

Right Here Waiting For You by LilFerret

Fandom: Torchwood

Summary: Sometimes it takes almost losing someone to realize exactly what you have.

Rated: R/Mature

Categories: Drama, Romance

Characters/Ship: Jack Harkness/Ianto Jones

Spoilers: None

Warnings: **Mentions of Past Abuse (Not graphic, but very emotionally charged and possibly emotionally painful. Please proceed with caution.)**, Sexual Situations

Completed: Yes

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Author Notes: This was originally meant as a cliché fic, however I wasn't able to get it finished in time. I am posting it in parts but at least half of the fic is written so far.

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Chapter 1

He realized his mistake the moment Ianto paused and turned around. The lights from the car lit him up like a Christmas tree, and Jack's shout of warning was far too late. The scream the scene wrenched from his throat sounded like that of a mad man, but Jack couldn't control it. He felt his legs carry him to the younger man's side, tears sliding down his face unchecked.

“Ianto...Ianto!” He knelt by the man's head, touching his cheek, brushing his hair, but knowing better than to move him. “Owen!”

“Oh God,” came a cry from beside him. Jack didn't look up. He knew it was the driver of the vehicle. “I swear to God I didn't see him. I didn't see him!”

“Jack, move aside.” Owen lowered himself to his knee. “Jack, I said MOVE!”

Jack fell backwards, landing roughly as he attempted to scoot out of the way. He felt a hand on his shoulder. Gwen.

“He'll be alright, Jack,” she murmured, close to his ear. “You'll see. He's going to be just fine.”

Jack watched as Owen's shoulders slumped, a deep sigh going through him. He touched his earpiece. “Tosh, call 999. Ianto's been struck by a car. He's breathing but he's not responding.”

“Got it.” There was a moment of silence on the comms. “*They're in route. And it looks like the weevil's gone back into the sewer.*”

“Oh God, oh God.” The driver was now pacing and ringing his hands.

“Jack, Gwen, sit with Ianto for a moment.”

Jack nodded mutely, shuffling closer to Ianto while Owen got to his feet and pulled the driver of the vehicle aside. A crowd was beginning to form and it appeared the man was quickly becoming unstable. Jack could hear sirens in the background.

“Talk to him, Jack,” Gwen said softly, rubbing his back.

“I-Ianto?” There was still no response, and Jack's throat threatened to close. “Please, Ianto. You have to wake up. We have plans, remember?”

He could still feel wetness on his cheeks but he didn't bother to wipe it away. He had done this. If he hadn't called Ianto's name in order to make an off-color remark about him looking good from behind, the Welshman would have never stopped in the middle of the road.

“This is my fault,” he mumbled, stroking Ianto's suit-covered arm. “I did this.”

The pressure on his back increased as Gwen's arm wrapped tightly around him. “No, Jack. You didn't do this. What happened here was an accident.”

He leaned into her, swallowing hard. “Ianto...”

The next few minutes were a bit of a blur for Jack. Emergency services as well as the police had arrived, the latter securing the area and keeping the crowds back as the medics looked Ianto over. Jack refused to move more than a couple meters away. He didn't want to miss it if Ianto woke up.

He vaguely registered Owen saying he'd take Gwen with him in the SUV before he was climbing into the ambulance beside his injured friend and lover. There was only room for one with the medics needing to treat and monitor Ianto, and Jack found himself pushed to the side while they worked.

Jack finally took a moment to wipe his face. He wasn't like this; he wasn't this emotional. Hell, he couldn't even remember the last time he'd cried. Had he even cried when Estelle died?

Ianto looked so small and fragile. His clothing had been unfastened and shoved to the sides to allow for his vitals to be checked. There was an oxygen tube in his nose, and the steady beeping of his heart monitor was all that Jack could hear.

When they arrived at the hospital Jack followed their progress through the corridors. At a large set of double doors, however, he was stopped.

“You can't go any further, sir,” a nurse told him, holding his arm.

“What? I need to be with him!” he sputtered, watching as the gurney carrying the Welshman disappeared down another corridor.

"I'm sorry, sir, but he needs immediate attention. You'll need to wait out front until the doctors can stabilize him."

"I..."

"I'm sorry," she repeated, squeezing his arm and giving him a sad smile before turning and heading through the doors.

He watched her go until the doors closed behind her with a soft click.

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Once Ianto was moved to a room to be monitored Jack was allowed back to see him. What followed next were six days of a vigil at his side. The rest of the team had been in to see him several times, usually one at a time so as to always have the Hub covered, and one of them always told him to get out of the hospital and get some rest. But Jack refused to stay away for longer than it took to catch a quick shower. He ate at the hospital, slept in the chair by Ianto's bed when the need arose, and when visiting hours were over he headed to the waiting room.

"You're going to run yourself into the ground," Owen scolded him, frowning. "What good will you be to him then, eh?"

"I'm not going to leave him, Owen. I owe him that much."

"Even his sister wanted to drag you out of here, mate."

Rhiannon and her family had been in to see Ianto all of once. Once in nearly a week of Ianto's coma. Granted, they'd stayed for a couple of hours, on Saturday, but Jack wasn't going to let someone who obviously didn't care nearly as much as him tell him when it was time to go.

When Jack didn't reply, Owen sighed loudly. "Look, Jack..."

"Owen, enough!" His eyes narrowed and he turned to look at the doctor. "I'm staying here until I'm sure he's going to be okay."

"And the rest of the team? What about them?"

"You can handle anything that's thrown at you. You're a good team."

"We're down to three operatives, Jack." Owen shoved his hands in his pockets and stared down at him. "Things have been relatively quiet, but that's bound to change. I know you want to stay with Ianto, but we could really use you back at the Hub as well."

Jack rubbed his face. "I want to be here when he wakes up."

"And if he doesn't?"

Jack threw him a sharp glare. "That's not funny, Owen."

"I wasn't making a joke, Harkness. Look, he's in pretty bad shape. There's no way to even test how badly his brain has been effected until he does wake up. And worse case scenario..."

"I KNOW, Owen!" Jack folded his hands under his chin and leaned his elbows on his knees. "I know. Worse case scenario, Ianto dies. You don't think I've considered that?"

"And best case scenario, he's perfectly fine when he awakes. The chances are he's going to have some things to work through."

Jack sighed, closing his eyes. "Then I'll be there to help him if he does."

Owen furrowed his brow, placing a hand on Jack's shoulder. "Alright, mate. Alright."

Chapter 2

"Hello?"

The voice was weak but Jack's eyes immediately flew open, a grin stretching across his face when he saw the man's eyes were watching him. "Hey. Ianto."

"Ianto?"

Jack's grin faltered. "How do you feel?"

"I-I'm not sure. Where am I?"

"You're in the hospital. You were hit by a car. Do you remember?"

Ianto's eyes darted around the room and his right hand clutched at the blanket over his body. Jack thought he looked a bit like a deer caught in headlights. "No."

Scooting his chair closer, Jack placed his hand over Ianto's. He saw the Welshman stiffen considerably but tried to ignore it. "We were out in town, chasing," he thought for a moment, "something...and you were struck by a vehicle. You've been a little out of it."

"A little? How long?"

"About nine days," Jack explained. "You were in a coma."

Ianto visibly swallowed. "What were we chasing?"

Jack glanced at the door before answering, voice low. "A weevil."

"I-I don't..."

Jack's eyebrows went up. "Ianto, what's the last thing you remember?"

The man appeared to think for a moment, his brow crinkled. "I don't. I...can't..."

"You mean you don't remember anything?"

"No." He looked panicked. "Sorry, no! I..."

Jack let out a large breath, squeezing Ianto's hand. "It's okay. It's alright. I'm going to let the nurses know you're awake, okay? I'll be right back."

Ianto nodded once and then Jack reluctantly stepped away from his side. He waited at the nurses' desk for a few moments before seeing one come out of another room.

"Excuse me. Hi. Hello! Room 319, Ianto Jones? He's awake."

"Is he, now? Alright, thank you. Let me call the doctor in."

Jack found himself nervous and pacing the corridor for a couple moments before realizing he didn't want to leave Ianto alone for too long. He headed back into the room, finding the Welshman curled onto his side, wires looking cumbersome.

"They're calling the doctor, Ianto," Jack told him, slipping into the chair once more and reaching for Ianto's hand. Ianto snagged it backward, eyes wide and lip trembling, leaving Jack's hand to drop to the bed. "I'm sorry. It's hard to remember that you don't know who I am."

"We're...friends?"

"Yes. Yeah, we're friends. I'm Jack Harkness. Captain Jack Harkness. And you're Ianto Jones."

"Captain of what?"

Jack's brain unhelpfully supplied 'The Innuendo Squad,' but he let that go with a quirk of the lips. "It's a long story."

"Why were we chasing a...a weevil?"

"That's probably more information than you need right now, but...we work together, and there was a job we were doing. I called out to you and you turned around..."

"And I got hit?"

An apologetic smile formed on Jack's face. "Yeah. I'm sorry, Ianto. I'm really sorry."

"It's okay...Jack." Ianto smiled back at him. It was awkward and Ianto still looked uncomfortable, but he reached out and let his hand cover Jack's. "Sounds like an accident."

Jack swallowed the lump in his throat and was about to say something else when the doctor and a couple of nurses came into the room. Jack slipped away from the bed, sliding the chair back out of the way so that the hospital staff could do what they needed to do.

“I’ll be right outside, Ianto,” he told the Welshman, and received another small smile in return.

Jack stepped into the hallway once more, pulling his phone from his coat pocket. He was thankful Gwen had brought it to him the morning after the accident and he’d handed over his earpiece. From now on, he was going to ensure they always had at least one mobile on them while in the field. If the comms had gone down, it would have taken a lot longer to get Ianto to A & E.

He glared at the phone when it wouldn’t turn on. Right. Of course not. Heaven forbid its battery should last that long. He growled in frustration, turning on his heel and heading back to the nurses’ station.

“Is there a public phone nearby?” he asked, and was instructed to head into the waiting room.

As he passed Ianto’s room once more, Jack glanced in and saw that the doctor was running tests, including checking Ianto’s vision. He hurried past, and down into the main corridor. When he got downstairs and entered the waiting room, he caught Tosh on the way in. He wouldn’t need his phone yet after all.

“Toshiko, good! Ianto’s awake.”

“That’s fantastic, Jack! How is he? Can I go in?”

“He’s with the doctor right now, but…he has amnesia, Tosh. I need to get back in touch with his sister and her family.” He pulled out his mobile phone and shook it slightly. “Dead battery.”

“Oh! I…okay.” She immediately pulled her own mobile from her purse and phoned the Hub. Apparently she’d not brought her comms to the hospital. “Gwen. It’s me. Ianto’s awake. Yes, I know. But he has amnesia, Gwen. Can you please ring his sister? Thank you. I’ll be back in a while so you can see him too. Alright. Thank you.”

“We should get back to him. I told Ianto I’d be right outside.”

She nodded and followed him back upstairs and through the labyrinth of corridors. When they arrived at the room, the Doctor was just coming out, the nurses in tow.

“Ah, Mr. Harkness,” the doctor greeted him. “I was just coming to talk to you. Mr. Jones seems to be in fine shape, considering what’s happened to him.”

“Can we see him?” Toshiko asked.

“Absolutely. He’s going to need his friends for a while yet.”

Tosh went into the room as Jack and the doctor moved closer to the nurses' desk. "How long do you think the amnesia will last?" Jack asked the other man as they came to a stop.

"It's hard to say. I've seen these things last a couple days, a few weeks, and sometimes..." He let his sentence drift off as he shrugged apologetically. "It's going to take time. There's no telling for certain."

"And when can he go home?"

"Well that I can tell you. As long as he has someone to take care of him, and I'm notified of any significant changes in his behavioral or mental status, I don't see why he can't go home in a couple of days. I want to watch him to make sure he's stable first."

Jack nodded, thanking the doctor, and then joined Tosh in Ianto's room. "Good news," he began. "You, Ianto Jones, will be able to leave the hospital in just a couple of days."

"Oh, that's great," Toshiko agreed.

"But where will I go?"

Jack smiled. "Home, Ianto."

"If only I could remember where that is, yeah?"

Jack chuckled, squeezing Ianto's ankle through the blankets. "Give it time. Soon you'll be able to remember everything."

"You think he'll want to remember Owen?" Toshiko joked, raising her eyebrows. Ianto furrowed his brow.

"He might ask us to give him back his amnesia."

Tosh and Jack laughed together and Ianto nervously joined in. Well, thought Jack, that was a start.

Chapter 3

Jack watched Ianto out of the corner of his eye as they took a taxi to his flat. During the two days before the Welshman had been released from the hospital Jack had harbored some high hopes that Ianto would recover his memory quickly. It didn't appear to be happening, however, as even the scenic drive through Cardiff failed to trigger thing.

"Cardiff is lovely this time of year," Jack said, tilting his head to glance up at the sky through the window.

"I wish I could remember any other time," came the soft-spoken reply. "It seems nice."

Jack turned to look at him. "You will, Ianto," he promised. "You just have to give it time."

Ianto raised an eyebrow. "I take it you're a fairly positive person?"

"I've been known to be occasionally." He grinned. "Look at it this way, until you get your memory back you have an opportunity to see things through new eyes. You can appreciate everything around you. Fall in love with this glorious city all over again."

"I'm friends with the real life Pollyanna."

"Hey, you remembered Pollyanna! That's a start." Jack beamed. Ianto just shook his head and turned back toward his window, but not before Jack caught a small smile tugging at the corner of his lips.

When the taxicab arrived at the address Jack had given the driver Jack got out, going around to Ianto's side to open the door for him as the driver removed Ianto's small overnight bag from the boot. Toshiko had done the honors of picking up a few changes of clothing and a couple essentials for the Welshman once he'd been admitted to the hospital.

Jack paid the driver and then started to slip an arm around Ianto's shoulders before he realized that might not be taken very well. Instead he shoved his right hand into his pocket and clutched the Welshman's bag in the other as they walked toward the building.

"So this is it?" Ianto asked, looking around. "Still nothing familiar."

"Maybe the inside, then," Jack replied, ushering the man into the building and then up the lift to the fourth floor.

When he opened the door for Ianto the man stepped cautiously across the threshold, as if he were afraid something would jump out at him. Jack did touch him at that point, simply placing an open palm between his shoulder blades for support.

"Let me go make it a little more homey," he told him, setting down the bag by the wall in the hallway. He walked through the door to his left and into the lounge before moving to the window and drawing the curtains aside so that the summer sun could shine through. "There. Much better."

And it was. When Ianto joined him in the lounge it was bright and cozy, and didn't have any of the feel of having been abandoned for nearly two weeks. Jack knew that was due to the immaculate condition in which Ianto always kept his flat. He'd be hard pressed to find someone who kept things more tidy than one Ianto Jones.

"It's a bit small," Ianto commented, moving slowly through the room and looking around. He ran a hand over the back of the couch before walking into the kitchen. "Lovely coffee maker, though."

Jack smirked, hanging his greatcoat up on the rack in the corner of the lounge. "That's your favorite thing in the flat." Well, when Jack wasn't there, anyway, he thought to himself. "You

love it even more than the one at work.”

Ianto turned to face him, eyebrow raised. “When I can see that?”

“The other coffee maker?”

“No, I meant where we work.”

“Oh.” Jack thought for a moment, still unsure exactly how much was too much information for Ianto to handle. “We should probably let you get your bearings here first, before re-introducing you to the workplace.”

“You do realize that anything could trigger a memory? If my home isn't working, maybe the office will.”

Jack sighed. The man had a good point. “Tell you what. Give it a day or two, and if nothing changes, I'll take you to the Hub.”

Ianto spun around from where he'd been browsing his DVD collection. “The Hub? Exactly where do we work, Jack?”

“In an underground base.”

“That's...” Ianto furrowed his eyebrows and then shook his head. “You're joking.”

“Not at all, Ianto.”

“And we chase things called weevils.”

“Among other things, yes. There's a lot of chasing.”

Ianto seemed to ponder that for a moment. “Well at least it seems my life isn't what one might call dull.”

Jack laughed. “No, not often dull.”

They spent the next half hour with Ianto exploring the rest of the flat, which, really, only consisted of his bathroom and bedroom. There were a few easily answered questions and then Jack insisted they order a take away. “I'm not sure I want to see the state of your fridge,” he'd justified.

They were seated on the couch with a couple bottles of soda purchased with their pizza, watching a random comedy on the television, when Ianto turned to him. “Do you live here too, Jack?”

Jack choked on his pizza and had to take a few swigs of his drink before he could breathe properly. “No. No I don't. Why would you ask that?”

“There are several shirts in my closet that I would never wear.”

It was Jack's turn to raise an eyebrow. "You remember what you like to wear?"

"Well, not exactly. But they match the style you're wearing, and not the ones on the other side of the closet."

Okay, so Jack's spare shirts hadn't triggered anything. "Is that all you noticed?"

"Actually, no," Ianto replied, taking a small bite of pizza, chewing thoroughly and swallowing before he continued. "There are also several pairs of similar trousers to what you're now wearing in the chest of drawers, and an extra toothbrush on the counter in the bathroom. I didn't check for underwear."

"Most people don't store their pants in the bathroom, Ianto." The Welshman just stared at him, eyes narrowing. "Alright, alright. No, I don't live here. But we are...involved."

"Involved as in...a relationship?"

Jack started to deny the assessment, wanting to cringe away from anything as square as the box Ianto had just placed them in, but he realized that without Ianto's memory of their history, it wouldn't help matters any. And was being in a relationship really all that bad? Sure, he wanted his freedom. He refused to be tied down in something as archaic as monogamy, but when he gave it thought, that's exactly what this was. He hadn't slept with anyone else since he'd begun sleeping with Ianto, and he was pretty sure the Welshman was a one person kind of man.

"Yes," he replied simply.

"You and I...we're...a couple?"

Jack paused for only a couple of seconds. "Yes we are."

"So I'm gay?" Ianto asked, setting down his plate.

"If I had to label you I'd say bisexual. You used to have a girlfriend." He tilted his head at Ianto. "You can't tell? How you feel, I mean?"

Ianto shook his head and then nodded, blushing. "Well, maybe. It's all a bit...confusing, I suppose."

"I can understand that."

"And we work together as well." It wasn't a question.

"Yes we do. Actually, I'm your boss."

"Couldn't that be considered harassment?"

Another laugh broke through. Jack couldn't help it. It was almost fun to watch Ianto re-

discover himself. If only it hadn't nearly meant his life as the price.

“Well, you haven't filed paperwork on it yet.”

“Then either I am horribly repressed under your demanding thumb, or I don't mind it in the least.”

“Which do you think it is?” Jack asked.

“I'm pretty sure it's the latter.”

“You seem awfully confident for a man who, a moment ago, didn't know he liked men.” Ianto was smirking and his eyes were twinkling. It took everything in Jack's power not to lean over and press his lips to the other man's. Instead he set his own drink and plate on the table and folded his arms. “What do you have to base your theory on?”

“Call it instinct,” Ianto replied. “Or...”

“Or?”

“Or the fact that I keep getting an erection every time I catch the scent of your aftershave.”

Jack's eyes widened and he couldn't help but glance down at the front of Ianto's trousers. His lips quirked into a smirk when he saw the man's growing arousal, and he felt a twinge of involuntary desire between his own legs.

“I don't wear any aftershave,” he told Ianto, voice softer than even the first time they'd had this conversation.

“You smell like that naturally?”

“Yep.”

“Can I..?” Ianto indicated Jack's neck with a shifting of his eyes.

Jack hesitated just a moment before nodding, watching as Ianto licked his lips. There was that twinge again. Well, actually, it was more like a pleasant tingle.

Ianto scooted closer and his eyes focused on Jack's neck. Jack let his hands drop to his sides and turned to face the other man a little more. Jack wasn't sure exactly what to expect but when Ianto moved close enough he lowered his head next to Jack's, sniffing softly along his shoulder and neck. The action would be comical if it weren't so damned hot.

Ianto nosed along Jack's shirt collar, barely touching, but it was enough to cause Jack to close his eyes. When he felt lips brush along his skin the tingle between his legs turned into a healthy throb, his cock obviously eager for more of Ianto's gentle exploration, as it pressed against its confines.

“I-Ianto...” Jack stuttered, as those lips began to move along his throat and up along his

jawline.

“Hmm?”

The kisses moved towards Jack's lips. “We shouldn't...mmph!”

Ianto's mouth slid over his like it was made to be there, and Jack's hands came up to hold the Welshman's biceps. He didn't push him away, however, like he knew he should. Instead he kissed Ianto back, lips parting when the younger man touched them with his tongue.

By the time Ianto's tongue was inside his mouth, Jack was moaning. It hadn't been that long since they were last intimate, all things considered, but the gentle and tentative way Ianto was kissing him was new. With them it had always been hot and messy, or languid but sure. This new kissing was inquisitive and filled with a need to understand, to map territory that should be familiar but wasn't. And it was filled with such an innocence that Jack felt his heart ache a little.

When Ianto's hand slid up the inside of Jack's thigh, however, Jack knew he couldn't let this continue. His grip tightened on the Welshman's arms and he pushed him back slowly, pulling his mouth away reluctantly. Ianto's eyes were wide and his lips were moist. It took every bit of Jack's control not to tug him back against him and ravage him where they sat.

“Did I...do something wrong?”

Jack shook his head, licking his lips and closing his eyes briefly before opening them and focusing on Ianto once more. “Absolutely not.”

“Then why did you stop, Jack?” He sat back and Jack released his arms. Ianto gestured between them. “I thought we were a couple?”

“We are, Ianto,” Jack replied, rubbing a hand over his face. “I just...I'm basically a stranger to you, right now. And I don't want you to think you have to do this. You don't owe me this.”

“You're not a stranger, Jack,” Ianto argued, frowning. “You were there with me. I could hear your voice.”

Jack lifted his chin. “What do you mean?”

“In the hospital. I didn't know what was going on, and I couldn't understand any words, but I heard you. You were talking to me.”

Jack sighed. “I didn't want to leave you alone. But that doesn't mean you have to do this, Ianto. I'm not expecting you to.”

Ianto smiled softly and stroked Jack's face. “I never said you were. That's not what this is about.”

“Then what is it about, Ianto? Because I really don't think this is something we should be doing right after you've come out of a coma, and especially when you're just getting to know

me again.” Ianto opened his mouth slightly to interrupt but Jack held up a finger, pressing it to his lips. “I understand, you know my voice. That doesn't mean you know me.”

“Are my instincts wrong?” Ianto asked, settling his hands on Jack's knees.

“That depends. What are they telling you?”

“That we live a very dangerous life, with bad things around every corner. That our relationship is one that's beneficial to us both, even when it might not always be convenient. That you care for me, the me I'm supposed to be, a lot more than you'd ever intended. That you're still afraid, even after considerable time, that you're going to hurt me.” He paused, eyebrow high on his forehead. “Tell me I'm wrong.”

Licking his lips, Jack shook his head. “I can't.”

“Then I do know you. Your face may be unfamiliar, and our past might be something I never remember, but I know how my body reacts to you. And how yours responds to me. I know this feels right.”

“We can't have sex, Ianto. The doctor clearly stated no vigorous activities for at least two to three weeks.”

“Then we won't have sex. Intercourse isn't necessary.”

“Ianto...”

The younger man got up off of the couch, reaching out a hand. “Please, Jack? This might jog my memory.”

He eyed the hand in front of him before looking back up at Ianto's face. Sighing deeply Jack took his hand, pushing himself up off of the couch and following the man out of the lounge and down the hallway. As the door was pushed closed behind him and he was slowly but thoroughly kissed, he could only hope that he was doing this because it was what Ianto wanted and needed, and not just because Jack was a greedy bastard. He hoped he was at least a tiny bit altruistic.

Chapter 4

Jack looked down at the face of the man sleeping on his chest. He brushed too-long hair back behind Ianto's ear and sighed. The afternoon and evening hadn't gone exactly as he'd planned. Not that he'd truly had a plan, that is. He hadn't expected to end up in bed with his favorite Welshman, though, that was for sure.

And no matter how much Jack had hoped that his touch would bring the man's memory back, it hadn't. He knew he shouldn't be upset, but it hurt a little. A lot, if he was being honest. They didn't have sex, at least not by society's standards. Just a bit of kissing, stroking, and, though he might deny it later, quite a bit of cuddling. He couldn't help himself.

Ianto had been asleep for hours while Jack kept up a vigil. He could probably sleep if he tried, but it was still early, and besides, he was enjoying watching the other man as he rested. They didn't have a lot of time to just enjoy each other, instead spending the majority of their time at the Hub. While they were able to sneak in quick shags and the occasional all-nighter, moments like this one were few and far between.

“Are you watching me sleep?” a thick Welsh accent rumbled against his chest.

Jack smiled, fingers carding through Ianto's hair as he was met with sleepy blue eyes. “I might be.”

“Do you do that often?”

“Not as often as I'd like.”

Ianto smiled and leaned up to kiss him. “You should sleep too.”

Jack sighed. “I don't actually need much sleep these days. But don't let that stop you.”

“You are quite comfortable,” Ianto replied, curling against Jack's side and draping an arm over his stomach. “Good night, Jack. Again.”

“Goodnight, Ianto.”

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Jack awoke from sleep he wasn't aware he'd had, mindlessly reaching out for the body he expected to be next to him. When he touched nothing but cool sheets his eyes snapped open. If it weren't for the smell of aromatic coffee wafting from outside the open bedroom door he might have let himself panic for a moment. Instead a grin stretched across his face and he pulled himself from the bed.

Stopping only to find his boxers and yank them on, Jack headed first to the bathroom to take care of some business and wash his hands, then out into the hallway and into the kitchen. He found Ianto leaning against the counter and sipping at a mug of steaming liquid. His eyes were closed and there was the faintest smile on his lips.

Jack propped himself against the doorway and folded his arms. “How on Earth did you manage to shower, dress, and make coffee without me hearing you?”

Ianto's eyes found his and his smile quirked up a notch. “Good morning, Jack. Would you like a coffee?”

“Absolutely.”

Ianto turned to place his own mug on the counter top before reaching toward the pot of coffee.

He poured the rich liquid into another mug, dropped in a dash of milk, stirred it quickly, and then handed it to Jack.

Jack's eyes widened when he took the offered beverage. "Ianto, how did you know I take my coffee white with no sugar?"

Ianto appeared to think for a moment. "I'm not sure."

"And this is the mug I always use when I'm here."

"Really?"

"Yes." Jack smiled, shaking his head, then took a sip of the delicious smelling brew. "Mmm. Ianto, it's wonderful as usual. I guess some things are just natural abilities."

Ianto blushed and picked up his mug. "You said I loved the coffee maker. I assumed I would make a decent cup of coffee."

"Decent doesn't begin to describe your coffee, Ianto." If possible the blush deepened, and Jack winked at him. "I was thinking we could take a bit of a drive around Cardiff today, maybe see if something sparks your memory."

"That sounds nice."

"We could go up to the stadium. You love Rugby."

Ianto's eyebrow quirked. "I would imagine so. I am Welsh, after all."

Jack laughed. "Touché, Ianto. Touché."

When coffee was finished Jack headed back to the bathroom to take a shower, leaving Ianto to wash up at his own request. Even without his memory it seemed that some things weren't going to be different. Ianto almost always preferred to clean up after them when Jack was over. He wasn't sure if it was Ianto's need to keep order, or if he was afraid Jack might break something. Probably a little bit of both.

Not much later they walked to a coffee shop for breakfast, Jack calling Tosh along the way and asking her to drive Ianto's car over from the Hub. After they all enjoyed a nice meal together Jack and Ianto dropped her off by the Plass before heading into the center of town. The bay area didn't seem to trigger any memories, and for a brief moment Jack wondered if anything ever would. He quickly put aside those thoughts, however, realizing they were counter-productive. There was no telling what would cause Ianto's memory to come back. It could be something small, big, or anything in between.

"That's a lovely suit," Ianto murmured as they passed a department store inside the St David's Centre.

Jack followed Ianto's gaze as they stopped in front of the glass display. "You usually prefer your own tailored. But that one is quite nice. Want to take a closer look?"

Ianto looked hopeful. "If you wouldn't mind."

"Of course not."

Jack followed Ianto into the shop, smiling as the Welshman perused the offerings inside. Several minutes later they emerged with a couple of garment bags, each slinging one over his shoulder. They were lovely suits, but Jack knew that once Ianto regained his memory he'd likely turn his nose up at them both.

They made a full circuit around the centre but nothing seemed to spark Ianto's memory. Jack could see the frustration beginning to take its toll on the Welshman's demeanor. He couldn't blame him. It couldn't be easy when nothing was familiar, everything having to be re-learned.

The walk back to the car was a quiet one, and when Jack pulled the vehicle out into the street he made a decision. Instead of heading toward Millennium Stadium he turned the car south instead.

"Where are we going next?" Ianto asked from the passenger seat.

"To the Hub."

Chapter 5

"I thought you didn't want to take me there yet?" Ianto asked him, raising an eyebrow.

Jack sighed and shrugged. "I changed my mind. Maybe it'll help."

Ianto frowned. "You don't have to do this if you feel I'm rushing things. I do want my memory back, but I can understand if you think it's too soon."

Jack glanced over at Ianto for a moment before turning back to face the road ahead. "I don't want to throw everything at you at once, but you were right before. Anything that could be familiar to you is a plus. And I don't want to hold you back."

Ianto was quiet for a moment. When they stopped at a red light Jack turned to face him again. He could see the Welshman's furrowed eyebrows and slight frown as he took in the scenery outside the vehicle. He hoped he wasn't making a mistake, but he couldn't bear the look of sadness that passed over Ianto's face when he thought Jack wasn't looking. Like right now.

"The others are working today," Jack told him, looking forward just as the light phased to green. "You've already talked to Tosh, but there's also Owen and Gwen as well."

"The same Owen you told Tosh I might regret knowing?"

Jack chuckled. "The very same. But he's all bark and no bite."

“And Gwen?”

“Gwen... I think you'll like her. She's very friendly. A tactile person. I think she's the most human out of all of us.”

“I think you'll find we're all human,” Ianto replied. “Unless I've a third eye I haven't found. Oh God. Please tell me I'm not actually a weevil?”

This time Jack laughed loudly. “No, you're quite human, Ianto. What I mean is that when I hired Gwen I wanted the perspective of someone who'd not seen everything we had. Someone with fresh eyes and a feeling for what people were going through. The rest of us...well, let's just say we've been through so much that sometimes it's hard to remember what we're fighting for.”

“Am I sure I want to remember this job?”

Jack sobered. “I hope so. I want you too, if that's any consolation.”

Ianto nodded. “It is.”

When they arrived at the Hub Jack parked in Ianto's normal spot, right next to Tosh. Before they went through the door into the cavernous underground base Jack put a hand on Ianto's shoulder, halting his movement.

“Just so you know, our workplace might come as a bit of a shock to you.”

“More so than chasing creatures through the streets of Cardiff?”

Jack smirked. “Trust me. You're going to get a special kick out of our guard dog.”

Jack punched in the security code for the door and led Ianto into the Hub, pausing just inside to let the Welshman get an idea of just what Jack had meant. He watched the man's eyes go wide, his mouth parting to form a silent “oh.”

As they slowly made their way into the Hub proper Tosh and Gwen looked up from their computers. Tosh smiled and gave them a little wave.

“Hi Ianto! Jack.”

“Oh, it's good to see you, Ianto,” Gwen added, putting down the pen she'd had in her mouth. “A little soon to drag him back to work though, yeah Jack?”

Jack snorted. “Just trying to jog his memory, Gwen. Believe me, I'm going to wait until at least tomorrow before I have him back in the field.” He nudged Ianto and the man smiled, obviously understanding it was a joke. “I'm thinking a mini tour is in order. Ready, Ianto?”

“As I'll ever be, I suppose,” came the reply.

Jack took a couple of steps toward the stairs so he could lead Ianto to his office when there was a loud squawk above them. He grinned as the man beside him jumped a good foot off the ground before ducking, the large, intimidating form of their Myfanwy swooping in for a closer look.

“Bloody hell!” Ianto cried, stepping behind Jack.

Jack turned to face him, still grinning. “Ianto, meet Myfanwy,” he said, drawing the man to stand beside him once more. The lady in question chirped happily, landing several feet away. “I think she's missed you.”

“We have a dinosaur?”

“Well, pterosaur, actually,” Jack corrected.

“Pteranodon to be exact,” Tosh advised.

“Who bloody cares?” Owen mumbled, coming up the stairs from his medical bay and rolling his eyes. “She's a right pain in the arse is what she is. Good to have you back, Tea Boy.”

Myfanwy squawked again and took to the air, obviously realizing there was no chocolate to be had at that moment.

“Tea Boy?” Both of Ianto's eyebrows were near his hairline, and he looked from Owen to Myfanwy and then back again when the beast disappeared.

“Ignore him, Ianto,” Gwen told him, smiling. “He's just bitter because he's been on feeding duty since you've been gone.”

“And cleaning duty. It's disgusting.” Owen stepped closer to Ianto and shone a pen light in his eyes. “Healing nicely, I see.”

“Is that necessary right now, Owen?” Jack asked, frowning. “I was about to give Ianto the grand tour.”

“As his doctor don't you think I should have some say in how much he does and how soon?”

“Actually, he's still under the care of the doctor treating him at the hospital. I have to report to him tomorrow, in fact.”

Owen huffed. “Fine. But don't overdo it. Last thing we need is for Ianto to get injured again.” With that the doctor walked away, shaking his head, muttering to himself. “Don't listen to me. What do I know? I'm only a bloody doctor.”

Once he was back down in the medical bay Ianto turned to Jack, smiling softly. “I see what you mean.”

“Remember, all bark,” Jack said, shaking his head. “At the hospital he was nothing but concerned about the both of us. He just likes to act tough.”

“Oi! I heard that!”

Tosh and Gwen giggled and Jack grinned again, leading Ianto up and around the work stations and on into his office. He didn't shut the door, not planning to stay long.

“You've seen the main work area,” he said, pointing out the door, “and this is where all the magic happens. My office.”

“Not much privacy,” Ianto remarked, nodding toward the glass doors.

“No, not really.”

“How do you get anything done?”

Jack chuckled. “Usually it's in the wee hours of the night, or, when it's a bit busy, you help me.”

“So I'm your secretary? Personal assistant?”

“Well, we call it administrative or general support.”

Ianto smirked. “So I work directly under you here, as well.”

Jack's eyes widened. “I'll have you know you're quite often a top, Ianto Jones.”

Ianto stepped closer, lowering his eyelids and his voice. “And how long until the doctor clears me for...active...duty, sir?”

Jack's mouth went dry at the formality and more to the point, Ianto's innuendo. “A couple weeks.”

“That's a pity.”

“Mr. Jones, you do realize we're at work?”

“Of course.”

“And yet you're unashamedly flirting with me.”

“It seems to come naturally,” Ianto replied, smiling. “Now, is there more to this tour, or do you plan to demonstrate exactly how the magic happens?”

Jack growled, mock-glaring. “If I were a lesser man...”

Ianto winked, following him through the office and down the back stairs.

Jack smiled to himself. Even if Ianto never regained his memory he'd retained enough of himself to still be the man that Jack had grown so attached to. The man he had fallen for. He

hoped that if the amnesia turned out to be permanent that enough of his Ianto remained in order for the man to return those feelings. Because he was under no illusion that he loved his Ianto as much as Ianto loved him. He'd just never had the chance to tell him.

Chapter 6

The tour of the Hub was nearly complete, and Jack was beginning to get a bit discouraged. It was the place where Ianto spent the majority of his time and yet his memory still wasn't being triggered. He began to seriously doubt it would ever come back.

“Penny for your thoughts,” Ianto told him, leaning against the boardroom table as Jack took a seat in his chair.

Jack rubbed his hands over his face. “I'd just figured of all places...”

“Look, Jack,” Ianto started, taking the seat to Jack's right and tugging one of his hands down, “it will happen when it happens. As much as I'd like to know who I am, and have a sense of familiarity when I enter a room, I'll be okay if I never remember.”

Jack frowned, settling his other hand over Ianto's and effectively sandwiching it between his own. “You'd really be fine with being a stranger in your own body?”

Shrugging, Ianto smiled. “You have to take what you're given in life. Nothing is guaranteed, and the end could be tomorrow. It's best to enjoy what you have. That much I know.”

“Sounds like a good bit of advice.”

“I think...” Ianto tilted his head slightly. “I think my grandmother once told me that.”

Jack's eyebrows went up. “Is that a memory coming back?”

“More like a feeling. I'm really not sure.”

“Maybe you're right, Ianto.” Jack squeezed Ianto's hand and then pulled away, getting up from the table. “Maybe we're both pushing you too hard. This thing is going to happen when it happens and it might just be the little nuances that come back first. Like your innate knowledge of coffee making, and the love of suits.”

“And pearls of wisdom from yesteryear.”

“Exactly.”

Ianto got to his feet and followed Jack out of the room. They stopped by the railing and looked down over the expanse of the Hub. “It's definitely not the traditional workplace,” he said, nodding towards the floor below. “Certainly fascinating, though.”

“Well, it's been like this a long time,” Jack replied, smiling. He wondered exactly how much to

tell Ianto. He knew if the man's memory never fully returned he'd need to know certain things he'd known before. "Are you planning to stay?"

Ianto's brows furrowed. "What do you mean?"

"If you never regain your memory," Jack explained, shoving his hands in his pockets, "would you stay here and still be part of Torchwood?"

"I'd not actually thought about it," said Ianto, licking his lips. "This is where I worked before. I don't see why I'd want to change that. Why? Did you...not want me to?"

Jack's eyes widened. "No, that's not it, believe me. I just wasn't sure that you wouldn't want a fresh start."

"Somewhere else?"

"Yeah."

"Is this coming from my boss, my friend, or my lover?"

"All of the above, actually."

"I can't guarantee this would always be what I want," Ianto told him, gesturing toward the whole of the Hub, "but for right now things are alien enough as it is, no pun intended, and I don't see a reason to shake things up even more."

Jack nodded, gripping the railing. "There are things I still haven't told you about. Strange things you might not believe right away."

"Stranger than the rainbow-colored, flying, reptilian Jolo'teri we currently keep in the cell next to the Weevil?"

Jack chuckled. The expression on Ianto's face when he'd introduced him to the alien species had been comical. It was like watching a child discover something new and fascinating and not have a clue what to make of it. Not that he considered Ianto a child, of course. Far from it.

"Stranger than that."

"From what I've learned and seen so far I think I'm taking it all in stride. I'm assuming these things are those which my former self already knew?"

"Yes they are," Jack replied, turning his back on the Hub and folding his arms across his chest. It was a defensive move, he knew, but he couldn't help it. It wasn't every day you told your lover you were immortal, and everything that it entailed. Twice with one person was more than enough.

"I'm listening, Jack."

“Something happened to me,” he started, drawing a deep breath. “A long time ago. Or, if I’m being more accurate, a long time from now.”

“Go on.”

“I was killed once. Many times, actually, but this was the first time.” Ianto’s eyebrow went up but he remained silent. “I was many years in the future helping my friends fight a race of aliens known as the Daleks. I was killed, but then I resurrected. I don’t know why, and I don’t know how, but ever since that first time I can’t stay dead.”

Ianto’s mouth opened slowly, as if he meant to speak, but then it snapped shut. He pursed his lips and stared down at his shoes for a moment before looking back up and raising both eyebrows. Jack nodded his head, reaffirming what he’d just said. Ianto spent a moment more appearing to process what Jack had told him before gesturing for him to continue.

“I can travel through time. Or, at least, I used to be able to.” He raised his left wrist, indicating his wrist strap. “It burnt out the last time I used it. I was trying to get back to a time I could meet up with my friends, since they disappeared after I died, but I ended up in Cardiff in the mid 1900s.”

“And you’ve been here ever since?”

“Yep.”

“And where are you from originally?”

“Boeshane Peninsula, in the 51st century.” He was leaving a lot out, he knew, but this was more than enough to throw at Ianto for one day.

“So that would make you...”

“Pretty damned old,” Jack finished for him. “Yeah.”

Ianto swallowed, glancing down at the computers and the women behind them. “Do they know?”

“They all do, Owen included. It’s a difficult thing to explain away when you resurrect in the field after a Weevil’s just ripped your throat out.”

“I imagine so.”

“Gwen was the first to know. She saw me get shot. It happened right in front of her.”

Ianto winced. “That sounds awful. I’m sorry.”

“Oh, gunshots heal quickly. It wasn’t that bad. Now the more violent deaths...”

“I meant for everything, Jack. I’m sorry this happened to you.”

Jack smiled softly. "It's alright, Ianto. I'm pretty used to it, actually."

"How does one get used to something like that? To...dying...and then coming back."

"It's taken me a long time, and apart from wanting answers, well...I just deal with it."

Ianto nodded, looking down at his shoes again. "I'm a bit tired, Jack. Do you think it would be too much trouble to go back home for a while?"

Jack felt his heart clench. Damn. Here it was, the moment Ianto rejected him. It hadn't happened the first time around, but he'd been dreading it all the same. "Not at all. We can go right now."

The drive to Ianto's flat was a rather quiet one, and Jack silently cursed himself for having thrown his own past at the man so soon. He was suffering from brain damage, damn it. Ianto didn't need to add the conundrum that was Jack Harkness to his burdens. He wasn't at all surprised that Ianto needed space. He only hoped it wasn't a permanent arrangement.

When they arrived Jack helped Ianto with the bags of purchases he'd made earlier, following him into the building, up in the lift and over to his door. He handed Ianto the keys and the Welshman took them from him, unlocking the door and heading inside. Jack stepped in behind him, draping the garment bags over the back of the couch in the lounge, and watching as Ianto did the same.

"Would you like a coffee?" the man asked him, taking off his coat and hanging it up.

"No, that's alright. I can grab something on the way back to the Hub. I'll leave your keys with you, though, in case you need to step out. It's not a bad walk."

Ianto stopped mid step in his journey toward the kitchen, spinning around. "You're leaving?"

Jack frowned. "I assumed when you asked to come back home you wanted to be alone."

"What gave you that idea?"

"Well..." The truth was he'd assumed. "You said you were tired."

Ianto rolled his eyes. "And that's the same as wanting you to leave?"

"Maybe." Jack couldn't help his smile at the Welshman's familiar mannerism. "I'm guessing I was wrong?"

"Extremely." Ianto shook his head and then smiled back, walking over to Jack and sliding his coat from his shoulders. "Here, let me."

Jack watched as Ianto placed the coat on the rack, the familiarity of the moment lost on Ianto but meaning so much to him. "Thank you."

"My pleasure," Ianto replied, heading back toward the kitchen. "Now, coffee?"

“Absolutely.”

He grinned at the Welshman's back, shoving his hands in his pockets and following behind him. He really needed to stop second-guessing himself. He should have put more faith in the man.

He paused in the doorway, watching Ianto pull their mugs out of the cupboard. Again it was their two favorite mugs, and for a moment he allowed himself to forget anything had changed. Once Ianto had poured the beans into the grinder Jack stepped up behind him, sliding his arms around the man's waist and kissing the side of his neck.

“I missed you.”

“Honestly, Jack, I've been in the kitchen less than a minute.”

Jack chuckled, not stepping away. “I meant I missed you while you were in the hospital.”

“You were there with me.”

“I know,” said Jack, watching Ianto's hands as they moved the coffee grounds into the coffee maker. Fresh, filtered water came next and then Ianto started the machine, turning in his arms and placing his hands on Jack's hips.

“So how did you miss me when I was right there?”

“I missed talking to you. Or rather, having a two-sided conversation.”

“I'm good at that then, yeah?”

“Yeah. When you want to be. Sometimes you're quiet, though, but your presence never goes unnoticed.”

Ianto pulled Jack tight against him. “We don't need words to have a conversation, sir.”

Jack growled deep in his throat. “You have no idea how hard it is not to break the doctor's rules and take you right against this counter, Ianto.”

“I can understand,” Ianto murmured, shifting his hips slightly so that their groins rubbed together. “Maybe you should call him and double check.”

The heady mix of Ianto's scent, the smell of coffee brewing behind them, and the friction Ianto was creating was enough to make Jack groan. “I think he's probably off shift by now.”

“He might be on call,” Ianto replied, backing him up until he'd pinned him to the opposite counter and burying his face in Jack's neck.

“He could be with a patient,” Jack argued, grunting when Ianto thrust against him.

“You're probably right,” Ianto agreed, tugging Jack's shirt from his trousers. “Better not to disturb them.”

“Ianto?”

“Hmm?”

“What about the coffee?”

“It can wait.”

Chapter 7

The next couple of weeks seemed to lead to more improvement in Ianto's memory. While he still didn't remember anything outright, his personality and behavioral traits were coming through in almost everything he did. From ensuring that the flat was spotless before leaving it for the day, to making sure he anticipated Jack's every need at the Hub, Ianto was returning slowly but surely.

Ianto had taken to his first day of retraining at Torchwood with a nod of the head and a small smile. Jack shouldn't have been surprised, really, as Ianto had always been a good employee. But if it had been him having to go through all of the training again, knowing that everyone else was aware he was learning it twice, he'd have been a lot less enthusiastic than Ianto. Yet the Welshman handled it all remarkably well, even if they'd had a mishap or two. It wasn't Jack's fault that weapons training was such a turn on, and Ianto wasn't saying no. And if anyone else asked, Gwen shouldn't have gone looking for them down there in the first place. Jack was quite sure she'd be scarred for life.

“Coffee's ready,” Ianto announced, indicating the boardroom behind him. “I do believe Jack wants to get this meeting started as soon as possible.”

“When did you get so bossy, Tea Boy?”

“Owen!” Toshiko scolded, frowning as she gathered her folders and made her way toward the meeting.

“Well he's being a prat!” Owen snarked, defending himself.

“I was simply informing you coffee was ready. But if you'd prefer to grab a cup from elsewhere...”

“I was referring to...oh, never mind.”

“Well I, for one, appreciate you, Ianto,” Gwen told him, planting a kiss on his cheek.

Ianto smiled and then frowned at Owen as he passed and Jack shook his head. If Ianto and Owen were back to throwing barbs at each other then maybe things wouldn't be so different

after all.

“I made yours a double,” Ianto told him, stepping up next to him and lowering his lids to half-mast. “Thought you might like the extra bit of caffeine after your long morning.”

“How very considerate of you, Ianto,” Jack replied, the very male part of his anatomy twitching in response to Ianto's expression. Their long morning had consisted of a blow job from the Welshman's extremely talented mouth, followed by Ianto taking him roughly against the ladder leading up into Jack's office.

“I only want to please, sir.”

Jack barely bit back a groan. As Ianto started to pass him Jack grabbed his upper arm, yanking him closer until he could growl in his ear. “If you don't watch it I'm likely to spread you out over the boardroom table.”

“And traumatize Gwen further, sir? Tsk.”

Jack caught the wink as Ianto practically sashayed away, and had to clear his throat. It was going to be a long day.

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“This weekend, Jack?”

“That's what she said, Ianto.”

The Welshman's scowl was reminiscent of the man he'd known before the accident. He'd actually hoped that Ianto's condition would make things easier between brother and sister, but apparently it had only proved to reinforce the distance between them.

“She's only called me once since I've been home. Why the need to see me now?”

“Mending fences, perhaps?” Jack offered. Ianto seemed to consider that for a moment before placing another forkful of spaghetti into his mouth. “You two were never the best of friends, but I think she wants you to be in the kids' lives a little more. They grow up so fast, Ianto.”

Swallowing his bite Ianto wiped his mouth with his napkin. “You say that like a man with a past.”

Jack chuckled. “You could say that. I have a grown daughter and a young grandson. I barely get to see them.”

“I'm sorry, Jack.”

“No, don't be. It's my own fault, really. I let it drift. I could have made more of an effort but I never really tried.”

“There's still time. You said your grandson is young.”

Jack sighed, smiling softly. “There was bad blood between Alice's mother and me. She took my daughter from me when she was little. We've never really recovered from that.”

Ianto nodded in understanding, placing his fork down on his mostly empty plate. “I don't know the reasons behind my estrangement from my own family, but I imagine it can't be much better.”

“No, not really. You and Rhiannon were never close. Well, maybe when you were both much younger. But you grew apart when your parents died, and with Torchwood...”

“Not much time for family.”

“Exactly.”

“And she wants me over there for dinner on Sunday?”

“That's what she said. Well, actually,” he corrected, pushing his plate away, “she invited us both.”

Ianto's eyebrows went up. “Are you going to go?”

“Only if you want me there.”

“Of course I do, Jack,” Ianto replied, smiling gently. “I'm just surprised you'd be willing to go. You two had quite a row the last time she called.”

A row was a slight understatement. When Ianto had become frustrated talking to his sister over the telephone, Jack had taken it from him, trying to explain to her that Ianto was a bit tired and that it might be better if she waited a while before calling back. It was only his first week back home, after all, and he wasn't used to his sister's long-winded and extremely pushy style of conversation. What was said next would have burned the ears off a lesser man.

“She has a very colorful vocabulary,” Jack quipped, shaking his head. “I think I took the most offense to her accusing me of trying to steal her brother away.”

“She's jealous I'm with you.”

“She didn't even know who I was, Ianto. We'd never met until she came to the hospital. You telling her I was taking good care of you must have really thrown her for a loop. She thought I was just your boss. Anyway, the point is she wants us both to be there, and if it helps, I'm all for it.”

“I can't promise anything, Jack. She's very much still a stranger to me.”

“You've done well with the team.”

“And that took a bit of time. Getting used to Gwen's hovering, and Owen's insults. I think Tosh might be the most normal of them all. She and I have had some lovely chats.”

Jack smiled. “You and she were always the closest. Nothing much has changed there.”

Ianto slipped his hand into Jack's, holding it on the table. “So back to us,” he said, eyes sparkling with a mischief Jack was quickly getting used to. “Do you want to get dessert here, or have something sweet back at mine?”

“Ianto, there's no dessert at your flat.”

“I know.”

Jack's eyebrows shot up and he waived his hand for the waiter to bring their check.

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They sat in front of the small house in Ianto's car, but neither of them had made a move to so much as unbuckle a seat belt, much less get out of the vehicle. Jack could practically see the thoughts swirling around in Ianto's head.

“Delaying is just going to make it worse,” he said, squeezing Ianto's hand.

“I've just no idea what to say to her, Jack.”

“Say hello. Ask her how she's been.” Ianto rolled his eyes. “I know, that's not quite what you meant, but I'm serious, Ianto. She knows you have amnesia. She doesn't expect you to jump up and down with excitement to see them. Just keep it simple.”

“I tried that when she called, remember?”

“I know. But she was new to it all. I'm sure she's had a little more time to process things now.”

“If she insults you I can't promise not to react.”

Jack laughed. “My hero.”

After a few more moments they finally made their way to the front door. Jack knocked firmly on the wood, moving his other hand to the small of Ianto's back. His own small token of support.

When the door opened and a little girl peered out at them Jack smiled. “Hello, Mica.”

The girl's eyes widened and she turned to walk into the house. “Muuuuuummmm! Uncle Ianto and the cradle robber are herrrreeee!”

Jack stole a glance at Ianto and winced. The man's expression was thunderous. “Breathe,” he

whispered to him, rubbing small circles over his suit jacket. "It's okay."

"No, it's not."

They entered the house together and Jack shut the door behind them. He could only hope their visit didn't spiral further downhill.

Chapter 8

"Here, have a seat, Ianto," Rhiannon said, settling herself on the sofa next to her husband and patting the seat beside her.

Ianto threw a glance at Jack but Jack merely nodded, taking the only other available spot on a chair a couple feet away. He could see Ianto's irritation at them being separated but it was only a seat. Nothing to lose your temper over.

"My wife tells me you're a queer now," Johnny stated, a grin on his face. "A regular poofter."

Ianto's face went red. "I beg your pardon?"

"Johnny!" Rhiannon scolded, smacking his knee. "I'm sorry, Ianto. This is just new for us."

"All of this is new to me," Ianto replied, frowning.

"Yes, of course it is." She sat for a moment, worrying her lip. "I made a roast for dinner. You always loved my roast."

Ianto's frown lessened. "That sounds nice."

"So how long?" Johnny asked.

"Sorry?"

"How long will your memory be gone? Surely it should have returned by now."

Jack cleared his throat. "Actually, the doctor assured us that there's no set limit on time for these things. It could return tomorrow, next week, or..."

"Never," Ianto supplied, frown returning. "I'm sorry, do you think I could have a glass of water?"

"Oh, yes, sure! I'll be just a minute."

Jack watched as Rhiannon jump up, heading for the kitchen. An awkward silence followed as it seemed Johnny wasn't prepared to handle a conversation on his own. Ianto was staring at the floor and Jack was staring at him. Johnny was staring anywhere and everywhere else.

“Here you are, Ianto,” his sister said, handing him a glass. “I’ve just checked on the roast. It should be done shortly.”

“Thank you.”

“So Johnny, I hear you're a big rugby fan,” said Jack, wanting to lighten the mood. “Ianto insists it's a Welsh requirement.”

“Aye, that it is,” Johnny replied, straightening a little on the couch and sliding his arm around his wife's shoulders. “Hardly can call yourself a Welshman if you aren't a follower. Isn't that right, Ianto?”

“Yes,” Ianto murmured, taking a sip of his water. “National pride and all.”

“Little David's started to play in school,” Rhiannon told them, beaming. “He's a wonderful addition to the team.”

“Best there is,” added Johnny, proudly.

“You should come see him play sometime, Ianto.” Rhiannon patted his knee.

“That would be nice,” Ianto replied, a hint of a smile forming. “Though my boss is a bit of a slave driver. Not sure he'd let me have the time off.”

“Hey!”

“Oh, he's a right arse, is he?” Johnny asked, eyebrow raised in Jack's direction. The gleam in his eyes told Jack that he was teasing.

“I am nowhere near that bad,” Jack said, pouting a bit. “Family is very important. You can't let it drift.”

“I like him, Ianto,” Rhiannon whispered, just loud enough for Jack to hear. “He's a smart one.”

“That's quite a turn around,” Ianto muttered, drinking more water.

“I'm sure Jack understands why I was so upset,” she stated, looking in his direction. “Right Jack?”

“I think it's in the past,” he replied, smiling. “You only wanted what was in Ianto's best interest. As did I.”

“Well, now that that's settled,” Johnny said, getting to his feet, “how about we have some supper?”

“You call the kids back down and I'll get the dinner ready,” Rhiannon told him, getting up and heading into the kitchen. “Oh and Ianto, we're having Welsh cakes for dessert. With cream.”

Ianto's eyes lit up. "Sounds good."

When both Johnny and Rhiannon had left the room Jack scooted over to the sofa, dropping down beside Ianto. "You okay?"

"Yes, I think so."

"It started out a little rocky but I think it's going alright."

"Her attitude seems to have improved," Ianto said, shrugging. "Though I'm still a bit upset about what Mica said at the door."

"She's just a child, Ianto. I don't think she meant that."

"No, of course not. But she heard it from somewhere."

"Well I can't say I blame them," Jack said, smiling gently. "I am a lot older than you."

Ianto returned the smile. "True. Old man."

Jack's eyes darkened. "Just wait until we're alone, Ianto. I'll show you old."

"I look forward to it."

"Dinner's on!" called Rhiannon, breaking up their suddenly intimate conversation.

tw tw tw tw tw

To Jack's relief the meal went off without a hitch. The children were animated after some initial silence, engaging all four adults in talk about their school, their friends, rugby, and a collection of Lego that Mica insisted that Ianto come and see. Once dinner was over Jack offered to help Rhiannon clean up, and Johnny retreated to watch a game on the television with David while Ianto was dragged off by his niece.

"They really love their uncle," Rhiannon told him, reaching for the clean glass that Jack handed to her. "They rarely get to see him."

"He loves them too," Jack replied. "He did before the accident and I'm sure a part of him does now as well. He just needs to rediscover who he was."

"I'd like him to come up here more often. Spend more time with them before they're grown up with families of their own."

"A very good idea."

"That means you need to let him go, Jack."

He froze, turning to face her. “Let him go?”

“He'd dependent on you right now. He won't change his situation until forced to do so.”

Jack put the bowl he was washing down. “Ianto can't be forced to do anything, Rhiannon. He's his own man.”

“Maybe he was before the accident, but Jack, now he's having to learn everything over again. He has to get to know us all over again. His own family. We should be taking care of him.”

“Have you asked him what he wants?”

“How would I have had that opportunity? He's always with you!”

“Rhiannon...look...”

“No,” she said, dropping the towel onto the counter and putting her hands on her hips, “you look. He's my brother, and that means that we have a relationship stronger than most. We may not always see eye to eye, but I know what he needs, and he needs us.”

“I don't disagree. You heard me before. I think that family is extremely important. But Ianto is calling all of the shots here. I've not forced him to do anything since his accident and I don't plan on starting now.”

“He won't stop working for you unless you make him leave.” Jack opened his mouth to argue but she held up a hand. “I know, you think he wants to be there, that you're not forcing him into staying, but Ianto is a man who devotes himself to a job. This civil service gig is something he feels obligated to do. If he's ever going to have enough time for his family he's going to have to do something else.”

“And what do you think I should be doing?” Ianto said from behind them, hands akimbo in a male version of his sister's pose. The family resemblance was really uncanny. “A part time job somewhere where I'm miserable? I happen to like what I do. It's important work.”

“Ianto...” she started.

“No, Rhiannon. No. Just stop. Jack, I'd like to leave now.”

Jack nodded and glanced at Rhiannon before heading for the door to the lounge. Ianto spun to follow him, walking straight to the coat rack and removing Jack's coat. He held it out and Jack slid into it, sighing as Ianto smoothed it down over his shoulders. Ianto then pulled on his own coat and turned to face his sister, brother-in-law, and nephew.

“Ianto, please don't go. Let's talk about this.”

“I think you've done enough talking for the both of us,” Ianto replied, face stoic and showing absolutely no emotion.

“Are you leaving, Uncle Ianto?” came a small voice from the doorway. Jack looked up and saw

Mica with a Lego creation in her hands. "I made this for you."

Ianto's face softened and he met her halfway into the room, taking the Lego coffee cup from her. "It's lovely, Mica." He bent to kiss her on the top of the head. "I have to go now, but I'll see you soon. We'll have that tea party." He then turned and ruffled David's hair, making the boy smile and squirm away. "And I promised I'd come to one of your games soon and I will."

"Cool, Uncle Ianto."

"Don't be a stranger, mate," Johnny said, holding out his hand. Ianto hesitated only a moment before he shook it.

"Ready, Jack?"

"Yup."

They turned and headed for the door, Ianto moving out into the crisp evening before him. Jack paused only to close the door, hearing a choked sob from Rhiannon behind him.

Chapter 9

"I'm sorry, Rhiannon," Jack explained, glancing over at Ianto who was shaking his head vehemently, "but he can't come to the phone right now. Yes, I understand how important it is to you that we know you only have his best interests at heart. Uh huh. Yes, we're aware. No, he still can't make it to the phone. Yes. No. Okay. You have a nice afternoon as well."

Jack handed Ianto back his mobile phone. It was the second call they'd received that day and easily the tenth since they'd been to visit Ianto's family. Jack took a seat next to the Welshman on the couch and put a hand on his knee. "You know..."

"No, Jack," Ianto interrupted, throwing a glare back at Jack as he took the phone. "Just no. Not after the way she treated you, and not after the way she treated me."

"She loves you."

"That may very well be, but it doesn't give her an excuse to treat me like an invalid. Or a three year old. I'm a grown man, Jack."

"I'm well aware of that," Jack said with a leer, causing Ianto's lips to quirk just slightly.

"I make my own decisions, and there is no way I am moving in with them so that she can fuss over me constantly."

Jack squeezed his knee and then removed his hand, getting back to his feet. "How about we get out of the flat for a bit? Maybe do a little shopping?"

Ianto's eyebrow rose. "As I recall that didn't have the desired outcome last time we tried it."

“Well, sure, but that’s because we were trying to jog your memory, Ianto. Today is about getting your mind off what happened last weekend.”

“I could have been working and done the same thing.”

“Yes, true,” Jack agreed, holding out a hand and pulling Ianto up and into his arms. He pressed a soft kiss to the man’s lips. “But playing hooky is so much more fun.”

Ianto rolled his eyes and extricated himself from Jack’s grasp. “Alright. I suppose it might be nice to pick up another suit. Torchwood certainly pays well. I have quite a nice sum tucked away. You wouldn’t know anything about that ridiculous amount, would you?”

“It’s all for a job well done, Ianto,” Jack told him, smiling.

“And are the others doing their jobs quite as well?”

“Tsk tsk, Ianto Jones. Are you asking me to divulge the details of your coworkers’ paychecks?”

There was barely a pause. “Yes.”

“Well too bad.” Ianto smiled and turned toward the hallway and Jack swatted his arse. “That would be completely inappropriate!”

“It’s okay, Jack,” came the voice heading down the hall. “I do the budget anyway.”

Jack grinned, knowing Ianto would never actually look up the others’ financials. He might do the budget paperwork but that particular bit of financing belonged to Jack’s eyes only. Well, his and the Crown’s. He submitted it himself, every month. It was, however, more and more comforting to see so much of Ianto’s personality coming back.

He’d been in touch with the doctor several times over the last few weeks, giving the man progress reports on Ianto’s mental and behavioral changes. There was nothing severe, and more than anything the doctor was glad just to be kept informed. He’d made an appointment to see Ianto in person in a few days’ time, but the doctor had assured Jack it was just so he could see for himself that apart from the amnesia Ianto was suffering no ill effects from his accident. The doctor was still placing the odds in Ianto’s favor that he would recover his memories, especially with the personality changes and his preferences continuing to emerge.

“I’m ready, Jack,” Ianto told him, re-entering the room wearing black jeans and a red jumper, his black coat completing the look beautifully. Over his arm was Jack’s own overcoat. “It’s a bit chilly out, despite the sun actually shining today. Do you want to put a jumper on as well?”

Jack thought about it for a moment. “I think the coat will be fine,” he decided, slipping his arms into the garment and feeling Ianto’s hands straighten it on his shoulders. “So where to first? St. David’s?”

“I was actually thinking I might stop by a tailor,” Ianto replied.

It was Jack's turn to raise an eyebrow. "A tailor, really?"

"Yup. Is that strange? I'm not sure why I didn't do that when we shopped last time. A handmade suit is so much nicer than one you can just stop in and buy." He held the door open for Jack and then locked it behind them. "I did a little research and there's a place just on the other side of the city center."

Jack was smiling again. "No, it's not strange. It's good. A suit made specifically for you."

They got to Ianto's car and Jack immediately went to the driver's side, holding a hand out for the keys. Ianto, however, frowned for a moment and then smirked. "Actually, I think I'd like to drive this time."

Jack's eyes widened. "Wow. Okay. You sure you're up for it? Might need me to navigate, though."

"Possibly," Ianto agreed, switching places with him and opening the driver's door.

Jack buckled himself in on the passenger side and watched Ianto settle in behind the wheel. The Welshman's hands slowly closed over the steering wheel and flexed a couple of times, and he saw Ianto take a couple of deep breaths.

"You okay?"

"Yep."

"Sure?"

"I'm alright, Jack," Ianto insisted, giving him a small smile. "Just need to do this."

Jack nodded, understanding the desire to be able to do things for oneself. He was concerned that Ianto was pushing himself too hard, but he didn't want to seem like he was trying to control him. He had to let Ianto make his own decisions and take his own risks. That was something Rhiannon was still failing to understand.

Ianto backed the vehicle out of the parking space and a few moments later they were on their way to the shop that Ianto had mentioned. Jack was glad to see that driving seemed to be a skill the Welshman had not lost with his memory. He was as careful and steady as he always had been, prior to the accident.

When they pulled up to the front of the tailor's Jack saw Ianto's eyes light up. "This looks like the right place," Jack remarked, unbuckling his seatbelt and getting out of the car.

"Very...quaint."

"Most tailors keep small shops," Ianto told him, closing his own door and locking the car before heading toward the entrance. "No need for more space than a workroom, really."

"You must have done a lot of research," Jack noted, winking. He knew it was yet more of the Welshman's previous knowledge making its way to the forefront.

“Might have done.”

The bell rang over the threshold as they entered the shop and Jack stood beside Ianto who was looking around. Jack was just about to comment on the smile that had crossed Ianto’s face when an older gentleman stepped through from the back room.

“Why Mr. Jones,” he said, moving further into the room and shaking Ianto’s hand, “it’s been entirely too long. How’s my best customer?”

Jack smirked. “Best customer, hey Ianto?”

The Welshman’s face colored as he shook the tailor’s hand. “I apologize, but I’ve actually lost my memory. Bit of an accident.”

The man frowned. “Well that’s a terrible shame, lad. You’re physically alright, though, yeah? You look no worse for wear.”

“Yes sir,” Ianto nodded, his smile returning. “I wanted to see about getting a new suit, and found your name in my research.”

“Well, you’ve come back to the right place, son,” the man replied, returning Ianto’s smile. “I meant it. You are...were...one of my best customers!” He turned toward Jack. “No fewer than five or six suits a year, this one. Don’t know how his closet manages to hold them all, but he helps me pay my bills quite nicely, he does.”

Jack smirked and snorted, covering his mouth with his hand. He knew exactly how Ianto’s closet managed it. The amount of suits and other clothes Ianto and the team went through in just a month was ridiculous. No other job could boast that kind of destruction, though he was pretty sure they wouldn’t want to.

“I was thinking a nice dark pinstripe,” Ianto told the man. “Do you have any fabrics I can take a look at?”

The tailor grinned. “But of course I do, Mr. Jones. Follow me.”

Ianto looked back at Jack and smiled as he disappeared into the backroom with the other man, and Jack swallowed the lump in his throat. He hadn’t seen Ianto this excited in quite a while. Okay, that wasn’t exactly true, he thought, but he meant outside of the bedroom.

He took in the shop around him. Rustic, older, and likely it belonged to the same man for many, many years. Stepping over to the counter Jack found there were a few business cards in a small wooden holder. He took one, slipping it into his wallet, and picked up another so he could give it a read. “Cynddylan-Williams Family Tailoring – Professional Clothiers,” he murmured to himself. “That is quite a mouthful.”

He placed the card back in its holder and made his way to the only chair in the room. It was straight backed and rigid, but it beat standing. He found himself once more considering the man in the other room - Ianto, not Mr. Cynddylan-Williams. He was sure the latter was a fine

gentleman, but that wasn't where his mind was headed. He wondered if Ianto had remembered this place without realizing it, or if it was, as he made it seem, a lucky coincidence. He knew they'd been through Ianto's wallet together in case something triggered his recovery, but he didn't remember seeing one of the tailor's cards. He supposed it didn't really matter, as Ianto was happy to be there, but if more and more pieces fell together in such a way then perhaps he'd be getting his Ianto back sooner than he imagined.

It didn't take the two Welshmen more than five or so minutes to get done with their business in the backroom. "Pick something out?" he asked Ianto as they appeared in the doorway.

"A couple, actually," Ianto replied with a blush.

"Mr. Jones has exquisite taste," the tailor added, patting the younger man on the back and smiling at Jack. "I don't think we've actually been introduced."

"Sorry," Ianto, said, frowning. "This is my partner, Captain Jack Harkness. Jack, this is Merfyn Cynddylan-Williams, Master Tailor."

"You say that so much better than I ever could, Ianto," Jack replied, holding out his hand. "I apologize for my pronunciation, but it's good to meet you Mr. Cynddylan-Williams."

The tailor shook Jack's hand. "Please, call my Merfyn. Anything more is just a mouthful!"

Jack chuckled at the tailor's unconscious use of his own words and Ianto's smile returned when the other Welshman joined in. "How long have you been in business, Merfyn?"

"Ah, now that's the all-important question, isn't it?" He walked across the small room and stepped behind the counter. He pulled out an old looking leather bound album. "These photos go back through my family. We've owned this business since the late nineteenth century."

"It's in fine condition, considering," Ianto said, carefully looking through the photographs.

"Oh dear, no," Merfyn said, chuckling again. "No, no. This isn't the original location. It used to be by the docks. It's been here since I was a wee boy, though."

"These suits are amazing," Jack commented, pointing to a couple photos from much later in the album. "You and your family have done magnificent work."

"And I'm trying to carry on the tradition," he replied, closing the album and tucking it away again under the counter. "Mr. Jones, I'll have one of your suits ready for a fitting in a few weeks."

Ianto raised his eyebrows. "So soon?"

"Not much business apart from yours, these days," he said sadly, and then smiled again when Ianto frowned. "But that's alright, lad. Don't you worry about it."

Ianto attempted to pay up front for the suits but Merfyn only turned his money away, stating

he knew he was good for it and he would rather Ianto be satisfied with the product before any money changed hands. All in all Jack was incredibly impressed with the establishment. He might have to surprise Ianto and get himself a suit sometime as well.

“He didn’t need your measurements?” Jack asked the Welshmen when they got into the car.

“Said he had them memorized,” Ianto replied, shrugging. “I suppose I’ve not changed much in the several months he says it’s been since I last purchased one of his suits.”

“Nope, still hot.”

“Jack.”

“What? I’m just saying.”

Ianto shook his head at him and started the car, heading them back toward the bay and his flat. “We could get a takeaway,” he said, not taking his eyes off the road.

“Sounds good. Indian?”

“I was thinking pizza.”

“Pizza it is, then. Drive on, Mr. Jones.”

It wouldn’t be until later that evening that Jack realized exactly what Ianto had called him in the tailor shop, and how much it meant to him. And it would be less than a week before his past caught back up with him and his fragile relationship took a major blow.

Chapter 10

Jack hadn’t expected when he got up that morning that his world would fall apart before noon. It had been a lovely evening the night before. Ianto had kept him company in the Hub while Jack finished up some paperwork, and they’d decided to spend the night in Jack’s bunker since it was so late when he was finally done. They’d talked, made love, and then fallen asleep with Jack spooned up behind the Welshman in the small bed.

Ianto was awake earlier than Jack, which almost never happened, but he had mentioned he’d likely nip out early to get showered and changed at home so he could be back before the others arrived. Jack stretched out on the bed with a smile on his face, remembering the details of their night and luxuriating in the feel of aching muscles and soreness in all the right places. He absolutely loved when Ianto took control.

Figuring he should probably start to freshen up before Ianto got back, Jack rolled out of bed. He took a quick shower and dressed, deciding on his tan colored braces. For some reason Ianto seemed to have a thing for them. He wasn’t sure why. He preferred the red and blue ones himself.

Jack was seated at his desk and starting on yet another stack of reports when he heard the alarms blare and the cog door roll open. He smiled, figuring it was Ianto. He'd really begun to look forward to every minute they had together. He wasn't sure when he'd turned into such a needy person, but something had awakened inside him when he'd thought he'd lost the Welshman that night not so long ago. It was as if every emotion he'd been so scared of feeling was now right there at the surface, threatening to bubble over. He'd loved before in his long life, but this was different. This meant so much.

There was a tap at his office door and Jack looked up smiling, surprised to see Tosh instead of Ianto. "Hi Jack," she said, smiling back at him. "You're sure looking cheerful this morning. Good night?"

"You know it," he teased, winking at her. "You're in kind of early. Got a new project you're working on?"

"Actually," she replied, motioning towards a chair across the desk from him taking a seat when he nodded, "I had an idea. About Ianto."

Jack's eyebrows rose. "Oh?"

"I was thinking about the fact that everything we've all done so far hasn't helped at all with drawing his memories out. If anything I'd have thought that you and he...well..." She stopped, blushing slightly. "Anyway, there's one thing we haven't thought of before now."

"And what's that?" He was pretty sure he'd thought of everything.

"CCTV."

"What about it?"

"Well, we have a whole archive of Hub footage that Ianto could go browse, Jack. Maybe watching us all at work would trigger a breakthrough."

Jack's smile returned. "You, Toshiko Sato, are a genius."

"I'm not sure I'd quite go that far," she said modestly, ducking her head.

Jack got up from his chair and walked around the front of his desk, leaning down to plant a kiss to the top of her head. "You're always thinking outside the box. It's what makes you such a good tech and an even better agent."

Tosh blushed again and waved away his compliments. "Seriously, Jack. It's just an idea. You can praise me all you like if it works."

Anything he was about to say was forgotten as the cog door activated yet again. Jack walked out onto the cat walk and smiled down at the Welshman. "Welcome back, Ianto."

The other man looked up, smirking. "I've only been gone an hour or so, sir."

The word shot straight through him, especially when used with such a tone. Jack hurried down the stairs and met his lover on the lower level. He grasped his hips, tugging him close. “Longest hour or so of my life.”

“Oh please.” Ianto rolled his eyes. There was a giggle up behind them and both men turned to see Tosh hurrying to her workstation. “Look what you’ve started, sir.”

Jack chuckled. “She’s just jealous.”

“I am not,” she exclaimed in mock outrage.

“Are so.”

“If you’re both done using me for your own amusement I have coffee to make.” Ianto pulled out of Jack’s hold and made his way to the kitchenette, glancing over his shoulder as Jack followed close behind. “Yes?”

“Tosh had a great idea,” he told the Welshman, leaning against the counter and watching Ianto prepare their first drinks of the day.

“She tends to have a lot of those.”

Jack was triumphant. “See?” he said loudly, gesturing in Toshiko’s general direction. “She didn’t believe me when I said the same thing not five minutes ago.”

“Congratulations, Jack,” Ianto said, shaking his head. “You were right.”

“Don’t get him going, Ianto!”

Jack and Ianto smiled at each other. “So what was this idea she had?”

Jack sobered. “She thought it might be a good idea for you to watch some CCTV footage from the Hub.”

“From inside or outside?”

“Well, both, I suppose,” Jack said, shrugging. “Seeing some of the things we used to do around here, cases we’ve handled, all of it. I think she’s right. It might trigger your memories.”

“Is it anything like some of the things you and I have done in here lately?” Ianto asked, lowering his voice and giving Jack a sultry look.

Jack swallowed. “Some of it, I’m sure.”

“Hmm. Not so sure that’s safe for working hours,” Ianto told him, holding out his blue and white striped mug. “Maybe we should save it for after the others go home.”

Jack grinned over the edge of his mug before taking a sip. “God, that’s good,” he said,

moaning.

“It’s coffee, sir, not sex.”

“With you it’s pretty damned close.”

Another giggle was heard and Jack and Ianto laughed softly.

The others arrived within the next couple of hours, heading to their workstations. They got started on their tasks for the day. Owen was writing up a report on the finds of his last Weevil autopsy, Gwen was making calls to the local constabulary regarding some missing persons in the area, and Tosh was monitoring a couple of programs she’d been working on for the last few days.

All concerns regarding CCTV footage being inappropriate were put aside and Ianto set himself up in the archives at his preferred computer, pulling from the files Tosh had pointed him to. He’d been down there for more than a few hours and it was just coming up on lunchtime when Jack went looking for him. What he found made him stop dead in his tracks.

The Welshman was seated in front of the monitor, eyes wide and mouth hanging open. Tears were streaming down his face.

“Ianto?” Jack asked, hurrying forward. “What’s wrong?”

“Stop,” Ianto warned, turning his watery eyes on Jack and pointing. “D-don’t come closer.”

“I don’t understand,” Jack replied, stopping immediately and holding up both hands. “What’s going on?”

“You...you’re a...bastard!”

Jack racked his brain, trying to figure out what Ianto was talking about. What had changed between the teasing, flirtatious banter of this morning and now?

“Ianto...”

“You told me I had a girlfriend. Before us. You said I was seeing a woman.”

“You were...” he started to reply, shaking his head. “I don’t...”

“Lisa,” Ianto said, beginning to shake. “You told me the picture I found was of my ex-girlfriend Lisa.”

Jack’s eyes went wide. Oh God. He licked his lips. “What are you watching?” He started to move toward Ianto again but the Welshman got to his feet.

“Don’t you dare come near me!”

“Okay, okay...just...”

“You killed her!” Ianto shouted, pointing at the monitor. “It’s right there, for everyone to see!”

“I can explain, Ianto.”

“No,” he snapped, shaking his head vigorously and continuing to gesture toward the screen. “You made it sound like we’d broken up. But you...this... You held a gun to my head!”

Jack closed his eyes, trying to gather his thoughts. How did you explain to your amnesiac lover that you killed their girlfriend? It was horrible when it originally happened, and they didn’t talk for nearly a month during Ianto’s suspension. More because of Jack’s guilt than because of his anger toward Ianto’s behavior. It had been a long time after before Ianto had fully forgiven him.

“You let Myfan...” Ianto’s voice cut out, choked by sobs. “You poured sauce on her. On Lisa! What kind of a monster are you!?”

Jack’s eyes snapped open and he realized he himself was crying. He couldn’t do this again. Couldn’t lose Ianto again. “She was a Cyberman, Ianto. I swear, I would have never hurt you or her if not...”

“My head, Jack!” Ianto exclaimed, stepping well into Jack’s personal space. “You...you were going to kill me too!”

“No!”

“I can see it! With my eyes!”

“Ianto, I swear...”

“Oh God!” Ianto stepped back, tears still pouring out of his eyes. “I let you touch me! I let you convince me that we were a couple. That we were happy together!”

“We were! We are!”

“You’re worse than my sister! At least she never tried to kill me!”

Jack’s heart was breaking. He wished he’d never agreed to let Ianto watch any CCTV footage. He wasn’t even sure he remembered it was still on there. Hadn’t they wiped everything from that day? Hadn’t Tosh said she had?

“Please, Ianto, let’s talk about this. I need to explain.”

“There’s nothing to explain,” Ianto replied, shaking his head. “You tried to keep this from me. You didn’t want me to know what you’d done. You lied to me. All this time you’ve been lying to me!”

“You’d betrayed me, Ianto! All of us. You brought a Cyberman into the Hub to try to make her human again. She was a threat to everything, to everyone!”

“And so you killed her. Tried to kill me.”

“No. Yes. Oh God, Ianto, let’s just...”

“I can’t,” Ianto told him, tears still falling. “I-I have to go.”

The Welshman stormed past him and Jack tried to reach out for him only to be pushed away. He followed the man up into the Hub, calling out to him as he gathered his things and made his way out the cog door. Jack started to go after him.

“Jack!” It was Gwen, hurrying down from her desk. “What’s going on? What’s wrong with Ianto?”

“Jack?” Tosh this time, concern and fear written all over her face.

“The CCTV,” he explained, wiping at his face. “He saw what happened to Lisa.”

“Bloody hell,” Owen muttered.

“Oh no!” Tosh replied, starting to cry. “Oh God, Jack! It’s all my fault!”

“Shh, no,” Gwen soothed, wrapping an arm around her. “Go, Jack. Go after him!”

Jack didn’t need more convincing. He ran through the cog door and up into the cold, rainy Cardiff weather. He didn’t see Ianto and stood looking around the Plass, hoping for a sign. When he found none he started off in the direction of Ianto’s flat, oblivious to the sudden downpour and not caring that he’d left his coat behind. The ache in his heart at the thought that he’d finally lost Ianto for good cut much deeper than the driving rain and wind.

Chapter 11

Jack stood catching his breath before knocking rapidly on Ianto’s door. He knew he could have grabbed his keys from the Hub but he had been in far too much of a hurry to think of such things at the time. Instead he hoped that Ianto would have gone straight home and that he’d be willing to open the door.

He didn’t hear any movement from inside and sighed, knocking again. If Ianto didn’t want to talk to him Jack was positive his knocking would be a lost cause. He could stand there all afternoon and bloody his knuckles and it would do him no good.

“Ianto, please open the door,” he said, loud enough to be heard inside but soft enough so his voice wouldn’t carry. “We need to talk about this.” There was no reply. “Please?”

He stood there for a few more moments before sliding down to sit with his back against the wall. Ianto just wasn’t ready, he reasoned. He’d run out of the Hub like death itself was after him, and Jack felt nothing but guilt. Lisa should have been one of the first things they’d

talked about when Ianto showed an interest in knowing about his past. He should never have kept that from him. He'd figured it wouldn't do Ianto any good to know about it at that point, had assumed he'd remember in his own time anyway. But now that he hadn't and had found out in the worst way possible, all Jack's good intentions meant nothing. Ianto was going to see him as the same monster his past self had assumed he was at that time.

"I'll sit out here all night if I have to."

Jack was thankful for the fact that Ianto's flat was inside a building, instead of the front door being open to the elements. As it was Jack was soaked through to the bone, and he shivered without the heavy weight of his coat.

"Kind of chilly out here," he called through the door. "I'd kill for one of your coffees." He cringed, cursing himself for his choice of words. Smooth, Harkness. Real smooth.

He sat there for over an hour, stretching every once in a while so that he could get his circulation moving, and talking even though he never received a reply. It was going to be a long night.

He'd somehow managed to fall into a light doze when the sound of a key in a lock brought him slowly back to awareness. He was just registering the sound when the door beside him started to close again. He slammed his hand out, palm toward the door, and stood up quickly.

"Ianto, wait."

"Go 'way, sir," Ianto told him, pushing the door toward him.

It didn't take much effort to open it again, and Jack realized that Ianto had walked away from the door and was heading into the lounge from the hallway. He closed the door and followed the Welshman, taking the time to remove his shoes – why anger the man further? – and reached the room just as the Welshman was coming back out of the kitchen.

"Can we please talk?"

"Nuthin' to say," Ianto replied, lifting a bottle of beer to his lips and taking a long swallow. He flopped onto the couch and stared straight ahead at the dark television.

Jack's eyebrows rose. "Ianto, you're drunk."

Ianto met him eyebrow for eyebrow. "So?"

"So, if you've been out drinking then do you think it's a good idea to drink more?"

"re not my mam," the Welshman replied, taking another swig of his drink as if to emphasize his point.

Jack took a deep breath. He sat down next to Ianto and watched as the other man scooted as far to the other side as possible. "Ianto, I came here to talk to you, but I'm not sure you're in any state to hold a conversation with me."

“Don’ wanna talk to you anyway.”

“We need to discuss this.”

“You killed ‘er.”

“Yes, I did.”

“Nuthin’ more to talk ‘bout.”

“There was more to it than what you saw.” Ianto wasn’t looking at him. “Ianto.” No reply.
“IANTO!”

The Welshman turned to him with bleary eyes. “Go ‘way!”

“I can’t.”

“Yesh you can!”

Jack ran a hand over his face. “What you saw was me getting rid of a threat in the Hub.”

Ianto’s eyes widened. “She was my girlfrn’!”

“No, Ianto, she wasn’t.”

“I SAW HER!”

“I know. God...” He took a calming breath. “Ianto, you’ve already forgiven me for what happened that day. We got past it.”

Ianto rolled his eyes. It was somehow comforting to know he could still do that while drunk.
“I woul’ never, ever fo’give that.”

“You did. The woman you saw in that video was taken over by an alien race called the Cybermen. They tried to convert her.” He hoped to hell he wouldn’t have to explain all of Canary Wharf to him. “You thought you could save her but you couldn’t. It was too late.”

“No!”

“Yes, Ianto.”

“Get out.”

Jack growled. “Ianto, damn it!”

“Get OUT!” Ianto was standing now, the hand holding his beer pointing back toward the hallway as he wobbled unsteadily on his feet. “Now.”

Jack realized he wasn't going to get anywhere with Ianto in this condition. "Okay," he agreed, getting to his feet and holding his hands up. "Okay. But I'm going to be back."

"Why?"

"Because this isn't over, Ianto."

"Is for me," he said almost sadly, sitting back down. "I quit."

"What do you mean you quit. Torchwood, or us?"

"Both."

"You don't mean that. It's the alcohol speaking."

"No."

"I won't accept that."

"No choice," Ianto murmured, barely loud enough for Jack to hear. "Won't work with a monster. Won't sleep with a monster."

Jack hung his head, hurt even though he knew Ianto wasn't in full control of what he was saying. "I'm not a monster, Ianto."

The Welshman looked up at him, tears pooling in his eyes. "I loved you."

Jack's heart clenched. Past tense. "You still can."

"Can't."

Jack came to stand in front of Ianto and then slowly sank down to his knees so that they would be eye level. Ianto avoided his eyes, however, looking toward the window. Jack gently took his chin in his hand, turning the man's gaze forward again.

"Yes," he said firmly, "you can. I don't want to lose you, Ianto. I can't lose you."

Ianto's watery gaze held his for a few moments before he broke down into sobs. "I'm so confused!"

Jack swallowed hard and removed the beer from Ianto's grasp, placing it on the table. He reached for Ianto's hands, tugging him down onto the floor. The Welshman crumpled into a heap on top of him and Jack felt backward onto his arse, bringing the other man with him. He held him there in his lap as Ianto cried, burying his face in Ianto's neck and letting his own tears slip down his cheeks.

"We'll make it through this, Ianto. I'll help you."

A choked sob escaped and then the Welshman's arms slipped around his waist. "I jus' wanna

‘member what happened.”

“I know.”

“I can’ ‘member.”

“Give it time, Ianto,” he whispered, holding the man close. “Just give it time.”

“I fo’gave you?”

“Yes, you did. We forgave each other. I forgave you for betraying my trust, and you forgave me for treating you so badly.”

“An’ you loved me anyway?”

Jack felt a physical pain in his chest. “Y-yes.”

Ianto pulled back and his mouth fell messily against Jack’s. Jack gripped Ianto’s shoulders and tried to pry him away, but the Welshman was too eager to be easily stopped.

“Want you,” Ianto told him, roughly pulling at his clothes.

“W-wait, Ianto,” Jack said, trying to keep Ianto from ripping all the buttons on his shirt. He had to pull his mouth away from Ianto’s once more. “Hold on. Not like this.”

“Please,” Ianto begged, kissing his neck, his jaw, his chin. “Please show me you loved me. Need you.”

Jack fought the arousal slamming through him. As much as his body and mind wanted Ianto – and it was an ache that never really went away – he knew he couldn’t let Ianto do this. Not when he’d been drinking so much and was completely emotionally unstable.

“Okay, okay, Ianto,” he said, managing to put some space between them. “It’s okay.”

“Don’ go!”

It was quite a turnaround from a few minutes before. “I’m not going anywhere. Come on,” he said, sliding out from underneath the other man and pulling him to his feet with him.

“I di’n’t mean it,” Ianto cried, clinging to him and staring at him with sad eyes. “re not a monster.”

Jack couldn’t help the small smile that tugged at his lips. “I’m glad you no longer think so.”

Jack lifted one of the Welshman’s arms over his shoulders and wrapped his own around Ianto’s waist. It was slow going but eventually they made their way down the hallway. They were almost to the bedroom, where Jack fully intended on letting the Welshman sleep off the alcohol, when Ianto lurched forward and was sick.

Jack held him steady until he was done and then moved him into the bathroom, supporting him while he was sick again into the toilet. When he appeared to be finished Jack closed the lid and sat him down, flushing the toilet before wetting a flannel and gently wiping Ianto's face.

"m sorry," Ianto mumbled, leaning into Jack again as he lifted him to his feet once more and led him into the bedroom.

"No reason to be sorry," Jack said softly, removing Ianto's suit jacket and draping it over the foot of the bed. He lay Ianto down, removing nothing more but his shoes before tugging the covers up and over the top of him.

"Made a mess."

"Just a bit of one," Jack told him, smiling softly. "I'll clean it up."

"No," Ianto said, grasping at Jack's hand, "us."

Jack sighed. "You didn't make a mess of us, Ianto."

"I quit us."

Jack brushed a hand over Ianto's forehead, leaning down and pressing a kiss to his cheek. He could feel the heat of the alcohol under his skin. "I didn't let you, remember?"

Ianto seemed to accept that. Jack got to his feet and Ianto tugged his hand again. "Don' go. Stay?"

"I'm not going anywhere, Ianto," he replied, smiling down at him. "I'm just going to get you some aspirin and water."

After making sure he drank at least half of the water, Jack set the glass down on the night table next to the two aspirin he'd give Ianto in the morning. He waited until Ianto drifted off to sleep before he got up and retrieved Ianto's mobile from his jacket. He'd left his own at the Hub.

Heading out of the room Jack took a few minutes to clean up the sick in the hallway before washing his hands in the kitchen. He then put the unopened beers in the fridge, dumped out the one Ianto had been drinking, and settled back onto the couch with Ianto's phone. He dialed Owen's number.

"Ianto? You alright, mate?" Owen asked.

"No, it's me, Jack."

"Oh. Is Ianto okay?"

"Well, apart from apparently getting pissed at a pub and then buying himself another six pack of beer, yeah, he's great."

“Where is he now? And where are you? The girls are worried.”

Leave it to Owen not to confess he was worried as well. “I’m here with Ianto. I’m letting him sleep it off.”

“I can be there in ten minutes.”

“That won’t be necessary, Owen,” Jack told him.

“If he drank too much he could get alcohol poisoning, Jack. I’ll need to look him over.”

“He was sick before I settled him down to sleep. He’ll be alright. And I’m here to keep an eye on him.”

There was a silence on the other end of the phone and for a minute Jack thought Owen had disconnected the call. “Did you give him any water? We don’t want him getting dehydrated.”

“Of course I did.”

“Alright then,” Owen said, and Jack smirked at the man’s begrudging tone. “But you better tell me if anything changes.”

“I will,” he promised. “Don’t stay too late, and tell the girls to call me on Ianto’s mobile if they need to reach me. I’m not sure if I’ll be in tomorrow or not.”

“Cheers, mate,” Owen said, and then the phone clicked in his ear.

Jack set the phone down and then leaned back into the couch, closing his eyes. He hoped he’d convinced Ianto to give him another chance. It was hard to say how he’d react once he was sober again. But either way, as Jack had told him, he wasn’t going anywhere. He’d be right here waiting for him, no matter how long it might take.

He didn’t have any other choice. He loved him too much to give up now.

Chapter 12

The groan from the bedroom was Jack’s first clue that Ianto had awoken. The second was a loud thump a few moments later and a curse as he knocked into a piece of furniture.

Jack winced. “You okay in there?” Silence. “Ianto?”

He was just getting to his feet to check on the other man when Ianto appeared in the lounge doorway rubbing a hand through his hair. “Morning.”

“Hey.” Jack offered him a small smile. “I left some aspirin for you on the bedside table.”

“I found it, thank you.” Ianto walked slowly into the kitchen. “Coffee?”

“I’d love some.”

Jack joined him in the kitchen and waited in companionable silence as the Welshman ground fresh coffee and prepared the machine. He hadn’t slept much, concerned about how a sober Ianto would react to him being there. So far so good.

When the coffee was done Ianto poured two mugs, handing Jack his and then shuffling into the lounge where he settled himself gently onto the sofa. This time the groan wasn’t as obvious, but Jack still caught it.

“No cream or sugar for you?” he asked, sitting on the other end of the couch. He took his coffee black, and occasionally with sugar, but he’d never seen Ianto drink his that way.

Ianto looked down into his mug, frowning. “I didn’t even realize.”

Jack smiled. “I can fix it for you,” he offered, starting to get back to his feet.

Ianto waved him back down with a small return smile. “Don’t worry about it. I’ll manage.”

“You sure?”

“It’s fine, Jack. Thank you.”

Jack nodded and sipped his coffee, sighing in contentment. “When you retire and open your own coffee shop I want a loyalty card.”

Ianto’s eyebrow went up. “Retire from Torchwood?”

“It could happen.”

“Unlikely, sir, but I appreciate the compliment.”

Jack set his mug down on the table, careful to use a coaster. “How’s your head?”

“Pounding. Did you happen to catch the number on the lorry that ran me over?”

Jack chuckled. “I did, actually. The remaining bottles are in the fridge.”

Ianto snorted. “I had a little more than necessary.”

“I was worried about you.”

Ianto looked up under his lashes. “You needn’t have been, but thank you.”

“Are we okay, Ianto?”

The Welshman was quiet for a moment, staring into his mug of coffee. He took a sip before

placing his mug on the table near Jack's. "It's difficult to understand what happened."

"I know."

"I wish you'd have just told me yourself. It was quite a shock."

Jack nodded, leaning his elbows on his knees and folding his hands together. "That was my fault completely. I should have said something long before Toshiko suggested the CCTV."

"She was already gone, wasn't she?"

"By that time, yes. She'd killed the doctor you brought in to help her, and a delivery girl."

"I caused that."

"You didn't mean any harm, Ianto. You were trying to do the best for Lisa that you could in that situation."

"She could have killed all of us."

"We stopped her."

"I'm sorry, Jack," Ianto told him, eyes sad. "I'm very sorry."

Jack scooted closer, drawing the Welshman against him. "So am I, Ianto. So am I."

They sat that way for a couple of minutes, Jack with his arm around Ianto and Ianto with his head on Jack's shoulder. When Ianto yawned, Jack pulled back and smiled at him.

"Why don't you try to get more rest?"

"What about the Hub?"

"It'll keep. I called earlier and Tosh was already in. Gwen and Owen should be on their way there by now."

Ianto nodded, slowly getting to his feet. "I could probably use a bit more sleep." He started to reach for the mugs but Jack stopped him.

"You go ahead. I'll clean these up." He pressed a kiss to Ianto's forehead. "Later we'll catch a bite to eat for breakfast."

"I could make you breakfast now..."

"First, sleep. You need to get rid of the headache."

Once Ianto headed back to the bedroom Jack did a quick pickup of their half-consumed coffees, cleaning out the mugs and leaving them to dry. He made another call to the Hub, verifying the others were already working. He let them know he'd be out for the morning, but

might be in that afternoon.

Jack yawned and realized he could do with a nap himself. He glanced at the sofa and then made up his mind, joining Ianto in the bedroom. The Welshman appeared to be asleep already and Jack smiled, seeing he'd removed the rest of his suit and was tucked up under the covers. Stripping down himself Jack climbed into the opposite side of the bed, moving closer to Ianto and curling up behind him. When he slipped his arm around the man's middle Ianto interlocked their fingers, scooting back until they were pressed intimately together.

"I thought you were asleep," Jack murmured, kissing his temple.

"Almost," was the soft reply. "I was cold. Better now."

Jack smiled, nuzzling Ianto's hair and then settling his head on the pillow and closing his eyes. Though he didn't normally require much sleep he was out within a matter of minutes.

tw tw tw tw tw

Breakfast would have to be more of a late lunch, as Jack and Ianto slept much longer than anticipated. Ianto's curse as he jumped out of the bed woke Jack, and he smirked at Ianto's reaction to the time he'd read on the clock.

"We're late," Ianto told him, heading towards the bathroom. "I'll just grab a quick shower and we can head in."

"Don't be silly, Ianto," Jack called, rolling onto his back and stretching. "There's plenty of time. No need to rush."

The water turned on in the shower and then Ianto walked back into the room. "It's after twelve, Jack."

"Is that all?"

Ianto put his hands on his hips. "Well...the team will be waiting."

"Let them wait," Jack replied, lifting his head and smirking. Ianto frowned. "Go on, take your shower. I'm next, unless you'd rather share."

Ianto rolled his eyes, turning and going back into the bathroom. He called over the sound of running water, "Then we'd never get there."

"Exactly," Jack said, only loud enough for himself to hear. He grinned and relaxed against the pillow, awaiting his turn.

tw tw tw tw tw

The Hub was relatively quiet when Jack and Ianto arrived, carrying bags from the local Indian takeaway. Ianto had insisted on calling ahead and just bringing in their food for everyone, since he didn't want to take more time than necessary.

"Oh, Ianto, how are you?" Gwen asked, looking up as the two men came through the cog door.

"I'm fine, thank you, Gwen."

"I smell curry," Owen called out, a disembodied voice floating up from the medical bay. He appeared a moment later, taking the bag Ianto was carrying. "I'll just make sure this gets to the conference room. I could murder a coffee."

Jack laughed and followed Owen, winking at Ianto as the man made a detour to the kitchenette. Out of the corner of his eye he could see Toshiko follow the Welshman, and Jack smiled sadly. He knew how guilty Tosh was feeling.

Several minutes later they were all gathered around the table, tucking into their food and enjoying Ianto's fresh coffee. Gwen, Owen, and Toshiko brought them up to speed on what they'd missed, which, as it turned out, was pretty much nothing. There'd been a bit of rift activity but Owen and Gwen had handled it.

"A toaster," Owen growled, talking through his mouthful of chicken.

"It was space junk," Tosh clarified, shaking her head. "We're really not sure what it does, but we're certain it's not dangerous."

"A bloody alien toaster."

"It was blue," Gwen added, scooping up some rice. "Electric blue."

Jack laughed. "Sounds exciting."

"It actually could be," Ianto said, dabbing at his mouth with a napkin. "Depending on whether or not one likes alien toast from an electric blue alien toaster."

"I once ate an entire meal off an alien," Jack began, causing Tosh to giggle and the others to groan. "I remember it like it was yesterday..."

Chapter 13

Jack watched as Ianto took a sip of coffee from his travel mug. He winced, waiting to see the Welshman's reaction. Though he was normally not the one to make the coffee in the morning, Jack had asked for a quick refresher lesson and Ianto had patiently walked him through it. When Ianto's eyebrows shot up Jack licked his lips nervously.

"Well?" he asked.

“That’s pretty good, Jack,” Ianto replied, smiling. “Still not as good as mine, however.”

Jack breathed a sigh of relief. “Of course it’s not. Nobody’s is.” He picked up the keys from the counter. “Do we need to bring anything?”

“No. Doctor Smith just said to bring myself.”

“As long as he doesn’t mind me being there as well.”

Ianto’s care had been transferred to Doctor Smith while Doctor Williams was out of the country at a medical conference. He’d been called out expectantly, to replace yet another colleague who was ill, and hadn’t wanted to put off Ianto’s next follow up visit until he returned. He’d assured them that Doctor Smith was one of the best in the department. He dealt with trauma patients almost exclusively, and while he hadn’t been involved in Ianto’s care up until now Doctor Williams was certain he’d be a good temporary replacement.

“I’m sure he won’t, Jack.”

As they drove to the hospital Jack snuck glances at his passenger. It had been a while since he’d gotten to drive, unless it was Torchwood business, and they’d taken the SUV instead of Ianto’s car. Ianto was sitting back with his eyes closed, travel mug of coffee clutched between his hands in his lap, and a small smile gracing his lips.

“Penny for your thoughts,” Jack told him, unable to stop the smile that spread on his own face as he looked back at the road.

“I was just thinking about the festival coming up.”

Jack came to a stop at a light and looked over at him. “The pirate festival?”

“Yup.”

“And what about it?” he asked, suspicious.

“I think we should all go.”

“All, as in...”

“Torchwood, Jack,” Ianto replied, opening his eyes. They were sparkling with mischief.

“You want us all to go? And who, exactly, is going to watch the Hub?”

Ianto rolled his eyes, opening the mug and taking a long drink. He was silent for a moment as he slowly swallowed the beverage. Jack was almost convinced he wasn’t going to answer. “We’ll put it on mobile alert.”

Jack chuckled. “Alright, we could do that. But how do you plan to convince Owen that he should attend? I have it on good authority he’s not really the festival type.”

Ianto shot him a look. “All those women dressed as wenches? Really?”

Jack thought about that for a moment. Low cut dresses, flaunting everything. “Okay, you may have a point.”

“I’d like us to dress up as well.”

The light turned green and Jack hit the accelerator a little harder than needed, gaining himself a glare from the Welshman. “Come again?”

“I was speaking English, Jack, not Welsh,” Ianto sarcastically replied, causing Jack to snicker. “I want to dress the part.”

“So you want me to dress as...Captain Jack the pirate?”

Jack was surprised he didn’t receive another eye roll for that one. “Yes and no. I don’t have a thing for Johnny Depp.”

“You used to.”

“I did?”

“You did.”

Ianto seemed to process that for a moment. “Well in any case, I was hoping for...matching costumes.”

“All of us?”

“Yes. We’d all be part of the same band of pirates, after all,” he explained, smiling. “Owen could be our pet monkey.”

Jack laughed out loud, gripping the steering wheel tighter. “Now that I’d pay to see.”

A short time later they arrived at the hospital, heading to the medical offices car park and finding a spot relatively close. They stopped and provided Ianto’s name to the receptionist, taking a seat in the waiting lounge. They were few minutes early.

“So, what made you think of the festival?” Jack asked the Welshman, opening his own travel mug and taking a sip.

“We haven’t really done anything as a group since I’ve...well, since my accident,” Ianto replied, resting his elbows on his knees. “I thought it might be a fun way to get everyone together outside of work.”

“We used to do that a lot,” Jack told him, placing the mug on the floor next to Ianto’s and stretching. “Usually we’d go to the pub, and not anything more exciting, but it was good to get away.”

“Why don’t we do that now?”

“I’m not really sure. I’d say it’s because it’s been a bit busy, but maybe we’ve all just been drifting a bit.”

“I heard you tell Gwen not to let things drift with Rhys.”

Jack smiled. “That’s right. She has something beyond what we do at work. Completely removed from it. She should make sure to hold onto that as long as she can.”

“Do you ever want that?” Ianto asked. “Something outside of work?”

Jack turned towards him, seeing the look of uncertainty in his eyes and understanding immediately what he was implying. “No. Maybe long ago, but not now. I have everything I need already.”

Ianto smiled. “That’s good to hear.”

“I mean it,” Jack said, leaning closer and dropping his voice. “I wouldn’t change what we have for anything.”

“Not even for the old Ianto?”

“You are the old Ianto. Just because you don’t remember doesn’t mean you’re somebody else.”

“As far as I’m aware everything is new as of a few months ago,” Ianto explained, shrugging slightly. “While I do remember voices and your presence before I awoke, it was like everything began the day I opened my eyes.”

“Like being reborn,” Jack supplied.

“I suppose.”

“I’d like you to recover your memories,” Jack told him, resting a hand on his forearm, “for your own benefit. But I’m okay with what we have now. You don’t have to ever remember what we had before and that wouldn’t change how I feel about you now.”

Ianto’s brow furrowed a bit and Jack wanted to reach out and straighten the wrinkle, wondering what was making him think so hard. Ianto didn’t reply, however, so Jack remained in the dark as to what was running through his mind.

“Mr. Jones, Doctor Smith can see you now,” the receptionist announced, stepping around the counter with a file in her arms. “If you’ll just come with me.”

Jack grabbed both of their mugs of coffee and got to his feet, waiting for Ianto to pass him before following behind. They headed through the door, down the hallway, and were led into a fashionably decorated office, complete with a cherry wood desk, legs intricately carved. The

chairs in front of the desk matched the design, and the walls were paneled in similar wood. Jack and Ianto both took a seat, Jack placing their mugs between their chairs.

Doctor Smith took the file from his receptionist and then she exited the office, closing the door behind them. “Mr. Jones?”

“That’s me,” Ianto replied. “This is my partner, Captain Jack Harkness.”

The doctor reached over the desk and shook both of their hands. “It’s a pleasure,” he stated, opening the file and perusing it for a moment. He frowned. “Have you regained your memories, Mr. Jones?”

“No, I haven’t.”

The doctor looked up over the top of his glasses. “Any of them?”

Ianto shifted in his chair. “Unfortunately no.”

“Very strange.”

“Doctor Williams explained that every case was different,” Jack said, concerned that this doctor didn’t seem to have information Ianto’s doctor should have provided. “He told me, personally, that not everyone recovers their memories after an accident like Ianto’s.”

“Optimism,” the doctor replied, scribbling a note in Ianto’s file.

“I’m sorry?” Ianto asked.

Doctor Smith put down the pen and folded his hands on his desk. “Mr. Jones, have you spent any time actively attempting to access your memories?”

Ianto glanced at Jack before looking back at the doctor. “I’m afraid I don’t follow.”

“There are techniques we suggest, as trauma specialists, which have been proven successful in restoring much that amnesia takes away. One of those is hypnosis.”

“Doctor, how can hypnosis help if there’s brain damage?” Jack asked, folding his arms across his chest. He wasn’t completely sure he liked this man’s approach. He reminded him of Owen. No bedside manner, whatsoever.

“Well, that’s just it, isn’t it?” Doctor Smith replied, smiling tightly. “Mr. Jones isn’t suffering from any brain damage.”

“But Doctor Williams...”

“Was mistaken,” interrupted the man across from them. “Look, I understand that you’ve been working with Doctor Williams since your accident, Mr. Jones, however, his notes and the scans differ. There is nothing in your file to indicate anything physically wrong with you at this point. It’s simply...”

“All in his head?” Jack growled. The doctor didn’t make any move to correct him. “So you’re saying Ianto isn’t remembering because he doesn’t want to?”

“I’m not trying to not remember,” Ianto argued, sitting up a little straighter. “I just don’t remember my life before waking up in hospital.”

“He wouldn’t lie about that,” Jack added.

“It’s not a matter of lying, or trying not to remember,” Doctor Smith explained, leaning back in his chair. It was leather, Jack noted absently. “What’s happening in your mind right now is a defense mechanism.”

Jack raised an eyebrow. “And how would that work?”

The doctor grimaced. Jack wondered if it was supposed to be a smile. “The brain is a delicate and yet complicated organ. When it believes it’s been threatened it throws up walls, blocking out any information, sensory or otherwise, that it feels would be detrimental.”

“Like armor,” Ianto murmured, almost to himself.

The doctor picked up his pen. “I’m going to make a recommendation, Mr. Jones,” he said, pulling a pad in front of him and jotting down something Jack couldn’t read upside down. “I want you to meet with one of my colleagues, Dr. Elizabeth Davies. She’s a well-respected psychiatrist.”

“Do you really think that’s necessary?” Jack inquired, seeing how Ianto’s eyes had widened.

“I wouldn’t recommend it if I thought any different, Mr. Harkness.”

“Captain,” Jack corrected.

“My apologies,” the doctor stated. “Captain Harkness.” He handed a copy of the paper to Ianto and placed the other in the file, pushing a button on his phone. “Please see Mr. Jones and...Captain Harkness out, Eve. There’s a referral in the Jones file I’ll need you to place.”

“Right away, sir,” she replied.

A moment later the door opened and the receptionist stepped in, smiling as she collected Ianto’s file. Jack was livid, grabbing their coffees and getting to his feet. He could tell from Ianto’s body language he was just as angry, though the mask he wore allowed none of that anger to show.

“We’ll be speaking with Doctor Williams,” Jack told the other doctor, handing Ianto his mug of coffee.

“I’m sure you understand he’s at a conference in France at the moment.”

“There are telephones, Doctor Smith,” Jack replied, barely controlling his ire. He followed

Ianto and Eve out of the office without another word. He was afraid of what he might do if he stayed to confront the doctor further.

“Have a lovely day,” Eve told them, smiling brightly as she ushered them from the hallway to the lounge, stepping back behind her reception counter.

“Jack, do you get the impression he washed his hands of me?” Ianto asked as they exited into the Cardiff morning, walking side by side toward the car.

“Yes, Ianto,” Jack answered, sighing. “Yes I do. And he’s not going to get away with it.”

Chapter 14

Ianto hung up the phone, eyebrows knit together. “He said he’s going to talk to Dr. Smith, but that he can’t deny that sometimes hypnosis is helpful to patients with amnesia.”

Jack nodded, holding out his arm to Ianto. The Welshman placed the mobile phone on the table and scooted closer, letting Jack wind his arm around him. “I take it he wasn’t very happy with the doctor’s bedside manner?”

Ianto huffed. “Not in the least. He apologized at least three times. If it weren’t for the conference he’d probably be talking to him face to face. As it stands he’s going to call him.”

“Understandable,” Jack offered. He rubbed Ianto’s shoulder. “So what do you think about this recommendation for hypnosis?”

Ianto sighed, leaning his head on Jack’s shoulder. “Truthfully? It scares me.”

“You think maybe there are suppressed memories in there?”

“Perhaps. What if there’s some reason I don’t want to remember, Jack?”

Using his other hand to lift the Welshman’s head, Jack placed a soft kiss on his lips. “I can’t imagine what it would be. The worst event I’m aware of was Lisa’s death and your involvement at Torchwood One, which we’ve gone over.”

Ianto curled back up against Jack again. “I’m sure that was awful, but I think it’s important to remember such a tragedy. I wouldn’t want to forget it purposely.”

“Of course, if you do decide to go through with this therapy, we’re going to have to find you a psychiatrist that works with Torchwood. We can’t risk our information getting out there to the general public.”

“Doctor patient confidentiality,” Ianto replied.

“Not good enough. If they dig deeply you could reveal all kinds of secrets without even knowing it and not every doctor abides by the law.”

“Good point.”

“Besides, as much as I like Dr. Williams, I’d much rather your psychiatric care be with someone I trust. I’m sure Owen has connections.”

“I wish I could get my memories back without it.”

“Me too,” Jack agreed. “Me too.”

tw tw tw tw tw

Three days later found Jack speaking to a Dr. Elizabeth Singh via telephone. He’d been correct in thinking Owen had resources, and Dr. Singh came highly recommended. Jack was glad he’d clued Owen in on the residents of Flat Holm, since, as it turned out, Dr. Singh was one of the consulting psychiatrists for the patients housed there. If he hadn’t he might have had to dig through Ianto’s phone book in order to find her number, and truthfully, Jack hadn’t even thought of the Flat Holm connection.

“She’s one of the best in her field,” Owen had told him, handing Jack the number before snapping on clean gloves and going back to his autopsy. “Good looking bird, too.”

Jack had smirked, shaking his head. “As long as she can perform hypnosis I really don’t care how she looks.”

“Well, she’s tried it on a few of the Flat Holm patients. No success.”

“They’re in a totally different state of mind,” Jack had replied. “Thanks, Owen.”

“Cheers, mate.”

Jack read over the information Dr. Singh had provided him. Ianto had an appointment for the following afternoon. He’d been surprised, initially, but the doctor advised him that she always made room for Torchwood. He’d thanked her profusely, jotting down the directions to her office. They’d not have much of a trek, since she was in Newport, but there wasn’t anyone better, as far as Owen was concerned, and even if she’d been in London Jack wouldn’t have batted an eye. Ianto was more than worth the trip.

Tucking the paper into his wallet Jack went in search of the Welshman, hoping to whisk him away to a late dinner. The rift had been incredibly active over the last few days, and today had been no exception. He’d sent the others home an hour earlier, but Ianto had insisted upon doing some more archival work, stating he’d been away from work too long and the archives would fall into disrepair if he didn’t.

Smiling to himself, Jack leaned against the doorway. He saw Ianto bent over a box of artifacts Tosh had catalogued and sent down for storage. “You know,” he said, teasingly, “you’re supposed to bend at the knee, not the waist.”

Ianto straightened and raised an eyebrow as he looked at Jack over his shoulder. "I'd have thought you, of all people, would appreciate the view."

"Oh believe me, Ianto, I do." Jack leered. "I'm only thinking of your health."

Ianto rolled his eyes, turning back to the artifact in his hand. "Of course you are."

"Speaking of," Jack added, stepping into the room and putting his hands in his pockets, "I got a referral from Owen. Dr. Singh can see you tomorrow afternoon."

Ianto turned again. "So soon?"

"She said she's booked, but she moved things around to accommodate you."

"That's awfully generous."

"She respects Torchwood," Jack replied, shrugging. "Is tomorrow okay for you?"

Ianto glanced down at the item in his hand before indicating Jack should follow him. Jack did, and they made their way deeper into the archives. Ianto made his way to a specific shelf and stopped, moving a box over and placing the artifact he carried where it had been. He removed a label and pen from his pocket and wrote out what Jack assumed to be information regarding the item, slipping it into a spot on the edge of the shelf and pushing the one belonging to the box over a bit.

He then turned around, tucking the labels and pen away before folding his arms across his chest. "I don't suppose putting it off would be beneficial."

"No, I doubt it would." They began walking back toward the main room, Jack again trailing behind the Welshman through the narrow passageways. "It's just the one session."

"I know."

They arrived back where they'd started and Jack stopped Ianto from reaching for the next item in the box, placing a hand on his arm. "Hey, look at me."

Ianto turned, eyes not meeting Jack's. "I'm sorry, Jack. I just feel like I'm being made to feel I've done something wrong."

Jack tilted Ianto's chin up so that their eyes met. "I don't think you've done anything wrong. And even if you have somehow repressed these memories, and it's not actually amnesia at this point, it's nothing you consciously did. It's your mind's defense mechanisms kicking in. There'd be a reason for it. That's why Dr. Williams agreed with Dr. Smith about trying the hypnosis."

"What if... what if there's something deeper?"

"Like what, Ianto?"

The Welshman swallowed. "I don't know. But, if my mind is protecting me from something, it would have to be bad, wouldn't it?"

"Maybe." Ianto's shoulders slumped. "Look, Ianto, we're going to figure this out, okay? I'll be with you. In the room, if you want me to be. Or I can wait outside. I'll do whatever makes you more comfortable."

A small smile crossed Ianto's face. "Thank you."

Jack kissed his forehead. "Come on, enough work."

"But I have a lot to do still, Jack!"

"I know, but it can wait." He steered the man until they were facing the doorway. "Right now, I'm taking you out."

"Jack..."

"Nope, not taking no for an answer. We're going to a late dinner, and then I'm taking you back to your place so you're nice and rested for tomorrow."

Ianto looked as if he was going to argue again but instead he simply nodded. Jack grinned and took his hand, leading him out of the archives and along the hallway. When they arrived in the main Hub Jack turned and drew the Welshman into his arms, pressing a long kiss to Ianto's lips.

"What was that for?" Ianto asked when they broke apart.

"I know you're not much for public displays of affection, so I figured I get the kissing out of the way now."

"You're ridiculous, Jack."

"I try," he said, moving in for another kiss.

tw tw tw tw tw

The restaurant was relatively quiet when they arrived, due to the late hour, and Jack was thankful they'd have their pick of tables. He chose one out of the way, following Ianto and the waiter to their booth in the corner. Once seated, Jack ordered a bottle of white wine and a couple of waters.

"You don't normally drink," Ianto pointed out, perusing his menu.

"No I don't. But I thought it sounded good. Italian restaurant, after all."

Ianto smiled up at him before looking back to the menu. "I've been here a couple times since the accident and I can still never bring myself to try something new."

Jack returned the smile. He knew Ianto tended to get the mushroom chicken pasta, and he had even before his accident. It was just one more thing that convinced Jack that the Welshman's memories were just under the surface, waiting to come out. He hoped the hypnosis would prove to be helpful. It was better than assuming Ianto would never regain his past.

Jack picked one of his favorites, a seafood and pasta that never failed to please, and chatted casually with Ianto until they could place their orders. A few minutes later the waiter arrived with the wine and praised their dinner choices, before leaving with the menus to get their meals ordered.

Jack poured a glass for Ianto and then one for himself. "To tomorrow," he toasted, lifting his glass. "Here's hoping it's a complete success."

"To tomorrow," Ianto repeated, touching his glass to Jack's before they each took a sip of the wine. He placed his glass on the table. "And thank you, Jack."

"For what, Ianto?"

"For being here for me. Through all of this."

Jack set his own glass down and draped a hand over Ianto's fingers. "I couldn't imagine being anywhere else."

Their food arrived a short time later and conversation returned to the everyday mundane, neither of them further discussing the appointment with Dr. Singh. Tonight was about getting Ianto to relax, and Jack knew that talk of tomorrow would only make him more anxious.

When they were finished with their meal they decided to forgo dessert, Jack driving Ianto back home in the Welshman's car, since the alcohol he'd consumed didn't affect him as it did the other man. He waited while Ianto unlocked his flat, shutting the door behind them and hanging both of their coats up. He removed his boots while Ianto did the same with his shoes.

"Will you stay tonight?" Ianto asked him, moving down the hallway.

"I'd like to," Jack replied, following him into the lounge.

"Coffee?"

"Normally I'd say yes, but dinner was quite filling."

"Alright. A movie, then?"

It was close to ten, the night having slipped away from them, but Jack found himself nodding anyway, and he settled onto the couch while Ianto selected a DVD from his collection. "Casablanca?" he asked, eyebrows rising as the movie started and Ianto settled onto the couch

by his side.

“Just felt like something different,” the other man replied, smiling.

“Well, then Casablanca it is,” Jack said, taking Ianto’s hand and pressing a kiss to his knuckles.

Within an hour Ianto had fallen asleep, his head cradled on Jack’s lap. Let him sleep, he thought, lightly brushing fingers through Ianto’s hair and smiling at how young and carefree he looked. Tomorrow might be extremely draining.

Chapter 15

They’d decided to stop by the Hub for the morning before heading out to the appointment. Jack would have been perfectly okay with skipping it, but Ianto had insisted he wanted to finish what he’d started in the archives. Jack had begrudgingly agreed. Ianto gave him a quick kiss, a cup of coffee, and then disappeared down into the tunnels.

Jack settled in behind his desk, sipping his hot drink and smiling to himself. No one could make a better coffee than Ianto Jones, he mused, setting the mug off to the side and turning to his computer. Might as well start on the long-overdue emails he’d been avoiding.

The others arrived within the next couple of hours, greeting Jack and then getting started on their normal morning activities. By lunchtime Gwen and Toshiko had deposited on his desk their reports on a weevil hunt and new program, respectively, and Jack was just signing off on the latter when Ianto appeared at his door, smiling.

“I ordered Chinese,” he told Jack, smiling. “Should be here in about twenty.”

Jack scribbled his signature on Tosh’s paperwork and closed the file, returning Ianto’s smile as he placed the paperwork in his out tray. “Good. We can grab a bite to eat before heading off to your appointment.”

“Coffee?”

“Actually,” Jack said, getting up from his chair and sauntering over to where Ianto stood in the doorway, “I was thinking a coke.” He placed his hands on Ianto’s hips.

The Welshman gripped his hands and squeezed gently before casually removing them from his body, smile never wavering. “Not certain we have any, but I’d be happy to check, sir.”

“Thank you, Ianto.”

The other man nodded, turning on his heel and heading for their kitchenette. Jack tucked his hands in his own pockets and watched him go. He was forever trying to get away with touches and kisses at work, but Ianto never allowed it in front of the others. Jack smiled, remembering the kiss in the archives yesterday, before returning to his desk to make a call

before lunch.

A couple of hours later found them sitting in the doctor's car park, Ianto fidgeting nervously in the passenger seat of his own car. He'd asked Jack to drive, telling him he was too wound up to be any good behind the wheel.

"If you're not careful you're going to rub the skin right off your fingers," Jack told him, nodding towards the constantly-moving hands folded in the other man's lap.

Ianto grimaced, pulling his hands away from each other and rubbing the palms on his trouser-covered knees. Jack reached over for one of his hands, bringing it up to his lips and leaving a kiss on the knuckles.

"You're going to be fine."

"How can you know that?" Ianto asked, brows furrowing in worry.

"I'd never let anything bad happen to you, that's why," he replied, sandwiching Ianto's hand between his own.

Ianto smiled wearily. "You can't protect me from the world, Jack."

"I can try."

"And I appreciate it." Ianto leaned in, cupping Jack's face with his free hand and pressing a soft kiss to his lips. "My hero."

Jack chuckled, kissing Ianto long and hard before dropping his hand and turning off the car. "Time to go," he said, pointing his head toward the building. "Don't want to be late."

Ianto nodded and sighed, opening the passenger door and meeting Jack in front of the car. They walked side by side to the building, Jack opening the front door for Ianto and getting a raised eyebrow for his efforts.

"I'm a gentleman," Jack explained, earning himself a snicker from the other man as they entered the office.

The front room was quaint, Jack thought, much like Dr. Smith's office, but this one somehow felt more welcoming. The walls were pale lavender, with prints of the countryside hanging in tasteful wooden frames. There were large expanses of grass so green they could only be from here in the UK, and flowers of every shade under the rainbow. It was extremely calming.

"Good afternoon," the receptionist greeted them cheerfully. She was an older woman, her gray hair falling in large, soft curls around her face.

Jack moved to the desk and glanced at her nametag. "Good afternoon, Ms. Crowther," he said, turning on his hundred watt smile.

"Eira, please," the woman replied, blushing under Jack's gaze. She pushed up her glasses and

gestured to her computer. "Do you have an appointment?"

"That would be for me," Ianto said, stepping forward and smiling shyly. "Jones. Ianto Jones."

Jack grinned beside him. "It's a three o'clock appointment."

"Ah yes, I see it here," Eira told them, handing Ianto a clipboard with several pieces of paper on it. "If you could fill this out. I'll let the doctor know you're here."

Ianto took the paperwork and nodded, turning back toward a row of chairs against the window. Jack followed close behind, sitting down beside him and leaning over his shoulder.

"General medical questions," Ianto informed him, unclipping a pen from the top of the clipboard.

"Ah," Jack replied. He settled back in his seat and crossed one ankle over the other knee. He glanced around the room, taking in the clock. Twenty till. Lots of time left. He guessed he shouldn't have been so concerned with being late. "Do you remember enough of what Owen's told you to fill it out?"

Ianto nodded, writing in his name. "I've memorized my history."

Jack should have known. Since returning to work Ianto had devoured information, putting his previously eidetic memory to good use once again. It was one of the reasons he knew Torchwood One had hired him. What better quality to have in an archivist and junior researcher?

He looked back down at Ianto's paperwork and smiled, seeing the gentle and neat flow of the Welshman's handwriting. He was meticulous in all he did, and his writing was no different. When he looked back up he found Eira watching him. She glanced at Ianto and then back at him, winking before she turned back to her computer. He smiled. It was nice to know not everyone in the twenty-first century was bigoted.

Jack suddenly felt movement next to him. He opened his eyes, not even realizing he'd closed them, and found Ianto stretching his legs out before him, sans clipboard.

"Done already?"

"Yup. Turned it in a while ago, Jack."

"Wow." Jack looked up at the clock, realizing it was now just a couple minutes before three. He'd been asleep, then. "Didn't realize I'd dozed off."

Ianto smiled. "You looked peaceful. Didn't see a reason to wake you up."

The receptionist's phone rang and she picked it up, speaking softly. She placed the phone back on its cradle and got to her feet. "Mr. Jones?"

"Yes," he replied, standing.

“Dr. Singh is ready to see you now. Right this way, if you please?”

Ianto glanced down at him. “Jack?”

“You want me to come with you?”

“If you would?”

Jack smiled softly, getting to his feet and placing a hand gently on the small of Ianto’s back. “After you,” he said, following behind the Welshman.

Eira led them back through a hallway with several doors on each side. The building was larger than it appeared, Jack acknowledged. Bigger on the inside. He couldn’t help the smirk that crossed his lips.

“Alright, Jack?” Ianto whispered, eyebrow raised again.

“Ignore me,” Jack replied, chuckling softly.

The receptionist rapped on the door at the end of the hall, opening it at reply of, “Enter.”

They were introduced to Dr. Elizabeth Singh before Eira left them and closed the door. Taking one of the seats across from her desk Jack was struck by exactly how accurate his own doctor’s description had been. The woman was indeed good looking. Her dark brown hair bordered on black, and was half-pulled up in a clip behind her head. The rest flowed over her shoulders and back in gentle waves. Her eyes were large and clear, a hazel-brown shade, and they sparkled with hidden depths. Her lips were full but she wasn’t wearing lipstick, instead keeping to a soft gloss sheen. She was a natural beauty, her dark complexion appearing flawless.

Ianto cleared his throat and Jack turned his head, smiling apologetically before clasping Ianto’s hand in his own. To his surprise, the Welshman didn’t pull away.

“As I told you on the phone,” Jack began, “you come highly recommended. I know your techniques haven’t necessarily worked well on...some of our patients, but we’re hoping Ianto is a completely different story.”

Dr. Singh nodded, smiling. “I wish I’d had more of an influence on those in your care,” she agreed. “However, from what you’ve told me of Mr. Jones here, I think we may be successful.”

“And if we aren’t?” Ianto asked her, voice a bit shaky.

“Then we’ll keep trying,” she assured him. “Shall we begin?”

They moved to another room just down the hall. She indicated it was a treatment room. It was set up much like a psychiatrist’s office would look on the television, even though her own had been just chairs and a desk. This room contained a small table in one corner, several chairs with another table between them to one side, and a chaise, taking up residence in the

middle of the room.

Ianto looked hesitantly at the chaise, then at Jack, and finally the doctor. “It’s alright,” she told him, seeing his unease. “We’ll start with the chair. I have some initial questions and background to go through before we try anything else.”

Ianto nodded, taking a seat. Jack sat down beside him. Surprisingly, it was Ianto who initiated contact this time, slipping his hand into Jack’s and squeezing it for support. Jack was more than happy to oblige.

“I’ve gone over the information Dr. Harper sent over,” Dr. Singh advised, sitting down in her chair and facing them. Seeing the surprised looks on their faces she chuckled. “He’s extremely thorough.”

“I had no idea he’d already done that,” Jack advised, smiling. “We were going to ask him to do so.”

“He wanted to ensure Mr. Jones was given the best care,” she replied, smiling back and turning to look at Ianto. “I’m sure you’re aware that Dr. Williams has shared all his records with Dr. Harper, and he’s been given Dr. Smith’s notes as well.”

Ianto nodded. “Yes.”

Jack was aware as well. He knew that Owen had updated paperwork from Dr. Williams sent to him on a regular basis, and Dr. Smith had needed to share his findings with Dr. Williams’ office too. All three doctors needed to be on the same page, if they were going to take care of their patient properly. It was understandable that the information would then be provided to Dr. Singh.

“I’ve also spoken with Dr. Williams, and we’ve both agreed to move all further treatment here. Dr. Harper will, of course, remain your immediate doctor, but I will take over your post-accident care.”

“That makes sense,” Ianto replied. “The fewer hands in the proverbial pot, the better.”

“I’m quite in agreement,” she said, picking up a notepad and pen. “Now, I’m assuming that you can only remember back as far as the accident.”

“Several days afterward, actually,” Ianto corrected. “I was in a coma.”

“Ah, yes,” she said, scribbling something on her pad of paper. “A week, I believe.”

“Nine days,” Jack supplied, feeling Ianto squeeze his hand.

Dr. Singh looked up, nodded, then looked back at her paper. “And during those nine days in a coma, do you remember anything, Mr. Jones?”

“Please, call me Ianto,” he said, smiling when she glanced back up at him.

Dr. Singh returned his smile. "Ianto, I apologize."

"It's alright," he replied, blushing. "I suppose it just makes me feel a little more comfortable."

"Absolutely understandable," she said. "And do you remember anything of your coma, Ianto?"

"Bits and pieces," he said, looking off into space as if trying to remember. "Flashes of light and...and voices."

"Voices," she noted, writing it down. "Any voices in particular?"

"Jack's," he said, looking at the man beside him. Jack squeezed the Welshman's hand. "I could hear him, but I didn't know what he was saying. Or who he was, exactly."

Dr. Singh scratched out a few things on her notepad. "What did it sound like?"

Ianto frowned. "Reassurances, sometimes. And lots of chatter. I think Jack was using me as a sounding board."

"Best way to gossip," Jack teased, winking at Ianto. "I wasn't convinced you could hear me, but you know I like to talk. Figured you wouldn't spread it around."

"Do you remember any of the conversation?"

Ianto shook his head. "No. I couldn't make out the words. But when I was awake and heard Jack speak, I knew it had been him there with me. He stayed almost the entire time I was in the coma."

"And did you recognize his face?"

"No."

More writing on the pad of paper. Dr. Singh looked up. "Mr. Jo...Ianto, have you ever had memory issues before? Any cases of forgetting or misplacing a memory? Before this accident, I mean."

Ianto looked flummoxed. "I wouldn't remember," he said slowly, cautiously.

"Of course," she replied, shaking her head. "Silly question. Forget I asked that."

"If it's any help, Ianto has a photographic memory," Jack supplied. "He works as our archivist, and I'm not sure he's ever even walked into a room and forgotten why he was there. Unlike the rest of us."

Dr. Singh chuckled, looking between the two of them. "I do that myself from time to time. I believe it's the curse of getting older." She tapped her pen on the pad of paper and was quiet for a moment. "Ianto, any incidents like that since the accident? Any moments of sudden memory loss? Placed an object somewhere and forgotten where, for instance?"

"I don't believe so," Ianto replied, pursing his lips. "I've a habit of memorizing everything. Rooms, people... Jack and the others, our coworkers, told me that I was like that before as well. That I knew how they each took their coffees, what their preferences were for different takeaways, that sort of thing."

"A brilliant memory then," Dr. Singh commented, writing it down.

"That's our Ianto," Jack murmured, almost without thinking.

"And your family," Dr. Singh asked, barely acknowledging that Jack had spoken, "how have they handled your condition?"

Ianto stiffened beside him and Jack winced. "My sister is extremely...clingy," Ianto answered, glancing up at Jack before down at their joined fingers. "I'm not actually talking to her at the moment."

Dr. Singh seemed to consider that for a moment and licked her lips. "She's clingy, but is she being supportive?"

"Not exactly."

"How so?"

Ianto sighed. "Before my accident, according to Jack and the others, she and I were never very close. I loved her, of course, and my nephew and niece as well, but...it'd been strained for a long time."

"And so the clinging feels awkward?" Dr. Singh asked.

"It does. At first I didn't know any better," he explained, "but there's a tension in the air each time I speak with her, and she's been less than happy about..."

He broke off and Dr. Singh looked up, expectantly. "About?"

Ianto looked at Jack and Jack nodded, rubbing his other hand over the one tucked inside his own. "About Jack and me."

"Your...relationship?" the doctor inquired, raising an eyebrow.

"Yes."

"She doesn't accept the two of you, or she doesn't accept Mr. Harkness?"

"I'm not sure she really accepts either or," Ianto said, shrugging. "She wasn't very supportive of Jack helping me through my amnesia."

"He's putting it nicely," Jack added, all traces of a smile gone. "She told me in no uncertain terms that I was bad news, and that Ianto should be staying with his family while he

recovered. She wanted me to leave him.”

“That’s not what you want, I’m assuming,” Dr. Singh said, glancing between the two of them.

“No,” Ianto said emphatically, and Jack shook his head. “Jack is good for me. There was an immediate connection when I first awoke. I knew before he’d even told me that we had shared something prior to my accident. My family, apparently, hadn’t known that.”

“I see,” the doctor said softly, writing that down. “Ianto, I’d like to try something. It’s just a basic technique used to measure your natural responses.”

“Not hypnosis?” the Welshman asked, looking puzzled.

“Not yet,” she replied, setting her notepad down on the desk behind her. “It’s word association. It’ll help me understand where your memory stands at this time.”

“Alright,” Ianto replied, nodding. “What do I need to do?”

“Just sit back and get comfortable. Close your eyes, relax, and tell me the first word that comes to your mind after I say one.”

Ianto removed his hand from Jack’s and placed both hands on the arms of his chair. He cleared his throat, leaned back, and closed his eyes.

“Are you ready?” Dr. Singh asked.

“Yes.”

“Okay. The first word is...strong.”

“Coffee,” Ianto replied, a smile crossing his lips.

Dr. Singh wrote it down. “Weak.”

“Tea,” he said, wrinkling his nose. Jack smirked.

“Life.”

“Fragile,” Ianto answered, sighing.

“Death,” Dr. Singh supplied.

“Inevitable.”

Dr. Singh made a few scratches across her paper and looked thoughtful for a moment.

“Passion,” she said a moment later, pen poised.

“Jack.”

Jack's eyebrows shot up and he grinned, remaining silent and motionless beside the Welshman, even though he wanted to take him in his arms and show him that passion right now. They were there to help Ianto, and his interference wouldn't likely be welcome.

"Loss."

"Lisa," Ianto answered, swallowing hard.

Jack studied the man, grin turning into a frown. He'd hoped that the CCTV Ianto had watched would trigger his memory. Seeing who he thought was his girlfriend being murdered, however, had nearly driven him and Ianto apart. He hated to think it was still sticking with the man.

"Past."

"Painful." This was said through gritted teeth.

"Future."

Ianto hesitated. "Scary."

The doctor jotted down the answer and then put down her pad of paper. "You can open your eyes now, Ianto."

The Welshman slowly did as he was told, sitting up straighter and blinking at the doctor. Jack reached for his hand again and found that Ianto was shaking.

"Are we going to try the hypnosis now?" Ianto asked, looking uncertain.

The doctor shook her head. "We're going to save that for later, Ianto," she said, looking down at her notes. "First I'd like to go over a couple of your answers."

Ianto nodded, turning his hand over and entwining his fingers with Jack's. Jack squeezed.

"According to your records, Lisa is a past girlfriend, is that correct?"

"Yes," Ianto replied.

"And she's no longer with us?"

"No, she...died."

"Okay," she acknowledged, writing that down. "You indicated that death was inevitable."

"It is for everyone."

"And especially Torchwood, correct?"

Ianto looked up at Jack and received a nod. "Yes. Usually sooner rather than later."

"Is this possibly the reason for your sister's reluctance?"

"No," Ianto denied, shaking his head. "She doesn't know what I do for a living."

"I see." She paused. "When I said past, you said painful," she pointed out. "Why?"

"B-because of the accident," he said, stuttering slightly. "Right?"

"I'm asking you."

"I-I don't remember anything before that," he insisted, swallowing hard as he had when he'd mentioned Lisa.

"And you remember the accident?"

Ianto furrowed his eyebrows. "No, actually."

"Yet you said that was your past, and it was painful."

Ianto licked his lips. "I-I don't know why I said that," he admitted. "It...it was just the first thing that came to my mind."

The doctor nodded, writing down that latest bit of information. "Ianto, I think there is more here than what meets the eye."

Ianto and Jack exchanged a glance. "Like what?" Jack asked her when Ianto didn't reply, and he felt the man tremble slightly beside him.

"I'm inclined to believe that there may be some memories lingering just under the surface, trying to get out."

"Repressed memories?" Ianto asked, the tremble extending to his voice.

"Quite possibly."

Jack's hand was squeezed hard and he squeezed right back, lending Ianto as much strength as he could. He was starting to understand that what Dr. Smith had said wasn't necessarily off base, even though it could have been presented in a more kindly manner. If Ianto was repressing his memories, that could be what was keeping him from breaking through the amnesia.

"And are you going to hypnotize me?"

"I think that's our best chance at unlocking what's been tucked away," she replied, smiling reassuringly when he shuddered. "You can trust me, Ianto. I won't hurt you."

"I know," he said, taking a calming breath. "Should we start now?"

“No,” she replied, folding her hands in her lap over the notepad. “I think we’ve actually done enough work for today.”

Ianto raised an eyebrow. “Really?”

Dr. Singh smiled, nodding. “You respond well to therapy,” she advised. “Surprising, as Dr. Harper’s notes indicated you’re the quiet, private type.”

Ianto blushed. “I think I am.”

“It’s your manner,” Jack said. “Pretty sure it’s a lot easier to be open and willing to talk when someone’s not being abrasive in return.”

“Yes, he’s right,” Ianto agreed. “Thank you.”

“Abrasive has its uses,” she replied, getting up from her chair and tucking the pad of paper under her arm, “but this isn’t one of them. I want to see you back here in a week, Ianto. For now, I want you to relax. You might even want to try some meditation.”

Ianto looked surprised. “You’re kidding.”

“Absolutely not,” she said, picking up a pamphlet off the table behind her and handing it to him. “Here. This will give you some simple techniques for self meditation. I’ll go through my calendar to set your appointment and give you a call with the time and date.”

She walked them out of the office, shaking both of their hands before leaving them in the front room. Ianto looked up at Jack and Jack smiled at him.

“You okay?”

“I think so.”

They walked out of the building, Jack turning to give Eira a small wave and a smile before they exited the door. When they got to the car, Ianto indicated that Jack should drive them back as well. Slipping into the driver’s seat, Jack waited until Ianto had seated himself and closed the door before turning to him.

“Back to the flat?”

Ianto looked confused. “Shouldn’t we head to the Hub, Jack? Lots of work to do.”

“I was thinking we could settle in for the night, maybe order in later.”

Ianto thought for a moment. “How about a compromise? A few more hours at work, and then pick up a takeaway on the way to the flat.”

Jack smiled. “Alright,” he said, starting the car. “A compromise it is.”

He backed the car out of their parking space and then exited the car park, pointing the vehicle in the direction of the Hub. What had happened during the session was fresh on his mind, and he really wanted to discuss it with Ianto. The Welshman, on the other hand, seemed like he'd prefer to think on it himself for a while, and Jack didn't want to push him.

Ianto's hand settled on his knee when they got to a red light and Jack turned to look at him. "Thank you, Jack," Ianto said, squeezing his knee.

"You're welcome."

Chapter 16

Ianto blinked at him for a moment before turning to pour out the coffees. "Surely you're joking," he said, swirling a bit of milk in Gwen's coffee and a spoonful of sugar in another for Tosh. "We've already taken quit a lot of time off recently, Jack."

"Nope, not kidding," replied Jack. "We're taking the afternoon off. And don't call me Shirley."

Ianto raised an eyebrow. "I can't get you to watch James Bond with me without a grumble, but "Airplane!" you've memorized?"

"Oh yeah. It's a comedy classic. And Robert Hays is hot!" Jack grinned, closing in on him and pressing his body to Ianto's back, hands resting on his hips. James Bond. Yet another love of his Ianto's that the Welshman had stumbled back onto. He dropped a kiss on Ianto's neck, just above his collar. "You smell good this morning."

"As opposed to every other morning," Ianto stated, turning in his arms and holding up Jack's coffee.

Jack's grin never faltered, but he took the proffered mug and sipped it, closing his eyes and groaning. "Now that, Ianto Jones, is what a cup of coffee should taste like."

Ianto slipped out of Jack's embrace with the tray of coffees for the rest of the team. "You're batting oh for two," he said, heading out of the kitchenette and toward the work stations.

"A baseball reference," Jack called out, hurrying to catch up with him. "Nice."

"I think you'll note that I know everything, Jack."

"Thank you, Ianto," Tosh murmured, giving the Welshman a smile as he set her coffee down beside her paperwork.

"My pleasure," he replied, moving on to Gwen. "Here you are."

"Oh, I was just dying for a cup," Gwen told him, clutching it with both hands. "You're a god, you are."

“You have no idea,” remarked Jack, behind them.

Gwen snorted and Tosh giggled. Owen’s groan could be heard quite clearly as Jack followed Ianto down to the medical bay.

“You bloody lot are encouraging him,” Owen said loudly, accepting the mug of coffee with a nod at Ianto.

“He doesn’t need encouragement,” Jack replied, shoving his unoccupied hand in his pocket. “He’s amazing all by himself.”

“I was referring to you,” Owen told him, narrowing his eyes.

“So was I,” Jack said, winking as he took another sip of coffee.

“Right. Jack, shouldn’t you be finishing up that report to the Queen?” Ianto asked, tucking the tray under his arm and heading back toward the coffee machine.

“I really should,” Jack replied, walking in that direction. “Get yourself a cup and join me?”

Ianto seemed to consider the request for a moment and then smiled softly, nodding before turning to go make himself his own coffee. Jack smirked, practically trotting into his office and taking a seat at his desk.

A couple of minutes later Ianto appeared at his door, mug in hand, and Jack looked up, inclining his head toward a chair across from him. He watched as the man in the immaculate suit popped a button on his jacket and then sat down, neatly crossing his legs and taking a drink from his cup. God, he was gorgeous.

“Just for the record,” Jack started, folding his hands together atop the desk, “you always smell delicious. It just so happens you are wearing my favorite aftershave.”

“You did buy it for me,” Ianto commented, fixing him with a blank look.

“And your coffee is always perfect. I was simply stating the whole world should take note of your skills in the kitchen.”

“Go on.”

Jack grinned. “I think everyone knows you know everything, by now. You told us before, actually.”

“Did I?” Ianto’s lips quirked slightly. “Well, I rest my case, then.”

Jack chuckled and looked down at his report, picking up his pen and twirling it around in his fingers. He hated reports. With a passion. If it weren’t for the Queen he would just keep putting it off. As it was, he was already a few days behind due to taking Ianto to his appointment and generally slacking off. Ianto had been pushing him to get it completed by

today.

“It would behoove you to stay on Her Majesty’s good side,” the Welshman told him, taking another sip of his coffee.

“I know, I know,” Jack said, sighing.

“Wouldn’t it be easier to write it on there?” Ianto asked, gesturing to the computer.

“Of course,” Jack replied, “but then I’d have to print out a copy for the archives anyway. I can have Tosh scan this in.”

“The other way is quicker.”

“I like writing by hand. It’s soothing.” Ianto made a snort of derision and Jack looked up at him. “You’re welcome to do this for me.”

“Far be it from me to take away from you such a...soothing...activity.”

Jack growled.

tw tw tw tw tw

The pebble beach was unusually busy. Save for the surfers who used it any time of the year, it was generally one of the quieter coastline locales. Since it was a sunny, relatively warm day, however, there were people scattered along the beach, enjoying the weather.

“When you said we were taking the afternoon off I had no idea what you were planning,” Ianto stated, standing beside Jack at the edge of the road.

“That’s the point,” replied Jack, letting a hand rest on the small of Ianto’s back. “I wanted to surprise you. I figured this might get your mind off things for a while.”

“Until Tuesday, you mean.”

Jack nodded, even though Ianto wasn’t watching him. Dr. Singh had called the day after her initial meeting with Ianto and set up the appointment for his next therapy session. When she’d said a week she’d meant it. Jack had then planned their little outing. It wasn’t much, but it was all he could do for now. Ianto was right; they’d been taking a lot of time away from the Hub lately.

He looked down at Ianto and smiled. He was dressed in casual clothes, and Jack liked that as much as he liked the Welshman’s suits. Ianto had been told to pull on a pair of jeans, and he’d chosen to pair them with a red t-shirt advertising some local band. Jack was in a pair of darker jeans and a blue, button-down shirt that resembled his work clothes, except it had short sleeves. Ianto had raised an eyebrow at that.

“What?” Jack had asked, standing in the doorway to Ianto’s flat when he’d picked him up.

“You said casual.”

“This is casual! See the jeans?”

Ianto had just shaken his head, stepping out of his flat and locking the door behind him. They’d made their way to Jack’s secret destination – with Jack driving his own car – and pulled up several minutes later.

“I wish the others would take time off,” Ianto remarked, not taking his eyes off the water. “It would make me feel less guilty. But I suppose someone needs to watch the rift.”

“I’ve demanded they each take an afternoon or morning off next week,” Jack agreed, nodding again. “It’s not good for them to be all about work, all day every day.”

“No, it’s not.”

“Shall we get the chairs and table?” Jack asked after a few moments of silence, removing his hand from Ianto’s back.

“Setting up house, then?”

Jack smirked. “Just a picnic.”

“How romantic.”

Jack frowned. “Are you saying you don’t like my romantic gestures, Ianto?”

He must have sounded more hurt than he’d intended, because Ianto turned to him, concern in his eyes. “No, Jack. Of course I’m not.” He smiled gently, placing a hand on Jack’s chest. “Thank you for wanting to do this.”

Jack reached down and grasped the hand, pulling it to his mouth where he kissed the knuckles. Then he smiled, tugging Ianto along beside him and back to where he’d packed up their needed supplies in the boot of the car.

A few minutes later they were all set. There were two folding, plastic chairs, a small, folding table that matched, and a wooden basket laden with food and drink. Jack unpacked it all on top of the table, scooted up next to Ianto, and dropped the basket on the other side of his chair.

“You packed enough for an army,” Ianto said, his tone light.

“I couldn’t decide on what to bring,” Jack said, shrugging. He pulled out a couple of boxed drinks and set one in front of them both on the table.

“A fruit juice box,” Ianto said, tugging at the straw and holding it up before attempting to push it through into the drink. He failed, frowning. “I can’t get this into the hole properly.”

Jack's eyebrows shot up. "Funny, that never happens to you at home..."

Ianto shot him a look.

Jack cracked a grin, reaching for Ianto's drink and fixing the straw for him. He grabbed an apple and took a bite, settling back in his chair and admiring the view around them. It was a beautiful day; a few clouds in an otherwise clear, blue sky, a cool breeze that was just enough to keep the glare of the sun from being too much, and Ianto. Especially Ianto.

"Growing up where I did," Jack started, swallowing a bit of apple, "we had days like this a lot. My family would pack a lunch and we'd head down to the beach. Always enjoyed that."

"You don't talk about your family much," Ianto told him.

"No, I suppose I don't."

It was silent for a couple of minutes. Jack didn't offer up any other anecdotes and Ianto seemed content with what he'd been told. Neither of them had come from wonderful childhoods. For Jack, the good memories were usually overshadowed by the bad. He reached over and took Ianto's hand, running a thumb over his knuckles. The same knuckles he'd kissed earlier.

"What do you suppose the others are doing?" Ianto asked, taking a sweet roll from their food stash and not removing his hand from Jack's hold.

"Oh, I'd reckon Tosh is running some sort of rift program, Gwen is chatting with Rhys on the phone, and Owen is surfing the net for porn."

Ianto chewed his roll for a moment, swallowing before speaking. "I ordered them pizza before I left," he said, taking another bite.

"Good. Wouldn't want them to be starved and useless for the rest of the day."

Jack put down his apple core, deciding what to have next before taking one of the sandwiches off the table and biting into it vigorously. He really had packed enough for an army, he thought, admiring the collection of food and sweets. Four cheese sandwiches, two crisp packets, several sweet rolls, four drink boxes, a bag of licorice All Sorts, two apples, and a large packet of chocolate biscuits. If they ate it all they'd have to roll themselves into the Hub later.

Jack chuckled. Ianto raised an eyebrow. "I was just re-thinking all the food I packed," Jack explained.

"It is quite a lot."

"Yes it is."

"Good, though," Ianto added, adjusting the position of their hands so their fingers were

entwined. Jack smiled, watching as Ianto picked up a sandwich and examined it. “No pickle?”

“Not this time. We were out.”

“I’ll add that to the Tesco list, then.”

Jack took another bite of his sandwich, and within a minute he’d finished the entire thing. He glanced at the other two sitting invitingly where Jack had unwrapped them. He considered eating another, but thought better of it, reaching instead for his own drink. He fumbled with the straw. It was especially difficult to do one handed. Concentrating, he stabbed the straw at the hole and grinned when it slid into the foil without much fuss.

“It’s the little things, eh Jack?” Ianto asked, and Jack turned to look at him. He was smirking, one eyebrow high on his forehead.

For the second time that day, Jack growled.

tw tw tw tw tw

Due to his state of dress, Ianto did not voice an argument when Jack drove them back to the flat. He’d indicated that he wanted to go back to the Hub for the evening, however, so the others could go home a bit early. Jack hadn’t argued, knowing they’d been out much of the afternoon and it was only fair to take over the monitoring duties.

As Ianto changed in the bedroom, Jack sat on the sofa and reminisced about their day. After their lunch on the beach they’d packed back up and taken a long walk to work off the food. Ianto had insisted they wait at least thirty minutes after they ate, of course. Always the practical one.

They’d then driven out to Castell Coch. That was Ianto’s idea. Jack had never been one for castles, but Ianto’d told him Jack had lived in Wales long enough to start showing an interest in the local culture. Jack had argued that Ianto counted as local culture, but the Welshman had glared, so Jack acquiesced. After all, Ianto was right, and sounding even more like himself than he realized.

Their afternoon had ended with a quick jaunt through the city centre, where Ianto picked up a new shirt and tie. He’d contemplated a suit, an idea Jack had very enthusiastically supported, but at the last minute he’d decided his next suit would again be tailored by the little shop he’d rediscovered. Jack had smiled.

“All set,” Ianto said from behind him, coming in from the hallway.

“Ianto Jones you are breathtaking,” Jack told him, getting to his feet and walking around the couch so he could wrap his arms around the other man.

Ianto blushed, letting his hands rest on Jack’s chest. “Are you going to change here or at the

Hub?”

“Why?” Jack asked, voice husky. “Wanna see me naked?”

“We haven’t the time for that, Jack.”

“Sure we do. Five minutes, max.”

A familiar eyebrow rose. “I’d prefer to do things properly.”

“Hmm. Slow and thorough. I like that idea too.”

“As I said,” Ianto replied, pausing to press a quick kiss to Jack’s lips, “we haven’t the time. We need to get back.”

Jack held on tighter when Ianto started to pull away. He ground his hips into the Welshman’s, unsurprised to find a similar erection starting there, as well. Ianto groaned.

“See? We both want the same thing.” He lowered his hands to Ianto’s arse, tugging him closer. “I can feel how turned on you’re getting.”

“Jack...” Ianto’s response was strained, but Jack wasn’t deterred.

“I want you inside me,” he said, barely a whisper in Ianto’s ear. Jack felt Ianto shiver in his arms. He licked the shell of Ianto’s ear. “Hard, and hot.”

Ianto pulled away from him suddenly and grabbed Jack’s hand. He yanked him out of the lounge and down the hall, heading toward the bedroom.

Two minutes later Jack was panting with Ianto’s fingers inside him. Three minutes after that they were writhing on the bed, Ianto in control and Jack loving every minute of it. Fifteen minutes along they were sharing a shower and Jack was having his hands batted away after trying once again to get Ianto to go for round number two.

Five minutes later Ianto gave in and it was another forty minutes before they returned to the Hub, smiles on both of their faces.

Chapter 17

Jack frowned, watching Ianto attempt to get comfortable on Dr. Singh’s chaise lounge. They were back in the treatment room, so Jack had settled himself into one of the chairs. Dr. Singh had taken her own seat across from him, setting her notebook and pen on her knee. Ianto had taken several minutes to find a good position.

Once Ianto had settled onto his back with hands folded over his midsection and his eyes closed, he sighed. “I think I’m ready now.”

“Alright, Ianto,” Dr. Singh replied, a smile on her face that only Jack could see. “You may have seen this therapy on television, and to be honest it’s very similar to how I handle a session. It’s not a matter of getting you to do anything you’re not comfortable with, but merely a method of allowing me to potentially probe a little deeper into your mind.”

Ianto licked his lips but otherwise didn’t move. “Will I be aware of what I’m saying?”

“Yes and no. While you’ll be able to speak to me and answer my questions, you will be in a sort of trance-like state. Your eyes will remain closed and you will be open to suggestion. In other words, it will be harder for your mind to close off or give a dishonest answer.”

Ianto seemed to consider that for a moment. Jack briefly wondered if he was contemplating any secrets he didn’t want revealed, and then mentally chastised himself for even thinking of it. First of all, it had only been a matter of months since the accident. There weren’t many secrets he could possibly be hiding. And besides that, Jack trusted him. He begrudgingly realized it was only his own insecurities rearing their ugly heads.

“I understand,” Ianto finally replied.

“Then we will begin.”

The session started with a relaxation technique that, as the doctor had indicated, Jack had seen before on television. Ianto was led to a calm place within his own mind, one where he would feel no pain, and feel completely at ease. Jack had seen similar practices used in later centuries, however the process was nearly instantaneous and required only an electrode strategically placed on the temple. He had to admit, however, that this appeared to work just as well. He chalked the differences up to the desire for instant gratification. It only got worse as the centuries went on.

Once Ianto was completely under, Dr. Singh picked up her pen, poised to write.

“We’ll start with some very simple questions. These are baselines, letting us both get a feel for where you are. What is your name?”

“Ianto Jones.”

“And do you have any siblings, Ianto?”

“I have a sister named Rhiannon.”

“Where do you work, Ianto?”

There was a pause, as if Ianto was trying to decide if he should answer, but Jack knew he wouldn’t be able to refuse. It was why they’d chosen Dr. Singh in the first place. They’d needed a doctor they could trust with their secret organization, since Ianto would be under hypnosis and his mind an open door.

“I work for Torchwood.”

“And who is your boss at Torchwood?”

“Jack. Jack Harkness.” There was a smile, and Jack couldn’t help but smile in return.

“You’re smiling, Ianto. Does Jack make you smile?”

“Yes, he makes me smile.”

“That’s good, Ianto. And does he make you happy?”

“Yes he does.”

Jack swallowed the sudden lump in his throat. It was one thing to feel the emotions from Ianto, but to hear it almost third person made it seem even more real. And he couldn’t help the warmth that spread through his chest.

“Are you close to your sister?” Dr. Singh asked, seeming to change tack.

Ianto frowned. “No.”

“Why is that?”

“She doesn’t approve of Jack, and she wants to control me.”

“Is she an older or younger sister, Ianto?”

“She’s older by a few years.”

“How about your parents, are they alive?”

“No. They’re both dead.”

“Okay, and did your sister take care of you after they passed away?”

There was another pause, and Ianto’s fingers wrung together. “After my mum died, my sister moved away. My father died quite a few years later.”

So far this was all information Jack had provided to Ianto after his accident, to give him a base to start from. Nothing out of the ordinary yet. And of course, up until the point they’d discussed Ianto’s parents, Dr. Singh had been privy to the information as well.

“How did your mum die, Ianto?”

“She...became ill.”

“What kind of ill?”

The fingers wrung together again. “Mentally ill. She died in hospital.”

“A mental hospital? Which one?”

“Providence Park.”

“I see.” Dr. Singh scratched out another note. “And your father, Ianto, how did he die?”

“He drank himself to death.”

Jack swallowed again, but this time because his throat was thick with held back tears. Watching Ianto spill his soul was much more trying on him than he'd expected. Sure, he'd heard all of this information before, however it was in bits and pieces. Ianto never opened up this way. He never emptied out his entire life story all at once. He was far too reserved for that. He couldn't imagine how Ianto was feeling.

Dr. Singh seemed to know it was time to pull back a little. “Before they passed away, did you have a good family life?”

“It was okay. My mum was lovely and my father...he...was a little hard on me.”

Jack frowned, trying to remember exactly what Ianto had told him of his childhood. Not much, that was for certain. And Jack had told even less of it back to him after the accident. Just the basics.

“How was he hard on you, Ianto?”

“He wanted me to play the rugby. I loved rugby, but I was very scrawny. Always got hurt.”

“And in school, how did you do there?”

“I got passing marks, but nothing fancy.”

“How did your father feel about that?”

Ianto's hands were wringing together again and he was scowling. “I brought home a poor mark once. Tad slapped me so hard my ears were ringing. He told me no son of his was going to be a failure.”

Both of Jack's eyebrows shot up his forehead and his mouth fell open in silent shock. This wasn't information Ianto had learned after the accident. Jack hadn't known anything about it. He'd assumed Ianto's childhood wasn't good based on how little Ianto had ever shared with him, and the Welshman had once mentioned an accident in the park, but no details, and nothing like this.

It wasn't even in his file, as Ianto had made sure that contained as little about his personal life as possible before he'd joined Torchwood One. There was barely even a mention of Lisa, and her death had been noted by Owen. No details. These were memories, memories Ianto hadn't recovered, until now. Jack wanted to have the doctor bring Ianto out of his trance. She'd done it. His amnesia was gone.

Dr. Singh, however, was still taking notes, and didn't look over at Jack. He wasn't sure if she wasn't aware she'd already broken through the barrier into Ianto's past, or if she did know and was simply an expert at remaining composed. He had to assume it was the latter. But why continue the session?

"Did your father hit you often, Ianto?"

"Yes."

"You said the one time was for a poor mark. When else did he hit you?"

"If I didn't get dinner on the table before he got home. Or if it was too cold because he took longer than expected. He would sometimes get home very late after he'd been at the pub."

"Did you ever tell anyone, Ianto? When you were younger?"

"I told Rhiannon."

"And how did she react?"

"She didn't believe me," Ianto replied. "She told me I was just trying to get attention."

"Did she see any bruises on you?"

"No. She was never around when Tad hit me, and he made sure that any real bruises were where no one could see them. She was already moved out before it got that bad."

Jack had let the tears he'd been suppressing fall silently down his cheeks. What he was hearing was enough to break his heart. He now had no doubts about why Ianto hadn't told him details of his childhood. It was much rougher than even Jack had expected. He'd figured they'd not had much money, living on the estate, and he'd known Ianto didn't have a good relationship with his father after his mother died, but he'd had no idea the man was this abusive.

"Did you ever tell anyone else?"

"No."

"Why is that?"

"I knew they wouldn't believe me. Rhiannon didn't. And Tad said no one would believe me over him."

"How long did you stay at home once your mother passed away?"

"I was twelve when it happened, and I moved to London when I was seventeen."

"To go to University?"

“Yes, initially. But then I was recruited by Torchwood.”

“And you’ve worked there ever since?”

“I moved to Torchwood Cardiff after several years, but yes.”

“Did you talk to your father after you moved away?”

“No. I tried, at first, but he only told me how ungrateful I was, what a disappointment I’d become, and so I stopped ringing him.”

“Did you keep in touch with your sister?”

“Off and on. She had my nephew and a few years later my niece and she was very busy taking care of them. And her husband. She was the one to tell me when Tad passed away.”

“You said she later wanted to control you. Did she act that way while you were in London?”

“Yes.”

“What about when you were younger and both living at home?”

Ianto bit his lip. “Yes.”

“How did she try to control you when you were living at home together?”

“She made me do her chores. And I had to lie to our father when she was with her boyfriends.”

“Did she go out with different boys?”

“Yes. Until she met Johnny.”

“And Johnny is her husband?”

“Yes.”

“Where did she go with these boys, and why did she have you lie for her?”

“Sometimes they would go to a pub. They were usually older than her, so one got her a fake ID to use until she turned eighteen. Sometimes they would stay at home and fool around.”

“How old were you when she started bringing these boys home, Ianto?”

“It was before Mum died, when she’d been at hospital for a short while, so I was ten.”

“And how old was she?”

“Fifteen.”

“And these boys, you said they were older? How much older?”

“Usually eighteen or nineteen. But,” he paused for a moment, swallowing deeply, “one of them was in his twenties.”

Jack wiped at his face and shook his head. In his twenties, messing around with a girl who wasn't even yet legal. That disgusted him. He couldn't imagine what he would have done if that had been Alice and he'd caught the boy. Man, he corrected himself. And that was a lie. He knew exactly what he'd have done. And it wouldn't have been pretty.

“You seem upset about that particular boyfriend, Ianto. Are you upset?”

Ianto's hands were twisting around each other so much Jack was afraid the Welshman might actually hurt himself. He could see how tense the man had become, and if he wasn't mistaken the corners of his eyes were damp. Yes, there was a tear now, making its way down his face. Jack's heart ached and he wanted to hold him.

“Yes.”

“Why are you upset about him, Ianto?”

“I...he...”

“Go ahead, Ianto. Tell me what happened. Did he physically hurt your sister?”

“No. No, he didn't.”

“Did he mentally hurt her? Was he psychologically abusive toward her?”

“No.”

“Was he abusive toward you?”

Another moment of silence and then Ianto's face crumpled. Jack started to stand up but Dr. Singh gave him a sharp shake of the head, holding up her hand to stop him. He took a deep breath and sat back down, every nerve in his body on alert because of the pain written all over Ianto's face.

“Yes.”

Dr. Singh put her hand back down and clutched her pad of paper firmly, pen poised to write. “What happened, Ianto? How did he hurt you?”

Ianto was now curling into a tight ball on his side, arms wrapped around his knees and tears sliding down his face. Jack thought he looked like a little boy, and the urge to hold him only became that much stronger. He'd been ten. What did this boyfriend...this man...do to that little ten year old?

“He...he made me...”

“Take your time, Ianto. It’s okay. You’re safe here.”

“He touched me.”

Jack’s eyes widened. Oh God. No. Not Ianto.

“He touched you where?”

“Everywhere.”

“When did this start, Ianto?”

“A few months after he...started dating my sister.”

“Was it in your house?”

Ianto sniffled and his chin trembled. “Yes. In my room.”

“And where was your sister?”

“In her room.”

“Was this at night?”

“Yes.”

“And your father? Where was he?”

“He usually went back out to...to the pub. After dinner.”

“Was your sister asleep?”

“Yes. Tad wasn’t...home yet.”

Ianto was now trembling from head to toe, and Jack wasn’t faring much better. He knew what was coming. He didn’t want to know. He didn’t want to believe that this could have happened to his Ianto. He closed his eyes, for a moment, not able to watch the torment crossing Ianto’s features. He opened them a moment later when Ianto choked out a sob.

“Did he touch you inappropriately?”

“Y-yes.”

“Did he make you touch him inappropriately?”

“Yes. I didn’t want to.”

“I know, Ianto. And it wasn’t your fault. He was a grown man and you were just a little boy.”

“H-he said I made him want me.”

Jack wanted to throw up. More than that, he wanted to find the man that had done this to Ianto and kill him.

“That’s not true, Ianto. It was he who was in the wrong, not you. He knew better.”

Ianto just cried, folding in on himself even more, if that were possible. Jack hadn’t seen the man this torn up since...ever, he realized. Yes, he was crying when Lisa had to be killed, but not like this. This was...different. This was awful.

“Ianto, I know this is difficult. I know you’re hurting, remembering all this. I don’t think you remembered this happened until right now. But I need you to tell me. Did he have intercourse with you?”

Another sob, and in between trembling breaths Ianto managed to say, “Yes.”

Jack gripped the arms of his chair so hard he thought for sure they’d break. He must have made a noise as Dr. Singh looked over at him, face a picture of complete worry and eyes extremely sad. He realized then that this was almost as hard for her to hear as it was for him, even though she was the professional and he was the one in the relationship with Ianto.

She nodded at him, and put her pad and paper down on the table between the chairs. Leaning forward, she placed her hands firmly on her knees and took a deep breath.

“Okay, Ianto. I’m going to bring you out of this trance now, but I want you to be aware you’re going to feel two distinct emotions. One is going to be a tremendous feeling of relief at having regained your memories from before the accident, but the other is going to be one of almost total confusion for a moment, as you reconcile what we’ve discussed here today with what you’ve known for several months, and what you previously thought you knew.”

Ianto was still trembling but he seemed relieved he wasn’t going to have to answer any more questions and he was slowly regaining his breath. By the time Dr. Singh was ready to bring him back to the surface, he’d relaxed and was laying down flat again, arms once again folded over his stomach. Jack didn’t understand how it all worked, but he was glad to see the Welshman was no longer in a state of almost complete despair. His heart couldn’t take it.

When Ianto was told to open his eyes, however, Jack held his breath. For a moment, Ianto’s face broke out into a smile and he sat up, looking between the doctor and Jack with almost childish glee.

“Jack! I remember! I remember, Jack!”

Jack looked to Dr. Singh and she gave him a small smile and nod. He wasted no time in getting to his feet, taking the few strides needed to get to Ianto’s side and sitting down beside him.

“That’s fantastic, Ianto.” He pulled the Welshman into his arms and planted a kiss on the top of his head. And he waited. It didn’t take more than a minute or so.

“J-Jack?” The voice was unsure, shaky, and Ianto pulled back from him so their eyes could meet. His face fell. “Jack. Oh God. Oh God, Jack, no. No!”

Jack tugged him back into his arms and held him tight, looking over his shoulder at the doctor. She got to her feet, giving him a sympathetic look, and made her way to the door.

“I’ll be right outside. Come get me when you’re both ready.”

He nodded at her and barely heard the door click shut behind her before he was burying his face in Ianto’s neck and matching him tear for tear.

Chapter 18

Jack set a cup of steaming tea on the table in front of Ianto. The man was curled into the side of the couch, staring straight ahead of him. He’d been there since they’d arrived back at the flat, resisting Jack’s attempts to further comfort him.

“We need to talk about it at some point,” said Jack softly, sitting down on the couch beside him.

“Please, Jack, just...let it be.”

“Will you drink your tea at least?” Ianto’s eyes flitted to the cup and then back up to a space somewhere in the distance. “Please?”

Ianto nodded, but didn’t look at him and didn’t move to pick up the cup. Jack knew how devastated the Welshman was. It was his entire childhood coming back to him in a roll of emotions, and feelings he hadn’t had to deal with in many years were flooding his mind. Like every victim of abuse Jack had ever come into contact with or heard about, Ianto was blaming himself. And nothing Jack said to him seemed to help.

“Would you like me to run you a bath?”

Ianto didn’t answer at first and Jack wasn’t sure he would, but eventually he shook his head. “No thank you.”

“Okay. I’m going to fix us something to eat.”

Getting up from his place on the couch Jack walked into the kitchen. He wasn’t much of a cook but he didn’t think a takeaway was appropriate at a time like this. Instead he would make a recipe he remembered his ex wife making for him decades ago, a simple meatloaf. It wasn’t fancy, but it was comfort food, and Ianto needed comfort.

As he pulled the ingredients out he sighed. At some point he’d have to contact Dr. Singh to

see what he could do for the man. Obviously it would take time, but he wanted to be there for him, to be someone Ianto could turn to. Unfortunately Ianto wasn't ready for that yet.

After Dr. Singh had left the room he'd held the Welshman tight, trying to be the support he needed as he cried out his frustration and pain at the injustice of his situation. That had only lasted a few minutes, however, and then Ianto had stiffened and pulled back.

While they'd shared a much closer emotional relationship after the accident, and Ianto had been significantly more open about his feelings, it was as if the triggering of his memory had also reconstructed the wall that Ianto had carefully built around his heart. He'd shut him out, and Jack wasn't sure how to get back in.

He defrosted the meat in the microwave. Ianto couldn't stand when he did that, usually telling him that the meat tasted differently when it wasn't allowed to defrost naturally. Given the state Ianto was in at the moment, however, Jack figured Ianto wouldn't mind.

Once the meat was ready Jack added the rest of the ingredients, placing the loaf he'd created into the oven to bake. He put everything away and washed his hands, moving to the door of the kitchen and watching Ianto sitting on the couch. He was slowly sipping his tea and Jack took a breath of relief. At least it was something.

Jack returned to the lounge and took the seat beside Ianto once more. He wanted to reach out and put a hand on his knee, but the last time he'd tried that Ianto had jumped and moved away from him. He didn't want any physical contact right now.

"How's your tea?"

Ianto swallowed his mouthful. "It's fine, Jack. Thank you."

"Would you like to watch a movie? James Bond, maybe?"

Ianto seemed to consider that for a moment. "The World is Not Enough?"

Jack smiled. "Your wish is my command."

Getting to his feet, Jack went over to the movie cabinet and pulled out the DVD, opening it and placing the disc in the machine. He returned to the couch to sit next to Ianto, grabbing the remote and turning on the television and DVD player. Just as he was about to hit play Ianto's mobile phone rang.

Ianto jumped, looking down at the phone. When his eyes widened in fear Jack frowned, putting down the remote and picking up the mobile. The number displayed was Rhiannon's, and Jack immediately understood. The last thing Ianto needed at the moment was another reminder of his childhood when he obviously wanted to get his mind off of it.

"Okay if I reject the call?" he asked Ianto. The Welshman nodded, eyes still wide. Jack ignored the call and turned the mobile off. "There. No harm done."

"I can't talk to her," Ianto murmured, sinking back into the corner of the couch.

“I know.”

“I can’t face her.”

“I understand, Ianto.”

The Welshman looked at him with sad eyes. “She’ll never forgive me.”

Jack’s brow furrowed. “Forgive you? What do you need forgiveness for?”

“I treated her badly.”

Jack shook his head. “Ianto, she treated you badly, not the other way around. She didn’t want to accept that you had your own life, and other people who cared about you. That you had me.”

Ianto swallowed, looking down at his hands. “How can I tell her?”

“About what happened?” The other man nodded. “You just do. When you’re ready. But not until then.”

“She was right, Jack. I needed her. I couldn’t look after myself.”

Jack moved closer to Ianto, ignoring the wall between them and taking Ianto’s hand in his. “When you were a little boy, yes. Yes, you needed her. And she wasn’t there for you. She should have protected you, Ianto.”

Ianto’s chin began to tremble and Jack wrapped his arm around him, drawing him closer. The Welshman didn’t fight him, allowing Jack to pull him against his chest. When the tears started to fall Jack knew they were at the beginning of the healing process. The man was starting to accept what had happened to him. But there would be a long road ahead of them.

An hour later, Ianto was dozing on the sofa. Jack was watching him sleep, contemplating moving him into the bedroom where he would undoubtedly be more comfortable. He didn’t want to wake him up, however, and so when the timer chimed for their dinner to be ready, Jack winced. Ianto didn’t jerk awake, though, instead blinking his eyes open slowly and then yawning.

“Hey sleepyhead, dinner’s ready. You hungry?”

Ianto gave him a small smile. “Famished.”

“Good. I’ll get the food ready. Are you okay with us just eating in here?”

Ianto murmured an affirmative and Jack headed into the kitchen. He dished up their meals, putting the leftovers in the refrigerator, and poured them a couple of waters. Making his way back to the lounge with Ianto’s plate and glass he saw that Ianto had the remote in his hand.

“We didn’t get to watch the movie.”

“No we didn’t,” Jack agreed, setting down Ianto’s dinner and drink. “Go ahead and start it and I’ll grab my food.”

A few minutes later they were settled onto the couch with their meal, quietly watching the film. Jack wasn’t really a Bond fan, but Ianto’s love of the series was enough for him. Besides, he didn’t mind a good adventure drama, and the men who’d played James Bond over the years were nothing to thumb his nose at. He was especially fond of the bathing shorts they sometimes sported. And the Bond girls? Wow.

When the movie ended Jack cleaned up, even though Ianto protested. He thought he should be the one to do it. “I just want you to take it easy,” Jack had argued, and had taken the dishes into the kitchen. He’d then washed them, dried them, put them away, and proceeded to wipe down every available surface.

“You didn’t have to do all that,” Ianto told him when he’d returned to the lounge. “I could have done something.”

“You always do,” Jack replied, smiling gently. “It’s time I took care of you for a while.”

“I don’t want to be a charity case.”

Jack frowned. “Do you really think that’s what’s happening here?”

Ianto sighed, shaking his head. “No. I guess not. I just...”

“I know,” said Jack. “You’ve been dealt one hell of a blow and you’re still reeling. But you just found out today. It’s going to take time to get back to normal.”

“My normal isn’t what I thought it was.”

“Yeah. C’mon.” Jack reached out a hand to Ianto and to his relief, Ianto took it, pulling himself off the couch. “I’ll run that bath for you.”

Ianto smiled, following him out to the hall. He didn’t let go of Jack’s hand.

Chapter 19

The day that Ianto decided to confront his sister was one Jack was not prepared for. While several months had passed, and Dr. Singh had seen the Welshman quite a few times since he’d recovered his memories, it seemed too soon. But Ianto insisted he was ready, and Jack couldn’t deny him the chance to clear the air. He only hoped it would be a day of healing and not more pain.

Ianto had insisted on coming back to work less than a week after his discovery. Jack had asked him to at least take a couple of weeks, but again the man was determined to do things

his way. His stubbornness was always something Jack had admired, so he couldn't do more than sigh and throw his hands up.

The welcome the Welshman received when he stepped into the Hub was extraordinary. Jack hadn't given his team the details, of course, but he had explained that Ianto's memory had returned and that he was going through some emotional upheaval over it. Tosh had hugged Ianto to within an inch of his life, Gwen had linked her arm through his and demanded that he and Jack join her and Rhys for dinner, and Owen had dragged him away, ostensibly to discuss medical supplies. But Jack knew he wanted to give Ianto a chance to talk, and also himself an opportunity to give his patient a thorough examination.

Ianto had handled all the attention with grace, never once attempting an escape to the archives or throwing a desperate look for rescue Jack's way. And Jack was extremely proud of him for it. With everything Ianto had gone through, he had every right to want to flee. It just showed Jack that the man was being honest when he said he was ready to come back to work.

When Ianto had been back to work for three months without mentioning the events of his childhood, Jack assumed he was alright with how things stood. After all, if it was eating him up inside, he would have said something, right? In fact, the moment Ianto mentioned wanting to speak to his sister they'd been calmly sitting in a restaurant, sipping wine.

"I've called Rhiannon," Ianto had stated, putting down his glass and picking up his fork.

"Sorry, you did what?" Jack replied, eyes wide.

Ianto smiled around his bite of food, swallowing before speaking. "I called my sister. I told her I had something to discuss with her. She's invited us up for the weekend."

Jack just stared across the table for a moment. "You're ready to confront her?"

"I am."

"But you've been doing well, Ianto. Are you sure you want to bring this all up again?"

Ianto frowned. "I've allowed myself time to come to terms with what happened, yes, but I still need to tell my sister. I can't allow this to stand between us. Dr. Singh has taught me that in order to complexly heal, I have to release the burden. You must understand that, right?"

Jack sighed. "Yeah, I do, sorry." He gave the Welshman a small smile. "When do we leave?"

And so there they were, driving up to Rhiannon's and Johnny's place once more. Ianto had insisted on driving, Jack spending much of the time tapping a rhythm on his own knee and staring at the landscape as they passed. He was nervous. He couldn't help it. The last time he'd seen Ianto's sister things hadn't gone over so well. But Ianto told him that Rhiannon was extremely apologetic on the phone, begging him to forgive her behavior. It went a long way toward easing this reunion.

"It's going to be fine," Ianto said, placing a hand over Jack's and effectively Jack out of his own little world.

“When did you become so wise?” Jack asked, teasingly.

“This isn’t work, Jack,” Ianto replied, raising an eyebrow as he briefly glanced in his direction. “You don’t always have to be the strong one.”

Jack shook his head, turning his hand over to entwine their fingers. “I’m just worried about you, that’s all.”

“I’ll be alright,” Ianto stated, squeezing his hand before putting it back on the steering wheel. “I’m ready for this.”

They parked in front of the house and Jack helped Ianto carry their things to the front door. He wasn’t looking forward to spending the weekend with Ianto’s family. What if it all went wrong and they needed get away? Knowing they were only there for an afternoon would have been so much easier. But Ianto had agreed to stay until Sunday, and that meant Jack had to stay as well.

The door opened before they had a chance to knock or ring the bell. Rhiannon stood there with a tentative look on her face. When Ianto smiled, however, Rhiannon pushed past the door and flung herself into his embrace.

“I’m so sorry, Ianto,” she murmured, holding him tight.

“I know,” he replied, hugging her just as tightly.

They stood that way for a couple minutes while Jack stood to the side, relieved. When the two siblings finally broke apart, Rhiannon turned toward Jack, holding out her hand. Jack took it, and then pulled her into a hug of his own. “We’re family,” he whispered. If they were all a little teary-eyed as she led them into the house no one mentioned it.

The kids were out with Johnny for a couple of hours, as Rhiannon said it would probably be better to discuss whatever it was that Ianto wanted to talk about without them at home. Both Ianto and Jack agreed that was for the best. And as they sat with cups of coffee, a plate of homemade biscuits on the table between them, Ianto told his sister what had happened to him as a child.

Jack immediately felt like the biggest arse in the known universe, having assumed that Rhiannon would handle the news badly and blame her brother. Instead, she was inconsolable, shaking and sobbing into her mug. Jack had to take it away from her before she spilled it, setting it on the table as Ianto knelt at her feet in front of her chair and held her.

“Oh God, Ianto,” she cried, pulling back from him with a miserable expression. “How could I have let this happen? Oh, my poor baby brother.”

Jack looked down, swallowing the thick lump in his throat. He started to get up to give them some privacy by Ianto’s head whipped around and he fixed him with a pleading look. “Please stay, Jack.”

Jack nodded, settling back down into the couch and leaning his elbows on his knees. He put his head in his hands and rubbed at his face and scalp. Even though he wasn't Rhiannon, he knew exactly what she was going through. He, too, was an older sibling, and he, too, knew what it felt like to let his little brother down. It was up to them to make sure their brothers stayed safe, and they had both failed horribly.

"I thought he was a good person," Rhiannon sobbed, crossing her arms across her chest. "I let him into our house. I let him stay the night. Oh God, forgive me, Ianto!"

Ianto grabbed her shoulders, holding her still. "I do forgive you, Rhiannon," he said through his own tears. "It was Gavyn who was responsible, not you."

"But I let him..."

"You were asleep," he insisted, shaking his head. "You were still a child yourself! He was the adult."

"I'll never forgive myself."

Ianto laid his head on his sister's knees. "If Dad had been around, this never would have happened."

"Dad was sick, Ianto," she whispered, brushing fingers through his hair.

Ianto raised his head. "No, he was drunk, not sick. He should have been home. He should have been the parent. Gavyn would have never been allowed near us if he had been!"

Brother and sister stared at each other for a moment before Rhiannon nodded, sniffing. "But he wasn't. And I had to be the adult." She shook her head, both hands cupping his face. "I failed you. I am so, so sorry."

After that there were only more tears. Jack waited patiently, letting them get their emotions and apologies out into the open. It wouldn't do to rush this, as both Ianto and his sister needed to get past this to heal properly. He hoped that once the raw feelings were processed, they'd be closer than they'd been before. He wished he'd had the opportunity with his own brother.

By the time Johnny had returned with Mica and David, Ianto and Rhiannon had cried and talked everything out. Jack knew she and her husband would more than likely discuss everything later, but for now it was family time. They ate dinner, thoroughly enjoyed dessert, and played board games until it was time for the children to go to bed.

After a movie and some more coffee, Johnny and Rhiannon excused themselves as well, leaving Jack and Ianto to settle into the lounge for the night. The couch doubled as a pull out bed, already furnished with sheets and a duvet. They took turns in the bathroom and then settled back on the pillows Ianto had pulled out from the closet in the hallway.

Jack tucked an arm around the Welshman, drawing him close and pressing a kiss to the side of his head. "Are you alright?"

Ianto sighed, resting his head on Jack's shoulder and placing a hand on his chest. "As well as can be expected, I imagine."

"It's going to take time for things to get back to normal between you."

"That's just it," Ianto replied, snuggling closer, "I don't want things to go back to the way they were. Our normal was never good. I want things to be better."

"I think you're already halfway there," he supplied, smiling against Ianto's hair.

"Maybe you're right," Ianto agreed.

They were silent for a few moments, and Jack just enjoyed listening to the Welshman's breathing. Things could have gone so differently. He was proud of how well Ianto was handling everything that had happened to him, proud to be able to help him through it.

"Thank you," Ianto told him, lifting his head and pressing a kiss to Jack's chin.

Jack's eyes widened. "For what?"

"For being here for me. For supporting me."

"Where else would I be?"

"I don't know," said Ianto, settling down again and drawing patterns on Jack's shirt. "Out there somewhere, having adventures. I know you never meant to stay at Torchwood permanently."

Jack frowned, not having realized Ianto understood so much about his time there on Earth. "Torchwood might not be permanent for me," he said slowly, "but you are."

"Am I?"

"Yes, Ianto Jones, you are. As long as you're here there's nowhere else I want to be."

Ianto snickered. "That was quite possibly the sappiest thing I've ever heard you say."

Jack chuckled, unable to disagree. "It might be sappy but it's true."

"Then I say again, thank you, Jack."

Closing his eyes, Jack wrapped both arms around the Welshman. "You're welcome, Ianto."

Several minutes passed but nothing more was said between them. Ianto's steady breathing let Jack know he had fallen asleep. Jack didn't expect sleep would claim him for quite some time. The Jack before Ianto's accident would have slid out of bed and climbed to some rooftop to look out on his city. But post-accident Jack was a different person.

Ianto still had a long journey ahead before he was completely healed, and Jack knew there would always be emotional scarring, so Jack stayed in bed, holding Ianto close and keeping any nightmares at bay. Ianto was peaceful when he slept, and Jack was happy to hold him and maintain that peace for as long as possible.

He finally nodded off an hour later, still holding the other man close to his heart.