Alternate Universe

by calgarry

Summary

The Doctor held up a hand and cut Donna off. "You think you've got problems?" he asked her. "Look at me! I'm Scottish!"

After the events of 'The Unicorn and the Wasp', the Doctor and Donna wake up in an unfamiliar world, where they must face such trials as families, plays, and accents.
Where the hell is she?

The Doctor held up a book triumphantly. "Look at that."

Donna looked at the cover. It was the book *Death in the Clouds* by Agatha Christie, with a picture of a giant wasp on the front. "She did remember," she said in awe.

"Somewhere in the back of her mind, it all lingered. And that's not all. Look at the copyright page," he said, handing it to Donna.

She opened the book, and her eyes widened. "Facsimile edition," she read out. "Published in the year…five billion?"

"People never stop reading it," the Doctor told her, a small smile on his face. "She is the best-selling novelist of all time."

Donna sighed. "But she never knew."

"Well, no one knows how they're going to be remembered. All you can do is hope for the best. Maybe that's what kept her writing." He paused, growing more serious. "Same thing keeps me travelling."

Donna looked up at him, and he grinned. "Onwards?"

"Onwards," she agreed, his smile reflected in her face.:

Together, they stood up and pulled a lever on the console, staring up at the time rotor; then they looked at each other and grinned.

Suddenly, over the noise of the time rotor, Donna heard a sound coming from behind her, not so much noise as the absence of noise. She thought it was similar to white noise, and turned around in time to see a bright white light, inexplicably glowing in the middle of the air.

Unable to speak, she tapped the Doctor on the shoulder. He turned around in time to see the light expand until it became too bright to look at, taking over the control room. The light and the white noise too over their senses until it was too much to bear, and everything went black.

~000~

Donna opened her eyes to find herself lying on her back in a field of grass, with trees towering above her. She jerked upright, and felt dizzy for a moment, causing her to pause and out a hand to her head.

When the moment was over, Donna looked around, trying to work out where she was. She seemed to be in a park, or possibly a green. There were children kicking a ball around in the distance, but no sign of the Doctor or even the TARDIS.

Frowning, Donna pulled a few blades of grass out of the ground and smelled them. They smelled like Earth, which was a good sign for someone who could wake up anywhere in the universe.

She stretched and stood up, noting as she did so that despite waking up on the ground, she didn't seem to be stiff at all. In fact, she felt better than she had in ages.

Looking down, Donna saw that she was wearing a T-shirt with yoga shorts, the type people wore
when they went jogging (not that she would be seen dead jogging, of course). On the ground next to her lay an iPod and a pair of sunglasses. Maybe I was jogging, she thought to herself, then shook her head. Surely she would remember that.

There was still no sign of the Doctor, so Donna picked up the iPod and began to walk around the perimeter of the park in the hopes of finding something, anything, to tell her where she was. After a minute, she found a sign that proudly proclaimed that she was in a Richmond Green, in London. Well, she thought, could be worse. At least I'm somewhere near to home. But where the bloody hell is that Doctor?

For a horrible moment, Donna had a thought that maybe, just maybe, the Doctor had grown tired of her and chucked her out of the TARDIS. But she shook her head furiously to dissipate that idea. No way. He'd never do that.

Probably.

Donna decided that staying in this park was getting her nowhere. She turned on the iPod (deciding that whoever it belonged to had good taste in music) and set off, not heading for anywhere in particular, just seeing where she would end up.

Presently she found herself walking along a cobbled lane alongside the River Thames. She stopped for a few moments and leaned on the railing by the river, looking out across the water to the trees opposite.

There were a few boats on the water, and the man sailing one of them waved to Donna. She nodded back at him. He looked like her grandfather, she reflected with a small smile.

Donna sighed and turned around, resting her back on the railing and looking around. She saw a pub around the corner, the White Cross. Oh, she thought, I'd give anything for a drink right now.

Pushing off from the railing, she headed towards the brick pub, making a mental note to ask inside if anybody knew the way to Chiswick.

~00~

Half an hour later, Donna was striding along the streets of Chiswick when she noticed that something was wrong.

Every time she went home, there were some things that were different, of course, but she was used to that. But this time, there seemed to be too many things that were different. The tree on the corner, where Pamela lived, was much larger than she remembered; the large tree in old Tessa's garden was completely gone, even though she loved that tree, and had watered it every day for forty years.

Furthermore, Donna didn't recognise any of the people she saw in the streets, even in her own. She approached her house with some trepidation, for even though she was certain she was in the right street she did not recognise anything. Even the car in her own driveway was a strange car. Surely Mum wouldn't have bought a new car, would she? They're always strapped for cash, her and Gramps.

Donna was seized with a sudden feeling of fear as she reached the front door and raised one hand to knock. She paused and took a breath, then knocked twice.

A few moments later, the door flew open and a strange woman looked out at Donna. She had brown hair that was messily tied into a bun. "Can I help you?"
Donna blinked, and glanced behind the woman into the hallway. A child's pushchair stood by the stairs, surrounded by various toys and games. "Uh…" Donna was lost for words.

The woman frowned. "You all right there?" she asked Donna.

Donna shook her head. "No. Yeah, I'm fine. I think." She cleared her throat. "I, er, think I may have the wrong house," she explained. "Do you know where I can find a woman called Sylvia?"

"Do you mean Sylvia Noble?"

"Yes!" Donna was relieved. "Do you know where I can find her?"

The woman shrugged. "No idea, sorry. I don't even know who she is, but we get people asking for her occasionally. Usually students." She smiled apologetically. "Anything I can help you with?"

"No…I'll be fine." Donna smiled and walked away from the house, feeling slightly dazed. It was her house, she was certain. So why was a stranger living there? Where was her family?

Suddenly she was struck with an idea. Heading to the nearest telephone box, she dialled her mother’s mobile number. She was met with a notification that the number did not exist. Frowning, Donna dialled again, in case she had misdialled, only to be met by the same sound. She stopped and took a deep breath, beginning to panic now.

Closing her eyes and praying, Donna crossed her fingers and dialled her grandfather's mobile number. Once again, she was told that the mobile number did not exist.

Lowering the phone from her ear slowly, Donna pressed her forehead to the cool glass of the telephone box and closed her eyes. Where the hell was her family? Where was the Doctor? Where was she, for that matter?

~00o~

It had taken Donna a while to calm down after the revelation that she was completely alone. She had walked around for some time, maybe an hour, probably more, trying to clear her head.

However, this had not proven to be a good method for calming down, as even the streets of London city were unfamiliar to Donna now. The evidence of all the strange things that had happened in London – Royal Hope Hospital, the Racnoss ship, the aliens on Big Ben – was all gone, as if it had never happened. The posters telling people to 'Vote Saxon', which normally flapped uselessly in the wind down alleys and on abandoned shops, were nowhere to be seen. Even the people were strange: the shop owners that Donna would normally chat to, the tramps sitting on the footpaths in their usual places, the teenagers who would graffiti slogans such as 'Bad Wolf', all seemed to have vanished completely, replaced by strangers.

Eventually, Donna had an idea. She popped into a newsagent's shop, avoiding the shop-keeper's eye, and bought a newspaper. She hurried out to the street and looked to the top of the front page, searching for the date.

Friday 22 April, 2011.

Donna let out an involuntary gasp and looked around, realising that she was in the future. Five years in her future. In London's future. She'd been to the future before, of course, but that was always a long time away, and usually a great distance from Earth. This, however, was completely different. She was so close to her time.
Donna began to feel a bit calmer. Perhaps her family had moved house in the five years since she was last year, and her mother had changed her phone number. Perhaps the council had finally gotten rid of the signs of alien invasion, and the graffiti.

There was still a knot in Donna's chest, a niggling feeling that wouldn't go away. Where was the Doctor? Surely he wouldn't abandon her, five years away from her time. Would he?

Rolling up the newspaper, Donna put it under her arm and began to walk. Sylvia Noble didn't believe in being in the telephone book, but she had one sure-fire way of finding her family. Her mother would never move out of London, and if her Gramps was in London, there was one place she would be certain to find him.

Not half an hour later, Donna stood stock-still under the purple sky, staring at the spot on the hill which had been her last hope. The hillside lay empty, the shed old and broken and rundown. It was as if Wilfred Mott had never existed.

Her Gramps would never let it get in that state, not if his life depended on it. His stargazing hobby was his life, in some ways. Something must have happened to him, something awful that didn't even bear thinking about.

Donna closed her eyes and slumped against the ramshackle shed, sliding down the side until she was sitting on the ground. She rested her head back against the rotting wood and gazed up at the darkening sky, the sky that was full of stars, and yet so maddeningly empty. It had been an exhausting day, first finding out that the world as she knew it seemed to be gone, and then realising that her family was similarly unreachable. The knot in her chest that she had had since she woke up, her grown larger and was becoming harder to ignore.

She sat alone on the hillside, watching as the sky turned black and the stars grew brighter. She had lost track of how much time had passed when she closed her eyes and curled up on her side, feeling more alone than she ever had before. Gradually, Donna drifted off to sleep, her eyes red and raw from the loss of everything she knew.

~00o~

Donna Noble opened her eyes to find herself still alone on the hillside where she had fallen asleep. She sat up quickly, noting as she did so the knot in her chest, as well as faint pangs of hunger. Donna realised that she hadn't eaten anything the previous day, at least after she had woken up in the park with no memory of how she got there.

Donna stretched and stood up. She glanced up once at the cloudy sky, before looking away and beginning to walk down the hill towards the strange city called London.

She arrived in town just as the shops were beginning to open. Donna noticed the enticing smell of frying bacon, and followed her nose to an American-style diner. Not her usual haunt, but today was not a normal day.

Donna ordered her breakfast and took a seat, noticing as she did so that a couple of the customers seemed to be staring at her. Look down at herself, she realised that they probably had a good reason: she wore a rumpled jogging-style outfit, and her hair was probably a mess considering that she had slept on the ground.

A waitress brought Donna her meal, accompanied by strong coffee and a frown. "Don't I know you from somewhere?" she asked Donna.

Donna studied the waitress' face. "I don't think so," she said.
"Look, I don't know what you're talking about, but I'm certain we don't know each other," Donna said rather irritably. "Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to eat my breakfast."

The waitress walked away, affronted. Donna felt bad for a moment, but the feeling dissipated when she began to ravenously attack the sausages in front of her. Glancing up for a moment, she noticed that the other diners were still staring at her. She gave them a look that had them hastily turning their attentions back to their food.

Donna finished her breakfast quickly, and left before anybody else could claim to recognise her. She walked out onto the street and turned left, hurrying along the way she had done the previous day. Today, however, she knew exactly where she was going.

She turned a corner and walked straight into a man going in the other direction. "Sorry," she muttered.

"It's alright," he replied in an unfamiliar Scottish accent.

Normally Donna would have walked away without a second glance, but something possessed her to stop and look twice at the man she had nearly run over. And when she did, she gasped and took an involuntary step backwards. "D- Doctor?" she stammered out.

For indeed, standing in front of her was a man who looked very much like the Doctor, yet... different. His hair was not as unruly, and he looked as if he hadn't shaved for a while. He was wearing a shirt and black trousers, a far cry from his usual suit and long coat. Still, he had the same face as the Doctor, the same sparkling eyes. And a Scottish accent.

The Doctor-like man did a double take also. "Donna?" he said incredulously. "You look... different."

Donna was so relieved to see a familiar face, she could have cried. As it was, she threw her arms around him in a tight hug. "You would not believe the day I'm having!" she exclaimed. "First I wake up in a park, then my family are disappeared – gone! Nowhere to be found. And nothing around here is normal, and to top it off people keep staring at me as if I'm some sort of freak show, and-

The Doctor held up a hand and cut her off. "You think you've got problems?" he asked her. "Look at me! I'm Scottish!"
Who the hell are David and Catherine?

The Doctor and Donna were sitting in a greasy spoon café, at a table just inside the window. The Doctor had ordered a coffee, and they shared their experiences of what had happened.

"I thought you might have abandoned me," Donna admitted.

The Doctor frowned. "Abandoned you? Donna, I-" He was interrupted by the waiter bringing his coffee. "Thank you. I would never do that to you," he told her. "I mean it."

Donna looked down at her hands, which were twisted in her lap, and said nothing.

The Doctor took a sip of his coffee and grimaced. "I've had better," he said, in reference to the coffee (or so Donna presumed).

"So what happened to you?" she asked him. "Where's the TARDIS? And why are you Scottish?"

A look of genuine concern crossed his face at the mention of his ship. He shrugged helplessly. "The last thing I remember is the bright light in the TARDIS, same as you. Then I woke up on a street bench. I couldn't find the TARDIS or its keys anywhere, or my screwdriver. There was nothing. And then London seemed different as well, but I think I worked out a pattern."

"A pattern in things being different?" Donna sounded sceptical.

"There are no signs of anything alien. Everything here is boring, and from Earth."

"Oi," she said warningly, and he held up his hands in surrender.

"Sorry. Anyway, I don't think this is the Earth we're used to, Donna."

She shook her head. "What? There are other Earths?"

"There are infinite parallel universes, Donna," the Doctor said in his 'stupid humans' voice. "Every time somebody makes a decision, a universe is created where everything is the same, except they made the other choice. The decisions could be anything from choosing whether or not to nuke a country, to deciding what sort of toothpaste to buy, or even which way you go in your car."

"Anyway, the universe we come from is the result of all the decisions people have made, and this could be the result of a decision made a long time ago by some intergalactic council to leave Earth alone."

"What, and everybody else in the galaxy will just accept that and leave us alone?"

"They'd be forced to," the Doctor said, with another sip of his coffee. "Someone up there," he pointed upwards, "is protecting the Earth."

"Why?" Donna asked, perplexed. "What would they do that for?"

"Why not?" he countered.

She frowned, and shook her head again. "But that still doesn't make sense. If we've travelled to a parallel universe, then why are you different? And why did we wake up in those strange places like that?"
"Ah," the Doctor said. "I'm still working on that bit."

"Well, you'd better work it out soon, spaceman," she warned him. "Or we're going to be stuck here."

The Doctor opened his mouth to say something in response, but was cut off by the ringing of a phone from inside his trouser pocket. He jumped and stared at Donna. "What do I do?" he whispered.

She raised an amused eyebrow. "For someone who flies around in a phone box, you're not very good with phones, are you? Answer it, you prawn!"

The Doctor extracted the offending phone from his pocket, and stared at it as if it might blow up at any second. The screen proclaimed that the incoming call was from someone called Georgia. He answered it cautiously. "Hello?"

A cheerful female voice replied. "David?"

He raised his eyebrows at Donna. "Uh...yes," he said. "This is David. Is this Georgia?"

"Who else would it be? She gave an uncertain laugh. "Look, where were you last night? I really needed help with Olive. You said you would be there."

The Doctor's eyes widened comically. "Er, you needed help with Olive?"

Across the table, Donna leaned forward with an interested expression. He held up a finger.

On the phone, Georgia was saying, "Yes, and you said you would. Where were you?" She sighed. "Was it that play again?"

"Uh...the play! Yes, it was the play. Sorry, I'm so sorry. Yes. The play."

She chuckled uncertainly. "Are you sure you're all right?"

"Oh, I'm fine," he assured her.

"All right." She sounded unconvinced. "Well, you come home quickly, yeah? Or are they making you do Saturdays as well now?"

"I'll be home as soon as I can," he promised, and hung up. He slowly lowered the phone from his ear, to stare at it as if it held the key to the universe.

Donna raised her eyebrows at him. "Well? Who's Georgia?"

"I have absolutely no idea," he said, still staring at the phone. "She seemed to think I was somebody called David, and that I was in a play. She needed help with an olive."

"An olive?"

"That may have been a person called Olive," he admitted, "not quite sure." He put the phone gingerly on the table and dropped his head to his hands. "What is happening?" he groaned. "Why do we look different? Who are we?"

Donna sat up straight. "Well," she said, "I have no idea either. But it looks like someone is expecting you to go home and help her."

"I don't even know who she is!" he exclaimed.
"She might be able to help us find out who you are," Donna pointed out. "But first we need to find her."

"There must be lots of Georgias in London!"

"You give up easily, don't you?" she said somewhat mockingly. "She thinks you're in a play, so this David must be at least partly known, right? At least well-known enough to have a mention on the Internet." The Doctor raised his head questioningly. "So if we can get to the internet, there's a chance that we can find her. This universe does have internet, doesn't it?"

"Bound to have," he said, enthusiasm beginning to creep into his tone.

"So we find an internet café…"

"…and find out what on Gallifrey is going on!"

They grinned at each other and jumped up, ready to go.

~00o~

Donna sat down at the computer keyboard, flexing her fingers. The Doctor leaned on the back of the chair, watching over her shoulder. "Let's start with David," she suggested, and opened up a search engine. She typed in the words 'David play'. There were millions of results, and no way to sort through them. She tried 'David London play', but there was still no luck.

"Try 'David Georgia'," he suggested, and she did. There were fewer results, but none seemed to be what they were looking for. He shook his head. "We'll never find it," he said, defeated.

But Donna had an idea. She entered the words 'David and Georgia' into the search engine, and pressed enter.

Instantly they were hit with several images of a couple, as well as results for a woman named Georgia Moffet. "Bingo," Donna said, and clicked on the first link.

"Georgia Elizabeth Moffet is an English actress," she read out. "She was in The Bill, and some show called 'Doctor Who'. This is a picture of her." She clicked on the link, and a picture of Georgia popped up on the screen.

Her eyes widened. The Doctor's hand slipped off the back of the chair, and he stumbled before righting himself, staring at the screen. "What the hell?" he demanded in a whisper.

For the picture they were staring at was one of Jenny, the Doctor's artificially created daughter from the 61st century.

"You got a phone call from your dead daughter?" Donna demanded disbelievingly.

The Doctor was frowning at the screen, eyes quickly scanning the text. "There," he said suddenly, jabbing a finger at the screen and reading it out loud. "Georgia Moffet is rumoured to be engaged to Scottish actor David Tennant after having his child early in 2011'. That must be him! Look at his page."

Donna raised her eyebrows, but clicked on the link for David Tennant's page. The page took a few moments to load. She tapped her fingers on the desk impatiently, and glanced up at the Doctor. He was staring at the screen intently, one hand on the desk, the other gripping the back of her chair.
Donna turned back to the computer in time to see the page pop up on the screen. Her fingers stilled mid-tap, and the Doctor's grip on the chair tightened until his knuckles were white.

The picture on the screen was of a brown-haired man who was unmistakeably the Doctor. The man in the photo, however, did not look like the Doctor normally, but rather the way he looked now, with a T-shirt and a scruff on his chin.

Donna made a choked sound. "You got engaged to your daughter?" she demanded, rather louder than she had intended. The man sitting at the computer next to them turned and frowned bemusedly at the Doctor.

"Of course I didn't!" the Doctor said defensively, to both the man and to Donna. Then he whispered, "That wasn't me, it was David."

"You certainly look like him," Donna muttered pointedly.

The Doctor rolled his eyes and ignored her, squinting at the screen once again. "David Tennant," he read out, "is a Scottish actor known for his role as..." he trailed off for a moment, before continuing cautiously, "...known for his role as the tenth incarnation of the Doctor in the British television series Doctor Who."

Donna's eyes widened, and she turned around to look at him as he looked at her. "Television series?"

"Apparently so." His voice was quiet, his face haunted.

Her voice rose in both pitch and volume. "You brought us to a world where you're fictional?"

He shook his head numbly, staring back at the computer.

She clicked on the link. "It's a science-fiction drama, produced by the BBC since 1963. Blimey, that's a long time for one programme." The Doctor didn't react, and Donna rolled her eyes and kept skimming the article. "Um, it's about an alien called the Doctor, who's the last of the Time Lords, blah, blah, blah. It says he's been played by eleven actors..."

"Stop reading," the Doctor said suddenly.

"What?"

He looked at her seriously. "There's only been ten of me so far," he said. "Not eleven."

She frowned. "We're in the future," she pointed out. "Maybe there's eleven of you by now."

"No one should know about their future, Donna," he said warningly.

She sighed and went back to the article on David Tennant. Then she frowned as a thought occurred to her. "So the actor who played you got engaged to the actress who played Jenny?"

The Doctor's eyes lit up. "Yes, of course!" he said. Then the implications of this hit him, and his face abruptly became horrified. "They had a child together, right?"

"That's right," Donna said. She caught his face, and realised what he was thinking. "Ooh, no," she said. "Oh, that's not a nice image."

The Doctor cleared his throat and stood upright. "I think that's all we need to know for now," he said, striding out. Donna closed the window and followed him, glancing back at the computer...
cautiously as if it might blow up at any moment.

She joined the Doctor on the street, hurrying to keep up with his strides. "Just think, though," she said conversationally. "Two Time Lords getting married. Sort of sweet, isn't it?"

"Happened all the time on Gallifrey," the Doctor said dismissively. "But there's something else, something wrong, something I'm missing…"

Donna was still talking. "And I now you kept saying that Jenny wasn't a real Time Lord, but she seemed like it to me. I mean, she had two hearts and everything…"

The Doctor stopped in his tracks. Donna went crashing headlong into him for the second time that day. "Oi, watch it!"

"That's it!" he breathed, staring wildly somewhere into the distance. The Doctor placed one hand on his chest, then began to pat down his pockets. He frowned, apparently finding nothing, and turned to Donna. "Do you have a stethoscope?"

"And why the hell would I have one of those in my pocket?" she demanded.

"Good point, good point." He nodded, glancing around. "Where's the nearest hospital?"

Donna rolled her eyes. "We're not raiding a hospital to find you a stethoscope," she told him firmly. "Why do you want one anyway?"

He rubbed the back of his neck uncomfortably. "I want to…to check how many hearts I have," he said in a rush.

She blinked. "You what?"

"It's just…things seem different, and I'm slower and getting tired more easily and things seem duller," he explained. "And my brain isn't working as fast as it was yesterday."

Donna raised an eyebrow. "So what, you think you're human because you're not performing as well as you were yesterday?"

"Well…" He rubbed the back of his neck again, not wanting to offend her.

Donna rolled her eyes. "Come here, spaceman." She grabbed his wrist and pulled him into a conveniently-placed alley (funny how there's always an alley lurking nearby, she thought) and pushed him against the wall.

"Um, Donna?" he asked with trepidation as she began to undo his top. "What are you doing?"

"Being a stethoscope," she said, slipping her hand inside his top and pressing it against his chest. He hissed at the contact, and she looked up at him with a raised eyebrow.

"'S cold," he muttered in explanation, and Donna rolled her eyes. Then she frowned in concentration.

She moved her hand to the right side of his chest, then to the left, and finally to the middle, waiting ten seconds each time. Then she removed her hand and stepped back, leaning against the opposite wall and motioning for him to do up his shirt. "Well?" he asked as he did so. "What's the diagnosis?"

"You're not going to like this," she warned him, "but it seems you only have one heart."
The Doctor froze mid-way through doing up the last button. "Are you sure?"

She nodded. He shook his head, then darted one hand to the wall beside him, wiping a finger down a dirty brick and bringing it to his mouth. He quickly licked his finger, then spat it out almost immediately. "Ack," he said disgustedly. "That tastes like-"

"A wall?" Donna suggested, watching him with arms folded, a small smirk on her face.

"Yes!" he said in disgust. "It tastes like a dirty wall would to human senses."


The Doctor made a face. "Not again," he muttered disgustedly.

"Oi!" Donna said indignantly. "What's wrong with being a human? And how did you not notice before now?"

"Oh, I suppose the writer forgot that part or something," he said dismissively. "But I'm not only human," he reminded her, "I'm also Scottish."

It seemed strange, but Donna had almost forgotten that he had a different accent, having become used to him speaking. Suddenly she remembered something from what they had read earlier. "That actor, David Tennant," she said slowly. "Wasn't he Scottish?"

The Doctor stopped still once again, and stared at Donna for a few moments before his eyes lit up in realisation. "Of course!" he exclaimed. "I don't just look like David Tennant. I am David Tennant."

She blinked. "I think being human's getting to you," she said after a few moments. "You're talking nonsense."

"No, don't you see?" The Doctor/David ran a hand through his hair. "Something or someone has transported us to this world where we're fictional, but they've also transported us into the bodies of the actors who played us! That's why we look slightly different, and why I had David's phone, and why Jenny – Georgia, sorry – thought I was David. Because I am."

Donna looked down at herself. "So whose body am I in, then?" she asked. "What's her name? And more to the point, where are they, these actors?" She gasped as a thought struck her. "If we're in their bodies, then-

"They must be in our bodies," the Doctor finished for her. "In another universe, David Tennant and an actress are right now wondering where they are, and what they're doing in the TARDIS."

"Bloody hell," Donna breathed. "Will they be all right?"

"Can't say." He ran a hand through his hair worriedly. "But what we can do, Donna, is to find out whose body you're in. Then maybe we can trace who has done this, and why, and work out how to get back to our world."

She raised her eyebrows. "Is that all?"

"Not quite," he told her. "Someone needs to help Georgia with her daughter."
How many children does he have?

It was a short walk back to the internet café, and before long Donna was sitting in front of a computer once again, this time looking at a page dedicated to an actress called Catherine Tate. The actress, it seemed, was in a relationship with someone called Twig Clark (Twig, Donna thought, silly name), and they had a daughter called Erin.

"Oh great," she said to the Doctor, who was once again standing behind her, "I'm a comedian."

"What's wrong with being a comedian?"

"People will expect me to be funny," she explained. "I'm not funny."

The Doctor began to laugh, which he hastily turned into a cough. "No," he agreed, trying not to smile. "You're never funny."

"Watch it," she warned him, wagging one finger in his direction. Then she closed down the computer and stood up. "I think that's all I want to know," she said. "So what do we do?"

The Doctor shrugged helplessly. "The only thing I can think is that we should live out their lives for them. David and Catherine, I mean."

She studied his face for a moment. "You don't look like a David."

"You don't look like a Catherine," he countered.

She rolled her eyes. "We should go."

They walked outside. "So you're really going to go and play Happy Families with your daughter and her daughter?" Donna asked him.

He winced slightly at the reminder, but again shrugged helplessly. "They have a family," he said, "and David is a part of it. It seems that for now at least, I'm David, so it makes sense. Anyway, Catherine has a daughter, who'll be missing her."

Donna jumped slightly. "Yeah, she does. But I don't know how to be a mother!" she exclaimed. "Especially not to an eight-year-old who I only learned existed five minutes ago!"

The Doctor stopped walking, and turned to face Donna, putting a hand on her shoulder. "You'll be fine," he assured her. "Catherine played you, now all you need to do is play Catherine."

"I don't even know what Catherine's like!" she said. "It's easy for you, you already sound Scottish!"

The Doctor was about to answer her when his phone began to ring again. Both jumped violently, and he gingerly retrieved the phone once more. "Hello?"

"David?" Georgia's voice floated down the line once more. "I know you said you'd be home as soon as you can, but how long will that be? My dad's coming over for lunch, remember."

"Georgia," he said carefully. "Sorry. I seem to have gotten a little bit lost. You wouldn't happen to know the way home from…" He looked upwards and read out the street name.

Georgia sighed. "You're hopeless, you know that?" The words were accusing, but the tone was
light. "All right. Go to the end of the road, and turn left, then take the next right..." She continued to give directions, and the Doctor listened closely to every word. When she was finished, she added, "Hurry home, or you won't be getting any lunch!"

The line turned dead, and the Doctor turned towards Donna. His shoulders slumped slightly. "What was that about?" she asked him.

"I don't know where David lives," he explained, "so I got directions. It was a risk, I know, but apparently David is forgetful anyway. That could be useful," he mused.

"So are you going to go there now?"

"I think I have to," he said. "Are you going to be all right?"

Donna forced her face into a smile. "I'll be fine," she promised, hoping that he wouldn't guess that she wasn't really fine at all. "Go on, spaceman," she encouraged him when he hesitated. "You've got two daughters waiting for you."

"Shut up," the Doctor said, but he was grinning. He started off down the street, and Donna watched as his retreating back disappeared into the throng of people on the footpath.

Then she sighed and walked off in the other direction, heading (she hoped) for the park in which she had woken up. Donna wasn't sure how she was going to find Twig (still a silly name, she thought) and Erin, but she had the seed of an idea. She only hoped it would work.

~o0o~

The Doctor was walking down a suburban street, glancing up at each house as he passed. He knew he had the right street, but he had no idea how he would find the right house.

He reached the end of the street, and turned around and went back the other way. He tried not to make the fact that he was lost obvious, although it was difficult. He briefly missed being a Time Lord (he was better at acting); although upon reflection, the Doctor realised that he didn't mind being human as much as he had thought he would do. He frowned to himself and shook his head, trying to clear away the ridiculous idea from his head.

As the Doctor passed by one house, the front door opened. He turned his head automatically towards the sound, only to stop dead when he saw a familiar face appear at the door. His heart rate increased, but there was nothing he could do about it. "David?" the face asked. "Where are you going?"

He took a deep breath, forcing himself to appear calm. "Hello, Georgia," he greeted his (daughter? Wife? He wasn't sure how to refer to her).

"You've walked right past twice now," Georgia told him bemusedly. "Are you all right?"

"I'm fine," the Doctor assured her. "Just...thinking. In another world." He made some vague motions with his hands that he hoped would convince her.

They seemed to work, because she gave a chuckle and shook her head at him. "Come on in," she told him, holding the door open. He walked up to the door went inside, leaning slightly away from Georgia as he passed her in the narrow doorway.

She didn't seem to notice the action, though, as she closed the door behind her and went past him into the kitchen. He followed her through, glancing around as he did so, trying to get the measure of the place.
The house seemed to be a fairly average, two-storey, suburban home, with white walls outside and cream inside. Normally the setting would be too domestic for the Doctor to even think about living in, but today things seemed different. He felt like he was at home, despite never having seen the place before.

"So where were you last night?" Georgia asked as she crossed to the fridge and pulled out a tray of sandwiches. "Something to do with the play, didn't you say?"

"Er…yes," the Doctor said, sitting down at a dining chair. "It was the play."

"Whose house was it this time?" She set the tray down in front of the Doctor. "Adam's or Elliot's?"

"Um, Adam's house," the Doctor said, hoping the answer wouldn't get him into trouble.

Georgia pursed her lips as if experiencing an unpleasant smell, and the Doctor winced inwardly, realising he had made the wrong choice. "Can you make a pot of tea, David?" she asked primly, abruptly changing the subject.

"Certainly, Jenny," he said, jumping up and heading over to where the kettle stood in one corner of the bench. He flicked it on and turned around, to see her staring at him, brow furrowed. "What's wrong?"

"You just called me Jenny," she said slowly. "Why did you do that?"

The Doctor forced his face to stay neutral, despite his heart rate increasing. "No, I didn't," he said. "I'm sure you did, Jenny," she said.

"Now why would I call you Jenny? You must have imagined it," he told her quickly. His heart was pounding so loudly he was certain she should hear it, but she gave no indication of noticing anything out of the ordinary. "Maybe you're remembering being my daughter. Speaking of my daughter, can I see her?"

Georgia eyed him warily, but nodded. "She's upstairs," she said shortly, and turned towards the table, away from him.

The Doctor managed to make it out into the hallway before his whole body slumped, and he leaned against the wall. Stupid, stupid, he berated himself. How the hell could you do something as simple as calling her Jenny? Idiot.

He took a couple of deep breaths, before steeling himself and heading up the stairs. It took him a few tries to find the correct room, but eventually he found himself in a nursery. The walls were plain white, but were covered in colourful pictures. A cot had pride of place in the centre of the room.

He walked over to the cot and carefully leaned on the side, peering in. A small baby was just visible amidst the blankets, eyes closed, chest moving up and down rhythmically as it breathed. The Doctor couldn't help himself; he reached into the cot and gently picked up the month-old infant. He cradled it close to his chest, carefully supporting its head. "So you're Olive," he whispered with a smile. "David's child. Well, my child, I suppose. Aren't you cute?"

"I remember my first child," he told her, a faraway look in his eyes. "Back on Gallifrey. The first time I held her in my arms, it was like a miracle. But that was hundreds of years ago. They're all
gone now, all my children. All passed on.”

The Doctor blinked and shook his head slightly, coming back to the present. He pressed his lips to Olive's forehead once, and carefully laid her back in the cot, watching as she shifted slightly in her sleep. Her face twitched, and her tiny arms moved around fitfully, before coming to a rest on either side of her head.

The Doctor crept out of the room as silently as he could, the smile lingering on his face. He turned a corner and came face-to-face with a young boy. He looked to be around ten or eleven years old, with curly blonde hair. "Hi, Dad," the boy said as he passed the Doctor.

"Hi," the Doctor said distractedly, watching as the boy walked past and into another bedroom. Dad? he thought. Just how many children do I have?

He went back down into the kitchen, where the kettle had just finished boiling. Georgia had her back to him, and he took the opportunity to hunt around the kitchen briefly for the cups, taking note for later on. One thing he had learned from pretending to be someone in the past, was to know where things were in the kitchen, otherwise people would know straight away that you didn't belong.

The Doctor eventually managed to make two cups of tea. He deposited one on the table in front of Georgia, and sat down across from her. She took an experimental sip, and grimaced. "You forgot the sugar," she told him.

His eyes widened. "Did I? Sorry." He grimaced apologetically.

She stood up and crossed the kitchen, spooning two spoonfuls of sugar into her drink. Then she sat back down opposite him and leaned her elbows on the table. "Are you sure everything's all right, David?" she asked seriously.

"Yes, of course," he said quickly. "Why wouldn't it be?"

"You've been acting distant ever since you came home," she told him. "It's like you've been in another world. You barely spoke to Tyler on the stairs, and you keep forgetting things."

The Doctor shifted uncomfortably. "I'm just…occupied, I suppose," he said. "With the play and everything. I'm sorry if I seemed distant."

Georgia's eyes scrutinised his face for a moment, then she leaned back, apparently satisfied with his answer. "It's okay," she assured him. "It just feels like this play is taking over your life, Dave. You never have time for us any more. You speak more to Beatrice than you do to me." She gave a weak smile, tracing the rim of her teacup with one sugar.

The Doctor nodded somberly, but in his head he was processing the Shakespeare plays he knew. He could only think of one Beatrice, in *Much Ado About Nothing*. "I'm sorry," he said again. "I'll try to make it up to you."

"How?"

"I'll think of something," he promised her, reaching across the table and taking her hand. David Tennant had been neglecting his family, but the Doctor was not going to let that happen any longer. He would never let Jenny be sad again.

~o0o~

While the Doctor was promising himself that he would be kind to Jenny, Donna was wandering
around Richmond Green, suddenly unsure of what to do next. All she knew was that she had to find someone called Twig Clark. She didn't even know what he looked like. Was he short or tall? Dark-haired or light? Old or young? She had absolutely no idea (although she was hoping for young rather than old).

She hoped that she was in the right place. After all, she had woken up in Richmond Green, so it probably stood to reason that it was near to her house. Somehow, she doubted that Catherine was one for running long distances.

Suddenly, Donna's foot made contact with a large stone, hidden in the grass. She stumbled, putting out one arm to try to stop herself from falling; but it was in vain. She felt herself falling to one side, waving her arms around like an idiot, until she collided with the hard ground.

Opening her eyes, Donna could see a blade of grass, seemingly growing sideways. She blinked and lifted her head, and the world turned the right way up, which was a relief.

She groaned and out a hand gingerly to her head, wincing when she touched a spot above her right ear. She pulled her hand away, noticing as she did so that there was blood on her fingers. "Ow," she said matter-of-factly, wiping her hand and placing it once again on her head. Yes, the blood was definitely from there.

*Great.* So now she was lost, she had no idea who she was looking for, and to top it off her head was injured. *Just wizard.*

Donna groaned and shakily stood up. She started to walk again, her walking unsteady at first, but then growing more steady and confident as she walked. She kept going, hoping that her head would be all right until she could get somewhere.

Presently, Donna heard the pitter-patter of light running footsteps behind her. She turned around just in time to see a flash of orange before something crashed into her stomach, winding her and nearly knocking her over.

She looked down to see a red-haired girl hugging her tightly around the waist, face pressed into her stomach. "Um, hello?" she wheezed, still winded.

The girl pulled back and looked up at her, and Donna realised with a jolt that she must be Catherine's daughter, Erin. "Mummy?" the girl asked. "Where were you? I was scared when you didn't come home last night!" She wrapped her little arms tightly around Donna's waist once more, and Donna awkwardly put her arms around Erin.

She heard more footsteps behind her, and turned her head to see a red-faced man jogging up to her. "Catherine!" he puffed. "Are you all right?"

Donna carefully took hold of Erin's hands and extricated herself from her grasp, then turned to the man. He had dark hair that stuck almost straight upwards, and a round face that looked as if it was normally cheerful, but at the moment was stretched into a worried frown. She felt a sudden twist of guilt in her stomach at the realisation that he was Twig Clark.

He was still waiting for an answer. "Um, yeah," Donna said lamely. "I'm fine."

"Erin and I were worried sick!" Twig told her. "You weren't anywhere to be found. We searched the park, all the streets around here, everything! I called the police, but they said to wait 24 hours. We only came back here this morning because Erin wanted to check one last time." Erin grabbed onto Donna's arm, as if to emphasise the point.

The feeling of guilt in her stomach grew. "I am so, so sorry," he told him honestly.
His face relaxed slightly, and he stepped forwards and pulled her into a tight hug, which she returned cautiously, with one arm as Erin was hanging off the other one. "I thought we'd never see you again." he murmured into her ear.

"You're not getting rid of me that easily," Donna said, trying to keep her voice light despite the unwanted tears pricking at the back of her eyes. She hadn't even considered what the reunion would be like with her 'family'. She didn't even know them, but she could tell how worried Erin had been at losing her mother, and Twig at losing his partner, even for one night.

Idly, she wondered how the Doctor was going with David's family. That thought was forgotten, however, when Twig pulled back and asked, "So what did happen to you?"

Donna froze, hoping that the fact she was panicking wasn't noticeable. "I…I don't know," she said lamely, wincing internally.

Twig raised an eyebrow, but said nothing. She could sense his disapproval.

Meanwhile, Erin seemed to have noticed something. "Mummy?" she said, tapping at Donna's arm. "Why are you bleeding?"

She frowned down at her. "What do you mean?"

Erin pointed up at the side of Donna's head, and she raised her hand to her head to find the cut on her head from when she had fallen over. She had almost forgotten about it, but now she was reminded, her head was starting to hurt again.

Donna looked back at Twig, who was watching her concernedly. "What happened to your head, Catherine?"

She opened her mouth to reply, then frowned at him. Was he that blurry before? She blinked hard, glancing around at the trees, which suddenly seemed to be less like trees and more like a green blur.

Donna was aware of herself stumbling. There was a voice in the distance, and hands were suddenly on her shoulders, steadying her. "Catherine?" the voice was saying. "Catherine, there's something wrong."

She forced herself to look back at Twig. "Look at you," she said, slurring the words. "You're not even in focus."

That was the last thing she remembered before everything went black.
What the hell is his problem?

Donna opened her eyes to find herself lying in a bed she did not recognise, with a green curtain in front of her. Glancing up, she was confronted by a bright light that blinded her for a moment.

Squinting and looking around, Donna noticed that she was still wearing her clothes. There was a muffled beeping sound from somewhere behind her. She turned her head to see an IV. Slowly, Donna realised that she was in a hospital. But why? What had happened?

Thinking back, Donna could not remember anything. The last thing she could recall clearly was bidding Agatha Christie farewell, then going back into the TARDIS with the Doctor…

The Doctor! Donna twisted around, but he was nowhere to be seen. Where was the Doctor? Was he in the hospital as well? What had happened to make her forget why she was lying in a hospital bed?

Donna sighed and flopped back against the pillow, turning her head to the side. A sharp pain shot across her temple, and she winced, slowly bringing her hand up to where her head was bandaged. That explained why she was in a hospital; but what had happened to hurt her head like that?

She heard footsteps outside, then the curtain was parted from the other side. A man stepped into her cubicle and looked towards her anxiously, rushing to the bed when he saw her watching him.

"You're awake," he told her in relief, striding over to the wall behind her and pressing a button. "How are you feeling?"

She studied him for a moment. He had a round, kindly-looking face, and spiky hair. His name rang a bell somewhere in Donna's brain, and she tried to put a name to it. It was something obscure, she was sure. Branch? Leaf? She couldn't tell for certain.

The man was still waiting for an answer, she suddenly realised. "Um, I think I'm okay," she said, frowning. The Doctor hadn't assumed a disguise that she'd forgotten, had he? Surely not.

They were interrupted for a moment by the appearance of a nurse through the green curtain. She bustled around them for a minute or so, asking Donna a couple of questions about how she was feeling, and whether her head still hurt. Then she disappeared back through the curtain, promising to come back soon to release Donna from the hospital. She was still none the wiser as to where she was, and why.

Once she was gone, the as-yet-unidentified man put an arm around her tense shoulder. "Are you sure you're all right? I've been worried about you, Catherine, passing out on us like that."

"Catherine. That one word was like the key to a floodgate, bringing all her memories back in a rush. They flicked through her brain like a slideshow: Catherine Tate. Alternate universe. Scottish. Daughter. Twig Clark. New family.

She raised a slightly shaky hand to her face and rubbed her eyes, trying to cope with the onslaught on information. "You're Twig," she told him slowly.

He frowned, sitting on the bed beside her. "I know I am, Cath Are you sure you're all right?"

Donna shook her head. "No, I'm fine. It's all fine." She was gaining confidence now. "I mean, my head hurts, but apart from that everything makes sense, I think." She gave a feeble laugh, trying to lighten the situation.
"You think?" Twig still looking concerned. "Catherine, what happened to you last night?"

Donna shifted uncomfortably. "I don't know," she said, repeating what she remembered telling him earlier. "I really don't. I...I was in the park, and then I fell and hurt myself, and then I found you. Or maybe I was hit in the head," she added, when he looked disbelieving. "I really don't remember."

"So let me get this straight," he said slowly. "You were running, then you might have been hit on the head, or you might have fallen over, and you woke up and found us? We were looking everywhere for you last night, Catherine! We would have seen you if you were there! Where were you really?"

Donna flailed around in her head for a moment for an answer, when another, more distant memory came to her: her wedding reception that had nearly been held without her. The same way as she had then, she slowly crumpled up her face and began to cry, leaning her face on Twig's shoulder and giving heaving sobs.

"Oh, Catherine," Twig said gently, putting his arms around her and rubbing circles on her back. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to pressure you, darling. It's okay. You're here now, that's all that matters." Donna nodded into his shoulder.

Inwardly, she prayed to every god she could think of, thanking them for the one piece of acting she knew she could do well. Catherine Tate might be an actress, and while Donna could never be as good as her, at least she could cry her way out of awkward situations.

~o0o~

The Doctor was ladling soup into small bowls (under Georgia's careful instruction – she evidently didn't trust David to be careful) when the doorbell rang.

Georgia turned to him with a stern look on her face. "Now, I know you don't like the Stevenses, but can you at least pretend to, for politeness' sake?" Before he could respond, she continued, "You know how much Ty loves playing with Mia."

Ty, the Doctor thought. Must be short for Tyler. He took note of the nickname for future reference, and went to open the door.

Halfway down the hallway, he heard a thumping noise from above, and turned in time to see Tyler thundering down the stairs next to him. The boy ran past the Doctor towards the front door, hopping impatiently from one foot to the other until the door was opened. He ran out onto the path to where a girl stood, about the same age, behind two adults. They began to talk together animatedly.

The Doctor watched them for a moment, before focusing his attention on the adults standing before him. A stern-looking man with an impressive ginger moustache frowned down on him, flanked by a softer-faced woman who also sported a moustache, albeit a much smaller one. "Mr Tennant," the man greeted him with a nod.

"Mr Stevens," the Doctor replied pleasantly, hoping he had the name right. "Would you like to come in?"

Mr Stevens gave him a gruff stare and nodded, walking past him into the hallway. Mrs Stevens followed him, and Tyler and Mia had to be called in from where they were standing, further down the garden path.
Before he followed everybody into the kitchen, the Doctor stopped and took a deep breath. *All right,* he told himself. *You just have to get through this lunch, and then you can work on figuring out what has happened.*

Being domestic never was his strong suit.

Thankfully, the lunch progressed almost smoothly, save for one minor hiccup. It turned out that Mrs Stevens, as sweet as she seemed, was very nosy, a fact which was infinitely useful to the Doctor.

"So how long have you two been together?" she asked Georgia with a saccharine-sweet smile.

Georgia swallowed a bite of her sandwich. "Well, we met in 2008, so almost three years now," she said, smiling across at the Doctor. "Isn't that right, honey?"

The Doctor took a too-large gulp of soup, wincing when it scalded his throat. He would still have to get used to the capabilities of this human body. "Yes, three years, that's right," he agreed, thinking quickly. If he had the numbers right, they meant David and Georgia would have met while acting in 'Doctor What', or whatever that show was called.

His theory was proven to be correct when Tyler loudly said, "Mum pretended to be Dad's daughter! And now they've got a daughter, and granddad's got a granddaughter…"

"Tyler," Georgia cut him off sternly. "Don't talk with your mouth full."

"But I wasn-' Tyler suddenly jumped, and cut himself off. He glared across the table at Georgia, but did not say anything else.

The Doctor's eyes flicked between Tyler and Georgia over the rim of his glass, wondering what had just happened. Mrs Stevens, however, did not seem to notice anything amiss, smiling and exclaiming, "And now you're getting married!"

"At the end of this year," Georgia confirmed. She glanced across at the Doctor with a twinkle in her eye, and he couldn't help but smile at the sight of his daughter looking so happy.

He grinned back at her, before his attention was diverted by Mr Stevens asking him a blunt question: "How much older than her are you, then, if you played Georgia's father?"

The Doctor considered for a moment, trying to guess Georgia's age. "Well, I'm 903 years old, and she's nearly thirty, so I'd say around 270 years."

Everybody around the table laughed, apart from Mr Stevens who looked confused. "903?"

"It's the character that he played, silly!" Mrs Stevens said, playfully swatting her husband with her napkin. "He's only forty, don't worry."

"There's twelve years between us," Georgia told him, somewhat shortly, before turning to Mrs Stevens and asking her about her job.

Mr Stevens looked across at the Doctor and subtly raised an eyebrow, supposedly at the age difference. The Doctor stared back at him, and stuck out his chin slightly, daring him to say anything. Truth be told, he agreed that twelve years seemed like a large age difference; but it made Georgia happy, and he wasn't going to let Mr Stevens put them down.

The rest of the conversation progressed almost smoothly, although the atmosphere was noticeably tense around Mr Stevens. He did not speak to anybody until the meal was over.
After the main meal, the Doctor and Mr and Mrs Stevens sat silently in the living room with cups of coffee, while Georgia went upstairs to feed Olive. Tyler and Mia had gone upstairs to Ty's bedroom together.

The Doctor took a sip of his coffee and glanced around. Mr Stevens was steadfastly looking away from him. Mrs Stevens glared at her husband, subtly nodding towards the Doctor in an attempt to get them to talk.

Eventually she gave up and stood up. "Might I use your toilet?" she asked the Doctor.

"Certainly," he told her. "It's just through there." he gestured vaguely through the living room door, hoping she wouldn't ask for further directions.

When she was gone, Mr Stevens finally turned to the Doctor. He cleared his throat. "David," he said gruffly.

"That's me," the Doctor said, "hello." He gave a small wave.

He could practically see the other man restraining himself from saying something rude. "I… wanted to tell you something. Alone. Without Georgia. Or Valerie."

The Doctor guessed Valerie must be Mrs Stevens' name. He raised an eyebrow. "Well, now's your chance," he told him, leaning forwards expectantly. "What do you want to say?" He had no idea what it could be, although he had a feeling it would not be good.

Mr Stevens placed his mug delicately on the table. "Tyler and my daughter have been friends for a long time," he began. "And they have grown rather fond of each other."

The Doctor nodded; he had seen that during lunch, Ty and Mia chatting and laughing together. They seemed to be good friends. "Your point is?" he asked.

A muscle twitched in Mr Stevens' jaw. "I don't want Mia to talk to Tyler any more," he said in a rush.

The Doctor paused. "Sorry, what did you say?" He hoped he had misheard.

"Look, Mr Tennant. I am sure you're a nice person at heart. And you and Georgia seem very happy together. But I just cannot allow my son to be friends with someone from a family like yours."

"What's wrong with my family?" The Doctor was surprised at how protective he suddenly was of people he had technically only met earlier that day.

Mr Stevens shifted uncomfortably. "Nothing, not really. It's more…you."

"We've known Georgia for years," Mr Stevens explained, "since she was a teenager. We don't want any harm to come to her. It's not that I don't trust you, it's just…you are a lot older than she is." He almost sounded apologetic. "I'm sure you love her and everything, but I cannot trust someone who will marry a woman who is young enough to be his daughter."

The Doctor's eyebrows nearly disappeared into his hairline. "Young enough to be my daughter?" he questioned. "Look, I don't know what your definition of age is, but-"

At that moment the door opened, and Mrs Stevens walked in. The Doctor fell silent, suddenly
becoming very interested in his coffee. No more was said on the subject, although he could feel Mr Stevens' eyes boring into the side of his head.

The coffee was nearly finished when Georgia reappeared from upstairs, and soon it was time for the Stevenses to leave. "David, be a dear and fetch Ty and Mia down, would you?" Georgia asked the Doctor. He nodded and practically ran out of the room, glad for a reason to be out of the awkward company of Mr Stevens.

It took the Doctor a couple of tries to find Ty's room, but eventually he was certain he had the right door. He knocked once and entered, just in time to see Tyler and Mia sitting on the bed, leaning towards each other, obviously about to kiss each other. They both froze at the sound of his knock, and turned to stare at him. Tyler looked panicked, Mia embarrassed.

"Oh, Mr Stevens will not like this," he thought. "It's time for you to go," he told Mia, glancing down at his feet. He stood aside as she got up, red-faced, and walked downstairs. Tyler tried to follow her, but was stopped by a hand to his chest. "I'll talk to you later," the Doctor told him, before letting him go.

As soon as he was out of the room, the Doctor froze again, and frowned at himself. Why did I do that? he wondered. Why do I keep acting stern where Tyler is involved? And what's wrong with him kissing a friend?

He shook his head, aware that he would be wanted downstairs, and again promised himself that he would work it out later. He closed the bedroom door and hurried downstairs, resolving to 'forget' to talk to Tyler later. It's his own business who he kisses, not David's.

Even if he is ten years old.

~o0o~

That night, Donna lay on Catherine's bed, reflecting on the past couple of days. Twig Clark had been really nice after his outburst at the hospital, hugging her and taking her home and making her broth for dinner and helping her rest. He seemed to be truly sorry for shouting at her, which was nice. Better than most guys she'd dated.

Erin was sweet as well. Earlier, she'd come in and read Donna a story, because that was what her mother did when she wasn't well. Donna remembered that with a smile; she hadn't thought much of the story (something about a moody girl called Judy), but Erin seemed responsible, and quite grown-up for someone who only looked to be eight years old or so. She'd gone to bed over an hour ago, leaving Donna with some time to think.

Although to be honest, she wasn't sure what to think. She'd been thrust into a parallel universe without her permission, like something from a science-fiction show (which she apparently was from, just to make things more confusing). The Doctor had been most unhelpful, swanning off to go and play Happy Families with his daughter and leaving her to sort things out for herself. She had no idea when she would get back home to her world, no idea what to do while she was there, and to top it off, she had to think of an excuse for why she had disappeared for a day. Wizard.

There was a soft tap on the door, and Twig entered the room, bringing a steaming mug of tea and a smile. "How are you feeling, darling?" he asked, setting the coffee on the table beside her bed and sitting down beside her.

Darling. Yes, Donna liked that. "I'm feeling better," she said, pushing herself further up onto the pillows with her elbows.
"That was quite a cut you got," he said, reaching out to gently touch it. She winced, and he pulled back immediately. "I'm sorry, Catherine."

She shook her head carefully. "No, no. It's all right."

Twig laid an arm around her shoulders. "I don't blame you for not remembering what happened, you know," he told her. "Or for not coming home last night. But can I ask something of you, Catherine? Just one thing?" She nodded, and he reached into his jeans pocket and pulled out a cell phone. "Please," he said, "take this with you when you go out running. You didn't take it yesterday, and I didn't know where you were."

She took the phone from him and turned it over in her hand. It was an iPhone, a new-looking model. Much better than the phone she was used to. "Of course," she said. "I'm sorry, I should have taken it. I know."

"You don't need to apologise," Twig told her. "I just want to know that you're safe, that's all."

Donna gave him a small smile, and he beamed back at her. "You should get some rest," he told her. He kissed her on the cheek and stood up, heading towards the door. "I'll sleep in the spare room tonight, leave you alone, yeah?"

"Yeah," she replied gratefully. "Good night, then."

"Night," he said, and then he was gone, and Donna was left alone with a still-steaming mug of tea.

She picked it up and took a sip, holding it in her hands and allowing it to warm her up from the inside out. Maybe things weren't so bad after all. She decided that she could live in this universe; but for how long? How long would she have to pretend to be Catherine Tate? How long before she could be herself? See her family? Be back in the TARDIS? Have an alien for a best friend?

*Although, if I am stuck here, she told herself, I can't ruin Catherine's life for her. I have to at least make an effort in being her.*

Donna thought for a long time, until what remained of her tea had become stone-cold. It took her more than an hour, but eventually she had put together a game plan for the next day. She knew exactly what she needed to do, and where she needed to be.

She glanced at the clock, and saw it was a quarter to midnight, and it had been a long day. She placed the cup on the table next to her and lay down, closing her eyes and relaxing into the pillows.

Donna's last thought before she drifted off to sleep was that as soon as she found out who had put her in this situation, she would give them a good slap.

~o0o~

Across London, the Doctor sat in a bed, for all intents and purposes reading a crime thriller book. In reality, he was thinking hard, having read the book a dozen times before. He also knew that it would be made into a disappointing film in a couple of years' time, but did not mention this to Georgia, who was sitting beside him reading a different copy of the same book.

The Doctor was quite pleased with how well he had managed to act as part of a family he did not belong to. What was surprising, however, was the way that he had found himself reacting strangely to events during the day. He did not seem himself at all.
He had a theory about this, but decided he would wait until he had more data to work with before making a hypothesis as to the cause of his strange behaviour.

Beside him, Georgia yawned. "Is it all right if I turn the light off?" she asked, getting up and crossing to the door. "You can leave your lamp on if you want."

"No, no, it's fine," he told her. "I would do with some sleep actually. It's been a long day."

"Yeah," she laughed, flicking off the light switch, "and it's going to be a long night, too." She hopped back into bed and turned to him. "It's your turn to look after Olive, since you went AWOL last night."

She leaned over and pressed her lips to his in a kiss. The Doctor froze, eyes widening, but Georgia did not seem to notice as she pulled back and lay down with her back to him.

The Doctor blinked and turned out his lamp, slowly sinking down under the duvet. He still felt shell-shocked. What with all the excitement about seeing his daughter alive, he hadn't thought about the implications of living as her fiancé. She would certainly want to kiss him, if not go further…

He cut that thought off in its tracks, pushing it out of his mind with a shudder. Instead, he thought about what he would do the next day, which involved working out how he had got into this situation, and how to get back to his own universe. He also made a note to learn more about the play Georgia had mentioned earlier. Would he have to do a play, on top of being in a family? Would he be a good enough actor to do so?

The Doctor suddenly surprised himself with a large yawn. Apparently, he would have to compensate for his human body becoming tired far more easily than he was used to. Until then, he closed his eyes and pulled the duvet up to his chin, preparing to relax after what had been far too long a day. Learning that he was in a parallel universe, in another man's body, in which he – the real him – was fictional, had proven to be a lot to process; on top of the fact that his daughter was alive (in one form, anyway) after she had died in his arms.

He pushed that memory out of his mind for the moment, instead listening to Georgia's quiet breathing from beside him. He listened to the steady sound of each breath, allowing the soft regularity of the sound to carry him off to sleep.
Donna opened her eyes to a bright light on her face. She squinted and shielded her eyes, managing to make out a window with half-open curtains, letting the light in.

She experienced a moment of confusion, before remembering where and who she was. She yawned and stood up, noticing as she did so that the lumpy feeling of worry in her chest was still there. She tried to forget about it, but the feeling stayed, a constant presence in the back of her mind.

Looking in a chest of drawers, Donna found a white top with lace which she liked, and some black trousers. She quickly got dressed and exited the room carefully, managing to find her way downstairs without too much trouble.

She went into the kitchen to find Twig and Erin sitting at a dining table, having breakfast. They looked up, surprised, when she appeared in the doorway. "Good morning, Cath," Twig greeted her over the top of his newspaper. "How are you feeling?"

"Much better, thanks." Donna gingerly touched the almost-healed cut on her head. She had all but forgotten about it.

"That's great." He nodded towards the stove. "We left some bacon in the pan for you."

"Daddy wanted to eat it himself," Erin giggled, "but I made him stop."

"She did, too." Twig grinned at Donna, then went back to his newspaper.

Donna crossed to the stove and served some bacon and eggs onto a plate, then went and sat next to Erin at the large wooden table. Both the others looked up as she sat down and began to cut into her fried egg.

Twig quirked an eyebrow. "Why are you sitting there?"

Donna frowned, looking down at where she was sitting, then across at him. "It's a seat," she pointed out. "Aren't I allowed to sit here?"

Twig shrugged. "You can sit where you want," he told her, going back to his newspaper.

Donna tried to continue cutting up her breakfast, but she could feel Twig's eyes on her. She attempted to ignore him. Instead she glanced towards Erin, who sat stiffly, not eating.

Eventually Donna sighed and placed her cutlery on her plate. "What is it?" she asked Twig, finally looking up at him.

"Nothing," he said nonchalantly, eyes flicking back to the newspaper. Then he looked back at her. "Don't you want to sit next to me?"

It was Donna's turn to frown. "What do you mean?"

"Normally you sit there," he said, indicating the seat next to him with his knife. "Why don't you want to sit next to me today?"
"It's not that I don't want to," Donna explained hurriedly, inwardly cursing her mistake. "I just... felt like a change, that's all. Is that all right? Can't I sit next to my daughter for once?" She jutted out her chin, deciding that attack was probably the best form of defence.

Twig merely raised his eyebrows. "You can sit where you want, Catherine," he said in measured tones. "Of course you can." His eyes flicked back to the newspaper once more.

Donna tried yet again to go back to her breakfast, but before she could take a bite she noticed that Erin was still not eating anything. "Are you okay?" she asked her.

"I'm fine," Erin answered stiffly; but she was looking nervously at Twig.

Donna looked from Erin to Twig, and back again. She sighed and picked up her plate, walking around to the other side of the table. She took the seat next to Twig.

Glancing nervously to her right, she saw Twig smiling slightly, eyes still glued to the newspaper. Across from her, Erin relaxed slightly, reaching forward to pick up her fork. Donna pursed her lips, not entirely sure about what had just happened, but certain that it was not good.

Breakfast continued in silence. Afterwards, Erin ran off to her bedroom saying something about a friend's party, while Twig washed the dishes. Donna took the opportunity to have a better look around the house, making sure she knew where the important rooms were in case of an emergency. It wouldn't do to be found out on her first day being Catherine Tate.

Eventually she found herself back in her bedroom, where she noticed a buzzing noise coming from the night stand. She walked over to see the mobile that Twig had given her the previous day vibrating, the screen lit up with a text message. Donna picked up the phone to shut off the noise, and squinted at the message.

It was from someone called David, but was addressed to her. After a moment's thought, she remembered that David was the Doctor's counterpart, and opened the message quickly.

'Donna,' it read, 'how are you? Are you managing all right? I've found out a lot about David's life. Apparently he's supposed to be doing a play with Catherine some time soon. Do you know anything about this? What have you found out? Call me when you can.'

Donna's shoulders slumped. She wasn't sure what she had hoped for, but somehow news of a play wasn't it.

Nonetheless, she knew she had to address it sometime. "Do you know anything about this?" she murmured to herself, thinking back over what she had seen so far.

Her gaze fell to the night-stand, where she noticed a small stack of paper, stapled neatly in the upper-left corner. She crossed quickly to the nightstand, picking it up and glancing at the title. Flipping through the script, as she now realised it was, she noticed a lot of highlighted lines, which she guessed was Catherine's part in the play. There certainly seemed to be a lot of lines highlighted.

Picking up the phone once more, Donna entered the contact for David and called his mobile number.

The Doctor picked up on the second ring. "Donna?"

"Doctor," The relief in Donna's voice was palpable. "It's good to hear your voice. Even your Scottish voice."
"Very funny," the Doctor said dryly. "Any news on the play?"

"It's Much Ado About Nothing," she announced into the phone, holding the script in front of her as though it were a dead animal. "Judging by the highlighting, I am – or Catherine is – playing someone called Beatrice."

Balancing the phone carefully between shoulder and ear, the Doctor grinned. "I knew it!" He fished a soapy cereal bowl out of the sink in front of him and began to scrub it. "Any idea who I play?"

"Hang on, there's a cast list at the back." The sound of rustling paper could be heard, then Donna said, "It looks like a misspelling."

"Lots of Shakespearean names look like misspellings to people from the 21st century," he pointed out.

"True," she admitted. "Does the name Benedick ring a bell?"

"He's the male lead," the Doctor explained immediately, "who eventually falls in love with the female lead, despite both of them swearing off love forever."

"Which one's she?"

There was a pause before he answered. "Beatrice."

Donna made a choking sound, or perhaps it was a cough. "So you fall in love with me in this play?"

"It goes both ways," the Doctor said defensively. "They fall in love with each other after their friends make each of them think that-"

"Here, how do you know so much about the story, anyway?" Donna interrupted.

There was another pause before he answered. "I may have slightly helped to write it."

"What? You helped William Shakespeare write all this?"

"Certain parts, yes," he said uncomfortably. "It was a long time ago, centuries! I was a different person then, quite literally."

"Hmm," she said, flipping through the pages. "You couldn't have given Beatrice fewer lines, could you? There's an awful lot of highlighting in this copy."

"You think that's bad?" the Doctor asked. "Look at the start of the fourth scene of the second act. No, wait, it's the third scene," he corrected himself, scratching his head with a wet hand.

More page rustling could be heard, before a sharp intake of breath from Donna's end. "Well," she said eventually, "I don't envy David that speech one bit."

"It might not be David," the Doctor pointed out. "We don't know how long we will be here. We might have to do it for them."

Donna opened her mouth with a frown, when she heard a knock at the door. "I need to go," she hissed, hanging up abruptly.

Raising an eyebrow, the Doctor raised one soapy hand to the phone, but it slipped through his fingers, falling with a plop into the dishwater, He cursed, and fished it out quickly, placing it
gingerly on the bench and out of harm's way.

Donna quickly pushed the phone down her top, a reflex action gained from years of living with a nosy mother. "Come in," she called.

The door opened, and Twig poked his head into the room. "Everything all right in here? I thought I heard you talking to someone."

"Not at all," Donna replied quickly. "I was rehearsing my lines for the play, that's all." She held up the script as evidence."

"Oh, that reminds me," Twig said. "You missed Graham Norton on Friday night. I taped it for you, we could watch it tonight if you like?"

Graham Norton, Donna thought. That Irish chat show host? Why is his show so important to Catherine? "That'd be great," she said out loud. "Thanks for taping it."

"Well, you could hardly miss it, could you?" He grinned, then indicated behind him with a thumb. "I need to take Erin to this party in a few minutes."

Erin appeared in the doorway beside him, wearing a purple dress. "Can you do my hair, Mummy?" she asked, running over and holding a hairbrush out to Donna. "You said you would."

Donna took the hairbrush and looked at Erin's hair, considering it. "How do you want it?"

"Can I have that funny plait?" she asked excitedly, sitting on the bed with her legs crossed. It was obvious that this was a regular occurrence between the two.

"A French plait?" Donna asked. "One that goes up here?" She drew a line with her finger up the back of Erin's scalp.

"That's it!"

A smile tugged at Donna's lips. "Okay then," she said, raising the hairbrush. She glanced towards the door as she did so, noticing that the doorway was now empty. She looked back to Erin, and began to brush it, forming the plait gently with practiced hands.

When she was done, Erin looked in the mirror, and began to jump up and down excitedly. "Thank you, Mummy!" she said, wrapping her hands tightly around Donna's waist.

Donna managed to extricate herself. "That's fine, sweetie," she said, the pet name sounding foreign on her tongue. "Now you go along to your party."

"It's not my party," she giggled. "It's Katie's party!"

"Well, tell Katie happy birthday from me, won't you?"

"Yes, Mummy." Erin gave her one last squeeze and ran out of the bedroom.

Donna heard her footsteps running down the stairs, then Twig's voice in the hallway. The front door opened and closed, and Donna watched through the window as the two of them got into a blue car, driving out of the driveway and down the street.

As soon as they were out of sight, Donna turned away from the window and pulled out the phone. She quickly turned it back on and rang David's number, crossing her fingers in the hope that the Doctor would pick up.
Sitting on the kitchen bench, David's phone lit up feebly, and a gurgling sound emerged from the tiny speakers. The Doctor sighed and wiped his arm on a dishtowel, picking up the phone and switching it off. He made a mental note to put it in some rice as soon as possible.

~o0o~

Catherine Tate opened her eyes to find herself staring at a metal pole that stuck out horizontally in front of her. Moving her head, she found that she seemed to be leaning her hand on a metal grating.

It took a moment for her to realise that she was lying on the grating, rather than leaning on it, and that the metal pole was in fact vertical. She was the horizontal one. She tried to sit up, and her back and neck began to ache. *That's what you get from lying on the ground,* she chastised herself. *But where am I?*

A strangely familiar voice spoke above her. "You're awake then."

Catherine turned and looked up to see David Tennant leaning backwards against the metal railing beside her. He was clean-shaven, wearing a blue shirt and brown pinstriped trousers. "David," she said gratefully, scrambling up to stand beside him. She frowned. "Wait, why are you here? What happened? Where are we?"

David gave a twisted smile that was almost bitter. "Take a look around," he told her in an English accent, turning to lean his arms on the railing in front of him.

She did as she suggested, frowning. They appeared to be in the TARDIS set from *Doctor Who*, but something was different. Something was wrong.

Catherine surveyed the room slowly, rubbing her neck. She noticed that the blue ambient lights were on, the ones used for serious or sad scenes. There was a noticeable humming in the background, more than was usually caused by the cameras and other equipment. A bell seemed to be tolling somewhere in the distance, but that wasn't the strangest thing about the scene.

Turning slowly in a circle, Catherine realised that the wall of the set which was normally missing, to make way for the cameras and crew, had been filled in so that it was all one room. She frowned again. "Am I dreaming?" she wondered aloud.

"If you are," David said, still not looking at her, "we're both having the same dream."

"How do we get out?" was the only thing she could think to ask."

"You could try the door." David jerked his thumb over his shoulder, pointing towards the small phone box door set into the wall of the set.

Catherine crossed to the door, feet clanking on the metal gangway, and pulled on the door handle. It stuck for a moment, and then gave way abruptly, leaving Catherine staring wide-eyed at the sight that greeted her.

Space.

Quite literally, space. Outer space. Past the doors, there was nothing but black space, dotted with white stars, as far as the eye could see.

It was the most beautiful thing Catherine had ever seen, but she could not enjoy the view. Instead, she was staring at it, face aghast.
David came and stood beside her, so they were staring out of the door together. "Is it real?" she asked faintly.

"It is," he said grimly. "I checked."

"You…checked?" she questioned, still staring out.

"I jumped out," he told her. "Well, I fell out. I got caught, though. Scraped my hand getting back in." He held out his hand, and Catherine could see a small red mark on his palm. "It's healed a bit since. A lot, actually."

"When you say you got caught…"

David sighed. "A blue police box swooped down and caught me in the doorway so I didn't go floating off into outer space."

"Right." Catherine looked out again. "And we're not dreaming."

"We're not dreaming," he confirmed.

"Right."

David looked sidelong at her. "This might be a good time to have a mental breakdown, if you want," he suggested.

"You're not having one," she retorted.

"You were unconscious for quite a while. I'm over it."

"Right."

"Are you going to be all right?"

"Yeah," Catherine said. "I'm only in the flipping TARDIS, in the middle of outer space. Nothing to worry about. Oh, and the man next to me has some sort of strange hand-healing power. Perfectly normal."

"It's a bit more than that," David said carefully. "Something is different about me. Well, several things, actually."

"Such as? Actually," Catherine said suddenly, "can we close that door?"

"Sure." David reached around her and pushed it shut. It swung closed with a squeaking sound. He turned to her seriously. "We appear to be in the TARDIS," he began, "which should logically be impossible. What should also be impossible is the fact that I'm speaking in an English accent without trying, which is difficult to get used to. Do you feel anything different? Unusual?"

She thought about it, frowning. "Yes," she said eventually. "I feel lighter, like there's been a weight lifted off my shoulders." She looked up at him. "Do you feel that?"

"No," he told her grimly. "I feel the opposite. It's like my brain's become bigger. I know a lot more, and the knowledge is very heavy."

"What sort of things?"

"Just…things. Like the square root of pi, and the fact that Raxicoricofallapatorius is much smaller than the inhabitants make it out to be, and that on Earth right now it is the seventeenth of May in
the year two thousand and eight. Stuff like that." He reeled off the list in a fast spiel that was
difficult to keep up with.

Catherine looked at him blankly. "How do you know that?"

"I don't know," he said, "but I have an idea."

"Look, if you're not going to tell me anything, I'm just going to go," she told him, turning and
walking towards the centre console.

"I think I'm a Time Lord."

Catherine froze mid-stride. She turned around slowly. "You what?" she said, unsure as to whether
he was taking the mickey.

"I think I'm a Time Lord," David repeated. "More specifically, the Doctor."

She shook her head slowly. "No. That's rubbish."

"Think about it, Catherine!" he said. "We both wake up in the TARDIS, we both feel different, my
body works differently, and I'm much smarter! I even have two hearts, I checked." He undid the
first few buttons of his shirt and held it open. "You can see if you like," he offered.

"I'll pass, thanks," she said cautiously.

"We're even wearing clothes from Who. Look at yourself!"

Catherine looked down. Sure enough, she was wearing the cocktail dress she had worn in the
Agatha Christie episode. The Unicorn and the Wasp, or something like that.

"So if you're the Doctor – which I'm still not convinced about, by the way – then am I Donna
Noble? Again?"

"It would seem so," the Doctor said, swiftly re-buttoning his shirt.

"Right."

"Are you sure you're all right?" he asked again, walking towards her carefully.

"I'm fine," she assured him. "Really."

"That's good."

"But why are we here?" Catherine asked suddenly. "How did we get into the TARDIS in the first
place? How is it real, any of this?"

David sighed. "I don't know," he admitted. "I am just as clueless as you are. The last thing I
remember was sitting on a bench on a street in London, and then I woke up here."

"I was jogging," she remembered, nodding. "I was in the park, Richmond Green, then I woke up
here. Same as you."

"Maybe something else brought us here," he suggested. "Some sort of alien force? I don't know
what could do that, though. Even the Doctor's brain doesn't seem to have any idea."

"Hang on," Catherine said suddenly. "If we're here, ostensibly being the Doctor and Donna, then
where are they? Donna and the Doctor. Are they in our bodies somewhere?"
David frowned. "I suppose they must be," he agreed, "wherever that is. They must be really confused."

They can join the club," she muttered.

Chapter End Notes

Thought I'd experiment with another point of view. What do you think, of that and the story as a whole? Please comment and let me know!
Catherine was getting anxious. She and David had been stuck in the TARDIS for what felt like hours now, with no explanation of how or why. Usually, there was a director or scriptwriter on hand to explain what was happening, but now they didn’t even have that.

She was sitting on the jump seat, watching David as he paced around the central console, running an agitated hand through his hair every few minutes. “How long are you going to keep that up?” she asked eventually. “You’ve been walking in circles for at least an hour now!”

He finally stopped walking, instead turning and leaning backwards against the console. “Sorry,” he sighed. “I’m just not used to having all this extra energy.” He pulled the sonic screwdriver out of his trouser pocket as he spoke, absent-mindedly throwing it in the air and catching it again. “Plus it’s a lot to take in, you know? And the Doctor seems to be quite an anxious person, which appears to be transferring itself to me because I’m in his body.” David spoke quickly, firing words out the way he used to on set. Except this time there was no script to work from.

“I know what you mean,” Catherine nodded slowly. “I feel quite calm, more than usual. It almost feels numb, taking it in. You know?”

David gave a short, sharp laugh. “We’ve swapped over in more ways than one,” he stated. “Who knew that a different body could have such an influence on a person?” His tone was bitter.

“I wouldn’t have thought anyone would have tried it before,” she said mildly.

“Well, maybe not in your – our – time,” he said, “but they will in the future.”

“How do you know that?” Catherine asked. “And can you stop playing with that screwdriver?” she added.

David jumped, and looked down at his hand. Sure enough, he was holding the sonic screwdriver. Despite the situation, a smile crept onto his face: he’d always dreamed of holding one. A real one, that was, not just the prop from the television series.

He flicked the switch on the side of the sonic, and the tip lit up and began to emit a buzzing noise. Grinning properly now, he raised it and pointed it at the TARDIS door. There was a pause, then the door flew open with a bang, white sparks flying from the lock. David jumped, and hastily clicked his fingers. The door swung closed again.

Catherine resisted the urge to roll your eyes. “Now you’ve got that off your chest,” she said firmly, “we need to think of a way to get back to our own bodies.”

David shrugged, slipping the sonic back into his trousers and leaning back against the console. “Don’t think we can,” he said simply.
“What? But we have to!” She looked alarmed. “We can’t stay here forever! Can we?”

“Unless we can find out what brought us here in the first place,” he said logically, “we can’t figure out how to get back. And neither of us can remember anything about how we got here, so there’s nowhere to start. Unless some sort of miracle happens, we’re stuck here.”

Catherine folded her arms, raising a cold eyebrow. “So you’re going to give up? Just like that?”

There was a pause, then David spread his arms in a gesture of helplessness. “What else can we do?” he demanded. “I don’t know about you, but I don’t exactly know how to fly a TARDIS. We’re stuck here until we drift onto a nearby planet or something, and goodness knows how long that will take. I’m sorry, Catherine, but there’s nothing we can do.”

She frowned. “You don’t know how to fly a TARDIS? What were you doing for four years when you were the Doctor?”

“Most of the time I was pushing random buttons.”

“Rubbish,” she snapped. “You knew what a lot of those random buttons were, and what they did. Just because you pretended not to know doesn’t mean you didn’t have any idea. I saw you making sure you pressed the right buttons. And then there was that time you told me off for pressing the stabilisers instead of whatever it was I was supposed to do. It was more real to you than to anyone else, believe me. And now it is real, the least you can do is push a few buttons!” She glared coldly at him when she had finished speaking.

“Catherine…” David sighed. He slumped further back against the console, staring down at his feet. “I made it all up, you know that. None of it was real. I was just a kid playing with a toy, nothing more. I’m an actor, not a pilot.”

Catherine pursed her lips and stood up, stepping towards David. He refused to meet her gaze, so she started to speak. “I know you made it all up,” she said, more calmly, “but if we accept that everything in Doctor Who is somehow real, that means that in this universe or wherever we are, the Doctor was doing those same things, right? Assuming the show is a direct copy of his reality, then…”

“…then those random buttons I was pressing must actually mean something!” David finished, finally raising his eyes to meet hers. For the first time since they had arrived in the TARDIS, he began to smile properly. “I just need to remember what I pressed, then we can go somewhere!”

“Exactly!” Catherine practically shouted. She was grinning now, glad to have finally convinced him to do something about their situation.

“Right,” David said, turning to face the console. He closed his eyes for a moment, casting his mind back to his days playing the Doctor. It was surprisingly easy, because, he assumed, he was in the Doctor’s body.

David took a moment to bask in the full realisation of that fact: he. Was. The Doctor. After decades of enjoying the show, followed by several years of actually playing the character, David Tennant was finally in the TARDIS. The real one.

If he had been alone, David would have probably jumped for joy at that moment, preferably accompanied by some hoots of laughter. As it was, he allowed himself a small skip in his step as he walked around the console, surveying the many controls and reminding himself of what was what.
“I think,” he said finally, “that I start with this.” He turned a lever, and the TARDIS began to shake violently.

Catherine grabbed at the console, barely managing to stop herself from falling flat on her face. “What was that?” she demanded, glaring at David around the shaking console.

“The handbrake, I think,” he shouted, also holding on for dear life: the actual shaking was very, very different from the acting that they were used to.

“Well, put it back on!”

He turned the lever again, and the shaking stopped as abruptly as it had started. He took a deep breath. “Perhaps,” he said, “I should do the handbrake last.”

“Good idea,” Catherine agreed.

David continued his circle around the console, until he arrived back to where he had started. He took another deep breath. “I think,” he began, “we should start with a small trip, and then work up to going larger distances.”

Catherine nodded.

“And then,” David continued, his confidence growing, “we can make our way back to Sol 3, and go home! Sol 3 is the intergalactic designation for Earth,” he added in response to Catherine’s raised eyebrow.

She nodded, somehow managing not to roll her eyes. “One short trip, then home,” she repeated. “Got it.”

“Right.” David rubbed his hands nervously, and turned to face the console once again. He pushed a button, then pulled a lever down. He let go of the lever, and it sprung back up again to where it had been.

“Er,” David said, glancing at Catherine, “could you hold this down?”

She rolled her eyes and held the lever down. David gave her another lever to hold, this time in an upwards position. He pushed another couple of buttons, turned a dial or three, and grinned. He was in his element.

Half a minute later, he was sure all the settings were set to their desired values. Holding one button down with his left foot, he half-hopped, half-reached around the console towards the handbrake. “Ready?” he asked Catherine.

She let out a long breath. “Not really,” she admitted.

“Me either,” he agreed, and pulled the lever without a second thought.

The shaking resumed almost immediately – again, they found that acting being in a shaking TARDIS was entirely different from the real thing. David almost managed to fall over, but hung onto the console, barely managing to keep his precarious position as the time rotor in the centre went up and down, up and down.

The trip lasted only a few seconds, but it felt like much longer as the pair held on for dear life. As the noise of the centre console finally died down, David ran across the metal gangway to the door, Catherine hot on his heels. He pulled open the door triumphantly, to see…nothing.
There was nothing outside the door, save for the endless darkness and stars. It looked the same as it had last time.

Catherine poked her head around David’s shoulder, peering outside. “Have we moved?” He didn’t say anything. “Well?”

“I…don’t know,” he admitted, frowning. “We only moved a little way, so it’s difficult to tell. There’s just…”

“Stars,” she finished for him.

“Exactly.”

They both frowned for a moment, before Catherine’s face cleared. “Well, we obviously need a landmark of some sort, right?” she asked, stepping back from the doorway. “Something we can use to tell we’ve moved,” she continued, picking up the Doctor’s long coat from where it hung over a metal railing. She walked back to the doorway and held it out into the emptiness of space before them.

“Careful,” David said automatically – it may not have been his coat, but he was still protective of it. He and that coat had been through some good times together on Who.

“Of what?” Catherine said, raising an eyebrow at him. “It’s not going to fall. No gravity, remember?”

“Right,” David said, beginning to feel a little silly. He’d just been given the Doctor’s brain, and he couldn’t even work out that there was no gravity in a vacuum.

Catherine rolled the coat up into a ball, and let go of it carefully. There was some movement from the motion of her hands, but otherwise the coat stayed where it was, suspended in mid-air – or rather, in mid-vacuum. She let out a slow breath. “Voila. Landmark.”

David smiled slowly. “Cath, you are brilliant,” he said.

“I know,” she said nonchalantly. “Now, are we going to stand around yapping all day, or are we going to test-fly this TARDIS?”

Not words she’d ever have imagined herself saying in real life, or at least, in whatever the hell this was.

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