Wrapping his arms tighter around her, he smiled, nuzzling her soft brown hair, causing her to look up at him, smiling sleepily as she had been on the verge of dropping off. He laughed quietly at her adorableness.

“Comfortable are you?”

“Hmm, oh very. Why? Don’t you like it?” she asked, moving closer to him, burying her face in his faded jumper.

He pulled her close and kissed her forehead. “Of course I like it my dear Peri. Why on Earth would I object to having such a lovely young lady pressed close to me? Most men could only dream of being so lucky!”

“Very romantic Tris,” Peri replied sarcastically, used to his flirting. She made sure he could see her rolling her eyes and lightly hit his shoulder.

Tris gasped dramatically, clutching his shoulder as if in terrible pain and looked over to her sadly. She giggled, feeling more awake, and rolled her eyes again before bending down to press a soft kiss to his terrible wound, mumbling. “Better now?”

“Mmmm, much,” he sighed contentedly before a wicked glint came into his blue eyes. “But you know, I’m going to have to get you back for that. I mean such a terrible injury deserves vengeance!”

Peri looked at him apprehensively and tried to push herself out of his arms, raising a warning hand towards him, knowing exactly what he was planning. “Tris, no…No…Don’t you dare.”

Her words fell on deaf ears as Tristan pounced, easily pinning her to the sofa, tickling her mercilessly.

Loud peals of laughter rang around the silent TARDIS, mixed with shouts of ‘Tristan’ as the two of them continued their tickle fight, after a while the young vet joined in Peri’s laughter, as she was trying pathetically to fend off his attacks, which merely caused the pair to roll off the sofa and onto the carpeted floor.

At that moment, the door opened and the Doctor appeared in the doorway, having come to investigate the laughter. He looked down at the giggling humans, locked in a tickle fight, a small smile playing on the edge of his lips as he watched them.
Unable to resist, the Doctor called out. “Having fun you two?”

The effect was instantaneous, Tris paused mid attack and Peri succeeded in pushing him off of her, giggling at his indignant surprise, managing to say breathlessly

“S-sorry Tris.” She looked up at the Doctor, pushing her hair out of her face, blushing heavily.

“Hi Doctor.”

“Yes, hello Doctor,” Tris chimed in, fed up of pretending to be hurt and switching to ginning boyishly instead, making Peri roll her eyes and the Doctor shake his head.

“Don’t start Tristan,” the Doctor said in a long suffering voice, which was belied by the smile on his face, as he made his way to the now abandoned sofa.

“Start?” Tris asked innocently. “I’m sure I don’t know what you mean Doctor and it’s terribly unfair of you to accuse me of doing something you know.”

“I’m sure,” the Time Lord replied drily, despite the grin on his face. Peri, falling into the familiar routine, stood up and placed her hands on her hips, glowering at the two of them.

“Come on you two, knock it off.”

Then she reached out a hand to the other human, who kissed the back of it before taking it gratefully and pulling himself up. From the couch the Doctor too reached out and grabbed Peri’s free hand, gently pulling his two humans to him, Peri landing on his knees and Tristan on the sofa next to them.

The blond Time Lord then extended an arm slowly and draped it over the vet’s shoulders, not wanting to make him too uncomfortable. He needn’t have worried though because Tris’s eyes flashed up to meet his, and he grinned, before snuggling his head into the crook of the Doctor’s neck, still holding Peri’s hand, stroking the back of it and occasionally lifting it to press a soft kiss to her skin.

The young American meanwhile, was snuggling his chest, her other hand clutching at the Doctor’s as if afraid he’d leave or disappear. He squeezed her hand reassuringly and she smiled, leaning up to kiss him on the cheek.

The Doctor simply smiled his hearts lighter than they had been in a long time as he pressed a kiss to both humans’ foreheads, feeling content as he felt the waves of love flowing over him.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!