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BOOKS



TORCHWOOD



Turn Into
Rhi

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Turn Into

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Torchwood | NC-17 | Jack/Ianto, Gwen/Rhys, Tosh/Owen (slight) | 43,000 words

The Arde'thi meant it as a gift; unfortunately for Ianto, it wasn't one he precisely wanted. Now, he's a woman and has to deal with his sudden change – especially since it doesn't look like he can change back. What does that mean for his relationship with Jack? How does that change him and his colleagues at Torchwood Three?

Despite its cursory resemblance to *Almost Perfect*, this is not based on that novel. I have not read *Almost Perfect* so any resemblance to plot points from that book are completely coincidental. This takes place sometime after Reset, with canon events occurring as aired on the show, with one exception:

Owen is not killed or resurrected with the Glove. Events after that are AU and the time line for Torchwood season 2 is not followed. Ultimately, this is a story about a person dealing with a forced gender change, especially one he doesn't want. Information on transgendered persons and transexuals obtained from: [PFLAG](#), [Youth Resource](#), and other pages linked on those websites. Lastly, inspiration for this fic came from the amazing team of Auburn and Mona in the SGA fandom with their fic [Ardhanarishvara](#).

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Tuesday, February 17, 2009

The Arde'thi meant it as a gift - a means of thanking Jack for his assistance in repairing their ship and offering what amounted to guest rites in their culture. They had given both Tosh and Ianto samples of their technology in return for their assistance in servicing their ship's engines. Their aid had come only because Jack had recognized the ship and had walked them through the steps necessary to get the engine back into shape. But their gratitude for Jack's assistance went beyond his advice on how to successfully repair their engines; without his approval, the Arde'thi likely would have suffered imprisonment or never gotten off of Earth. Jack had provided the Arde'thi with help and they wished to present to him a gift of equal value. Unfortunately, what they considered a great gift and honor - one of the highest in their culture, though this would take Torchwood-Three a few days to discover - did not translate as the same to the humans. Immediately upon dispensing their gift, their ship took off, leaving the Torchwood team staring in shock at one of their own.

"Oh my God!" Tosh exclaimed as she looked at Ianto.

"Jack," began Ianto, his normally rich voice at a higher pitch, though still sexy as hell, in Jack's opinion. "What the hell just happened?!" Each word clipped alerting Jack to the fact his lover did not exactly appreciate what just happened to him.

"Um..." Jack looked hopelessly at Ianto, his eyes quickly cataloguing the differences in Ianto's form.

Ianto still remained tall, though he had lost the broadness of shoulder that had defined the Welshman in the past. His form had morphed into that of a svelte and sexy woman, complete with long curly brown hair that cascaded down his - her - his? back. Eyes - still as blue as ever and clouded with unspoken emotion gazed at Jack under lush eye lashes, as if Jack had all the answers to the current predicament in which Ianto found himself. 'But I don't! Damn it!' Jack thought, panicking a bit. 'I just recognized their ship. I haven't seen the Arde'thi in years, and never managed to learn about their culture. Jack's eyes roamed lower, noting how Ianto's new nicely shaped breasts strained the confines of the dress shirt he had donned this morning. Ianto shifted awkwardly beneath his gaze, and Jack traced with his eyes the way Ianto's new hips flared, distending the fit of his trousers, showing the world that Ianto Jones now bore the form of a woman.

"Jack..." Ianto's voice rose at end of his name, almost pleading for Jack to tell him everything would be okay. Tosh still looked at the two of them in shock.

Ianto's comment acted as an impetus for Jack to actually move his limbs, to shake off the state of shock in which he had found himself. He slowly gathered Ianto into his arms, holding him (her? God, how the hell did he refer to Ianto now?). He closed his eyes. Perhaps all of this didn't really happen - a nightmare?

Except, Jack did not have that sort of luck. And while he didn't really *mind* the change, he didn't think Ianto would react in a very sanguine manner should his new gender become permanent.

“We’ll figure this out,” he assured Ianto. He turned his attention back towards Tosh. “Tosh, pack up the SUV with the equipment and new tech. We’ll head back to the Hub and see if we can’t figure all of this out,” he ordered. She nodded, wide-eyed and full of disbelief, before scampering off to do as he had said. Jack remained as he was: offering Ianto what comfort he could. Hopefully, they could decipher all of this out soon, and Ianto could return to his proper gender.

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Ianto sat on the exam table in autopsy as Owen finished his examination, trying to determine just what had happened to Ianto, well besides the obvious. Jack had instructed Gwen to search the digitized archives to see if she could find any information on the Arde’thi; he would have normally asked Tosh to do that - or sent her to the archives, but he had instead sent her to find Ianto some clothes and other supplies. This left Jack with the task of entering Ianto’s domain - the archives. He hoped he could find something - anything really - that might answer the questions of just why the Arde’thi had decided to switch Ianto’s gender, and for how long such a switch might last. He didn’t actually like leaving Ianto alone with Owen, but he also felt that the sooner they figured out what had happened, the better.

Once in the archives, Jack went to section A, looking to see what Torchwood had on the Arde’thi. He had personally met them once, many years ago in the future, when he was still a Time Agent. The Agency had ignored the Arde’thi, so he didn’t really know much about them, really only the bare minimum. He recognized their technology though, and in fact had... appropriated one of their ships once upon a time. This, of course, explained his familiarity with the engine, and why he could instruct Tosh and Ianto on the best and safest means of repairing it.

In all, his interactions with the Arde’thi had never amounted to much; he regretted not taking the time to learn more about them, but then, he had never thought he would find them on Earth in the early 21st Century. He frowned as he looked through the file cabinets before him. He knew Ianto had the archives very organized - he considered it his special project, so his heart dropped in disappointment when he saw a far too thin file on labeled “Arde’thi” in Ianto’s neat hand. Skimming through it, he could see that it held only the most basic of information - and certainly nothing on why they might want to change someone’s gender.

Damn, Jack thought. He had hoped, despite knowing the improbability of it, that the archives would have *something* helpful for him to tell Ianto. He hated this, hated knowing that he couldn’t help Ianto in this, fix what had happened. He admitted to himself a slight fear at what all of this would do to Ianto and their relationship.

A relationship that was still quite fragile, for all that it had moved beyond whatever they had had before he had left with the Doctor.

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lanto's thoughts chased around themselves as he tried to make sense of just what had happened to him. He didn't really know *what* to think, still feeling the shock of his new form. About the only aspect of this that didn't freak him out was Jack's assurances that the other man would not leave him. He sighed.

"Well Tea Boy, you are definitely a woman," Owen commented, placing the scanner he had just finished using on a nearby table. lanto raised his eyes to meet Owen's, catching the half-leer that had emerged on the doctor's face.

"Don't look at me like that!" lanto growled - or at least tried to. Unfortunately, it lacked the normal threat, as his voice just did not have the same bite in its higher pitch.

"Yeah, yeah," Owen replied with a smirk. "Who knew you would make such an attractive bird?"

lanto raise his eyebrow at that. "Thanks... I think," he finally said. Was Owen actually *flirting* with him?

"Ahem!" Tosh cleared her voice softly from where she stood on the landing, a shopping bag at her feet. lanto smiled wanly at his friend. "I picked up some basics for you, lanto. I hope you like all of it."

"Thanks, Tosh," lanto smiled tremulously up at her. He turned his attention back towards Owen. "Are we done here?"

"Yeah. Go on then," he said, nodding his head towards Tosh. "Get into those clothes Toshie got for you."

lanto smiled weakly again, and hopped off the table. He grimaced as the breast he had suddenly developed jiggled loosely underneath the shirt that no longer fit properly. He sighed as he walked up the stairs, grimacing as he got used to his new center of gravity. He felt ungainly, completely not himself, alien in a way that Torchwood had not managed to do to him before, not in the four years he had worked for the Institute and after all that he had seen.

Tosh handed him the bag of her purchases to him, smiling sympathetically. He took the bag and headed towards the showers to change. He ignored Gwen's looks of concern, as she pretended to work on the task Jack had given to her.

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Tosh watched, worried, as lanto headed to the showers, the bag in his hands. She had no idea what exactly had happened, but only hoped it would not permanently change lanto. But even if it did, she vowed to herself to stick with him regardless of what the future brought.

"Jack, I'm back," Tosh told him, toggling her comm and heading to her station.

"Good. See what our friends from UNIT have on the Arde'thi. I'm hoping their files might have more than ours." He sighed and Tosh could hear the worry and frustration in his voice. "There's not a lot here, unfortunately."

"We'll figure it out," Tosh encouraged. There wasn't anything else she could say really.

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Ianto looked at himself in the mirror. He gazed at a stranger. Oh, he could find some similarities between his new form and his old, could still make out the features he had considered his own, but he still *looked* different, not quite him. It bothered him at a level he didn't really have the time to examine. He inspected his appearance; Tosh had truly only bought him the basics, not wishing to bother him by taking a full set of measurements, so the new clothing hung on him in a way he would not have tolerated in his old form. At least not if he went out in public. Still the clothes she had bought for him did provide some comfort in their simplicity. He carefully folded the suit he had donned this morning and placed it in his locker. He took another look at his reflection, sighing deeply. Tosh had gotten him a loose pullover, large enough to hide the fact he went braless, yet something else for which he had to thank her. All of this traumatized him as it were; he did not need to add the experience of wearing a bra on top of it. She had also gotten him a pair of track pants and a pair of trainers that fit his now smaller feet better than the shoes he had worn earlier.

All of this demonstrated why he liked Tosh. No fuss for him, nothing that would make him more upset than he already felt. Just simple clothing, reminding him of the hopefully temporary nature of his condition. No need for posh and fitted suits, not yet. Why waste money on something he would have to donate to the charity shops once they figured out how to reverse his condition? Ianto clung desperately to that idea, though he suspected he could be living a fool's dream at this point.

His newly lengthened hair had gotten tangled, so he ran a comb through it, frowning as the teeth of the tool hit snarls. He patiently worked the tangles free before gathering the mass and pulling it into a hair clip. He thanked god for his sister; she had forced him more than once in the past to brush out her hair, so he had some experience in doing this. Lisa, of course, had had short hair that had not required a lot of maintenance, so he did feel a bit out of practice. Also, he discovered a difference in combing one's own hair versus another's. Yet something else to attribute to his new change. Depending on how long his... condition lasted, he would have to figure out how to handle the length. In the short time he had had the long hair, he had already found its tendency to get in his face annoying. He idly wondered how Gwen and Tosh dealt with having longish hair on a daily basis. Perhaps he would ask Tosh for recommendations.

Oh god. He couldn't believe he was already making contingencies for the long-term. He frowned and then sighed, slumping and staring blankly at his mirrored reflection. It was his nature to make plans for the future. In fact his organizational skills lent him the aura of prescience and allowed his competency in performing his tasks. So perhaps this planning of his did not actually *mean* his acceptance of his condition. Because he very much did not wish to remain a woman.

Jack called for him over the comm. Time to face the others. He squared his shoulders, placed a placid expression on his face and departed for the conference room. No way in hell did he wish to give Owen more ammunition, or have to deal with Gwen's effusive "compassion" over his situation.

If he pretended hard enough, maybe none of this would be as bad as he expected it.

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“Alright, people, what do we have?” Jack asked. While he had not found anything useful in the archives, he hoped one of the others had found something. Jack ignored the icy feeling of terror that had yet to leave him since the Arde’thi had departed. He strongly suspected he and his team would not find a quick and easy solution to this and while it didn’t bother him overly, he worried about the long-term effects on his lover. Ianto had already dealt with a lot of shit because of Torchwood; he didn’t need anything else ruining his life. For all that Ianto displayed a worldly air, he was still very much a product of 20th century Earth. People didn’t just change their gender on a whim and those that had, didn’t find the greatest acceptance by the majority of people. Also, those that did opt to change their gender chose to do so, something that was very much *not* the case with Ianto.

So no, he had no desire to see this destroy Ianto.

He listened as Owen basically confirmed that Ianto had changed from a fully functional human male to a fully functional female. “You’re a woman in every way, as far as I can tell,” Owen finished. Jack felt a frisson of concern when Ianto accepted Owen’s diagnosis by curling his hands around the coffee mug in front of him and merely shrugging. It seemed this concerned Owen as well, as he peered closely at his teammate, waiting for the quip that would normally accompany the finish of Owen’s commentary. When nothing came, Owen looked to Jack with concern.

Personally, while he understood Owen’s response, he also had no idea why Owen hadn’t expected Ianto’s lack of one. Having a gender change forced on oneself did not exactly make for a normal situation. “Thank you, Owen,” Jack said, shaking his head slightly at Owen’s questioning look. Best to get this all dealt with now and he would give Ianto the comfort he surely needed after everyone left.

“Gwen, did you find anything?” he continued, not really expecting anything from her. Not surprisingly, she did not have anything to add. He turned to Tosh, hoping she had something - anything really - to give Ianto some modicum of hope (or closure, he forced himself to admit).

Tosh bit her lip in the way she did when she didn’t have the best of news. On the other hand, she looked Jack in the eye rather than avoiding his gaze as she did when just had bad news. “UNIT has a file on the Arde’thi but it’s not digitized yet. It’s a part of their archives that is still waiting to be processed. However, I spoke to my friend and he promised to send a copy of the file to us by courier.”

“Do you know if it contains anything helpful?” Jack asked.

“Maybe. A lot of the file contains information from interviews with some Arde’thi visitors during the ‘70s. He just skimmed through the information, but he did say it contained information on the Arde’thi culture. So hopefully there will be information on why they would... they would want to... um. Well, change a person’s gender.” She darted a quick look at Ianto, who showed no response, before returning her attention to Jack. “Given the circumstances in which the change occurred, I think we can hypothesize that they thought the change would be... welcomed.”

Owen snorted. “What - they thought Tea Boy wanted to be a woman, so they zapped him?”

Ianto lifted his head and glared. "Owen!" Jack called out, hoping to stop anything before it started.

Tosh shrugged. "We already know that the Arde'thi believe that a gift of thanks is owed to anyone that aids them if they need help. So they gave Ianto and I some tech for our help in repairing their engine. But from conversations with the two that helped us, the Arde'thi were very much aware that the repairs only happened because of Jack. So the... um... change has to have *something* to do with their gift to Jack, because the only one of us who *didn't* receive anything in thanks was Jack. I mean," and here she frowned, "I don't think they meant the technology for me and Jack." She looked apologetic. "I have no idea why they would think changing Ianto was a good gift for Jack, but we're probably missing a cultural understanding."

"Wait, you're saying Ianto is supposed to be a *gift* for Jack?" Gwen asked. Her eyes wide, her tone incredulous and all Jack wanted to do was smack her for insensitivity and disbelief that Ianto could ever satisfy Jack. Her remark caused Ianto to jerk his head up, long hair slipping from its clip and whipping around his face in a manner so unfamiliar and alien that it made Jack bite his lip. Tosh had drawn a breath to say something - what, Jack didn't have a clue and suspected even she didn't know - but it was Owen that surprised him. Acerbic Owen, who had some sort of strange relationship with Ianto that Jack still didn't understand, despite his attempts.

"And why would that be such a surprise, Cooper?" Owen growled out, his eyes narrowed and arms crossed in aggression.

"But, but..." Gwen stuttered. "I just..." she trailed off, not having anything to say that would make her initial remark seem any less crass that it had been. Of all their team, she had always expressed the most doubt about the relationship between Jack and Ianto, seeming unable to believe that Jack would actually choose to spend time with Ianto outside the Hub, to have romantic dinners and go to the cinema and spend lazy Sundays in bed together. Unwilling to accept that Jack and Ianto had a real relationship this time, not just a casual shag to release frustration and tension.

"Is there anything else?" Ianto's quiet voice broke through the highly charged atmosphere.

"What?" Jack asked.

"Is there anything else? Or can I go home?"

Jack looked - really looked at his lover. He saw how much this strained him, how tired he appeared and how close he looked to breaking. He wanted nothing more than to grab Ianto, to hold him and hug him and assure him that Jack would not abandon him through this. But... Jack needed to do his job, be the leader he claimed to be. And Ianto needed his space, needed to wrap his head around what had happened and what his future held. If Ianto wanted Jack with him, he would be there, but he would wait until the other asked. So. He took a deep breath and slowly let it out. "Yeah, you can head home. In fact, everyone can go. But Ianto, I want to speak with you before you head out."

Tosh and Owen nodded, pushing back their chairs and gathering their files, obeying him. Tosh hugged Ianto gently whispering something in his ear before leave the conference room. Gwen moved slower,

and in fact moved towards Ianto, but Owen grabbed her arm and steered her away. Jack caught his eye and nodded in thanks. Ianto did not need Gwen's act of sympathy and empathy. Not now.

In many ways, Gwen brought something to Torchwood-Three that Jack liked. Her dogged determination, her belief in humanity - all of that had not exactly flourished in Three before her arrival. Or at least not since he had taken over as leader at the Millennium. He had, quite unintentionally - or at least, he hoped so - hired broken people, people who could devote themselves wholly and fully to Torchwood. But Gwen had Rhys and a love for life outside of Torchwood. She believed in the best of all things, and despite all she had seen in the last year of working for Torchwood, she still had that spark that had first inspired him to hire her.

Despite all that, she also had a serious blind spot when it came to her teammates, seeming unable to view them outside of whatever category in which she had placed them in her mind. She continued to flirt with Owen, despite their affair having ended months ago - on his part from what Jack could tell. Tosh received insincere attempts of friendship. And Gwen continued to see Ianto as poor and misunderstood, someone whose tragic past had forced him to work for Jack at Torchwood-Three.

"Jack," Ianto cleared his throat delicately. Jack returned his attention to his lover.

"Sorry," Jack apologized. "Was just thinking of something."

Ianto raised an eyebrow at his remark. "I'm sure it's fascinating, but I would love to get home sometime before my neighbor does, since I don't particularly wish to come up with an excuse as to why I look like - like this!" he finished, gesturing rather wildly to his new appearance.

Jack winced and apologized again. "You're right. I just um... I wanted to know how you were handling this."

"Handling this? Jack, you're not really asking me that," Ianto asked with a harsh laugh. "I'm trying not to think of it all all."

"I'm sorry, Ianto. I just want... I don't know," Jack sighed. "I just want you to be okay. I know you've been through a lot today, a lot these past months. So, um... I want you to take the next few days off, at least until we get that file from UNIT. Maybe do some of your work from home, if you feel like it."

He squirmed, just a little, as Ianto fixed him with a gimlet stare, wondering if maybe he should have kept quiet and not made the offer. But he also knew Ianto, knew that the events of today had not sat well with the man. Having his gender changed on him without so much as a by-your-leave affected him more than just a normal day at Torchwood. Not as much as Canary Wharf, or the disaster that had been Lisa, or even that first field trip. And Jack wanted to be there for Ianto, to show that he supported his lover and would continue to do so. He tried to put all that in his eyes and maybe... just maybe Ianto would see and understand what he tried to say, because he sure as hell didn't have the words, didn't know how to make it better.

Maybe Ianto realized that he didn't belong at Torchwood unless he could give it his full attention, because instead of bitching at Jack, he just sighed and nodded. "You're right. I'll head home." Jack waited to see if he would include an invitation for him, but none came forth. He stifled the pang of hurt he felt at that, but also realized that sometimes Ianto needed to work things out for himself before sharing with Jack - if at all. So he just nodded, cupping Ianto's shoulder with his hand and trying to convey without words that if Ianto needed him, he would be there.

Ianto gave him a strained smile before pushing back his chair and slipping out of the Hub. Jack watched as from the conference room window as Ianto exited, admiring his new form, whilst aware of the turmoil which Ianto had to be experiencing. He only hoped that the two of them could get through this without destroying that which made Ianto all that he truly liked.

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It did not surprise Ianto that his teammates had not found anything that might pertain to his current situation. He held out a slim hope that the information Tosh would get from UNIT would have the information they needed to change him back, but he somehow doubted that. He just didn't have that sort of faith, not after Canary Wharf, not after all that he had seen with Torchwood.

He tried to ignore his changed form, something that did not come all that easy, considering the added appendages he had grown and the loss of one for which he had had particular fondness. He *hated* how his teammates had treated him, the way Owen had leered, Tosh's quiet sympathy, Gwen's earnest empathy. And Jack. He had watched as Jack had buried his personal feelings and been the boss, the one who tried to figure out what had happened to one of his employees and not his lover. Even if Ianto did fall into both categories.

Burying his head in his hands, he sat on his couch and tried to calm his thoughts. Tried to figure out what he would do if the worst actually came to pass, if he never reverted back to a man. Because it scared him, scared him a lot.

He felt like his life existed outside his control. It wasn't just this change, but what it could mean for him and his relationship with Jack. Giving him time off while they waited for the file from UNIT was more than he had hoped for, but he also knew that if it turned out he would remain a woman, he couldn't remain at his flat, hiding from the world. He would have to return to Torchwood at some point, to take up his duties and move forward with his life. Just... he had no idea if whatever he and Jack had would survive.

Classifying their relationship gave Ianto a headache. At least he could properly call it a relationship now, rather than whatever they had had before Jack left with the Doctor. So much of their relationship revolved around sex. Sex as a means of comfort and then sex between friends. Jack leaving with the Doctor hadn't exactly stunned him; Jack hadn't done that terrific a job in erasing his past from the archives, and Ianto had made it his business to know the information that existed in his domain. Like a certain transcript from Jack's interrogation when grabbed by Torchwood in the late 19th Century. So no, Jack's defection had not surprised him, though Ianto thought the Doctor could have had better timing.

Nothing like leaving your team after you recover from their betrayal that left you dead for three days. Ianto could not even blame Jack for leaving with his Doctor. He had had to wait decades for the Doctor to arrive at a time and place that would not cross his own timeline.

However, it had surprised Ianto how much he actually *missed* Jack and their conversations, the field training Jack had started him on, and Jack's unforgettable leadership style, one that Owen and Gwen had attempted to emulate and failed. Then Jack had returned and rather than push to re-enter Ianto's bed, he had instead dated him. Granted, Torchwood did not allow for the most consistent of dating lives, but they *had* managed a small number of dates that hadn't been totally ruined by Torchwood-related business.

But this, this change certainly hadn't been a consideration. Ianto just did not know how he would handle this newest way with which Torchwood had decided to fuck up his life. And while Jack had acted extraordinarily supportive this afternoon, Ianto didn't know if it would continue past the immediate aftermath. If the change turned out to be permanent... well. Ianto didn't quite know if he could handle having sex as a woman. Jack was a very sexual being and while he never pushed Ianto in anything they did do, Ianto just didn't know if their relationship had grown strong enough to survive the time Ianto would need to wrap his head around his new circumstances.

He sighed, letting his head fall back against the seat back's cushions. Of course, he might be getting ahead of himself. For all he knew, this change would not be permanent and in a few days or weeks, he would return back to his original body.

He could only hope.

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Wednesday, February 18, 2009

How the hell did women stand it? Ianto scowled as he woke from a sleepless night. He had spent most of the night twisting and turning his blankets as he tried to find a comfortable position. His new breasts ached, hurt every time he tried his preferred position for sleep - his stomach. His hair, now reaching to his waist, kept getting caught under his body every time he moved. If he remained a woman for long, he would need to ask Tosh how she dealt with all of this. Hopefully, she would have some hints. No way was he asking Gwen. He just didn't feel comfortable doing so.

He stumbled from his bed and made his way to the loo. He scrubbed his eyes as he avoided his reflection in the mirror. He had no desire to even begin dealing with what had happened the night before until he became more awake. He couldn't avoid everything, but what he could, he planned to.

After his shower and other morning ablutions, he dressed in some of the clothing Tosh had bought him the night before. Plain clothing, nothing that would highlight his new status as a woman, but also comfortable. It seemed she, at least, had recognized that Ianto needed to feel as comfortable as possible with the change if he were to be of any use to Torchwood and himself. He smiled softly as he thought of his friend. He knew that between her and Jack, he would likely get through this.

lanto grabbed a bite to eat, thankful that he had stocked his kitchen not too long ago as he had no desire to go out and shop for supplies whilst he looked like this, especially if it turned out he was only temporarily a woman. Unfortunately, he looked nothing like his sister in this form, so could not even pretend to be her to his neighbors, all of whom had met Rhianon at some point in the past.

Once he finished eating and putting his dishes away, he sat down at his computer, determined to at least try and get some work done today. He appreciated that Jack had let him work from home and decided that tagging the various files he had digitized in the last month would go a long way towards helping him ignore his own change.

Better living with denial: it wasn't just a river in Egypt.

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Thursday, February 19, 2009

While Jack hadn't actually visited lanto in the two days since the incident, he had emailed and phoned his lover several times in the interim. lanto had, of course, insisted he felt fine and was dealing with what had happened him. Jack didn't believe he was handling it all that well, but also knew he pushing lanto on the situation would not endear him. lanto needed to work out what happened by himself first. Jack hadn't set eyes on lanto since Tuesday. None of the team had, despite Gwen pushing to visit him, a suggestion the rest of them had shot down as soon as she voiced it. Jack had actually been a bit surprised at how well Owen had seemed to understand lanto's likely reaction to a visit by Gwen.

Or maybe he shouldn't have been. For all that Owen and lanto snarked at each other, they also seemed to have a bond of friendship. Tosh had explained it to him once, saying that Owen recognized many similarities between them, but it had only been when Jack had left with the Doctor - and they had been forced to work together on a regular basis - that he had been able to acknowledge the similarities.

In no way, shape or form was Jack waiting in the conference room for lanto to enter the Hub. Nope, nada, nein. He just liked the view. Yep. That was it.

Oh God, he thought. *I can't even lie to myself convincingly anymore.* He snorted a bit self-deprecatingly as he scrubbed a hand across his face. He stared down into his domain, watching as Tosh perused the file that had arrived yesterday afternoon. He couldn't actually see her expression but given the hunched over way in which she sat, he suspected she would not have good news to impart.

"Is lanto coming in today, then?" Gwen asked as she entered the conference room. She took a position next to Jack.

"Why wouldn't he?" Jack asked.

"Oh, I just thought that it might be too much for him."

Jack frowned. "He has as much a right to know what happened as any of us - more so."

"I guess." Jack looked over at Gwen and wondered at her attitude. She had been acting rather strangely every since Ianto's transformation. He made a note to himself to keep an eye on her. Ianto did not need any additional stress on top of what had happened to him.

The sirens rang out and the cog-wheel door pulled back to reveal Ianto. Jack's eyes hungrily catalogued each and every aspect of Ianto. Ianto moved hesitantly into the Hub, his hair pulled back into a clip. He once again wore a tracksuit, looking younger than he normally did. Of course, Ianto rarely appeared at work in anything other than a suit. Jack couldn't help but wonder if it was an effort to appear older than he was, rather than an affectation left over from his years at Torchwood-London.

He hid a smile as Ianto barely acknowledged Owen's catcall and Tosh's quiet greeting. He watched as Ianto headed to the kitchen, likely to make coffee for the meeting. Ianto did like his routines and making coffee was part of his job. It didn't surprise him that Ianto would try to do as much as possible to avoid thinking of the real reason he had had the last couple of days off, and what the agenda of the meeting due to start in a few minutes was about. This, more than anything, was how he coped; he had done the same in the aftermath of Lisa, after the disaster with the cannibals, and Jack knew if he bothered to look at the CCTV footage, after Abaddon and all that had followed. Maybe not the most healthiest of coping mechanisms, but it seemed to work for Ianto. Tosh, for example, turned to technology and books, while Owen found alcohol and willing bed partners. Gwen poked her nose into business not her own, or attempted to comfort those that didn't want comforting, or turned to Rhys. Jack went to a high building and just stood for hours on a rooftop, watching the city below him. And Jack knew enough to step in before Ianto hurt himself. No, he *liked* the Welshman, and was not going to give up on him - either as an employee *or* a romantic partner.

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Tosh really didn't want this meeting to start. As much as Ianto considered her a friend, she didn't relish the idea of telling him the reason for his condition. For all that he seemed unflappable at the best of times, she knew that his new condition bothered him and he would not take kindly to the information she had pieced together from the UNIT files. Still, she took a deep breath, reminded herself that Jack would ensure that nothing too bad would happen to her, and that Ianto wouldn't purposely hurt her - if only because he liked her.

"UNIT's file on the Arde'thi turned out to be much more thorough than what Torchwood had. Apparently, a group of Arde'thi visited Earth in the '70s, and agreed to tell UNIT about themselves in exchange for being allowed to holiday here."

"What did they get, Tosh?" Jack asked. She grimaced slightly at the sound of impatience in his voice.

"Basically, they did mean the change to Ianto as a gift. The file, well... it tells quite a bit about them. First, they don't discriminate against what we would consider same sex relationships. They believe that love is pure and doesn't fall along gender lines. But they also highly prize children and procreation. Continuing the line, as it were. So, to get around that, they created the machine they used on Ianto. Basically, it's used among couples who are same sex to allow them to have children."

“Wait. So they changed Ianto, so that he and Jack could have kids?” Gwen asked incredulously.

“Well not precisely for that reason, no, Gwen.”

“Then why?” Ianto asked, the first time he had spoken.

“The Arde’thi have highly advanced senses. They go far beyond what humans have been recorded to possess. I mean, Owen could probably understand the medical jargon better than I can, but as far as I can tell, they knew that you and Jack were in a relationship, and that you two care for each other a great deal.” No way was she going to use “love” in context with the two of them. Not because she didn’t believe they couldn’t or didn’t love each other, but because she knew that their relationship was still new and that they were still working out the kinks. She fully believed that, Torchwood willing, they would eventually have the type of relationship she herself dreamed of. But it wasn’t quite love, at the moment. “They knew their ship got repaired largely because of Jack. So they needed to give him a greater gift than that which they gave to me and Ianto. They don’t like being indebted to others. Switching Ianto’s gender was their way, as near as I can tell, of thanking Jack because in their view, they were giving him the ability to have children with the person they saw as his partner.”

Gwen tittered. “You mean because Jack and Ianto are, um...” she paused, seeming unable to figure out how to finish the sentence.

“They saw that Ianto and Jack are in a relationship and thought they would appreciate the ability to have children with each other. They must have thought everyone would be okay with their actions.”

Tosh watched as Ianto seemed to shut down, closing off even from Jack. He looked as he had after Lisa; completely emotionless, as if all hope and life was over and done with for him. She could understand why he was so upset; it didn’t matter if the aliens had done it as a means of thanks. Having your gender changed still sucked.

She saw Jack take a deep breath, his normally expressive face clear of emotions. He had glanced at Ianto, but seemed to take his cue from his partner. He didn’t betray one way or the other whether he liked the gift that the Arde’thi had given to him.

“Is that all, Tosh?” he asked calmly.

She nodded, wishing she had something more to add.

“So there’s no way to change him back?” Owen asked.

“No. Not without them. The Arde’thi who did this already left. And without their machine...” she shook her head. “Neither us nor UNIT have the technology to switch Ianto back.”

“Oh, sweetheart...” Gwen murmured, looking as if she wanted to embrace Ianto and soothe him.

“Alright then. Um... Tosh, thank your friend for sending us the file. Owen, I’m going to send Ianto down to you for a whole new physical. We need a new baseline for him. Gwen. Why don’t you finish those

reports you owe me. Ianto. After Owen has finished examining you, come up to my office for a chat," Jack ordered, standing and effectively ending the meeting before Gwen could make her move on Ianto. Tosh suspected he didn't want to deal with the fallout that would occur when Ianto snapped at her. She couldn't exactly blame him.

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Ianto followed Owen into the autopsy bay and hopped onto the table without being asked. Owen busied himself with getting ready everything he needed to conduct the exam. Ianto helped by taking off his jumper. Owen smirked at the t-shirt Ianto wore underneath. If the long hair and more delicate features Ianto now sported hadn't advertised Ianto's new form, the very nicely shaped breasts the strained the confines of the shirt did. Who knew that Ianto made a pretty good looking bird?

Somehow, he didn't think Ianto would appreciate the compliment from him, so it was with great restraint that he kept it to himself. He didn't need Jack yelling at him for upsetting Ianto. Jack was already on edge from the change he hadn't asked for, though Owen prided himself on knowing Jack well enough to realize that the man wouldn't exactly protest should Ianto remain as he now looked.

Of course, Ianto might have something to say about that. He really hoped not. Owen did not need a repeat of the Lisa incident or when Jack disappeared with the Doctor. He would never admit it to Ianto or Jack, but he actually thought they made a cute couple and was happy they had found each other.

Torchwood had to be good for something.

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Ianto hid the surprise he felt at Owen's rather quick medical exam. As he headed up to Jack's office, he realized he shouldn't have been so surprised at how relatively quick and painless it had been; he hadn't actually changed species, just sex. Though neither he nor Owen had been best pleased with the discussion about yearly pap smears and the need for an oral contraceptive. He made a mental note to speak to Tosh and ask her for advice. He figured her greater experience in this sort of thing outweighed Owen's medical knowledge.

And he almost couldn't believe he had to do such a thing. Fucking Torchwood.

"Jack, you wanted to see me?" he queried as he leaned against the door. Jack looked up from the paperwork that covered his desk. Ianto wondered if he would get a call from whatever office those papers would be sent to decipher just what exactly Jack meant.

"Owen finished already?" Jack asked with a hint of surprise in his voice. "No, obviously he did. Otherwise, you wouldn't be here." He sighed. "Look, it's Thursday. Take off until Monday. We'll call you in if it's an emergency, but you deserve the time off to deal with... this," he said, gesturing towards Ianto's body. "I know it's not going to be easy for you. I'll ask one of the girls to, um... help you pick out some clothes and things," he continued, a bit embarrassed.

"I'd prefer Tosh," lanto said, not about to argue with the extra days off. He still needed to wrap his head around the idea that this change was not temporary. He knew he was suppressing, even knew it wasn't healthy, but he had no desire to breakdown at the Hub.

"Okay, I'll have her go to your place on Saturday," he paused, looking as if he didn't know how to continue. "Look, I know how you handle things that upset you. I don't want to push, but... I worry." He smiled ruefully, a sad half smile that lanto hadn't seen directed at him for several months now. "Just. Give me a call if you need someone. Unless the world is ending, I guarantee I'll show. Break down your door if I have to."

lanto sighed, moving to sit on the rarely-used chair in front of Jack's desk. Normally, he perched on the side of Jack's desk. He did not feel comfortable doing that today. "I know. And I appreciate it, I really, really do. But this? This, I need to figure out first." He sighed. He had three and a half days to figure out how to handle his new life. Jack, wonderful as he was, would just distract him, allow him to push off the reality of what had happened to him. "I have no idea how I'm going to handle this. But I'll figure something out by Monday."

"Alright," Jack said, clearly unhappy but willing to allow lanto some leeway. "I know this isn't going to be easy for you, lanto. I'm not going to push, but if you need to talk, give me a ring. Let me know if there is anything I can do."

"Thanks, Jack," lanto said quietly. He got up from his chair and hesitated for a moment before heading home. For the first time in months, he didn't kiss Jack goodbye. Silly, of course, but lanto just didn't want to hint at something he didn't know if he could ever continue whatever he had with Jack. It shouldn't make a difference. He knew gender didn't matter to Jack; if Jack wanted a person, he went after them. And lanto had demonstrated his own bisexual tendencies, what with dating Lisa and now Jack. But... it seemed a whole different kettle of fish now that he himself was a woman. Too much going on in his head and he didn't have the patience to deal with the complicated headache that categorized much of his and Jack's relationship. Fortunately, Jack would let him set the pace, so he knew he wouldn't need to worry on that front.

He nodded in goodbye to Owen and Tosh, ignoring Gwen's halfhearted wave to come over and speak with her, and headed back to his flat. Time to start coming to grips with his new life.

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It shouldn't have hurt or surprised Jack that lanto had refused his help. Jack knew lanto, knew how he handled massive upsets in his life. It didn't stop the small feeling of rejection. He had hoped, so very, very much that the UNIT file would bear some good news. That it wouldn't disappoint him, mostly because he knew it would affect his burgeoning relationship with lanto. Not on his part, of course. He liked lanto for who he was, not what he looked like. Just because he changed gender didn't mean Jack had no desire to pursue a partnership with lanto.

He suspected that Ianto actually knew this and really did just need the time to straighten out his own head. Jack vowed not to push Ianto, to wait until he came to grips with who and what he now was. He knew how to wait - the Doctor had taught him that.

"Tosh, could you come up here for a moment?" he asked over the comm. She quickly agreed and he rather thought she knew what he wanted to ask her. Tosh was both a very smart lady, and a good friend to Ianto.

"Jack?" Tosh asked from the doorway.

"Ianto's going to need to get new clothes and things. Can you go with him on Saturday and help him pick up new stuff?"

"Of course, Jack," she assured him. She hesitated a moment. "Jack, do you think the Doctor could help Ianto?"

He smiled softly. "Thought of that already. Only the Arde'thi can reverse what they did."

"Oh."

"Yeah. I would ask Martha to call him and see if he would take Ianto with him to the Arde'thi home world, but he hasn't been answering his phone lately. Martha thinks he's sulking. But maybe we'll be able to get in touch with him soon enough, and he can take care of things." He refused to even mention the possibility of getting the Doctor's help to Ianto. He knew that his lover didn't exactly harbor very fond thoughts towards the Time Lord. But more than that, he didn't want to get Ianto's hopes up, not if the Doctor couldn't effectuate a cure for Ianto's gender switch. No, he would mention it only if Ianto asked, or the Doctor stopped by and agreed to help.

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Friday, February 20, 2009

Ianto spent all of Friday ruthlessly sorting his clothing, putting the suits and other items that definitely did not fit him properly anymore into the wardrobe in the spare bedroom. It left his closets rather bare, but kept from him the daily reminder of who he used to be. Besides, he needed the room for the new clothes he would buy with Tosh's help. Also, cleaning helped him clear his mind. He still didn't have a handle on being a woman, but he suspected that would come with time. Unfortunately, he knew he only had a couple of more days before he needed to return to Torchwood and perform his duties. Oh, he knew Jack would probably try and keep him in the Hub as much as possible, but he couldn't remain in the Hub forever. Eventually, he would need to go out into the field again.

Tosh had already sent him an email detailing the changes she had made in his records to make it seem that he had always been a woman. She had included the contact information for her GP in case he wanted to see someone other than Owen for birth control. Ianto still hadn't worked up the nerve to call

and make the appointment. The whole concept just seemed... seemed so very foreign and strange and scared the fuck out of him.

He had forced himself to look at his new body on Thursday night before he went to bed. He needed to get comfortable with how he looked, needed to figure out how this new body worked. Last thing he needed was to fuck up because his body didn't do what he wanted it to when he wanted it.

True to his word, Jack hadn't visited once yet. He had called, numerous times. Asked if Ianto needed anything or wanted him to stop by, but Ianto didn't feel comfortable with that yet. His flat was his space and at the moment, he needed the separation between that and Torchwood. He belonged to Torchwood, and would return to it on Monday. And Jack wasn't precisely Torchwood, and yet he really was very much so. Jack at least seemed to understand that he needed the space and hadn't pushed. Ianto figured he would wait until Ianto returned to work before pushing to discuss their relationship. But until then, Ianto was very much left to his own devices.

It was both a blessing and a curse.

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Torchwood had introduced Gwen to many wonderful and horrible concepts. There were times when she questioned her decision to join the secret organization; yet every time she came close to requesting retcon and returning to her previous life, something extraordinary happened that convinced her to stay. Ianto's transformation did not fall into that category, but it did make her wonder whether - if it happened to her - she would remain. Poor Ianto. So much tragedy had happened in his life. She worried that this would prove to be the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back.

Ianto had all but hidden since the transformation had occurred. Jack had been nice enough to let him work at home. Gwen thought Ianto needed to be out and about. The sooner he became more comfortable in his new form, the happier he would be. More than that, he needed to embrace what being a woman meant. It was very well and good to wear the shapeless... things Tosh had picked up for him when it first had happened, but that was when they had all assumed it was temporary. Yesterday's conference had shown it was not and it had not made Ianto very happy at all. Gwen knew just the sort of thing that would make him happy: shopping. She was certain that once he donned clothes that fit and accentuated his new body, he would start to feel better about the whole situation.

It was with this notion firmly fixed in her mind that she mounted the stairs to Jack's office Friday morning. "Jack," she greeted, handing to him the cup of coffee she had bought for everyone at Starbucks. (No one touched Ianto's coffee machine when he wasn't in. Mostly because no one could figure out how to make it work.)

Jack looked up from the paperwork he was trying to finish and smiled in thanks. "Gwen, exciting plans for the weekend?" he asked as he took a sip of the substandard coffee. Gwen hid her smile. Jack had left her the perfect opportunity. She settled into the chair in front of his desk, ignoring the surprised look he gave her.

“Well Jack, I was just thinking. Now that Ianto’s not going to be changing back any time soon, he’ll need new clothes. And I thought I could take him shopping this weekend. Get him some stuff, help him learn how to be a woman.” She smiled at him brightly.

“Oh...” Jack replied. She frowned at his less than enthusiastic tone. “That’s very nice of you Gwen. But I think Ianto already asked Tosh to help him.”

Gwen didn’t lie to herself. It hurt that Ianto would turn to Tosh rather than her. But... maybe it shouldn’t surprise her. She liked to think she had become friends with Ianto in months after Jack left them for the Doctor, one reason she was volunteering her help, after all. Before that, she had mostly ignored him, not feeling very comfortable in his presence in the aftermath of the whole Lisa affair. As much as she hated Jack’s disappearance, the one good thing to come out of it was that the whole team had been forced to get over their differences and learn to get along with one another. Even though she tried, Gwen couldn’t really compete with Tosh when it came to Ianto. They had a bond that only strengthened after Jack’s leaving.

She smiled brightly. “I’m glad then. Um... I guess I’ll tell Tosh that if they need my help, they can ring me.”

Jack seemed to smile in relief that she wasn’t offended as she left his office. She made her way over to Tosh.

“Hello Tosh,” she said, leaning on the other woman’s desk. “Jack told me you’re taking Ianto shopping tomorrow. Rhys and I are having a quiet weekend, but if you need any help, let me know. I’ll be happy to help.”

Tosh blinked at her before taking off her glasses. “Oh... thanks Gwen. Um... it will be up to Ianto. I don’t know how he’ll feel having anyone other than me there. But I’ll let him know you asked to help.”

“Thanks, Tosh. And give him my best.” Gwen left Tosh to her work and returned to her own desk, where her own cup of coffee sat cooling on the edge. She was a little saddened that it looked as if Ianto was turning to others for help, but at least she tried. She made a note to make sure to let him know she was there for him should he want someone to listen. He would surely need to vent to someone about what had happened. And she knew she was a good listener. Satisfied that she had done what she could, she turned her attention back to the report she needed to finish.

Saturday, February 21, 2009

Switching genders did not change Ianto’s opinion of clothes shopping. He still retained his eye, gained on his father’s knee as a child, but he also continued to dislike the crowds and shrill voices of his fellow shoppers. Tosh had taken him all over Cardiff to outfit his new wardrobe. “Jack gave me Torchwood’s credit card, and I, for one, think you should take advantage of it.”

“The fact that I get to explain to the auditors helps too,” Ianto agreed with a small smile.

“Well, of course!” she grinned wickedly.

He had given in to her suggestion, of course. He didn't have a lot of will power against her when she wheedled as prettily as she had. Plus, she had opted to take him shopping for the easier items first: casual clothing. While women tended to wear more form-fitting clothing, he still recognized that denims and simple shirts made suitable attire for hanging around on the weekend or at home.

Unfortunately, he *hadn't* realized the bewildering number of *styles* said denims came in: boot leg, straight leg, low rider, high waist, comfort fit, boyfriend fit. He stared at the display blankly before Tosh took pity on him and thrust several pairs at him for him to try on.

It turned out that women had more curves than men. Ianto had known that before the change; hard not to when his mind, late at night, catalogued the differences between falling asleep with Lisa and falling asleep with Jack. And he knew he had all the curves that women had, courtesy of the Arde'thi, but... he hadn't actually realized what that meant. Not until he squirmed and jumped in the changing room whilst trying to squeeze into that first pair of denims. God! Now he knew why women constantly asked if their arse was too big. Though... he thought as he looked at himself in the mirror, maybe getting the denims on made it all worth it. He started with some fascination at the way the material clung and accentuated his curves.

Huh. He might have to be careful about wearing these in front of Jack. No telling what the man would do.

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As a healthy twenty-something male, Ianto Jones had bought lingerie and unmentionables for whichever girl he had been dating at the time. As such, he had some familiarity with feminine undergarments. But, much like shopping for denims, he hadn't realized the sheer number of different styles that existed, having focused more on what would excite him than the particulars of what would feel comfortable on her. Tosh had grinned at him as he looked helplessly at the different styles of panties. “Here, you'll want these for every day use,” she said, thrusting a handful of plain cotton panties his way. “How do you feel about thongs?” Ianto gaped. Thongs? He had enjoyed the way they looked on past girlfriends, but to wear? He had no idea. “Never mind. We'll just get you an assortment and you can pick and choose which feels the most comfortable for you,” Tosh continued to lecture, her hands sifting through the silky pile of panties before them. Ianto blushed as she continued, detailing her own preferences. He could only assume Tosh did this not to embarrass him, but to give him as much information as possible on something he never once thought he would need practical knowledge on.

Unfortunately, the torture Tosh sought to inflict upon him didn't end with the panties. Oh no, then came bra shopping. Ianto knew he needed proper support for his breasts. They had ached since he had gotten them, their weight just a bit uncomfortable on his chest, his nipples chaffing against the material of his shirts. He knew that bras would help him with this. But like so many things he had learned since becoming a woman, he hadn't realized the intricate process it took to get a properly fitted bra. Tosh had shoved him into a changing cubicle and grabbed one of the shop girls.

“Alright then, love. Let’s see what your measurements are so we can get you the support you need,” the shop girl, whose name tag declared her to be Elaine, declared cheerfully. Ianto smiled wanly at her as he did what she instructed, lifting his arms to the side so she could snake the measuring tape around his chest. “Let’s see. Looks like you’re a 36D,” she said with a smile. “I’ll tell your friend so she can pick some out for you to try on. Let me know if it doesn’t feel right, and we’ll try a different size.”

“Thank you,” Ianto said faintly, pink coloring his face. Oh god. He could only hope that Tosh would never relate this to *anyone* they worked with. He did not need the teasing from Owen or Jack. But then, this was Tosh. She wouldn’t purposefully do that to him. Unlike Gwen, who had a tendency to stick her foot in her mouth. Unintentionally for the most part - or at least Ianto hoped so - but she had the habit of bringing up incidents that most people had the tact *not* to mention.

“Here you go, Ianto,” Tosh said, handing him some scraps of satin and lace and cotton. “Try these on. I got you some front clasp bras as well as the more traditional back ones. I figured you might like the ease of the front clasp, at least until you get use to it.”

“Thanks,” Ianto said. He really didn’t have much of anything else *to* say. She gave him what he assumed was meant to be an encouraging look, before leaving him to it. He looked at the various colored and styled bras in his hands and sighed. Best to get this over with as soon as possible. He didn’t need either Tosh or Elaine to interrupt him and ask if he needed additional help. Bad enough that he had to do this to start with.

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“What kind of clothes do you want to wear for work?” Tosh asked after the humiliating trip through the lingerie store had finished and Ianto had found himself the owner of enough undergarments to start his own shop - or so he thought.

“Um... I don’t know,” Ianto said, blinking at her question. It wasn’t that he didn’t know what women wore to work, it was just that he didn’t know what to wear to Torchwood. Gwen often wore denims, a plain shirt of some sort and trainers. Tosh tended to dress a bit more professionally, but even she paled in comparison to what the women at Torchwood-London wore. London had required suits. Women could and did wear suit separates, but men had to wear the full suit and tie ensemble. He knew that Owen and maybe even Gwen, thought he wore the suit because Jack liked it. The truth was, he wore the suit because that was what he had worn in London. And while London might have burned and buckled under its own weight and hubris, it still deserved to be remembered. Hence the suits, a very subtle memorial to his friends and co-workers. Jack had *hated* Torchwood-London and all that it represented. Sometimes, Ianto wondered what exactly had finally convinced Jack to hire him, because the man had fought it with everything in him. Ianto had never had the courage to ask, not after Lisa. Maybe he would one day.

“Well, do you want to wear skirts? Trousers? Denims?” Tosh asked encouragingly.

Oh god. Skirts. Ianto didn't know if he was ready for that. He looked at Tosh hopelessly. She seemed to understand his problem as she took his hand in hers and squeezed gently. "Never mind. We'll get you an assortment of things I think you'll like and you can choose to wear what you want."

Ianto really appreciated Tosh. She pushed and prodded him but never made him feel like a fool for not having the answer to even the simplest of questions. He didn't want to think of what it would have been like if she hadn't agreed to help. He suspected he would have curled up into a small ball and refused to leave his flat. The questions Tosh asked him, and the decisions she helped him make forced him to acknowledge the change he had undergone. He couldn't hide away from what had happened to him, no matter how much he might wish to.

Under her guidance, he chose a number of clothes he considered appropriate for work. Tailored trousers, blouses, and even a few skirts and dresses. "I know you don't think you'll wear them now, but you might change your mind," Tosh told him. He grimaced, but figured she might be right. Who knew what he would decide once he wrapped his head around his new form? It wasn't like it was his money that purchased any of this. If Torchwood wanted to pay for clothes that would stay buried in the back of his closet, he wasn't going to complain. And Tosh could be right; while he in no way felt comfortable wearing a skirt or dress right now, that could change sometime in the future, as he adjusted to being a woman.

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The penultimate horror Tosh subjected him to, involved shoe shopping. He had *hoped* he could get away with but a few pairs: trainers and a couple of shoes appropriate for work. Tosh, it seemed, had another idea, and encouraged by the salesperson, proceeded to force Ianto's foot into excessive numbers and style of shoes. "You're lucky the ballet flat is so popular!" Tosh commented. "Fashionable and yet completely appropriate for work."

"Lucky, yes..." Ianto smiled weakly.

"How does that feel?" Sarah, their salesperson asked.

"A bit tight around the toe," Ianto stated.

"Half a size bigger than," she concluded, dragging the appropriate size forth from the mound of boxes that currently encircled them.

"Great," Ianto replied.

"How about heels?" Sarah asked.

"Oh, no. No heels for me," Ianto quickly stated. He had no doubt that he would fall flat on his face, the first time he tried to walk in a pair.

"I think we should try some low heels," Tosh countered. "Some of the trousers we bought for you definitely require a bit of a heel to look right."

“But...” lanto trailed off, recognizing the look in her eye. He hadn’t a chance in winning this argument. “Fine. But a low one. I don’t need to trip and hurt myself the first time I need to run in them. Have no idea how you manage,” he muttered, ignoring Tosh’s clap of glee as she quickly hurried through the shop and picked out yet more shoes for him to try on.

Even with lanto’s capitulation, it still took them another hour before they left the shop. Tosh and Sarah got into a discussion on the appropriate type of heel for him to wear. Kitten versus platform versus styles lanto couldn’t name, even if he tried to. He tuned out after a point, letting Tosh and Sarah fight it out. He did manage to limit the number of heeled shoes they wanted him. “I have to be able to walk in them,” he pointed out, quite reasonably he thought. “Not going to be much use if I can’t do my job in them.”

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Perhaps in revenge, Tosh added one last trip to their agenda. “No, no... Come on Tosh!” lanto pleaded as she dragged him into the Escentual store for face products and makeup.

“Nope. You need at least the basics,” she decided.

“But...” He trailed off. He could see the determined glint in her eye. “Fine. *Only* the basics though.”

“Fabulous,” Tosh said with a wicked grin. lanto bit back a groan as he followed her into the store, where he learned what type of skin he had, how best to take care of it, and what colors suited him best. Surprisingly, he managed to limit the makeup he did buy, holding Tosh to her word of just the basics.

By the time they exited the last of the shops, lanto felt more exhausted than ever. “Hungry?” he asked as they headed back to Tosh’s car.

“Starving,” she admitted.

“Take away?” he offered. He had no desire to cook, not after being dragged to the shops for hours on end.

“Sounds good to me,” Tosh agreed.

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Tosh helped lanto sort out his new clothing for the wash. She ordered the food while he placed the first load of laundry into his washing machine. “Wine?” he asked from the kitchen. She couldn’t deny that it seemed a good idea. She had been surprised by how much he had let her drag him around to the different shops and outfit him. It had been more fun that she had expected.

But then, she didn’t have very many female friends she could do something like this with. And while lanto had just become a woman, they were friends and not just work colleagues. For instance, she couldn’t imagine shopping with Gwen for hours on end. lanto probably hadn’t either, which was why he - or rather Jack - had asked her for help.

Jack had asked her to keep an eye on Ianto. He worried about his lover, worried that this latest “gift” from Torchwood would break Ianto. From what Tosh could see, Jack had a right to be worried. Ianto was wound extremely tight, holding his emotions close to him. He had let her direct where they were shopping and what he should try on, only objecting to colors. He had an instinctive eye for which styles suited him best, something Tosh envied. But he had not mentioned once what had happened to him. Of course, they had been in public, so discussing it wouldn’t work. But she hoped he would unbend a little during dinner. Maybe the wine would help.

The conversation over dinner had drifted to mundane topics. Tosh related what the others had gotten up to at the Hub on his days off. “It’s been pretty quiet, actually. Jack’s a bit worried about what that will mean for later on, but it’s not like the Rift will tell us anything.”

“Still, we were due some quiet,” Ianto noted, sipping from his glass. “We’ve been working non-stop since the Pharm incident.”

Tosh shuddered in remembrance. They had almost lost Owen with that little adventure, and it had only been Ianto’s quick tackle of Owen that had let the bullet crease his shoulder, rather than hit his heart. “You’re right. Still, Jack’s worried. He keeps asking me about the Rift prediction program, wanting to know if something big is coming. Of course,” she said mischievously, “he might also be doing that to avoid the paperwork on his desk. He’s been sending Gwen out to buy him coffee almost every hour too. She’s starting to get annoyed, but really can’t complain because she’s the only one not working on a project that can’t be interrupted on a regular basis.”

“Oh? What’s Owen working on then?” Ianto asked.

“New Weevil spray. He thinks he has an idea on making it more effective. I think he’s getting tired of having to manhandle them into the SUV and then having them wake up in the middle of the ride back to the Hub. And you know Jack. He really doesn’t like it when we have to kill them.”

Ianto nodded in understanding. Just as he knew, so did Tosh: Jack hated when they had to kill the aliens that slipped through the Rift. Most of Torchwood-Three had adopted Jack’s view that not everything alien was dangerous, and so, as long as no threat occurred, they were happy to let the aliens visit and live their lives without interference.

“I’m just glad it’s been quiet,” Tosh continued. “It’s given me time to work on the time lock program I told you about.”

“How’s that going then?” Ianto inquired, politely.

“Oh, fantastic, actually. I think in a few more weeks, I can ask Jack if I can test it out.” She was thrilled. The program was her baby, one that she had been working on for years. She just hoped it worked. “So, how are you doing?” Tosh finally asked. Ianto sat loose-limbed in his chair, the glass of wine sitting loosely in his hand, light sparkling and refracting through the liquid held within. He shrugged, taking a sip.

“It’s not the first time,” he suddenly said.

“What?” she asked, confused.

“It’s not the first time in Torchwood history where their employee’s gender has changed.”

“Really? I didn’t see anything...”

“Probably got lost at Canary Wharf. I think there are some backups at Two. Or maybe at Torchwood House. But yeah. It’s happened before. Alien device, some type of chemical and whoosh! Good old gender swap. Used to be a protocol and everything.” He nodded at her sagely, taking another sip of the wine. She blinked at him in surprise, but remained quiet. He needed to talk, to unburden himself, just a little bit. “We used to laugh, used to laugh when we read the files. Poor buggers. Usually, it spelled the end of the person’s life.”

“What?!” Tosh asked. She knew Jack ran his branch very differently than the other branches, but killing someone because of something not their fault? That seemed a bit extreme, even for Torchwood-London.

“Oh, not literally,” he assured her. “But they might as well have. See, they would wait. A few weeks usually, just to see if they turned back. If not... well. They sent in the retcon specialists. The person switched, their whole family, everyone that person might have cause to meet. Retconned. And the person who had their gender switched? They got a brand new life, far from Torchwood.”

How horrible. Tosh shuddered. Not for the first time did she thank God for Jack finding her in that UNIT prison and not someone else from Torchwood. She didn’t think she would like working for that particular brand of Torchwood.

“But yeah. We used to laugh. Thought it was sad, but humorous. I mean, it’s not like it would happen to any one of us.” He swallowed the last of his wine, not looking at Tosh as he poured more into his glass. “Christ, but I’m glad Jack doesn’t follow those protocols.”

It was the closest Ianto had ever come to mentioning how much he preferred working for Three over One. Tosh nodded. “He wouldn’t. Not your fault you’re now a woman,” she encouraged.

“I know. But it feels like it is,” he admitted, putting his glass on the table and scrubbing his face with a hand. “I mean, they only did it because of my relationship with Jack.”

“They meant to help,” she felt obliged to add.

“Whatever they meant by it, doesn’t change the fact that I’m missing bits that I once had and gained ones I could do without,” he replied, bitterly pointing to his chest.

“I’m sorry, Ianto. I wish there was something we could do.”

“I know, Tosh. And thanks for today.”

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Monday, February 23, 2009

lanto had woken up earlier than normal on Monday morning. Partly due to nerves, but also because he had no idea if it would take him longer than it normally did to get ready. Tosh had advised him to wash and dry his hair the night before so he didn't have to deal with that lengthy process on his first day back. As he brushed and plaited it for work, he reflected that it might be better if he had it cut for easier maintenance. However, he found he rather liked having long hair. Something to ponder at a later date.

It hadn't taken lanto a very long time to decide on what to wear to work. He liked looking professional, even if his fellows chose more casual clothing. He had to admit that being a woman certainly opened up his choices. As a woman, he didn't need to wear a suit to look professional. He opted to wear something simple, yet classy for this, the first day back to work as a woman.

With some degree of reluctance, he carefully took out the makeup Tosh had made him buy. Fortunately, she had also taught him how to use it, so he didn't poke out his eye as he applied eyeliner and mascara to each of his eyes. A hint of blush and a neutral colored lipstick, and he nodded with some satisfaction at his appearance. He didn't look all that different from any number of young professional women, about to start their work week. It would have to do.

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Jack thought he had exercised great restraint in the last few days. While he had called lanto daily, and sometimes more than once, he had not gone to visit him, or used the CCTV to track his and Tosh's shopping spree on Saturday. He had even refrained from calling Tosh on Saturday night and grilling her on how lanto had taken to the shopping. Wonderful woman that she was, she called him after she returned from lanto's flat and filled him in.

He knew he hired her for a good reason.

Still, even with her assurances that lanto was handling it, he worried. He suspected he wouldn't believe everything was fine until he saw lanto himself. Which explained why he waited Monday morning for lanto to arrive in the Tourist Office.

"Good morning, Jack," lanto said as he unlocked the door to find Jack lounging against the counter. Jack smiled brilliantly in response, his eyes taking in everything about lanto's appearance. No skirt, but then Jack didn't expect lanto to fully embrace his feminine side yet - it was far too early for that. Still, the tailored trousers fit lanto lovely, encasing his long legs and almost hiding the flats lanto wore for shoes. Jack smiled as he took in the red blouse lanto wore under the plain black blazer; it didn't matter what gender lanto was, he *always* looked good in red.

"Good morning, lanto. I've missed you," Jack told him. "No one's touched the coffee machine, but I think Gwen is tired of going to Starbucks every time we want coffee." As if the truly important thing was the coffee machine and not lanto's new status.

"I see, Jack. You only love me for my coffee," Ianto replied, face blank, though Jack could tell he was amused.

"Not just for that," he assured him. He hesitated, unsure whether Ianto would welcome his touch, but then figured he would yell at him if he objected to Jack's embrace. Slowly, so as to telegraph his movement, he brought Ianto into his arms. He felt Ianto stiffen but he didn't pull back. Jack considered that a good sign. "I really have missed you," Jack confessed.

"Daft fool. I believed you," Ianto replied. "Thank you for the time off. I needed it, needed to get my head wrapped around all of this."

"And?" Jack couldn't help but ask. He didn't know if part of the "this" referred to, included his and Ianto's relationship. He didn't *think* Ianto would unilaterally decide to end things with him, but he had long since stopped being surprised when it came to Ianto.

"I'm still not happy that I'm a woman, and I don't think I'll come to grips with it for a while. This..." he shook his head. "Jack, this is so far beyond anything I've ever thought would happen to me at Torchwood. I mean... I've imagined a million different ways I could die, or get hurt, or even decide that I've had enough, and I should just take the retcon and get out of here. But this... it's just so unbelievable." Ianto sighed as he pulled back, giving Jack a small smile. "I'm not in as much shock as I was last week. I'm willing to give my Hub duties a whirl. I don't know when I'll get back out into the field. I think it'll take a while. Have to see how I shoot with these," he finished, gesturing towards his newly ample chest.

"Let me know if I can help with anything, alright? You're not in this alone," Jack hastened to assure him. His heart had nearly stopped when Ianto admitted to imagining dying because of Torchwood, or worse, deciding to take retcon. Jack didn't know what he had with Ianto - especially after his metamorphosis - but he did know he wanted the time to explore it and see how it grew. It frightened him to hear Ianto elucidate several valid and realistic possibilities that could take Ianto away from him before he had the time to find out what they had.

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To Ianto's surprise - and relief - his teammates didn't fuss over him after they came in. He and Owen traded their usual morning insults that passed for greeting between them. Tosh thanked him for the cup of coffee and biscuit he left at her elbow. Jack had handed him a bunch of files that needed to go to the archives, and correspondence that needed mailing. Even Myfanwy hadn't treated him any differently than normal. She had looked at him in surprise when he went up to her nest to feed her, but other than a chirp and trill, had ignored him in favor of her meal.

This, of course, left Gwen.

Ianto tried, he honestly did, to like Gwen. And he did... to an extent. Despite her lack of tact, and inability to see him as anything but inexperienced and junior to her, he did appreciate her attempts at forcing them to look beyond Torchwood. It was easy to forget when you had as small a staff as Three did

- easy to just focus on the here and now and what needed to be done, rather than what the effects would be. Not that she was always right - because she wasn't. But he did agree with Jack that they needed someone like Gwen to push them out of their ruts. Hopefully, with time, she would mellow - or at least gain discretion.

He had hoped to already be in the archives, straightening out whatever mess had developed over the last week. Unfortunately, he had yet to make it there before Gwen came in for work. He had just delivered Jack's coffee when she made a beeline for him, dropping her bag and coat over her chair. "lanto! Here already?" she asked.

He held the tray before him as a shield, preventing her from embracing him as she no doubt wished to. Instead, she settled on grasping his upper arm and look at him earnestly. "You look wonderful, sweetheart. Did you have a nice break?"

"Thank you, Gwen," lanto politely replied. He ignored the second half of her query. It wasn't as if he had had a real break, just a few days off to sort his head on what had happened.

"Well, we'll have to go out sometime. We can go shopping!" she suggested with enthusiasm. lanto blinked.

"Um... I don't know when I'll feel up to that, but thanks for suggesting it," he told her. "I should... the archives. They're a mess." He needed to get away from her. Intellectually, he knew she only meant to help, to be kind even, but he did not appreciate her assumption that he had acclimated to his new gender in such a short period of time. He flashed her a quick smile, shook his head at Tosh's inquiring face and fled to the archives. He didn't care what it looked like, but he needed to get elsewhere, needed to be by himself and calm down.

"lanto, everything okay?" Jack asked him over the comm a few minutes later. "Gwen said you seemed upset."

He took a deep breath, calming himself. "I'm fine. You all made a mess while I was gone. There's a lot that needs straightening."

Jack didn't reply right away. "Alright. Just... let me know if you need anything."

"Will do." lanto leaned back against the cabinets, closed his eyes and sighed. It made his heart do strange things to know that Jack cared about him. Not just as an employee, but as something more. He knew that if he had told Jack that Gwen had upset him, he would have sat down and talked with her. But he didn't need that, not yet. He was an adult and didn't need someone fighting his battles for him. Yet, he couldn't deny the way his heart warmed with the thought that his co-workers no longer ignored him or let him fade into background as he had when he first started working at Three.

A year ago, he had come here, his only thought on saving Lisa. After it all ended in heartache and tears, he had slowly regained his equilibrium, the team absorbing him into their zeitgeist. It had taken some time before he felt as if he was more to them than just tea boy and admin. But once that feeling had

changed... he had found to his surprise that he *liked* working at Three. And if, despite the smallness of the office, he didn't precisely *like* everyone who worked here, well he could still manage to tolerate them during working hours. He had even managed to work out a signaling system with Tosh and Owen as for when one or the other needed some Gwen relief. He had a similar system in place with Tosh, for when Owen got to be a bit too much.

And now this. He snorted in disgust. It figured just as soon as he felt *comfortable* in his life, something would come along to bollocks it up. The universe certainly had it in for him.

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Friday, February 27, 2009

"Let's all head to the pub," Owen suggested. "lanto can buy the first round, on account of no one getting their gender changed on them!"

"Sod off," lanto grumbled as he picked up the last of the coffee mugs. The Rift had - thankfully - remained fairly quiet this week, meaning his absence from the field had not impeded the rest of the team when they went out on an alert.

"Owen!" Gwen admonished, shooting a concerned glance at lanto. "Don't say that! lanto doesn't need the reminder," she hissed. lanto ignored her comments. He appreciated that she came to his defense, but he also liked that Owen didn't see a need to curb his tongue just because lanto had a feminine form. He just expanded his repertoire of insults to include those about his new gender. Gwen confused him with her behavior. She kept vacillating between trying to keep him wrapped in cotton - viz. this latest spat with Owen - or extolling the benefits of being a woman. He really wished she would chose one attitude and let it be.

"Oh come on, Cooper. Or are you afraid that lanto'll pull more than you?" Owen asked caustically. lanto snorted, wondering when Gwen would realize that Owen teased to show his affection. Not that he couldn't be a right bastard when he chose to be - he just aimed his barbs differently when he liked someone.

"Owen!" Gwen huffed again, and this time lanto rolled his eyes. Tosh bit back a giggle as she caught his expression.

"Jack?" Owen appealed. Jack stood outside his office, arms crossed against his chest as he took in the scene below him. He caught lanto's eye and must have seen that lanto hadn't taken offense at what Owen had said, since he didn't reprimand the medic.

"Sounds like a good idea. Five minutes," Jack announced, ignoring Owen's grin and Gwen's little stomp of outrage. lanto finished gathering the used mugs and dumped them in the kitchen sink. He had just enough time to finish washing them before Jack came to collect him. No need to let them soak over the weekend.

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It felt strange walking into the pub as a woman. Owen had the kindness to at least pick one they didn't frequent that often. Why start rumors when the problem might be fixed at any moment? Or at least that is what lanto tried to reassure himself. He really hoped a solution to all of this would be found - and soon.

A part of him, a part that he tried to push deep into the recesses of his mind and not acknowledge, was terrified that he would forever remain a woman, that they would never find the technology to revert him back. They have to wait for the Arde'thi to return, or one of their machines to fall through the Rift, or the Doctor to hang around long enough for Jack or Martha or Sarah Jane to ask for his help, since he hasn't exactly answered his mobile. All of this really added up to the terrifying conclusion that lanto had to get used to what had happened.

He closed his eyes, doing his best to stifle the panic that threatened to overwhelm him.

"You okay?" Jack leaned down to ask, hand resting against the small of his back.

"Yeah," lanto said and smiling a bit nervously as he took a deep breath to calm himself. He could do this. He *needed* to do this. He couldn't keep hiding in the Hub or his flat.

"Alright," Jack said softly. "Let me know if you need to leave."

lanto smiled softly at his offer. It meant a lot to him. At the least, it went a long way to proving that Jack wanted him for more than a shag. He just wished he could gather the courage to take all that Jack offered. Maybe soon.

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Owen watched lanto without seeming to as he made his way to the bar to put in the night's first order. He worried about lanto and how he was handling his forced change. His activities this week reflected the way he acted after the cyberwoman incident and after Jack had left with the Doctor: he worked mainly in the archives, ghosting out only to provide coffee and food, though Tosh had been the one to pay the delivery people. He knew from a comment dropped by Jack that lanto spent the evenings at home, alone. It wasn't healthy, but he wasn't too worried yet. If lanto still acted this way in another month, he would suggest intervention. He thought it promising that lanto had consented to join them at the pub tonight. He had hoped he would, but hadn't counted on it.

"Owen, go help lanto with the drinks," Gwen ordered. He grumbled as he got up and followed lanto to the bar, but didn't protest or ask why she didn't send Jack. Jack, after all, ostensibly had a relationship with lanto - even if it had been put on hold for a while because of the change. But then, she seemed to have a blind eye when it came to Jack and lanto, for reasons no one could decipher. He also knew that Gwen had taken to mothering lanto, convinced that he couldn't take care of himself without help. He was waiting for the moment lanto lost his patience with her and told her off. He only hoped he had a front row seat for it. He knew it would be memorable.

As he got closer to the bar, he noted that Ianto looked a bit frazzled. "There you are, sweetheart," he said, sidling up to Ianto and effectively cutting off some of the blokes who had been chatting him up. "Was getting a bit worried so came to help. These blokes weren't giving you any trouble, were they?" His voice hardened as he cast a look over his shoulders at the suddenly less than eager men.

Ianto shook his head and collected two of the drinks he had ordered. Owen grabbed the remaining three, practice letting him balance the third pint without spilling anything as he escorted Ianto back to the table. "Thanks for the rescue, Owen," Ianto said softly.

"No problem, love," Owen smirked. "We'll have to teach you how to handle guys like them."

"Great," Ianto replied, sounding a bit downhearted. "Never had this much trouble, not even when we went to the gay bars."

Owen laughed a bit. "Gay bars? You?"

Ianto shrugged. "Jack's not the first guy I've slept with." He left Owen gaping. Not that Owen had given much thought to Ianto and Jack's sex life - he preferred to avoid thinking about it in fact - but he had always assumed that Ianto hadn't shagged blokes before Jack. It wasn't a huge thing, but it did change his perspective, just a tiny, tiny bit, about Ianto. He shook his head and hurried to catch up with his colleague. He wondered what other surprises Ianto had hidden.

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Monday, March 9, 2009

"Hey, Jack," Ianto calls out tiredly from where he's leaning against the doorjamb of Jack's office. "I'm going to head home now, unless you need something?" He felt exhausted as the Rift decided to make up for the quiet of the previous weeks and had kept the team busy for the past 36 hours straight. Busy enough that he had had to go out into the field for the first time since his change. Fortunately, it had only required a lot of running and picking up of artifacts rather than shooting or capturing dangerous aliens. The others had already left, but Ianto had wanted to finish his last report so he didn't have to do it later.

"Come in late tomorrow," Jack ordered, standing and making his way towards Ianto. Ianto smiled in grateful response.

"Thanks. All I want to do is collapse on my bed and not wake up for a while."

"Sounds lovely. Want company?" Jack asked with a waggle of eyebrows. Ianto giggled - and was then properly horrified that he had *giggled*. It did have the benefit of making Jack smile one of his big grins.

"Jack..." Ianto warned, even as Jack pulled him slowly into his arms. Just enough pressure to effectuate his desire, but leaving enough slack for Ianto to pull free if he wanted to. Ianto felt his heart pounding just a bit harder. This was the first time since the change that Jack had even suggested something sexual between them. It had taken Ianto a while to get used to the almost platonic way Jack had treated him -

except for his eyes. Jack's eyes begged and promised Ianto all sorts of things. For all that Ianto felt nervous - even more so than the first time they did this - he also wanted to try. So he allowed his body to fall against Jack's.

Jack's arms engulfed him, holding him close. Ianto breathed in the unique sense that meant *Jack* and he closed his tired eyes as he felt a little bit more peaceful. Jack caressed his hair, stroking up and down the mane of hair that had fallen out of its neat braid hours ago. "I've missed this," Jack confessed softly and Ianto's clenched his arms just a bit tighter.

"Me too," he replied and smiled at the soft groan that follows that. His breasts were pressed against Jack's chest in a way that felt strange and alien and just a little bit frightening. He wasn't sure about this, not at all, but he was also exhausted and needed the comfort. Going out into the field had been harder than he had imagined, mostly because he had worried that those who paid attention to Torchwood might connect the new tall Welsh woman with the man he used to be. It didn't help that he responded to a male name either. Just too much for him to handle, but he had forced himself to ignore that and just go out.

Jack tilted his face up a little bit and bent his head to kiss him. Ianto's eyes bore into his, seeing the emotion and desire Jack felt towards him. He could feel his face heating a bit as Jack gently traced his lips with his own. It shouldn't have surprised him that the kiss felt no different than any of other kisses they had shared in the past, but somehow it did. Jack kept the kiss simple and didn't push for more, something Ianto felt incredibly grateful for. He opened his lips and slowly responded, causing Jack to pull him tighter against his body.

Ianto squeaked as his breasts were crushed against Jack. It felt strange and they tingled in a way that his chest had never done so before. It frightened him enough that he pulled back, breaking away from Jack. He nervously smoothed a hand down his hair as he looked at the floor. "I'm sorry," he whispered before fleeing. He couldn't exactly explain why he couldn't stay; he just knew that if he stayed he would break.

He really hated being a woman.

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Jack clenched his fists as he watched Ianto flee the Hub. He slowly breathed out, reminding himself that Ianto was a young, 21st Century male who had had an involuntary sex change given to him. He knew that people in this time set store by their gender and Ianto hadn't taken the change very well. Oh, he acted like he did, even wearing a bit of make up and pretty feminine clothes. But it was almost as if he was play acting and he certainly hadn't accepted that it might be permanent.

Maybe he shouldn't have pushed. But he *missed* Ianto, missed holding him and kissing him and just spending time with him. He had hoped... but, apparently still too soon. Maybe Owen was right, maybe he should arrange for Ianto to speak with one of the UNIT psychologists about this.

He would see how lanto acted in the morning. In the meantime, he would also make sure he knew that he didn't blame lanto for running away. He was determined to make sure that he got an actual shot with lanto - just like he had dreamed of in that year with the Master.

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Tuesday, March 10, 2009

Gwen watched with as lanto scurried around the Hub, never sitting or standing still long enough to engage anyone in a conversation. She knew something had happened, something that bothered lanto and she wanted nothing more than to confront him and ask him just what had happened to rattle the stoic mien he had effaced in the weeks since his transformation. Once, she would have just gone up to him and forced him to speak with her. Now though? She didn't think she would have much luck. He had changed so much since his forced transformation to the point that there were times when she barely recognized him. She had thought he had come to grips - at least a little bit - with what had happened to him. He smiled more, had stopped hiding in the archives, and had even joined them when they went to the pub the other week.

She glanced up at Jack's office; whatever had happened to cause lanto to revert back to his behavior of two weeks ago had also affected him. He had barely spoken to any of them - and Gwen was fairly certain she had seen disappointment in his eyes when lanto had refused to join them for lunch.

It was so frustrating! She wanted to help, but she didn't think anyone would appreciate her interfering. lanto barely tolerated her advice on being a woman; Jack all but bit her head off when she had suggested he back off of his relationship with lanto; Tosh forcefully told her not to try and fix lanto or Jack; and Owen - of all people - warned her to stay away from lanto. Their reactions bothered her because she didn't mean harm. She had complained to Rhys about it, but he had suggested that her brand of concern might just make things worse. "Wait it out, love. When they need your help, you'll know."

And so, Gwen waited. She just made sure they all knew they could come to her if they needed her help. So far, no one had taken her up on her implicit offer.

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God, I can't believe I just ran! Jack's going to hate me! lanto berated himself as he hid in the archives. Too cowardly to face Jack after last night, but also knowing he couldn't take another day off of work, he had done his best to be "least seen" all day. Fortunately for his nerves, everyone had let him be. Unfortunately, not even the usually calming archival atmosphere helped him today.

He couldn't even really explain why he had fled. It wasn't as if he and Jack hadn't kissed before. Should it really matter that he now had breasts? He had thought he was slowly coming to grips with the change. And yet, last night's reaction clearly belied his thoughts. As much as he told himself that he wanted Jack, wanted to keep the relationship they had reignited, wanted to move forward in his life, his natural

instinct clearly thought differently. He had hurt Jack - and continued to do so b ignoring him - but he couldn't bring himself to reassure him that everything was going to be okay.

Frankly, he didn't know if it was *ever* going to be okay.

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Thursday, March 19, 2009

The next emotional crisis occurred about one month after the initial incident. Ianto woke with a throbbing, consistent pain in his lower stomach. It wasn't until he reached the bathroom that he realized *why*. Thankfully, Tosh had prepared him for even this, so he had the supplies he needed. However, it highlighted his change. He blinked back angry tears; Owen had said he was 100% female, and completely functional. He hadn't really thought what that meant though, not until now.

He decided it really fucking sucked.

A couple of painkillers later, he called Jack. "I'm not coming in today," he informed him without preamble.

"Ianto? Why? What's wrong?" Jack asked, sounding panicked. Ianto supposed he had a right to: Ianto *never* called out. Ever. He had even showed up to work with the flu and a fever.

"I'm crampy. God, Jack. How the hell do Tosh and Gwen stand it?" he whined, curling up into himself as the pain shot through him.

"What?" Jack asked. He must have realized what Ianto meant a few moments later. "Oh... I get it," he continued, sounded smug. Ianto wished Jack was here so he could strangle the idiot. He had no right to sound like that.

"Yes. Well, don't call me unless the world is ending," Ianto stated and hung up the phone. He held it in his hand for a moment before narrowing his eyes and tossing it to the side.

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Tosh rang the bell at Ianto's flat and wondered how he was handling everything. Jack had mumbled something about Ianto not feeling well when Gwen had asked where he was; he had later told Tosh that she might want to stop by - that Ianto might appreciate having someone to talk with about yet another new experience. It had confused her until she had looked at the calendar and realized just why Ianto might not be feeling well. Poor Ianto.

She bit back a smile as she saw the utterly miserable look Ianto gave her as he opened the door. He wore sweats that he must have worn when he was a man and looked quite unlike his usual immaculate self. "Tosh," he greeted, holding the door open for her to pass through. He shuffled after her and returned to his sofa, where he promptly cocooned himself in blankets.

“Cramps?” Tosh asked sympathetically. She unloaded the bag of supplies she had brought - chocolate, pain relievers and a hot water bottle.

Ianto grimaced in reply. “How the hell do you stand this?”

“Well, it gets better.” Ianto snorted in disbelief and rolled his eyes. “No, seriously. The first few times, yes... it’s painful. Then, it just is something you deal with once a month. Granted, you have to watch your diet to an extent. Sometimes, if you eat improperly it affects the severity of your cycle.”

“I hate this,” Ianto groaned, accepting the glass of water she handed him and the tablets. “Do these work better than Anadin?”

“Yep. It’s designed specifically for menstrual cramps.”

“Thank god,” Ianto grimaced. He had a high pain tolerance – it was hard to work for Torchwood if you didn't - but today had certainly stretched his reserves. It wasn't the cramps themselves that hurt; oh no... it was the way they would go away, the way his body had this persistent ache that throbbed with each breath he took and irrevocably reminded him of his change. He hoped that whatever Tosh had brought to him worked.

“How are you doing, Ianto?” Tosh ventured. Ianto cracked open an eye from where he rested on his sofa. His friend looked nervous but determined. He sighed, knowing he couldn't put her off.

“I take it you're not referring to my physical health?” he asked.

Tosh shook her head, her hair swinging loose and framing her face. “It's been a month, Ianto,” she began softly. “And none of us know what's going on in your head.”

God, I really don't want to have this conversation, not now. He played with a strand of his hair, a habit he had obtained in the last month. It kept his hands busy, while letting him avoid Tosh's all too-knowing eyes. She saw so much more than he wanted people to see. As annoying as that could be, it also made her his best friend. She never let him get away with anything.

“It's complicated,” he finally said. She snorted and rolled her eyes in response. Clearly, his answer was inadequate. “I... can't really articulate it. This,” he continued, gesturing weakly towards his feminine body, “was not something I ever expected to happen. And don't get me wrong; everyone's been great. But... I miss my old body. And Jack's great, he really is. But... I don't know what's going on between us.”

Of all Ianto's various friends, colleagues and acquaintances, Tosh knew the most about Ianto's relationship with Jack - more so than the man himself. She knew that Ianto had almost not agreed to the date that Jack had actually arranged about a week after he had returned. She had urged him to at least try, since Jack had made the effort to follow through on his request. To his surprise, Jack had gone all out with the date and together the two had drifted into a relationship that actually seemed to resemble something more than just shagging.

Ianto assumed that the Arde'thi had sensed the growing bond between the two of them when they decided to give him his new body.

"Have you even tried to talk to him about any of this?" Tosh asked.

"Not really."

Tosh raised an eyebrow in question. Ianto huffed as he tried to articulate what had changed beyond the physical when it came to his relationship with Jack. Not that he had ever actually told Jack how he felt towards him. Tosh had urged him in the week before the Arde'thi to actually tell Jack what he felt. Ianto had been working up to revealing his feelings but then he had been changed and everything else had seemed to as well.

"I don't even bloody know what I'm doing with my own life, Tosh, never mind something with Jack," he finally said.

"Well, maybe you should do something about that," she told him tartly. He scowled at her in reply. Sadly, he couldn't disagree with her assessment. Something needed to give - and soon.

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Friday, March 20, 2009

Owen rarely hesitated to speak when he felt something needed to be said. Jack had once told him that he appreciated that about his medic. He sighed as he hovered on the first step leading to Jack's office; he didn't really want to breach this subject with Jack, but he needed to before it began to affect the team. Not that it hadn't, but until recently, Ianto's change and subsequent methods of dealing with it hadn't exactly impacted anyone when they were in the field or trying to do their job. He had made sure Ianto knew he could come to him and talk about what had happened - had even promised not to take the mickey out of him. Ianto had very politely thanked him for his kindness but had yet to take Owen up on his offer.

Of course, given their past history, Owen couldn't say he was very surprised. But still, he *was* the medic for Three and at the moment, Ianto was dangerously close to being placed on medical leave. Hence, his need to speak with Jack. And therein laid his reluctance.

Everyone - with everyone defined as he and Tosh - had realized that Jack and Ianto had restarted whatever they had after Jack had returned. Not that Gwen hadn't noticed - she had - but unlike her, he and Tosh had realized that whatever Jack and Ianto had had before, it was now something more. Jack was protective of all of them and despite his whatever with Ianto, did not treat him any better than any other member of Three. Except... they all of them knew that Jack would not tolerate someone intentionally hurting Ianto. He looked after his lover, even if he did not make a big deal of it. Small things, but enough to hint that the two of them had more than a casual relationship.

“Planning on coming up here anytime soon?” Jack’s amused voice asked him from the door of his office. Owen threw him a half-hearted smile in reply.

“Don’t get your panties in a twist, Harkness,” he griped half-heartedly. “Need to talk to you about something.”

“Well come on in and sit yourself down,” Jack offered.

He felt almost like he was going to his execution and nearly snorted at the image. He wondered if Ianto would cater it or even if such an event would get Ianto into an honest to goodness dress.

“What’s going on?” Jack asked, bringing Owen back to reality. In turn, Owen cleared his throat. He needed to be professional.

“I’m here about Ianto,” he began.

“What about Ianto? Is he okay? Is something wrong?” Jack asked, looking a bit frantic.

Owen held his hand up in response. “Hold it. Nothing’s wrong with Tea Boy. Yet. But he needs help and he’s not getting it.”

Jack leaned back in his chair; Owen was relieved that the other man appeared to actually be listening to him and not dismissing him out of hand. “What kind of help?”

“Come on, Jack! He needs mental help,” Owen sneered. “He’s not handling this change very well; we’ve all seen it, haven’t we? He’s going to snap if he doesn’t talk to someone - and I know he’s not talking to Tosh or me - so unless somethings changed and he’s talking to Gwen - or you - he needs to see someone. Ianto can’t keep this all to himself.”

To his surprise, Jack just sighed and nodded. “I know,” he confessed. “I’ll talk to him today, see if he’ll do it on his own so I don’t have to make it an order.”

Owen breathed a sigh of relief. “Good.” He made a face, “I really should have forced him to see someone earlier than this, but I was hoping he would either mention it on his own, or get better.”

“Yeah, well... I think we all wanted that.”

Wasn’t that the truth.

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“Ianto! Need to talk to you!” Jack ordered. Ianto looked up with a frown, wondering what exactly Jack wanted to speak to him about. Of course, his order made it easier for him; the conversation with Tosh the night before had convinced him he needed to see a professional. Hopefully, Jack would have a suggestion. He couldn’t very well go to some random psychologist and try to explain what had happened.

As much as he had been prepared to speak to Jack today, he also didn't feel ready to do so just yet. He breathed deeply, trying to calm himself before heading up the stairs. Tosh caught his eyes and gave him an encouraging look. He smiled at her weakly. He could do this. It was for the best really - and necessary.

"Jack?" he queried after he entered.

"Sit, Ianto." Ianto walked slowly to the chair and lowered himself into it, his fingers clasped tightly in his lap. Once upon a time, he would have simply perched on the edge of the desk, assured of his place in Jack's life. Yet another thing that had changed in the last month. "How are you feeling?"

"Um... better than yesterday. Tosh got me something to help," Ianto replied, flushing at the question and answer. He didn't feel very comfortable with this latest evidence of his change.

"Glad to hear that," Jack said and looking at him, Ianto could see that he meant it. He smiled at the evidence that Jack still cared for him in some way, despite his actions these past weeks.

"Jack? I wanted to ask you something," Ianto ventured. He figured he should just ask now, while he felt a bit confident about Jack's feelings for him. "I was um... talking to Tosh last night, and she kind of brought something up that well..." Ianto's fingers twisted in his lap with nervousness before he took the proverbial bull by the horns and met Jack's gaze with his own. "At One, we had an entire department of psychologists. Something like this," and he waved a hand in the vague direction of his own body, "would have required a number of sessions. I know there are the online counseling sessions, but I don't think it's going to work, not for this... Jack, I..."

"I know. That's what I wanted to talk to you about," Jack interrupted. His face softened. "I'm glad you're asking me. I spoke with Martha and she suggested one of the counselor's at UNIT. I called Alistair and he agreed to temporarily transfer Dr. Grant to the Cardiff base for you." He handed Ianto a post it with the contact information.

Ianto glanced at the paper in his hand. "Thank you," he said softly. "I just..."

Jack stood from his chair and walked to Ianto's side; crouching down beside him, he grasped Ianto's hand in his own. "Hey... I get it. It's all overwhelming. You'll talk to Doctor Grant and things will get better."

"You really think so?" Ianto couldn't help but ask.

"Yeah, I do," Jack said. He pressed a soft kiss on top of Ianto's head. "Come on. Work to do."

"Right. I'm surprised the savages haven't started a riot, not getting their coffee yet." He was so very grateful that Jack wasn't pushing him. He could do this.

He had to.

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When lanto had phoned in sick the day before, Jack had not shared the details of just why lanto would not be in. He made a vague mention of general illness and that seemed to satisfy Owen, who, in a fit of actually being the medic for Three, had asked if lanto needed his medical help, but after Jack's denial seemed quite content to let it be. Later, Jack had pulled Tosh aside and suggested that she visit lanto and help him deal with the sudden arrival of his menstrual cycle. He didn't bother alerting Gwen as to what had happened.

Jack genuinely liked Gwen; he liked her persistence and her willingness to stand up to him when she thought he was wrong. He also knew that she rubbed several of her colleagues the wrong way. Before he left, lanto and Gwen had a very superficial relationship: they were work colleagues and that was all. Somehow, in the months after he had left, they became actual friends. Despite this, Jack knew it annoyed lanto that Gwen didn't seem to think that their relationship was more than just a casual shag. He also knew that Gwen's habit of trying to elicit conversation about feelings and lanto's life drove him batty. So telling her that lanto was freaking out because he had gotten his first period would not exactly endear him to the person he hoped to become lovers with - again.

Not that they weren't lovers prior to the Arde'thi-induced change. lanto had quite calmly informed Jack that while they still had to work on the actual relationship aspect of whatever they had, lanto had no qualms about having sex, mostly because he was young and missed it when Jack had been gone. Jack hadn't put up much of a fight and they had both enjoyed sex and attempted to carve out space for a real actual relationship, one that had been going somewhere when the Arde'thi came. This was what bothered Jack the most about what had happened: not only did he no longer have sex, but he also didn't have the nascent relationship he and lanto had been building. He missed that, missed the pleasure of holding lanto's hand whilst walking to a restaurant for a date, or necking in the back of the theater, or just holding him after a particularly harsh day.

He wanted it back.

At any rate, he had not informed Gwen of the true reason for lanto's absence the day before. He had, in fact, mostly did his best to avoid the woman and in the end, had sent her home early to spend time with Rhys. Fortunately, lanto had returned to work today, meaning that Gwen could beard the actual lion rather than a poor substitute. Still, he couldn't help but shudder in sympathy as he saw the Welsh woman approach his archivist and draw him aside for a quick talk.

He really hoped no one ended up on de-caf because of this.

He might have an honest-to-goodness mutiny on his hands.

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As soon as Gwen entered the Hub this morning, she knew that lanto had returned to work; the aromatic smell of freshly brewed coffee permeated the main area. She hurried to her desk, where lanto had already placed her mug of coffee - made just the way she liked it - on the coaster he preferred she used, rather than scar the desk. Just one more habit that defined lanto; she missed it when he was absent.

She took a sip of the exquisite coffee and sighed a bit in happiness. No one made coffee like Ianto; it didn't matter what he looked like. In fact, the main reason she had grown used to Ianto's new look was because his coffee tasted the same. The Arde'thi might have changed his body, but they didn't rid him of his skill when it came to make beverages. *And now, I'm stalling*, she thought to herself. She wrinkled her nose. Time to find Ianto and see what had kept him from work yesterday.

For some reason, one she couldn't quite define, she had always felt protective towards their youngest member. Not that he needed her protection. Intellectually, she knew that Ianto had worked for Torchwood for longer than herself, and as long as Tosh and Owen. It could have been even longer - she didn't really know his start date. And still, she couldn't help but feel a bit maternal towards him. Maybe it was because he had only started to go out into the field in the last year, rather than remain simply support staff; or possibly, it was because of the sheer depth of tragedy he had experienced in his life.

Whatever the reason might be, Gwen was determined to get Ianto to tell her how he felt. She stubbornly felt that if he would only *talk* about his feelings and thoughts instead of bottling it all inside him, he would be happier. She casually looked around, happy to see that everyone appeared busy with their own work. *Perfect*, she thought. *No one to disturb us.*

Finding where Ianto had disappeared to within the archives was not an easy task. But, by dint of sheer persistence, she finally managed to track him down. She watched him as he unhurriedly examined and catalogued various items that had been stuck helter-skelter within the archives for God knew how long. Ianto had opted to pull his long hair back in a simple twist; he wore a pair of nicely tailored trousers and a button down blue blouse. In all, the very image of a professional woman.

"Ianto?" she asked, clearing her throat as he turned around. He held a PDA in front of him and raised an eyebrow in query. "Jack mentioned you were ill yesterday. Are you feeling better, sweetheart?"

"I am," he told her. She waited to see if he would elucidate on his answer, but the silence continued to stretch between the two of them.

"Well, that's good then," she replied awkwardly. She tried to figure out how best to push him for more. "You know... if you need to talk about... well, what happened, you can always come to me."

"Thank you, Gwen."

Gwen felt a frisson of surprise run through her body. This was better than she had expected. She waited with some expectation for him to continue.

Unfortunately, he didn't seem inclined to. She huffed in annoyance. "Ianto?" she ventured.

"Do you need something Gwen? I have a lot I need to finish today." She knew a dismissal when she heard one.

"No... just wanted to make sure you were okay," she finally said.

He flashed her a smile. "Thank you."

As she headed back to the main area of the Hub, she couldn't help but feel disappointed that he hadn't shared his secrets with her.

Gwen knew she hadn't handled Ianto's transformation as well as she should have. Of course, nothing that Torchwood had thrown at her so far had really prepared her for the possibility of an entire sex change. She couldn't acknowledge that some of her initial reaction came from her jealousy at what the change implied. She knew about Jack and Ianto's relationship, but unlike Tosh and Owen, had assumed that it didn't really *mean* anything. And she knew she had Rhys and didn't have Jack, but a part of her had always felt that Jack was hers but for the asking. After all, he was the one to keep pushing towards Rhys and she was happy enough to let him do that. She had seen the way Jack looked at her sometimes though, and those looks combined with his tendency to let her do what she wanted had led her to think she meant more to him than anyone else.

The Arde'thi's actions had changed that outlook. She had mused with Tosh about the change and what it actually meant for Jack and Ianto. "Seems kind of silly, doesn't it?" she had said. "I mean, to change Ianto when he and Jack are well... you know."

Tosh had frowned at her and asked her to explain. "Well, you know... they're not really together, are they?"

"Gwen, they go on dates. Of course they're together. The Arde'thi wouldn't have changed Ianto if they thought they weren't serious about each other."

Taken aback, Gwen had just stared blankly at Tosh. What had she missed? Over the next few days, she reviewed her memories of Jack and Ianto before the change and realized Tosh was correct: they did have something more than what she had assumed. How embarrassing.

As a man, Ianto had existed in the background. Gwen knew he was there, but she often had to remind herself of this fact. Something about being a woman changed that. It wasn't as if Ianto embraced his transformation, or wore clothing that accentuated his new form. He dressed conservatively, wore a minimum amount of makeup, never wore heels, and in general avoided anything that could remotely define him as a woman. His efforts were a bit futile though, because Ianto was very much a woman now and looked beautiful, even when he wasn't trying to do so. Gwen knew they weren't competing for anything or anyone, and yet she couldn't help but feel threatened by his presence, even as she wanted to protect him against the horrors they dealt with at Torchwood.

So yes, Gwen hadn't exactly approached Ianto with the degree of sympathy she should have. Not that he ever brought it up. Which brought her to her present situation. She wanted him to confide in her, wanted it to be her to help him come to grips with what had happened.

Unfortunately, Ianto wasn't cooperating.

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Wednesday, March 25, 2009

Ianto had seemed oddly on edge all day. The only reason Owen hadn't gone to Jack and mentioned his concern was that Jack didn't seem overly worried about Ianto's behavior. He had even seen the two of them in Jack's office and miracle of miracles, Ianto had let Jack hug him. Briefly, yes, but a hug all the same. Since the transformation, Ianto had become quite body shy and tended to avoid even the most casual of touches. So that he allowed Jack to hold him - even for a short few seconds - implied that Owen probably wasn't going to have to force him to take medical leave - either temporarily or permanently.

It made him happy. He genuinely liked Ianto and would miss him if he left Torchwood. Of course, a part of him thought that Ianto should leave Torchwood, since it would increase his life span. He also knew Ianto well enough to never suggest it. Torchwood was in Ianto's blood.

"Oi! Tea boy, coffee anytime soon?" he called out as Ianto made his customary trip through the Hub on his way to the archives.

He didn't receive a verbal response but Ianto did make his way to the kitchen. He turned back to his reports - such scintillating work but better than running around outside in the misty rain that defined Cardiff. Before long, Ianto placed a cup of fresh coffee by his hand. "Ta, Ianto," Owen muttered as he took a big sip of the hot beverage.

"Anything else? Or can I get back to my job?" Ianto snarked.

"Hmm... let me think..." Owen leered, taking care to let his eyes linger on Ianto's body. "You offering?"

He hid a snort as Ianto rolled his eyes. "Right... because I found you so appealing as a man I'm now going to succumb to your charms."

"I figured there was a reason you're dressed so nice today. Come on love..." Owen teased. In the weeks since his change, Ianto had simply exchanged his suits for conservative female versions. He no longer wore terribly bright colors, at least after that first day back.

"Sorry Owen, have an appointment after work. Thank you for making sure Jack had the necessary information for me," he said. "And now, I really need to finish archiving. I don't know what it is with you lot. You all seem constitutionally unable to correctly label your files."

Ianto's actions and remarks left Owen satisfied. For the first time in a while, Ianto had responded as he once would have and even let Owen tease him about his new body. Of course, Ianto also knew that Owen had no interest in him as a possible sexual partner. Ianto might be a woman now, but he was - and still considered himself - a man, and Owen didn't prefer men in his bed. It didn't matter that Ianto was stunning as a woman; to Owen, Ianto was a man, even if his outside didn't exactly support that categorization.

More than that, Ianto's ability to snipe at Owen had reassured him that whatever made Ianto nervous, it didn't involve Torchwood. From his comment, Owen assumed Ianto had made an appointment with a therapist to talk about what had happened to him. What no one at Three had really discovered was that they had built the foundation of their friendship on taking the mickey out of each other. When Ianto had first come to Three, Owen had meant the acerbic comments he made to the archivist.

Owen knew he had a caustic tongue. Even when he had Katie, he hadn't suffered fools gladly. Coming to Three hadn't changed that aspect of his personality, only enhanced it. Jack, for his part, simply ignored Owen's comments, seemingly amused by whatever came out of his mouth. Only in the last few months had Tosh snapped back at him when he made hurtful comments. Suzie, well... Suzie had been even more socially awkward than Tosh if that was possible. All of her insults had revolved around Owen's prowess (or lack thereof) in bed. When Ianto had arrived from the proverbial ashes of Torchwood Tower and convinced Jack to let him work for Three by agreeing to any menial task the Captain gave him, he had not left his own caustic nature in London. At first, Ianto had quietly accepted Owen's taunts; then, as time went on, the other man had calmly begun to return Owen's comments with ones of his own.

Shortly after Ianto had arrived at Three, Owen had found someone new to entertain him. Ianto had happily traded insults with Owen and slowly, they had developed a relationship that existed solely on those foundations. They weren't friends and wouldn't actually acknowledge one another if they had, by some chance, bumped into each other in the "outside" world, but they each held a grudging sort of respect towards each other.

Which was why Owen had grown increasingly worried after Arde'thi had bestowed their gift on Ianto. In the weeks since the change, Ianto had rarely exchanged quips with Owen. And, even though Owen had a whole slew of comments and insults ready to unload on Ianto, he had refrained from unleashing more than one or two - especially after Ianto had responded so listlessly to his initial attempts.

So no, Owen didn't plan to corner Jack or Ianto and ask for details on Ianto's new attitude change. It was enough that they were both taking the steps to ensure that the change forced on Ianto by the Arde'thi wouldn't ruin Ianto's life forever.

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Ianto waited patiently, if a bit nervously, in the reception area for his appointment with Doctor Grant. Though attached to UNIT, the psychologist had found rooms to share with a local practice. Ianto couldn't help but feel relieved about that; he had no desire to traipse to the UNIT base located right outside of Cardiff for however long it took for him to work through his issues.

He jiggled his leg with excess energy. He really didn't want to be here; he had never had a good rapport with the psychology profession. After Canary Wharf, he had completed the bare minimum required for all the survivors, thankful that the powers that be allowed him to use the online therapy option. His only other experience revolved around his mother and her removal to Providence Park when he was a teenager. The doctors in charge of her case had misdiagnosed her condition and placed her on the

wrong drugs; it had resulted in his mother's suicide. Given all that, he had very little desire to actually work with a psychologist, but he also knew that if he didn't, he would need to leave Torchwood.

He had no desire to do that.

And not because of Jack. He didn't really let himself think about his relationship with Jack - something Tosh had repeatedly scolded him about. Gwen and possibly even Owen thought he continued to work for Three because of Jack, that he had transferred his need to save Lisa to someone who couldn't die. They couldn't be further from the truth. Ianto remained at Three to make sure that the legacy of One did not go forgotten.

Not the legacy that Jack and the others believed in - oh no. The Tower had been so much more than Yvonne and her mad desire for power and glory. As one of only twenty-seven survivors, Ianto felt it was his duty in part, to make sure that his fellow colleagues were not forgotten or that their achievements were smeared with the stain of Canary Wharf and therefore worthless.

He had tried so hard not to really think of anything but moving forward since the Arde'thi had transformed him and they had discovered they couldn't change him back. Unfortunately, as he had discovered and as Jack and Tosh had pointed out to him, he couldn't keep ignoring what had happened. He needed to deal with it all before it started affecting his life and possibly endangering the team. Ianto had agreed, and so here he was. Waiting somewhat impatiently for Doctor Grant to appear.

He just hoped she would help and not hinder.

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Doctor Celia Grant finished reviewing the case file before her. Ianto Jones had had an interesting life even before the Arde'thi had bestowed their "gift" on him and it amazed her that he was not already seeing a therapist. Of course, his employee file from Torchwood One mentioned an aversion to the psychology profession, which probably didn't help to encourage Ianto to seek help amongst them. And yet... for all that, Ianto had called for an appointment with her - had actually asked for help from Captain Harkness - without being ordered to. Ianto's own actions gave Celia hope that these sessions would prove fruitful and helpful.

After checking her watch, she went to collect her patient. She didn't plan to do a lot in this first session; she hoped that they could grow comfortable with each other, as even with Ianto's initial willingness to talk to a therapist, little could be achieved if Ianto refused to actually work with her.

"Ianto Jones?" she called out as she walked towards the only visitor waiting in the reception area. Startled blue eyes met hers as the person stood and held out a hand in greeting. "I'm Doctor Celia Grant. Come this way," she continued, gesturing towards the open door that led to her office.

Once they reached her office, Celia waited to see where Ianto would choose to settle; the office had several seating arrangements including a small two seater sofa, a chaise lounge, and two armchairs, all of it designed to make the patient feel comfortable and not feel as if he or she was being interrogated.

Therapy needed trust to work properly. Even something as small as where one sat could have an impact on the session. It was for that reason, that Celia let Ianto choose where to sit. After all, this was for Ianto's benefit and not hers - or Torchwood's.

"How are you today," she asked, trying to project friendly courtesy. She grabbed her case notes and settled into the armchair opposite her patient.

Ianto shrugged. "Well enough, I suppose."

Celia nodded, "Well, we both know why we're here. I've received copies of your files from Torchwood, including a brief summary of the incident which changed you. I'll be honest with you. I'm a UNIT psychologist, but I've mostly worked with patients who've found working with aliens or alien technology overwhelming. Some of my patients have been significantly affected or injured by the technology they worked on and I've helped them deal with what happened to them. But the main reason I suggested to help you is because I've counseled a number of transsexuals who've desired to transition to their preferred sex. Obviously, your case is quite different as your change was not consensual, or even wanted." Celia paused for a moment as Ianto snorted at her statement. She waited to see if Ianto would say anything but after a moment of silence, she continued. "The first thing I tell all my patients is that I'm on your side. I'm here to help you." She leaned forward, "Nothing you say will be reported back to UNIT or Torchwood. My reports to your medical officer will not contain the specifics of what you reveal here. I've looked over your employment file and frankly, I think there is a lot we should talk about, but if you're not comfortable with discussing it, we will only focus on what the Arde'thi did to you. You're going to set the pace here, okay?"

Ianto nodded. Celia noted the fingers curled tightly in Ianto's lap and could assume that it took all Ianto had to appear calm. She had read in an evaluation from London that Ianto had tight control over his emotions, something seen as very fortuitous and an asset. While such was all well and good in the field, Celia needed to break through to him if this was going to do any good.

"Alright then, why don't we start? I'll start with something easy. How would you like me to refer to you? Miss Jones? Mr. Jones? Or something else?" This more than anything would help her immensely. Ianto's choice of gender expression would help her to guide their conversations.

"Please call me Ianto," her patient replied. "I'm... still not used to Miss Jones and Mr. Jones seems quite formal for this," he smirked a bit ruefully, gesturing between them.

"Very well," Celia smiled encouragingly. "Why don't you tell me in your own words how this change happened."

She saw Ianto's eyes darken with some sort of dark emotion before he sighed and settled deeper into the arm chair. Slowly, quietly, he related the events that had led to his change. Celia had read about the incident of course, but hearing it from his point of view made her sympathize with the Torchwood agent. It also made her thankful that she was not a field agent. By the time he finished, Celia had a

clearer idea of how to steer their sessions together so as to benefit Ianto best. She also realized that at least some of their sessions would need to deal with his relationship with Jack Harkness.

"I notice you haven't cut your hair and that you're wearing clothing that, while not overly feminine are clearly meant for a woman," Celia commented carefully.

Ianto shrugged, "Tosh took me shopping after it happened and we learned I couldn't be changed back without Arde'thi help. It... just seemed easier to go along with it."

"How have your colleagues reacted?"

"As I would expect really," Ianto replied with a small frown. "Tosh is wonderful, as usual. She's helped me a lot. Owen... Owen has been helpful. Actually, I like that he's not really treated me too differently," Ianto continued with a thoughtful look on his face. "And Gwen," here he shrugged, "she's Gwen. She reacted pretty much like I suspected she would."

"Oh?"

"Yes, she uh... Gwen's tried to get me to confide in her."

"But you didn't."

"Well, no. But we're not particularly close. Not really."

Celia made a note to return to his relationship with his colleagues at some future point. She suspected there was more to it than what he had just revealed. "And Jack?"

Ianto blew out a gust of air and his eyebrows twitched upwards for a moment. "Um... he's been good. Really good about all this. Very supportive and he's not tried to push me into well... anything really."

"He's waiting for you to initiate?"

"Well, when it comes to our... the thing we have. Had. Yes."

Celia raised an eyebrow at that. Ianto did not seem all that clear on where he stood with Captain Harkness. Something they would definitely need to explore more fully at a later session.

"Do you have family?"

"Yes. My sister Rhianon and her husband and son."

"Have you told them?"

"No!" Ianto scrubbed a hand through his hair, disturbing the pony tail it had been held in. He looked very agitated. "How can I? I mean... normally something like this takes *years*. How do I explain it to them? It's not like I can tell them aliens did it as a thank you to my boss. And what if the Arde'thi return and reverse me? What do I say then? I got better?"

“They don’t have clearance?” Celia asked. While rare, occasionally if aliens or their technology had significantly affected someone, UNIT would grant the victim’s immediate family security clearance to know what had happened so the victim could have support while adjusting to his or her new circumstances.

“Torchwood isn’t like UNIT. We guard our secrets far too closely to let them free.”

Celia grimaced. She was glad she worked for UNIT then. “What do you plan to do about your sister then?”

“Don’t rightly know. Probably avoid her until I can’t.”

Celia let the topic go for now. They would need to find a strategy to deal with informing his sister of his new status, but she also thought there were more important topics to go through first.

“Is there anything besides your change that you would like to talk to me about? Remember, these sessions are for you. No one else is going to know what we discuss.”

“You mean Canary Wharf,” Ianto said flatly.

“If you would like.”

Ianto grimaced. “I... don’t know.”

“It’s up to you. I’m not here to force you to talk about anything you don’t want to.”

He shrugged in reply. Celia discreetly checked her watch and saw their session was almost over. “It looks as if our time’s almost up,” she began. “Now, it’s been arranged for you to see me thrice a week until you have a bit more of a handle on this and then we’ll adjust accordingly. Obviously, if there’s an emergency, that takes precedence and we can reschedule. Currently, we’re set for Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Same time, unless you prefer an earlier time for Fridays?”

“No. Not like we have much of a weekend,” Ianto admitted. “Not at Torchwood.”

“Well, it was very nice to meet you, Ianto. If you need to talk to me outside of our sessions, please call me.” She handed him a business card with her mobile number listed. “Even if it’s just to vent. Remember, I’m on your side.”

A small smile flitted across Ianto’s lips as he accepted the card from her. He tucked it away in the shoulder bag he carried. “Thank you, Doctor Grant. See you Friday.” With that, he hurried from her office. Celia shook her head as he exited. Despite his obvious discomfort at talking about what had happened, he had tried. She rather thought that she could help him come to grips with what happened. She knew that would be a relief to both Captain Harkness and Doctor Harper, both of whom had expressed genuine concern and worry in Ianto’s files over what had happened.

It just wasn’t going to be an easy path. She just hoped they were all prepared for what would happen.

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Ianto stared at his mobile, finger poised to ring Jack or Tosh, to talk to one of them about his first session. Yet, he also hesitated to speak to them. It was private, for all that everyone on his team knew (or should know) his difficulty in adjusting to his new form. Even Rhys had expressed sympathy, as passed on by Gwen. Thankfully, he had stayed away from the Hub, but Ianto was uncomfortably aware that the man had offered his help. Yet another consequence of Gwen's refusal to retcon her fiancé.

And still...

The fact his friends and colleagues supported him through this illustrated more than anything the difference between Three and the Tower. At the Tower, he would have been isolated, then retconned and relocated. He would not have to worry about trying to convince his sister that he had always felt like he was a woman stuck in a man's body and finally taken the steps to reflect that, just so that he could continue to see his sister and nephew as a woman. He knew, in his heart of hearts, that it wouldn't work. For all that he and Rhianon spoke occasionally and saw each other even more rarely, she knew he had never identified himself as a woman. Which meant he needed to cease contact with her. Completely.

He didn't think he was ready for that. And he didn't know how to tell Jack or even Tosh about his fears.

Putting his mobile down, Ianto got ready for bed. He couldn't cope with trying to figure out what to do with his life anymore. Maybe a good night's sleep would help.

At least the therapist had not gotten on his nerves. He liked her professional, yet friendly demeanor. He rather thought they could work together. And that she had counseled several transgendered individuals transition was a positive factor. Even if they had all voluntarily changed their sex, she would at least know some of the problems he was going through.

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Thursday, March 26, 2009

Jack refused to admit - even to himself - that he felt any anxiety about Ianto's first session. He had hoped Ianto would ring him last night - or even text him - to let him know how it went. Never mind that the therapy was for Ianto and not Jack or Torchwood, he still worried. He had scarcely slept last night, wondering whether Ianto had cooperated with Doctor Grant, or had only pretended to. He didn't think Ianto would; he had, after all, requested the therapy himself.

He still couldn't help but worry.

Despite watching the clock, Ianto did not arrive any earlier than he normally did. Jack breathed a sigh of relief when his archivist entered the Hub at his normal time. It probably meant that Ianto wasn't too upset about the previous day's activities. Not long afterwards, Ianto stopped by his office, coffee in hand.

“Good morning, Jack,” Ianto smiled as he handed over the mug. Jack took an appreciative sniff of the coffee before studying the man before him.

Ianto had yet to wear anything truly feminine and today was no different. Granted, skirt suits or dresses were impracticable at Torchwood, but he didn’t accessorize like Tosh and Gwen did, or wear low cut tops or tight trousers. He did his best to hide his feminine attributes, though he did concede enough to wear a small amount of makeup and some discrete pieces of jewelry. Jack didn’t want to turn Ianto into someone he wasn’t, but he also wanted Ianto to become comfortable with who he was now. Even if that meant that the relationship the two men had begun never restarted.

“How are you?” Jack asked.

Shrugging, Ianto leaned against the doorjamb in a pose heartbreakingly familiar from *before*. “Well enough, I suppose. I think I can work with Doctor Grant.”

No real information, but Jack was reassured by Ianto’s willingness to at least share that small bit of information with him.

“I’m glad.”

“Are you?” Ianto asked and Jack frowned at the hesitation in his voice. He stood from his chair and walked to where Ianto stood. He laid a hand on Ianto’s shoulder, relishing the feel of the other.

“Of course I am, Ianto. I want you to feel comfortable, not for me or for Torchwood, but for *you*.”

Ianto just stared at him with unfathomable eyes and not for the first time Jack wondered what thoughts lay behind them. He wished he knew what Ianto thought, but he had been very careful not to push, especially given the whole reasoning behind the Arde’thi gift.

“I know I’m being daft,” Ianto finally said, his voice a mere whisper.

“Oh Ianto,” Jack murmured, pulling him into a hug. “It’s natural. You’ll work through this. I promise.” He hoped so at least.

Ianto nodded into his chest before breaking away from Jack. “The others should be here soon,” he commented and Jack knew their moment or whatever it was they had was done with for now. He nodded and watched as Ianto descended the stairs leading to his office and disappeared into the kitchen, presumably to prepare coffee for everyone else.

Not for the first time, he cursed the Arde’thi. He wanted things back the way they were.

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Wednesday, April 1, 2009

Ianto sighed tiredly as he carefully dried his body. It had been a difficult couple of days. He had almost cancelled his therapy session today, but in the end had decided to go. He could always leave early,

though he had not. He had had four sessions with her and so far he could not complain about her. She listened and asked him thought-provoking questions, helping to guide him in understanding and accepting all that had happened to him. Despite his initial reluctance, he had spoken briefly about Canary Wharf in Monday's session, though nothing earth-shattering. For the most part, Doctor Grant had focused on his sex change.

"Do you like your new body?" Doctor Grant asked.

Ianto frowned. "What do you mean? I still have the scars from before"

"But that body was male. You are no longer in a male body."

He shrugged in reply, not quite sure how to respond. "... don't know. Never really thought about it, honestly."

"So you've not explored your new body?"

"What do you mean?" Ianto was confused. Why would he explore his body?

"The Arde'thi violated your privacy by changing you against your will. They have forced upon you a new self identity, even if you still consider yourself male. That is not what the world sees you as. Barring your colleagues, the rest of the world sees an attractive, young woman when they see you."

Ianto scowled, huffing slightly as he folded his arms under his breasts. "I know that."

"Do you? I'm not telling you to automatically accept what happened to you. However, you yourself told me that you don't know if your change can ever be reversed. Even with working for Torchwood, there is a good chance you will have to live with what happened for many years to come. You need to grow accustomed to your new form."

"So you're saying I should just accept it?"

"No, not at all. We have a lot of work to do before we're at that stage," Doctor Grant stated with a small smile. "Right now some of your discomfort stems from an unfamiliarity with the way your new body operates. So... explore it. Get to learn how it works."

Frowning, Ianto reluctantly agreed to try some of the exercises she had suggested.

He hadn't exactly examined his body since that first fateful day. He had let Tosh guide him in helping him to choose new clothes and had subsequently paid little attention to his own appearance, only ensuring that he looked professional and neat. Owen had made comments alluding to his new attractive and feminine body, and Jack had certainly mentioned that he had no complaints, but Ianto had only assumed they were being polite or taking the mickey out of him. Even Gwen and Tosh's comments hadn't really impinged on his awareness of what it meant to be a woman. Doctor Grant had carefully led their sessions to this point; of course it wasn't many - only four - but he did appreciate that she hadn't forced him to confront his new body in that first session.

So now, he had look, to examine, to start the acceptance process.

"If you're going to wait until or if we ever regain contact with the Arde'thi, then have a sex change operation here will probably not help," Doctor Grant commented off-handedly.

"Yes, I know," Ianto grimaced. "We don't know what artificially remaking me a man will do with their technology. Besides, Owen looked up for me the requirements for hormone treatment and gender reassignment, on the off chance I wanted to pursue that avenue. It would take years, even with Torchwood and UNIT interference."

Doctor Grant nodded her head in agreement. Ianto suspected she wanted him aware of the complications in case he hadn't already considered it.

Lowering his towel, Ianto gazed into the mirror. He decided to start with something easy: his face. To his surprise, his features did not mirror his sister's. Rather, they just looked like a more delicate and feminine version of his male face. His chin was less square, his cheeks a bit more prominent, his nose smaller, his lips poutier, and his eyelashes fuller. Of course, his hair was longer but that was also by choice. Keeping it long was more of a convenience since he didn't have the time to maintain it at a shorter length. One trait he and his sister had shared was their hair; from her prior experiences, he knew that unless he cut it very short, it would be frizzy and completely unmanageable. It need length to weight down some of the frizz and that was the sole reason his hair remained halfway down his back.

Moving on, Ianto next examined his arms and hands. Again, his arms reflected a more feminine nature. They were more slender and his hands had lost a certain male bluntness; instead he had long fingers and a neatly maintained manicure. His eyes skittered away from his torso - he wasn't quite ready to confront that area just yet. Instead, he focused on his feet. Like his hands, his feet had become more feminine, taking a more delicate cast. His legs were slim and long, something he attributed to retaining his height.

Ianto took a deep breath. Time for the more difficult changes. Nothing so far had been too different. Yes, they *appeared* more feminine, but alone they did not spell out his change. His heart beat faster with nervousness as he prepared himself. He opened his eyes and as objectively as possible, gazed fully upon his body.

Perhaps easiest to accept was his abdomen and hips; his stomach had lost the small pudginess he hadn't been able to get rid of, despite the excessive amount of running Torchwood required. Now, he had smooth skin and a flat tummy. His hips appeared just the right size; not too small so as to give him no figure, but not so large as to make him seem unwieldy. His eyes skittered upwards to trace his shoulders: as a man, he had had shoulders broad enough to play rugby. As a woman, his shoulders were not too broad and reflected the daily weight training he incorporated into his exercise routine. He needed to develop the upper body strength he had once taken for granted as a man.

He dropped his eyes to his breasts. He tried to look at them from a clinical perspective, but had some trouble, mostly because they were on *his* chest. He hadn't precisely loved his chest - it had been a bit too hairy for his tastes, though Jack appeared quite fond of it - but it had been *his*. Now he had... these.

Granted, they weren't overly large - just spilling over a cupped hand in fact, but still. They were uncomfortable and at times ungainly. He felt quite strange having them and he still hadn't quite gotten the hang of sleeping with them. Still, he had promised Doctor Grant he would try his best and Ianto meant to do that.

From a male perspective, his breasts were quite lovely. According to Tosh, he had average sized ones and from his own experience in perusing the female gender, he concurred. Pert and supple, with translucent skin that highlighted the blue veins which pulsed delicately beneath his skin and nipples that were neither too large, nor too tiny and were a pale pink in color. He hesitated to touch and see how sensitive they were, but they had puckered in the somewhat chilled air. He wrinkled his nose in thought; slowly, almost as if he was about to touch something forbidden, he let fingers ghost across his skin. He shivered as he traced a path down his torso, past his stomach, across his hips and headed towards the neat triangle of curls framed by his legs.

If his breasts represented proof positive of his change just by their sheer inability to remain unburdensome, his genitals served as a harsh reminder of all he had lost. He had *liked* having a cock. The Arde'thi had quite literally stolen his manhood and left him a woman, complete with vagina and uterus. He had paid scant attention to the replacement genitals and he did not know if he had the courage to do so now. His fingers trembled as they hesitantly parted the curls... and he stopped, breath shuddering. He *could* not do this, not tonight. Enough that he had looked at and categorized his breasts. *This* took it a step too far and his mind couldn't cope with what learning the contours of his vagina would do to him.

Ianto stepped away from the mirror, twisting his lips into a parody of a smile and walked to his wardrobe. *I cannot be asked to accept such a change wholeheartedly. I have done enough for tonight. Tomorrow is another day.* He crawled into bed after changing into nightclothes, hoping Jack would have no need to call him in early and that the Rift would behave.

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Thursday, April 2, 2009

This week is never ending, Gwen thought to herself, trying and failing to suppress a yawn. Ianto handed out mugs of strong coffee, something they all immediately latched upon. "Do we know why the Rift is so active?" she asked.

Jack just shrugged and looked to Tosh, who hastily put down the pastry she had started to nibble on, to expound on their current theories. Owen drummed a quiet beat with his pen against the table while Ianto slipped into his seat, PDA in front of him. Gwen noted with some concern that he looked upset and wondered what disturbed his normal calm demeanor. From the sidelong glances Jack gave him, she surmised that Jack held the same concern. The whole team knew that Ianto had begun to see a psychologist, sent by UNIT especially to Cardiff for him. How could any resent the need? He did not have an easy lot in life and this latest had not brought peace with it.

"The Rift goes through cycles," Tosh began, dragging Gwen's attention back to the meeting. A chart flickered onto the screen and Gwen tried to make sense of the numbers and data. Her brain hurt far too much to make any sense of it. "We don't know the reason for it but we've got readings from last few decades and it clearly illustrates that. We had that lull after the Arde'thi visited and we've slowly seen an increase of Rift activity in recent weeks. It looks like it will get worse for a while - we're all going to be pulling long shifts - but it *should* stabilize by the beginning of next month."

"A month!" Gwen exclaimed. "How are we going to handle that?"

"We've done it before and with less people," Jack informed her.

"B-bbut!" Gwen protested. Rhys already thought her hours too long. How would he react to her latest news? They were supposed to get married soon. Somehow, she didn't see how that could happen. If the Rift kept them as busy as this past week suggested, there was no way Jack would let her have the time off.

"Sorry Gwen! You're going to have to postpone," Jack confirmed as if he had read her thoughts. Gwen huffed in disappointment and annoyance. No one was going to be happy about this. At least Rhys knew what she did now so she could explain it to him. Hopefully, he wouldn't get too angry.

"Are we going to take shifts?" Ianto asked, the first words he had spoken since arriving this morning.

Jack blew out a puff of air. "Probably the best thing to do. I'll leave that to you - get it on my desk for approval by this afternoon."

"Of course, sir," Ianto replied, inclining his head slightly. Gwen frowned; Ianto didn't really call Jack "Sir" anymore. Not since he had returned from his trip with the Doctor. And by Jack's expression, he wasn't happy to hear Ianto's words.

"Anything else?" Jack finally asked.

"If things get really bad, I'll start distributing RM-22," Owen announced. Seeing Gwen's confusion, he elaborated, "It's a drug Torchwood synthesized from some of the stuff that's come through the Rift. It's acts like a stimulant, but doesn't have the side effects uppers have. If we do end up having to take it for a couple of weeks, we won't get into too much trouble."

"If things get too bad, we'll ask for some help from UNIT," Jack announced. Everyone looked at him in surprise. Jack hated involving UNIT with Rift activity. He didn't trust many of the higher-ups. He held up a placating hand. "Hey... I don't want any of you to get hurt if I can help it. If the Rift starts to overwhelm us, I rather use UNIT than something worse happening."

"Will the Rift remain calm after it settles?" Gwen asked.

"It should," Tosh replied. "In the past, Rift activity increases for about a month and then returns to normal." She shrugged, "I guess we'll see in about a month."

Jack clapped his hands and rose from his chair. "Okay people. Let's get to work. Get those reports finished, Tosh see if you can predict when the next alarm is going to come."

Grabbing her coffee, Gwen followed Ianto out of the conference room. She bit her lip, wondering if she should interfere; Ianto tended to keep his own counsel - especially lately. Girding her loins, she followed him into the kitchen.

"Ianto?" she began, "are you alright, sweetheart?" She watched as his shoulders stiffened before slumping and turning to face her.

"Just tired, Gwen," he said. She knew there was more to it than that, but also didn't know how to push him to opening up to her. She didn't want to stress him out more by insisting he tell her what he felt. *Apparently, she thought to herself, all those talks with Tosh and Jack and even Owen had finally driven the point home: pushing Ianto did not reveal any answers.*

"If you're sure," Gwen put all the doubt she felt in her voice; she saw Ianto wince. She carefully took his hand in her own, absently noting how feminine it was, before continuing, "if you can't talk to me about it, try Jack or Tosh." She smiled and left Ianto to his duties. She needed to inform Rhys that they needed to postpone their wedding. Again.

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"How do you cope with being here?" Ianto asked Jack later that day. He handed Jack the tentative schedule for the next three weeks for his approval.

Jack leaned back in his chair. "What do you mean?"

Sighing, Ianto fiddled with the end of his braid and refused to meet Jack's eyes. "This isn't your time; you've complained more than once about 'you people and your categories' and how 'we've no idea.' How do you handle being in a time not your own, with so many differences?"

"Where did *that* come from?" Jack asked, confusion evident in his voice. "I told you a while ago that I wouldn't change anything for the world. I'm happy here with you... and the others, of course."

Ianto shrugged. "I just... Doctor Grant gave me an exercise to complete," he confessed with a grimace. "And it... brought home how much I've changed."

His heart beat faster; Ianto was actually *talking* to him about what the Arde'thi had done to him. He didn't want to chase the other away so tried to choose his words carefully. "Do you like Doctor Grant?"

"She's helpful," Ianto told him. "But that's not the real problem."

"What is, then?"

"You know as well as I, that I've not exactly handled this whole thing with my usual aplomb," Ianto scolded.

“I know, but lanto... this isn’t exactly something you could expect from working with Torchwood.”

lanto shrugged. “A minute possibility, yes, but it’s happened to others before.”

“But not to you.”

“True,” lanto conceded. “I just... every time I think I’m okay or getting there with the transformation, something happens that throws it all into stark relief.”

Jack wondered if he should risk offering some physical comfort. “It’s a big change. Even in my time, changing your gender permanently wasn’t a common occurrence. And it wasn’t your choice.”

lanto’s lips twisted into a bitter smile, “I know.”

There was nothing Jack could say to lessen the sting of that truth. The Arde’thi changed lanto for Jack. And Jack was just waiting for the recriminations to come. They hadn’t yet, but Owen and Doctor Grant had warned him. He passed a fleeting thought towards the Doctor, wondering if Martha would ever succeed in contacting the Time Lord and getting his assistance in this. “I didn’t ask for it, you know,” he told lanto softly.

“Doesn’t change things,” lanto said. “Anyway, I’m cutting down my sessions with Doctor Grant from three days to two, given how busy we are. I figure Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, unless we get really busy. Two of us for the night shift, on a rotating basis.”

“I’m sure it’s fine,” Jack finally replied after a few moments of silence. “You realize you’re going to have to go out into the field now, and not just coordinate?”

lanto nodded. “Yep. Don’t worry, Jack. I’ll be ready.”

Jack watched, a little disappointed at how their conversation had gone, as lanto left his office. He had no idea what lanto wanted from him. He knew lanto was upset; clearly whatever he and Grant had spoken about yesterday had affected him more than he had let on. He could only hope that the increased stress from Rift activity did not cause lanto to leave Torchwood for good.

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Tuesday, April 7, 2009

“Do you resent Jack?” Celia asked. She watched her patient carefully, wondering if today would lead to a breakthrough. So far lanto had amiably cooperated with her suggestions, but he had yet to really delve into what the Arde’thi had done to him.

“I don’t understand,” lanto prevaricated.

“The Arde’thi changed you to thank Jack. Because you were in a relationship with him. You told me that since the change, you and he haven’t really talked about the future for the two of you.” Celia was determined to try and start to figure out the dynamics of lanto’s relationship with Jack. They both

needed to decide what they wanted with each other - or at least Ianto did, as Ianto reported that Jack had repeatedly assured him he would wait.

What would Ianto say? Would he give voice to his feelings? Or would he sidestep the issue, as he had done so far.

"I..." Ianto stuttered, before sighing and closing his eyes. "Resenting him is the easy way, isn't it?"

"What do you mean?" Celia asked.

"Well, Jack didn't exactly ask the Arde'thi to change me. I mean, I'm pretty sure he can have kids himself, based on comments he's made. So if... we were ever at that stage, where we wanted our own kids, it was probably doable."

Interesting, Celia thought. He still comes to his partner's defense. "Why would it be easy then?"

"How can I blame Jack for something he had no control over?" Ianto asked.

"Are you just telling me that? Or is that something you really feel?" Celia prodded.

He shrugged, almost reluctantly and she did her best to hide her triumph. She didn't need to scare him into not sharing his feelings.

"I know... intellectually, that it's not Jack's fault," Ianto began, slowly trying to put his thoughts and feelings into words. Celia did nothing to stop it. Whatever he said, needed to be said. "But... I can't help but feel... bitter, I suppose," he continued with a slight wrinkle of his nose. "Jack and I... we worked damned hard to start a relationship between the two of us after he got back. We had a lot of misconceptions about each other - what we wanted, what we thought the other wanted, even just who we were. And, what we had - it wasn't perfect. We did have something though, and it could have been more, given time." He paused, gathering his thoughts. "I don't hate Jack for what happened - I really don't. I just feel... like so much has happened to me, you know? I'm one of twenty-seven survivors from the Tower and no one at Three wants to hear about it. They hate - literally hate! - any mention of protocols initiated by One. I think they've only ever seen the worst of what we did at London and they're not really willing to look beyond the leaders. And then..." he paused again, taking a shaky breath. "These sessions are still confidential, right?" he asked, grabbing Celia's gaze with his own. It startled her, how intense his eyes glowed as they bore into hers.

"Nothing you say in these sessions will go into your permanent record." Briefly, she wondered what secrets he held that he did not want others to know. She assumed it had something to do with Canary Wharf, and she made a small note to mention in her weekly reports that denying the existence of the Tower and what happened there over a year ago helped no one.

"Okay," he said. Taking a deep breath, he continued, "I originally came to Cardiff, desperate for Jack to hire me, because I had saved my girlfriend from the Tower. She was half-converted." He paused to let the seriousness of that sink in and Celia suddenly understood his concern. Cybermen were dangerous.

They couldn't be let loose. "I thought I could save her. As I later found out... I couldn't. Jack and the others, they, well, they took care of the situation when I couldn't. But the whole thing, it was just more proof to them that no one from One could be trusted."

"How did you handle the loss of your girlfriend?" Celia asked.

Ianto snorted. "About as well as you might think. It took me a while, obviously. Jack suspended me for four weeks. At first, he left me alone but then he started to spend time with me. He forced me to speak about Lisa and whether I wanted to remain working for Torchwood. In the end... I returned and he started to give me more responsibilities."

"Did you start your relationship because of that?" Celia felt that she had to ask.

"What?" Ianto asked, surprise clearly in his voice. "Oh, no. No, Jack... I'm sure UNIT has heard the rumors. How Captain Harkness flirts with anything that moves. And he does. He made it fairly clear from the moment I started at Three that he wouldn't be adverse to a fling with me. I refused because of Lisa. It didn't seem to bother him. At least, he never treated me differently. After Lisa, he waited a bit before the flirting started up again. It was mostly word games though. He never pressured me or acted inappropriately. I think... Well, I think he decided nothing was ever going to happen between us, that after Lisa and everything that I wouldn't want anything to do with him. But," and here Ianto flushed, "I found myself attracted to him."

"Captain Harkness is an attractive man," Celia acknowledged with a neutral expression.

"Yeah, he is," Ianto smiled. "After I got back from my suspension, everyone treated me differently. Owen - his comments to me had always had a bit of a bite, but after Lisa, they were *vicious* for a while before he calmed down. He showed up at my flat one night and proceeded to get completely blotto. And he told me he would have done the same if he had been in my position. After that, he just went back to treating me like he used to. Gwen followed me around, suspicious of every move I made until the others told her to knock it off. Tosh tried to make up for ignoring me, but she also had her own projects that kept her busy. Jack just took the time to get to know me. And I found myself responding to his flirtations and actually wanting something out of them. I don't know who was more surprised, me or him when I propositioned him," Ianto concluded with a small snort of laughter.

"How did you handle your relationship with Jack being your boss?"

"It wasn't - isn't - too difficult. At first, we were just shagging, but after he returned from traveling with the Doctor for a bit, we tried to make an honest go of our relationship."

"Did you succeed?"

"I suppose we were," Ianto shrugged. "We spent time together, just the two of us, doing normal things. We were trying to get to know each other, without letting our past define what we had."

"And then the Arde'thi came," Celia stated.

"Yep," Ianto sank back into his chair, seeming to think for a bit. "I think what bothers me the most about it all, besides them not *asking* me if I wanted the sex change, is that our relationship wasn't even close to the stage where we were even taking about the possibility of kids. And I know Jack wants our relationship to continue, that he doesn't care what I look like because he likes me for who I am, not what I am. But, it's not like it's easy to date Jack Harkness. His reputation alone is a lot to surmount. I don't think he knows how to not flirt with anything that's sentient. I got changed into a bloody *woman* because of him and it's my life that's been turned upside down. Not his. I can't help but think of that every time I see him."

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Wednesday, April 22, 2009

Ianto groaned as he flopped onto the couch next to Tosh. "God, what a perfectly abysmal day," he commented.

"Cheer up, Ianto. Only another week and half or so, and things should go back to normal," Tosh advised. She handed her colleague a mug of tea, knowing that he would rather drink that than any coffee made by someone other than himself.

"Normal, right," Ianto snorted as he took a sip of the tea. He stared into nothing as he tried to relax. He had the double shift today and the Rift had kept him more than busy.

"How are you doing?" Tosh asked.

Ianto tilted his head to look at her. "I take it you're not referring to my perpetual state of exhaustion with the Rift?" She shook her head. "I didn't think so," he sighed. "I'm okay, Tosh. Doctor Grant has been enormously helpful in helping me to deal with what has happened."

"I'm glad you can speak to her," Tosh commented quietly.

There wasn't much Ianto wanted to say about his sessions, so he just shrugged. Doctor Grant had forced him to examine quite closely his reaction to his new state. He still wasn't thrilled with being a woman and he still hadn't figured out what he was going to do with his relationship with Jack, but at least she had helped him start to work through it all. He had stopped flinching when Jack reached for him and while they hadn't exactly had time to talk about the future of their relationship given how busy the Rift currently kept them, Ianto had accepted hugs from the Captain. He planned to talk to Jack after the Rift calmed down; right now, he just didn't have the energy to discuss what needed to be said.

In the month he had begun to see her, they had covered the aftermath of Canary Wharf and what it meant to survive the conflagration that had destroyed it and nearly everyone Ianto had known in London. They had also spoken about Lisa and her half-conversion and her subsequent death. Ianto had confessed to the guilt he felt at the death of the two innocents, killed by Lisa before Jack and the others had succeeded in killing her. They had even touched upon the incident with the cannibals and how close

Ianto had once again come to dying. And of course, they had discussed his transformation to the opposite gender.

Under her guidance, Ianto had slowly begun to explore his new body. Doctor Grant had suggested that he take it slow and not force himself to do anything he didn't feel comfortable about; three days after his first abortive attempt, he had cursorily examined his genitals. He had yet to masturbate, but he had taken the time to learn the contours of his breasts and had slowly begun to explore what else brought him pleasure in his new body. Frankly, by the time he returned to his flat after a day (or night, or multiple days) at Torchwood, he was so exhausted that he just shoveled food into his mouth and went to sleep.

A direct result of the increase in Rift activity meant that Ianto had to put aside his reluctance to go out on field work. They were simply far too busy to keep someone behind in the Hub to man communications. These days, they were all out, even if on different calls. He had quickly gotten used to running around in women's clothes. With help from Tosh, he had found and bought several bras more appropriate for the amount of field work he had started to engage in.

"Where's Gwen?" he asked, hoping to change the subject. Tosh just gave him a look that told him she knew exactly what he was doing.

"Home with Rhys. As nice as he's been since this all started, she told me he's started to wonder when he'll get his fiancée back."

Ianto snorted. "At least he knows more than most Torchwood partners know. He should have been retconned."

"Gwen mentioned that he's still annoyed the wedding had to be postponed - again."

"Do you think they'll marry?" Ianto couldn't help but ask. He saw Owen coming up the stairs from the autopsy area out of the corner of his eye. He nodded as the medic sank into the chair at his station opposite Tosh. His question wasn't that outlandish. Holding a marriage together while working at Torchwood was not easy - even if one married a fellow agent. It was doable, but it also led to a lot of stress.

"Please," Owen snorted. "Gwen'll do everything she can to make sure it happens." Ianto's eyebrow rose at that; it felt funny to hear such an assessment from someone who had once had an affair with her.

"How do you know that?" Tosh asked, curiosity tinging her voice.

His ears flushed red as Owen actually hesitated for a moment, considering whether to answer the question or not. Finally, he opened his mouth, "Gwen likes to talk about Rhys," he said. "I think I know more about him than her." Ianto snickered softly while Tosh's mouth opened and closed a couple of times before she just shook her head. Clearly, Owen and Gwen's affair hadn't ended because of her guilty feelings, but because Owen didn't want to hear about her then boyfriend.

Owen didn't like complications.

"Tosh, please tell me the Rift will be quiet for the next few hours!" Jack pleaded as he strode down the stairs to join their little group. Ianto shifted so Jack could sit next to him, should he choose. Jack sent him a grateful look as he collapsed next to Ianto.

Tosh shifted to her computer, pulling up a couple of screens. "Can't guarantee it, but we should be clear for the next couple of hours."

"Good," Jack sighed with relief. "Why don't we eat something and maybe get some sleep?"

"Chinese alright?" Ianto asked as he pulled out his mobile to place the order. Hearing everyone's assent, he quickly phoned it in; the restaurant was well used to the familiar Torchwood order. If anyone there thought it strange that the person who ordered the food was now a woman and had the same name as the man who used to do the ordering, they never said. One advantage of working for a top secret organization: even with the fantastical change, no one really connected the female Ianto with the male one. Even if they did, it was such a ludicrous notion that most people dismissed it.

"Should be here in 15 minutes," Ianto confirmed. Turning his attention back to Tosh, he asked the question that he was sure they all wanted to know. "So those records you found, do they really indicate that thing'll get back to normal by May? Or was that just hopeful imaginings?"

"The readings and reports are far too imprecise to say for certain, but I'm 95% sure we'll be back to normal by mid-May at the latest. Jack, you've worked for Torchwood for a while. Surely you've seen this happen before?"

"Yeah, but it's been a while," Jack confirmed. He grabbed Ianto's hand in his and absently played with his fingers. Ianto was too tired to protest.

"Why didn't you warn us?" Owen asked.

"I forgot it was coming up," Jack replied embarrassment coloring his voice. "The cycle is there, if you look for it, but it's not a regular occurrence. Last time it happened, I caught the tail end of it. I've really only been present in Cardiff for it once and that was in '30s. Torchwood had more agents assigned to Three then, so the increased activity really didn't affect us as badly." Jack closed his eyes, his head leaning back against the sofa cushion. "If I remember correctly, Derek ended up suspending any projects people were working on, unless it was really time sensitive."

"Great. Why didn't anyone program an alert into the system?" Owen groused half-heartedly.

"The servers at One probably held the information and when the Tower collapsed, the information was probably lost. Or is now at Two," Ianto informed them.

"Why would *our* alerts be at One?" Owen asked. Tosh looked disturbed by that information as well.

“Because One liked to have as much information as possible,” Ianto replied softly. “Before Jack took over, the computers here had a connection to the servers at One and a copy of every report written or sent on the computers were also stored on One’s servers. An alert would have been routed through One and someone would have sent you notice of the upcoming activity or HR would have temporarily assigned agents here to help out. But since the servers at the Tower are gone and the files that have any detail about it haven’t been digitized, it slipped through the cracks.”

“Well, I’ll make sure that doesn't happen again,” Tosh stated. “I’ve already written the alert program into the System.”

“That’s helpful,” Owen grunted.

“Maybe not for us,” Tosh argued, “but for others, yeah it is.”

“On that note, I’ll go wait in the tourist office for our food,” Ianto said, groaning as he stood up.

As he headed upstairs, he couldn’t help but be surprised at the lack of negative comments from the others about One. It pleased him though; he well knew the valid complaints about One but not everything it had done had been bad. It was about time his colleagues at Three acknowledged that.

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Sunday, May 3, 2009

Stumbling through the door of his flat, Ianto barely glanced at the blinking light on his answering machine. He just wanted to go to sleep. He had been in the Hub for four days straight, with the Rift spewing aliens, artifacts and an assortment of junk in a last hurrah before returning to normal. According to Tosh’s Rift prediction program, they should - should being the operative word - be safe for the next thirty-six hours.

He kicked off his shoes, unbuttoning his blouse and shrugging it off as he headed towards his bedroom. He wanted sleep before he dealt with anything else. Besides, he suspected more than half the messages belonged to his sister who had grown quite insistent that they meet or at least talk on the phone. She had grown discontent with his insistence on using email. He didn’t want to deal with having to speak to Jack about his sister until he had more rest. No one - not even Doctor Grant - could argue with that.

As he collapsed onto his bed, partially clothed, Ianto briefly wondered when sleeping on his front stopped bothering him. He dismissed as unimportant.

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Monday, May 4, 2009

“Jack?” Ianto asked, as he entered his office.

“Ianto! Why are you here? You had the day off,” Jack asked with a pleased smile though confusion filled his voice.

"I need to ask you something," lanto replied. He looked and sounded nervous.

"What's up?" Jack asked, wondering just what was going on. They had had a harsh month, on top of the tension from the Arde'thi visit, so he was understandably nervous. They really didn't need another crisis. He noted that lanto wore casual clothes for once - something he really hadn't done as a woman. Before the change, Jack had grown used to the suits lanto wore to work, but once he was home, lanto had always changed into more casual gear. Jack had found himself missing that about lanto. He was pleased to see the denims and casual tee that lanto currently wore. He hoped it indicated lanto's growing comfort or at least acceptance with the change.

"My sister, Rhianon," lanto replied. "Jack... I don't know how much longer I can keep putting her off."

Jack smiled sympathetically. "How would she handle this?"

"Truthfully? I expect a slap and then a hug. Then she'll probably drag me shopping with her."

Nodding slowly, Jack thought about all the consequences of informing Rhianon Evans about her brother's change. It would mean informing her husband as well. "How old is your nephew?"

"Five," lanto replied, looking hopeful. Too young to really understand anything and no one would really take him seriously if he said anything.

"She and her husband will have to sign the Official Secrets Act," Jack warned. "And they can't tell anyone what really happened. To everyone else, it'll appear that you've had the surgery."

lanto just nodded happily. "Thank you, Jack!" he exclaimed. He hugged Jack in thanks. It meant a lot to him, to be able to tell his sister and her husband the truth of what had happened. "This means a lot to me, Jack," he said before gathering his courage and kissing Jack.

Jack inhaled in surprise, not expecting the press of warm lips against his own. lanto's tongue teased his briefly, his hand reaching up to caress Jack's cheek before he moved back. He raised an eyebrow in question and lanto's lips quirked upwards in a smile. "I'm working on it, but... I think we should talk. Friday?"

"It's a date. Unless the Rift acts up," Jack confirmed. Finally, after all these months, he and lanto could actually discuss their relationship. He missed lanto, missed holding him in his arms and yes, missed him in his bed. He had been patient and even if lanto was just rewarding him for his sister's sake, Jack wouldn't complain. He immediately began preparing for Friday. After all, he really wanted to convince lanto that he was serious.

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To: Rhianon Evans

From: lanto Jones

Subject: Re: your messages

Rhianon -

Things are a bit busy here at work so I can't make it out to you. However, if you and Mark could make it to Cardiff this Saturday, I can spend some time with you. Maybe even introduce you to some of my colleagues. Let me know.

—lanto

lanto breathed a sigh of relief as he hit send.

“Everything alright, sweetheart?” Gwen asked, coming up behind lanto. He twitched at her sudden presence but smoothed out his surprise and turned to face her.

“Yep,” he simply said, moving away from his computer. “Just had to ask Jack something.” He knew if he hadn't given even a bit of an explanation for why he had come in on his day off, she would badger him for an answer.

Gwen smiled at him. “How are you doing?” An open ended question and one that could be interpreted so many different ways.

“Fine. I'm glad the Rift has calmed down. How's Rhys?” lanto asked, wanting to get the conversation away from himself.

“He's just as glad as you,” Gwen confided. “He's after me to set a new date for the wedding. I'm going to ask Tosh when she thinks will be good.”

“Oh?” lanto asked.

“It was Rhys's idea actually,” Gwen continued. “I mentioned Tosh's Rift prediction program and he suggested we ask for a recommendation. I don't think anyone will be happy if we have to postpone again.”

lanto laughed politely. “Good luck.” He watched as Gwen walked over to Tosh with her request. It was a smart idea actually and at least Rhys seemed alright with the way Torchwood had taken over Gwen's life in the last month. Hopefully, Tosh could find them a free date in the near future.

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Friday, May 8, 2009

Staring blankly into his wardrobe, lanto couldn't help but think he had made a mistake. It was too soon to try and sort out whatever he and Jack had. And yet, he also knew putting it off did not benefit anyone. Judging by his actions today, Jack had high hopes for tonight. He had sent lanto home as close to five as possible. This left lanto with the unfortunate need to decide what to wear.

Even as a man, lanto had always dressed impeccably and appropriately for whatever the occasion called. Nicely tailored suits that demonstrated his personality whilst also able to withstand the stresses of

Torchwood had comprised the majority of his work clothes before the change. Tosh had helped him in securing a similar wardrobe after his situation became evident. Of course, Ianto wore more casual clothes, especially when not at work, but even then he still maintained an elegant air. Jack, of course, knew of this and thus, Ianto knew he had to dress as he would have if he were still a man.

Hence his current position in front of his wardrobe. He pushed various hangers aside, dismissing the various pants suits that comprised a good two-thirds of it. He didn't want to wear something he would normally wear to work. That left the more casual side of things... or one of the dresses or skirts Tosh had inveigled him into purchasing. With some small degree of reluctance he scanned the dresses; after an internal debate, he finally conceded and slipped a simple knee-length dress off the hanger. From what he remembered, it would do.

He felt incredibly nervous as he got ready for his date with Jack. He hadn't mentioned anything to Tosh, but given her quiet "good luck" as he left tonight, she suspected something. Of course, he also had to contend with revealing to his sister tomorrow the truth of what had happened and what he did for a profession. On the one hand, Rhianon would be pleased to know that he hadn't given up his "posh job in London" to work for the tourist bureau in Cardiff. But now, Ianto was a woman and there was a good chance that he would not live to reach forty. Torchwood wasn't exactly the safest job in the world. Ianto didn't want to think of any of that. Instead, he tried to focus on what he wanted to speak to Jack about this evening.

Doctor Grant had suggested that he approach the conversation in the same way he had earlier this year, when Jack had returned from his short hiatus. All that meant that he had to figure out what exactly he wanted from Jack. In many ways, Ianto realized he had extraordinary luck: his chosen partner worked for Torchwood and had the clearance to know what had happened to him. Moreover, Jack had grown up in a time where gender did not matter, which meant that whether they continued their relationship or not really remained in Ianto's hands.

He could admit to himself - if not to Doctor Grant - that he did not handle his gender change very well. He had initially pushed Jack away because he couldn't help but feel bitter that his condition resulted solely because of Jack. Jack's reward for helping the Arde'thi. Except, the reward didn't exactly affect Jack, did it. It affected Ianto and he was the one who had found his life in fluctuation.

Once, he would have thought Jack would simply laugh, urge Ianto to enjoy his new state and that would be that. It didn't happen that way. Jack had backed off, let Ianto decide the pace of what they had. Ianto had found Jack remarkably patient. Which was why Ianto cared about his appearance tonight. It wasn't just about taking pride in his appearance, but also to show Jack that he took their relationship - even if it reverted back to friends and boss and employee - seriously. Hopefully, Jack would recognize his effort, but considering that Jack could read him better than most, he knew he would.

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Jack hadn't felt this nervous since he had returned from traveling with the Doctor and realized he needed to tell Ianto something if he wanted to have an actual relationship with him. In many ways,

tonight's conversation would cover the same topics they had talked about that night all those months ago. He had patiently waited while Ianto grew more comfortable with being a woman. He had watched as Ianto had stopped hiding in the archives and slowly started acting as he had whilst a man. To his relief, Ianto had taken charge of his own life after the initial shock had worn off. More than that, Doctor Grant had seemed to help. Jack knew that her guidance and advice had led Ianto to request this meeting.

He had pulled out all the stops for tonight. A part of him did feel responsible for Ianto's present appearance. Ianto would not now be a woman if not for the help he had given to the Arde'thi. Ianto wasn't a citizen of the 51st Century and hadn't grown up in a society where gender was far more fluid than it was thirty centuries earlier. Frankly, Jack was surprised that Ianto hadn't resigned from his position at Torchwood when it became clear that he wasn't being changed back anytime soon. From Tosh, he knew that Ianto was aware of the former policy towards alien-derived gender change at Torchwood. He had wondered if Ianto was just waiting for Jack to initiate the policy, but then came the request to see Doctor Grant. It had removed a burden from his psyche because it indicated that Ianto wanted to remain at Torchwood - and hopefully, that meant he wanted to remain with Jack.

Ianto continued to be a mystery and Jack could honestly say he had not discovered everything about his lover. He genuinely enjoyed the time spent with Ianto and wanted to continue exploring the relationship they had begun that the Arde'thi managed to stall with their meddling. Hopefully, tonight would clear up many if not all of his worries and he and Ianto could begin again.

Ringling the doorbell, his mouth dropped open when Ianto opened the door. "Wow, you look gorgeous!" he complimented. Ianto blushed as he grabbed his coat and purse.

"Thank you," he replied and followed Jack down to the SUV. "I hope I'm not overdressed."

"Nope. You're perfect," Jack assured him. For the first time, Ianto wore a black cocktail dress and even slight heels. He had pinned his hair up and wore more than just the hint of lipstick and mascara he usually wore to work.

"Oh, good. I wasn't sure where we're going," Ianto replied and Jack hid his smirk at Ianto's attempt to figure out his plans. It wouldn't be that easy.

There were only so many places Jack felt comfortable discussing anything remotely private or sensitive. The restaurant he brought Ianto to had a very discreet staff and he had known the owners for quite some time. No one would bother them and that was the important thing. Jack had even arranged for the others to remain on call for Torchwood related emergencies tonight. Figuring out what he and Ianto had was far more important to him.

Only after they had ordered, did Jack start the conversation they needed to have. "I know I've said it before, but I want to reiterate that I want a relationship with you." Sometimes, being blunt paid off. Jack didn't want Ianto to have any doubts about Jack's intentions towards him. While he had all the time in the world, Ianto didn't.

Ianto blinked, probably a bit surprised by Jack's stark declaration but it didn't phase him for long, another aspect that Jack really liked about Ianto. "I know... and I appreciate how patient you've been," he smiled weakly, one hand curled around the stem of his wine glass.

"You don't blame me, do you?" Jack couldn't help but feel worried about that.

"Not precisely," Ianto prevaricated. He blew out a sigh. "You didn't ask for this to happen. They took the initiative to do it on their own. It's just difficult to cope with."

Not a dismissal, but not an unequivocal acceptance either. "How are you coping?"

Shrugging, Ianto takes a sip of his wine. "It's getting easier. Doctor Grant has me doing exercises to help acclimate me to my new situation. I'm making progress, according to her. I'm sure she'll be thrilled when she hears I finally wore a dress and heels."

"You look great," Jack complimented. It was something that bore repeating and he watched Ianto flush again. "I'm not going to push you, Ianto. You tell me what you want. My mind hasn't changed since I returned. I don't care if you're a man or a woman or a plant."

"A plant? Really, Jack," Ianto scolded with a familiar smile on his face. Jack felt some relief at seeing it; it gave him hope.

He shrugged in reply. "You're important to me."

"I liked working at the Tower," Ianto said abruptly. Jack's head rose sharply at the confession, frowning as he tried to understand why Ianto had brought Torchwood One into the conversation. "Everything and everyone had a place. We had a procedure for anything that might or would happen. Even if I disagreed with some of those policies, it was a comfort to know with certainty what would happen in any given situation."

"You like order," Jack acknowledged and Ianto nodded and smiled his own.

"I like order. I like knowing where I'm going in life. It used to drive Lisa nuts. I didn't need to know the day-to-day stuff, but I wanted to know where we would be in a week or a month or a year."

"And now?" Jack didn't know if he wanted to hear this. They rarely spoke about Lisa and his relationship with her. Torchwood One remained a *verboden* topic. Too much pain and hurt on both sides to discuss it rationally. As Jack had grown to like Ianto, he had realized his own dislike for One would hinder any relationship he might have with his archivist-cum-butler and he had to consciously repress any negative comments about the branch as a whole. After listening to some of the stories Ianto shared with everyone, he had to admit that not everyone or everything at One was awful. He just had a difficult time forgiving them for all that they had done to him in his long service to the Institute.

"Everything is in flux. I'm not who I once was and I'm still not comfortable with what happened." He paused as the server brought their entree to their table. Patiently, he waited till they were alone again and each had sampled their dishes before continuing, "I don't know what tomorrow will bring. I'm still

working through everything that has happened. But I do know that there is a connection between the two of us. It's been there since I badgered you into hiring me. I... Jack, I want to know what we have, whether there is a future for us."

Ianto met Jack's eyes briefly and in their blue depths, Jack saw a maelstrom of emotions before eyelashes dipped and they were hidden from him once again. He wanted to analyze them but he didn't have the time or leisure to do so. Maybe tonight, when he goes over this conversation in his head and analyzed it to make sure he knows what Ianto wants, but now, right now, he had to respond. He wanted to say the correct thing, wanted Ianto to realize that something as simple as a gender change will not scare Captain Jack Harkness from his side. Ianto interrupted his thoughts before he could say anything. "I'm not asking you for anything more than what we had before. What we both decided months ago is true now. We need to get to know each other and not just at work."

"I'm willing to try," Jack assured him. "I'm not going to rush you into anything you don't want."

"Thank you, Jack. I *am* trying, you know."

"I know."

"Good." They ate in silence before speaking about inconsequential things. Jack didn't want to disturb the strangely calming quiet that had descended upon them so he waited for Ianto to break the silence. When he finally did, he spoke of the inconsequential gossip of their colleagues' lives.

"You know you're coming over tomorrow morning," Ianto informed Jack as he brought him home. "I'm not explaining all this to my sister by myself."

"I figured. I was going to bring Tosh too." Things were already so complicated between them that Jack wanted someone else available to serve as a buffer, else he was afraid the lines between boss and friend and lover would blur and everything would fall to pieces.

"Thank you," Ianto stated, sounding relieved and Jack knew he had made the right decision.

As he said goodbye to Ianto at the door of his flat, he hoped that everything would work out, that they would have a happy ending at Torchwood. And when Ianto leaned upwards and pressed a small kiss to his lips he felt like maybe everything would work out. "Tomorrow, then."

"Tomorrow. Good night, Jack. I had a lovely time tonight."

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Saturday, May 9, 2009

Ianto hadn't seen his sister since the Christmas holidays. He had no idea how to even begin explaining what had happened to him. Somehow, he didn't think she would calmly accept the excuse of "aliens did it" for why he had ignored her since February. Once upon a time, he had no secrets from Rhianon. Then their mother died and their father followed soon afterwards and Ianto's life spun out of control. Rhianon

tried to pull him from the abyss but he spurned her aid. She had finally washed her hands clean of him and stopped trying to regulate his life. He had slipped his traces and did his best to enjoy his freedom. Only after he started working for One and had met Lisa did he reconnect with her. By then, Rhianon had married Mark Evans, but she had welcomed her brother back into her life.

It could not have sat well with her for him to suddenly stop taking her calls and continued refusal to visit. Ianto desperately wanted the upcoming visit to end well; he wanted his sister in his life, even if he rarely had the time to see her because of his job. He wanted her to know what he did so when Torchwood inevitably claimed his life, someone other than Jack and whichever future agent, bored or seeking procrastinate read his file, would know what he did and that it was important. He wanted her to know that he was no longer the colossal fuck-up that had fled her custody all those years ago and kept on running until love brought him back to Cardiff.

"It'll be alright," Tosh tried to reassure her colleague and Ianto obliged by sending her a faint smile. He hoped Rhianon would understand. If she accepted the truth of Torchwood half as well as Rhys had, he would be happy.

"I hope so." His mind reviewed all the completely horrible ways in which Rhianon could take the news. At least they had no other living relatives and Mark had none as well. That combined with Ianto's rare appearances to the Evans' home, meant that they didn't have to explain how Rhianon's brother became a sister. Small blessings, but Ianto would take what he could get.

They waited at the Hub for the Evans. Jack had volunteered to escort them from the tourist office to the downstairs; Ianto hoped that would minimize the disbelief at what he truly did. It also had the benefit of keeping any family squabbles away from the public.

Tosh kept up a steady stream of inconsequential babbling while Ianto prepared refreshments. They might just sit there, on the conference table, but he needed to do something with his hands.

And then the alarms blared and Ianto reflexively looked towards the cog door as it wheeled back. Jack strode through, looking as dashing as always and his heart beat faster because behind him was Rhianon and Mark, both looking a combination of annoyed and disbelieving. He wondered what Jack had told them upstairs and whether it would have been better to send Tosh instead. Tosh seemed to sense his disquiet and laid a hand on his back. Ianto turned to meet her gaze and gave her a half-smile.

"It'll be okay," Tosh tried to reassure him. Her words to God's ears - or at least Ianto hoped. She moved away from him and sat at her usual seat. Ianto didn't know where to place himself and after dithering for a moment just sat as he normally would.

By the time Jack led Rhianon and Mark into the conference room, Ianto had fiddled with the confidential agreements they would have to sign to such an extent that Tosh had hissed at him to stop.

"Ianto! Got those agreements for me?" Jack boomed, and Ianto watched as Rhianon and Mark looked for him with confusion.

“Excuse me Captain Harkness, but where is my brother?” Rhianon asked and Ianto could hear the anger and stress and worry in her voice. He bit his lip as he handed the forms to Jack.

“Sign these and we’ll tell you everything,” Jack promised. It didn’t take long for them to comply and Tosh ushered them into seats. “Right. This is Toshiko Sato. She’s going to give you a brief overview of what we do.”

“I don’t particularly care what you do, Captain Harkness. I want to see my brother!” Rhianon insisted. Ianto gulped. She was getting angry and Mark couldn’t seem to calm her.

“Mrs. Evans, Mr. Evans, we’ll explain what happened to Ianto but first you should know what we do here,” Tosh soothed. It seemed to work as they sat down, casting curious looks at Ianto, who smiled at them weakly. He wanted to crush his sister in his arms, but waiting to do so seemed a better choice.

Tosh launched into the introductory spiel that normally accompanies a recruit’s first orientation lesson. She used Powerpoint slides to illustrate her lecture and despite their initial disbelief, Ianto could tell that they believed. He breathed a sigh of relief because if they accepted the proposition that aliens existed and that this was where Ianto worked, then the revelation of his new gender shouldn’t cause too much panic.

“So Ianto works for Torchwood?” Rhianon asked. Mark held her hand in support. “He’s okay, right?”

Jack cleared his throat. “In February, we encountered some friendly aliens. Due to some cultural misunderstandings, they ended up changing Ianto into a woman as a thank you gift.” He gestured towards Ianto and he rose from his chair to stand by Rhianon.

“Wait?” Mark exclaimed, staring at the strangely familiar woman who had so far said nothing. “You mean... this is my brother-in-law?”

“Hello Rhianon,” Ianto greeted softly. With a strangled sob, she launched herself into his arms.

“You bastard! I thought something was really wrong!” she cried. Ianto just held her and tried to soothe her. Dimly, he heard both Tosh and Jack trying to explain to Mark what happened. He personally didn’t care what Mark thought. If he had a true problem with it, they would retcon his memories and warn Rhianon not to say anything about her brother.

“I’m sorry Rhianon,” he murmured into her ear, stroking her back in an attempt to calm her. He continued to mutter nonsense to her in comfort and before long, she calmed down.

“This why you’ve not talked to me on the phone?” she finally asked. Ianto nodded his head mutely.

“Well, let me take a look at you,” and she proceeded to examine him and the changes that happened.

“It’s not fair! You’re prettier than me!” she pouted and with that the tension that had pervaded the room broke. Mark joined them while Jack and Tosh gave the family privacy to talk about what had happened and catch up properly.

By the time Rhianon and Mark left, waving goodbye and promising to keep in touch, they appeared comfortable with the new knowledge of Ianto's gender. As Ianto leaned back into Jack's arms he can't help but cynically wonder when his sister will really react. He didn't think he's heard the last of her reaction to his transformation, but at least he could tell her the truth. That was all that mattered to him, and it was what he told Jack when he asked later that night.

In truth, he feared her reaction when and if she ever realized the why of Ianto's current predicament. He didn't think Jack would necessarily survive intact. Somehow, he didn't think "cultural misunderstandings" would suffice as an explanation.

And so it turned out; a little over a week later, Rhianon rang Ianto and proceeded to interrogate him on his situation.

"So, how exactly did this happen? All of you glossed over the mechanics," she began. Ianto inwardly groaned at her tone and wished he hadn't answered.

"Aliens did it as a thank you gift," he replied, having rehearsed his answer as much as possible. "They thought it would be appreciated."

"Why would aliens – and don't think that doesn't boggle the mind – think that? Ianto... did you *want* to be a woman?"

"No!" Ianto shouted. "No," he continued more calmly, "they knew Jack and I had a... thing, and they thought to help, so we could have kids."

"What?"

"Look, Rhianon, it was a cultural misunderstanding and there's nothing we can really do about it. Believe me, we've tried," and Ianto tried to keep the bitterness he still felt out of his voice.

"I think I need to speak to Jack." He had no idea what she would say to Jack, but if it kept her from yelling at him, he would happily provide her with his contact information. With that, he kept her happy and a happy Rhianon made his life easier.

Though curious, he never asked either Jack or Rhianon what the other had said. He decided that since Rhianon hadn't rung him up to insist he stop seeing Jack, that he successfully assuaged her curiosity. That was good enough for him.

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Wednesday, June 10, 2009

Owen surreptitiously glanced over to where Tosh currently giggled next to Ianto. Ianto had even unbent enough to smirk, something he hadn't done much of since February. Ever since Ianto's change, Tosh had grown closer to the other man. Not that they weren't close beforehand - their lives at Torchwood had

too many uncomfortable parallels not to - but they had clearly become, dare he say it - best friends - in the months since the Arde'thi visit.

"Are you done staring yet?" Jack asked, amusement in his voice as Owen jumped in surprise.

"What are you on about, Jack?" Owen sounded defensive, even to his own ears.

Jack peered over his shoulder and smiled with fondness at the sight of Tosh and Ianto joking about something. He suspected it had something to do with the "girl's night out" they had had last night. Gwen had finally worn them down enough to agree. Despite his initial grumbling, Ianto appeared to have had a good time. "Tosh looks nice, doesn't she?"

Owen flushed. "Um... sure. Yeah. Is Tea boy giving her advice or something?" It wasn't that he hadn't noticed how attractive Tosh was, but he had steered clear from her in the past. Sure, he had finally agreed to go out for drinks with her right before the Pharm incident, but after getting shot and almost dying, the date hadn't exactly occurred.

"Don't call him that," Jack admonished automatically. "Besides, Tosh has been helping him more than the reverse."

That caused Owen to think. He might hesitate to enter a relationship that could deepen into something more, but he wasn't blind. Tosh had changed her wardrobe by much - just some clothing that enhanced her figure a bit more - but it did make a difference. Plus with Ianto as a confidant, she smiled and laughed more than she had before. Tosh had a pretty smile and an enchanting laugh.

"You should ask her out," Jack urged. Owen just looked at him.

"You - Mr. 'I flirt with everything' want me to ask someone out?" Owen finally asked.

Jack just shrugged in response. "Just because I flirt doesn't mean I don't know the pleasure of a real relationship. Just think about it." As Jack left, Owen just shook his head. Clearly whatever problems Jack and Ianto had had, had now been cleared up. As evidenced by the quick kiss Jack gave Ianto before he returned to his office. But... maybe Jack was right. Maybe he *should* give Tosh a chance. It wouldn't hurt, would it?

He deliberately pushed all thoughts of Katie and Torchwood and just how dangerous their job was deep into the back of his mind.

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Friday, June 12, 2009

"Have fun tonight," Ianto murmured, his eyes glinting with mischief.

Tosh just shook her head in exasperation. "I have no idea why I even agreed," she replied. She smoothed her hands down her dress with nervousness.

"I would think that monstrous crush would have something to do with it."

She flushed, "I know, I know. And I know he said he would give it a try before he got shot, but it's been *months*. Why now?" She really didn't even know why she had agreed to go out with him.

"Maybe he got hit on his head and realized how wonderful you are?" Ianto suggested, grinning as Tosh playfully hit him. "Ow!" he pretended to pout before sobering up. "Seriously, I have no idea why now. But go. Have a good time. You've wanted this for a while."

"You... you don't think I'm making a mistake by accepting, do you?" Tosh couldn't help but fret about Owen's motivations. Everyone at Three knew about her crush on Owen, just as everyone knew that Owen politely - and sometimes not so politely - ignored it. She had grown used to it in the almost five years she had been here. She didn't understand his change of heart.

"I think he wouldn't have asked if he wanted to hurt you," Ianto soothed. "He knows that hurting you isn't in his best interest." Tosh bit back a giggle at the harsh tone that came out of the sweetly dressed Ianto.

"I guess you're right. Are you and Jack going out tonight?" She had been quite happy to discover that the two had rekindled their romance. She didn't know the extent to which they had done so and honestly, didn't really want to know details of their sex life. That they both seemed happier was enough.

"Not tonight. Tomorrow, we're going to try and see a film." He checked his watch, "Go on, get out of here. You don't want to be late. And remember, I want all the details."

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Owen jiggled his foot with nerves while he waited for Tosh to show. He had decided against doing something ostentatious; he wanted to start off slow and not raise any hopes. He didn't know how this night would go and in fact had some doubts as to whether he wanted it to work out or not. He liked Tosh and thought her attractive, but they also had to work together. Torchwood Three was small enough that they really couldn't afford to have dissension between colleagues. It tended to lead to more injuries. He'd already been shot once because of the tension between him and Ianto. He really didn't want to get shot again.

Despite his concerns, he did want to give Tosh a chance. If it didn't work out, at least he could say he had tried. And maybe Tosh would finally give someone else a chance. Half the time, he didn't know if her crush resulted from actually liking him or just the lack of time to find someone more suitable.

"Owen?" Tosh greeted, startling him as she came up behind him.

"Tosh!" he replied, his eyes taking in her appearance. Like him, she had gone home to change. She wore a knee-length flared skirt and white tee with laced sandals. "You look really nice," he complimented.

"Thanks." A becoming blush colored her cheeks. "Ianto made me buy it when Gwen dragged us out shopping."

“You two went shopping with Gwen?” Owen asked as he escorted her to the maitre’ de ; it sounded completely out of character for the two of them to agree to such an event. He gave his name and they were escorted to their table, while Tosh rolled her eyes.

“Ianto said he couldn’t keep avoiding Gwen’s plans to help him acclimate. He claimed I had to come or else Jack would have to bail him out.”

Owen snickered, “That makes more sense, then.”

Tosh shrugged. “She means well.” Owen couldn’t exactly disagree and really, it wasn’t as if he could throw stones. Gwen was Gwen.

“For someone who means well, she could be a bit less enthusiastic,” he complained. Tosh smiled in reply before turning her attention to the menu. They remained in silence while choosing their meals; after the waiter took their orders, they simply stared at each other.

“Wow,” Tosh finally said, “this is more difficult than I thought it would be.”

Owen felt a rush of relief that she had acknowledged it. “Yeah,” he sighed. “Don’t know why. ‘Snot like we don’t know each other.”

“Maybe it’s because we do know each other,” Tosh ventured. “Where we work doesn’t allow for many secrets.”

“I can’t disagree with that.” He sighed; he hadn’t thought it would be this difficult. He tried to think of a topic that didn’t involve either work or their colleagues. “Will you be seeing your family this year?”

Apparently, this was a good question to ask as Tosh’s eyes lit up with happiness. “Oh yes! Jack’s letting me have some time off in August and I’m heading down to London to visit my family.”

To both their relief, their conversation continued to flow nicely and they spent a relaxing dinner together. Unfortunately, Owen did not feel that flash of something more. He *liked* Tosh but he could not see them developing a romantic relationship. As Owen walked Tosh back to her car, he wondered how to tell her that; he didn’t want to hurt her by disabusing her of her crush.

“Tosh...” he began, only to be stopped by Tosh placing a finger to his lip.

“Wait, Owen. Let me say something first.” She looked down for a moment, seeming to fidget before taking a deep breath and meeting his eyes head on. “It’s not a secret that I’ve had a crush on you for a while. I’m not that good at hiding my feelings, even if you never encouraged me.” She shook her head as he opened his mouth to speak. “No, please let me finish. I never thought we would actually go out on a date. I’m not exactly the type of woman you usually go for. So thank you for this. It means a lot that you would even ask me, but... I think we both know, now at least, that we’re never going to be anything but friends.”

Owen smiled a bitter smile. Such a smart woman, Tosh was. He grabbed her hand in his and placed a chivalrous kiss on it, "You're right. I... never meant to hurt you, you know. But you're way too good for me. I'm glad you said yes and I did have a good time. You're right though. Maybe once we could have been more, but now? You're my friend."

"Thank you, Owen. I'll see you Monday." She kissed him on the cheek and entered her car. Owen sighed, stuffing his hands as he watched her drive away. A part of him had hoped that something more could develop between them, but he had suspected, deep down inside that his heart still belonged to Katie. He was just pleased that Tosh had made the decision and not him. He didn't know if he had the resolve to break her heart, even if it was for the best.

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Sunday, July 5, 2009

The wedding of Gwen Cooper and Rhys Williams had been postponed three times. Gwen had refused to marry without Jack present, a situation that had initially infuriated Rhys until Gwen had explained how upset one of her colleagues was at his disappearance. The second time they had to postpone had happened when the aforementioned colleague had mysteriously and suddenly become a woman. While Rhys wanted to hold some bitterness towards this, he genuinely liked the bloke; Ianto had always had a kind word for him and a wicked sense of humor, and didn't mind sharing a pint whilst watching the rugby down at the local.

The last time they had been forced to postpone their nuptials it was because the Rift refused to behave and ran Torchwood Three ragged. As much as Rhys wanted to rage at the further delay, he also couldn't help but worry about the small team, none of whom seemed well-rested. As soon as he understood what Torchwood actually did, he came to the irrevocable realization that he would *always* have to share his Gwen with Torchwood. That took him aback for a bit and he had to decide whether he could live with Torchwood such a big part of their lives. He knew Gwen, loved her very much in fact, and he knew she would never give up Torchwood.

Torchwood seduced her and she was caught in its siren call, unwilling to retreat, even if it brought her own destruction. Rhys wasn't quite certain it hadn't already happened.

When it comes down to it, Rhys Williams had always loved Gwen Cooper, from the first moment he saw her in that dodgy checkout line and he could share her with Torchwood and everything that entailed if it meant she came home to him.

He became used to Torchwood and could even say he respected her colleagues, even he didn't like them all. Gwen though, she seemed determined to show them normal and they let her drag them home with her or out to the pubs. They knew her flaws, almost as well as he did. It could be downright frightening sometimes. Rhys wanted to hate them because they took his Gwen and the future he thought they would have away from him. Her colleagues made it difficult to though and he found himself commiserating with the poor sod made into a woman. Gwen kept trying to bring him with her to

girl's nights and didn't seem to understand - even when others tried to explain - that just because he looked like a woman, he was still a man. Still, Rhys liked that Ianto humored her, often dragging the pretty Asian woman with him.

And then, Gwen ran home one day, all excited because Tosh had apparently figured out the perfect date for the wedding. No more postponing and he had to decide. Not a hard decision, not even with his mother's comments about whether he was certain Gwen wouldn't up and cancel again.

Gwen threw herself into wedding preparations with a fervor he hadn't expected, until he realized that as upset as he had been about the cancelled weddings, she had been more so. For the first time since she had decided to work for the secret agency, he had actual proof that she loved him and hadn't settled for him because Jack wanted her to have something normal in her life.

They had decided to marry right outside of Cardiff; Gwen wanted all her colleagues to attend and if they married too far away, some would have to remain behind to take care of potential problems. The day of, the sun shone brightly and he heard birds singing. He kept his fingers crossed that nothing ominous would happen.

Fortunately, nothing did. Even had a sign of good luck when Gwen miss-stepped and tore the hem of her gown. All of Torchwood Three attended, even if they kept mostly to themselves. He even saw, to some surprise that Ianto wore an actual dress, rather than the trousers he normally preferred. Ianto cleaned up pretty well and showed great restraint, or so Gwen giggled to him, in not stunning Banana Boat. Banana Boat clearly couldn't decide whether he preferred Tosh or Ianto and made a general nuisance of himself.

"Happy, love?" Gwen asked as she swayed in his arms.

"Couldn't be happier," Rhys replied and kissed her gently.

It was a good day to wed.

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Monday, July 20, 2009

It might seem odd to try and find a solution to your partner's current gender problem on the anniversary of one of the worst days of said partner's life, but Jack had never done normal. The implosion of Torchwood One remained a sore topic in Cardiff and despite Ianto's efforts in ensuring his colleagues remembered his past and where he once worked, they preferred to ignore it as much as possible. Jack knew that Ianto did not contain his discussions with Doctor Grant solely to his sex change and instead had also begun to work through his problems resulting from being one of twenty-seven survivors. Ianto needed it and he had slowly lost much of the tension Jack hadn't even realized Ianto had held.

None of that meant that Jack actually liked to remember that awful day two years ago. Not only had it been a colossal waste of life for a superfluous reason, but he had also lost Rose. He now knew she

wasn't dead, but at the time, he had railed against the Institute which had taken the life of someone he had genuinely loved for her innocence, hopeless naivety, and endless enthusiasm.

Two years after the fact and Torchwood little resembled the corporate empire Yvonne had tried to build. Jack personally thought it was for the best, but he also well knew that the guilt could eat someone alive. Hence his rather cautious eye on Ianto. He had caught all of his team watching out of their archivist this past week. This year, more than last, had proven far more stressful and they all worried that Ianto might do something a bit rash.

If Ianto noticed any of this, he ignored it and calmly went about his duties.

"Are you going to the memorial service in London?" Jack asked two days before the event.

"No. I went last year and it was... not very helpful."

"Do you want the day off?" Jack wanted to be supportive. He just didn't know what Ianto wanted - or needed.

"Jack, I want a quiet day. I know... you didn't like One, but not everyone there was a power mad bint like Yvonne. A moment of silence - of some sort of acknowledgment for the loss of life would be nice."

"We can do that," Jack assured Ianto and pulled him into a hug.

And they did. Everyone remained somber for the morning and Ianto had retreated to his safe haven. Gwen had even refrained from trying to force Ianto to talk about what had happened. Jack was fairly certain Tosh and Owen had threatened her in order to achieve that, but he didn't really care. He just didn't want Ianto upset.

With Ianto hiding and the others attempting to do their own work, Jack had retreated to his office and thought. He thought about the past and about Torchwood and how he had come to work for the Institute. He wondered if he would have ever met Ianto if Canary Wharf hadn't happened or if Lisa had truly died in the Tower. He wondered if he would have returned to Cardiff after he found the Doctor if Ianto wasn't here to come back to. He even considered what he would have done or would do if Ianto decided he had enough with everything Torchwood had given him and left.

It scared him - how integral Ianto had become to his existence in the twenty first century. He loved his team; they were each special to him. Ianto though... he had the capacity to break through every barrier he put up. Before he left after Abaddon, he had recognized that Ianto had the potential to force him to look at and recognize the hard things in life. It had scared him as much as it had exhilarated him. One reason he had fought so hard to begin a real relationship with the man on his return. He was also fairly certain that the Arde'thi had recognized that, and that was why Ianto had been changed.

He couldn't do much about the situation. He had come to that conclusion in the weeks after the transformation. Torchwood simply didn't have the technology to reverse it. Jack could do two things:

support Ianto in this and try and contact the Doctor. He had recruited Martha to help, since the Doctor seemed to like her.

Given that he hadn't heard from her in a while, he decided to give her a ring. Maybe she would have some good news and it would help alleviate this awful day for Ianto.

"Doctor Jones! I hope I'm not interrupting. If I am, give me details!" he greeted as she answered.

"Jack!" Martha scolded. "It's good to hear from you. How's Cardiff?"

"Still standing," Jack replied. "Sure you don't want to come and work for me?"

"I don't think Owen would be particularly happy if I did," she told him and he chuckled as he remembered Owen's posturing over Martha using *his* lab.

"You might be right," he conceded.

"Not that I mind you calling, but I somehow don't think this is a social call? What can I help you with? I'm not sending you any secret files that you want, so don't even ask," she warned.

"I'm hurt, Martha. I would never ask you." He wouldn't he had better ways of getting information he wanted than asking her. "No, it's about Ianto."

"What's wrong? How's he doing?" For having met and known Ianto for only a few short days, Martha seemed inordinately concerned.

"Should I be jealous?" Jack teased.

"Jack..."

"He's fine. Doctor Grant seems to help him a lot. That's not why I called. I was wondering if you've heard from our friend lately."

She sighed, "No. Nothing. I wish I had better news for Ianto."

"Me too," Jack confessed.

"Makes you almost wish we had some type of alien invasion, don't it?" Martha asked cheekily. "Then the Doctor would be here and everything would be fine."

Jack snorted with laughter.

"I'll keep trying," Martha promised.

"Thanks. Come up to Cardiff soon. I'm sure Ianto and the others would love to see you."

"I'll think about it. Take care, Jack. I gotta go."

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Tuesday, August 19, 2009

"Happy birthday, Ianto," Tosh said, kissing his cheek and handing him a wrapped present. He grinned as he accepted it, wondering what she had got him. So far, Owen had presented him with some gag gifts, emphasizing his new feminine side and a large bottle of Tanqueray Ten. Gwen, for some reason, opted to gift him with some pretty nightwear. "For Jack," she had smirked and Ianto hadn't the heart to tell her that he and Jack had yet to consummate their relationship in his new body.

Some days, he wondered if perhaps this "gift" hadn't actually been a blessing in disguise. Before the Arde'thi interference, he and Jack had attempted a real relationship. Sex, however, had been a big component of it, something easy and comfortable to do to cement what they had since Torchwood didn't really allow them much of a dating life. But since February, Jack had exhibited a quiet sense of patience that Ianto hadn't even been aware he had had. He waited until Ianto felt comfortable to try dating again. Once they had started their relationship again, he hadn't pushed for any intimacy that Ianto wasn't prepared for. So far, they had only kissed and cuddled. Ianto refused to move forward until he felt at least a little comfortable with his new body.

That meant working with Doctor Grant; their frank discussions on his new body had often left him in turns embarrassed and frustrated and angry. One of her favorite methods of acclimating him to his new body, was for him to touch himself and learn how his body worked, what felt nice or felt strange or just didn't do anything for him. It had taken him until quite recently to thoroughly explore his feminine form, but he could now say that he had experienced nearly everything in it.

The lack of sex meant that they spent the hours they used to have sex actually getting to know each other. They had been well on their way to something solid before the Arde'thi, but Ianto had always feared it wouldn't last for long. Now, Ianto could honestly say that they could have a real partnership without the sex serving as a mask for true feelings.

"Any plans for tonight?" Tosh asked, her tone mischievous and full of innuendo. Ianto just responded with a smirk.

"Jack said something about a nice dinner. Though, who knows? The Rift could always ruin it."

"Nope. I checked for predictions and we should be fine. And we've all decided we're on call tonight, not you and Jack."

"What? Tosh... that's wasn't necessary," Ianto scolded. He felt a rush of warmth towards his colleagues. He hadn't expected something like that, not in such a small office.

Tosh just shrugged. "You both deserve a little time off. And besides. It's your birthday. You should celebrate."

"Thank you," Ianto said, leaning in and brushing a kiss across Tosh's cheek. "I'm sure we'll both appreciate it."

“Good. I won’t even ask for details!”

lanto just shook his head at her teasing.

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For some reason, Jack had felt incredibly nervous about tonight. Dinner had gone well, better than he had expected in fact, though why he would feel nervous about taking lanto out to eat, he didn't really understand. Yes, they had dined at a restaurant a bit more upscale than their norm, but the two of them had settled into a nice pattern of dating. Yet, somehow, tonight felt different. Maybe because it was lanto’s birthday.

Finding an appropriate gift for him had also accompanied Jack’s thoughts for much of the last few weeks. He knew that lanto wouldn’t want a very girly gift; despite his growing comfort with being a woman, he still did not embrace his new status. Sex toys or accessories seemed inappropriate simply because they weren’t having sex. He wanted to give him something more personal than a book or DVDs. He had finally found something he thought lanto would love, but he still felt nervous about something.

“Dinner was lovely,” lanto commented as he sipped his coffee. Jack flashed him one of his famous smiles.

“Want to open your present now?” he asked.

“Only if you want me to,” lanto responded. Jack handed him the prettily wrapped gift and watched as it was opened. lanto’s eyebrow went up as it revealed a box used by one of the antique stores scattered around Cardiff. He held his breath as lanto slowly flipped the lid of the box.

“Oh, Jack,” lanto breathed, eyes widening as he gazed at its contents. He carefully lifted the lady’s pocket-watch from the box and examined it closely. “It’s perfect. Thank you!” His eyes sparkled as he replaced it.

“I thought you’d like it,” Jack said, sitting back in his chair with satisfaction. lanto had a propensity for old fashioned items and he knew that lanto loved time pieces. The lady’s pocket-watch seemed the perfect gift when he saw it in the store window and clearly, he had chosen right.

“I do,” lanto smiled brightly. Jack returned his grin, before turning the conversation back to the other gifts lanto had received.

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“Would you like to come up?” lanto asked, nervousness radiating from him.

Jack captured lanto’s gaze in his own. “Are you sure?” he asked. He had spent some time with lanto at his flat; lanto liked to cook and preferred cooking for two rather than one. He had yet to spend the night or do more than cuddle. Somehow he didn’t think that was lanto’s idea for tonight.

“Come on up, Jack,” lanto repeated, his tone a familiar wry one.

Jack followed lanto up to his flat. "Want some coffee?" lanto asked.

"Sure," Jack replied. lanto's birthday, lanto's decision, and lanto's pace. He vowed to not push too hard and resolved to have another case of blue balls if lanto put a stop to anything. He liked what he and lanto had and didn't want to spoil it for anything.

They drank their coffee in lanto's small living room; lanto engaged in small chat for a while, before taking a deep breath.

"I wanted to thank you for being so patient," he began, "Doctor Grant has had me work on a number of exercises." He wrinkled his nose in remembrance. "And I - "

"lanto, wait," Jack interrupted. "I don't need the details. The sessions with Doctor Grant are for you, not me. I have a good idea of why I'm here tonight, but... if you're not ready? I'll wait. I don't want you rushing in to do something you're not ready for."

lanto laughed. "God, Jack! You're... look. If I wasn't ready, I wouldn't have asked you up. So... please?"

Jack moved over to lanto's side and lifted his face to his. As his lips neared lanto's he whispered, "You don't have to ask twice."

He loved kissing lanto. He put so much emotion into each kiss that it always felt like a veritable feast. Tonight was no different and he took his time to seduce. lanto might believe he was ready, but Jack also wanted to make this - lanto's first time as a woman - as nice as possible. lanto didn't seem to have any complaints and welcomed Jack's touch.

After several moments, lanto pushed Jack away slightly. Jack looked a bit confused, but lanto simply smirked whilst standing and leading him to the bedroom. For all that in the past, they had had sex in every single room of his house; tonight he wanted a bed. Given Jack's eagerness in following him, he didn't think Jack would mind.

He had touched his body over the last few months, learned it's contours and how it worked, but nothing truly prepared him for someone else's touch. Once upon a time, he had known Jack's hands as well as his own; before tonight, he had wondered whether anything would feel different. At this moment, he knew it would. His skin felt more sensitive and he shivered as Jack skimmed the dress he wore off his body. He smiled as Jack growled in appreciation of the lingerie Tosh had forced him to buy all those months ago. He well knew the picture he made and despite his own nervousness at baring his body for the first time, he also felt a shiver of arousal.

Undressing Jack didn't take very long. lanto's hands followed the once-familiar ritual and even taking his time, Jack soon found himself naked and on the bed. lanto just took a long look at his lover, licking his lips as Jack smirked and posed to his best advantage.

"See something you like?" Jack asked. lanto laughed.

“Do those lines really work?” he teased. He knelt on the bed, hovering over Jack and drinking in the sight before him. “God, Jack. It’s been too long,” he commented throatily. Jack groaned a wordless agreement as lanto caressed his skin. “I want you,” lanto murmured, lowering his head to lick Jack’s skin. Jack didn’t seem to want to complain and he let lanto remain in charge of their encounter, something he appreciated.

Eventually though, Jack began to participate and his hands roamed lanto’s body, taking in the changes and noting lanto’s reactions to his movements. He wanted this first time to be as good as it could be for lanto; he didn’t want lanto to regret letting Jack back into his bed. lanto, for his part, didn’t seem to complain and gradually, Jack took charge completely. Not that lanto was passive - oh no! lanto had never been passive when it came to love making - something that attracted Jack like almost nothing else.

In Jack’s arms, lanto learned that his breasts and nipples were highly sensitive; Jack nuzzled and sucked and licked and nipped and lanto grew more and more restless as arousal grew stronger. Just as he had once played lanto’s male body, Jack transferred his skills over to this new one. Frankly, lanto couldn’t complain and he gave as good as he got. Finally, when he thought he couldn’t take anymore, Jack carefully entered him.

lanto couldn’t help but wince as Jack settled inside of him. He *had* known that initially, sex would hurt. He had just not expected it to hurt as much as it did. Fortunately, Jack was experienced enough to realize lanto’s pain and he moved slowly and gently inside lanto, doing his best to re-stoke the passion and arousal that had encapsulated lanto mere moments before. Unlike the claim made in many romance novels, lanto did not experience the “fiery explosion of a thousand suns” or even multiple orgasms as Jack moved within him. The pain was not unlike the first few times he had anal sex; unlike then his chosen partner took things slow and while lanto didn’t feel the same level of arousal he had been, the discomfort slowly ebbed. It didn’t disappear completely and Jack seemed to sense that lanto would prefer things end sooner than later. He took control and not long afterwards, spent himself inside his lover.

“Thank you,” he murmured as he carefully kissed lanto, trying to put into his kiss just how much he appreciated lanto’s decision. He pulled out and frowned a little at the blood that smeared lanto’s thighs. lanto made to move and Jack pushed him back down. “No, let me. I want to take care of you.” lanto blushed as he realized what exactly Jack meant but nodded and let the older man do as he wished. Jack retreated to the bathroom and returned with a damp flannel. He carefully cleaned lanto and himself before curling up next to lanto. He pulled the other into his arms.

lanto shifted his body, grimacing as he felt a dull ache in his loins. Jack’s arms tightened around him and lanto let himself relax. “Thanks, Jack,” he said, not quite sure what exactly he was thanking him for. Jack didn’t seem to need clarification, though lanto felt a brush of lips against the top of his head. A part of him couldn’t believe that he had finally taken that last step, whilst another part knew he had made tangible progress towards becoming comfortable as a woman. He was sure Doctor Grant would be proud of him.

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Thursday, October 22, 2009

“Given the amount of progress you’ve made in the seven months I’ve been meeting with you, I’ve decided to decrease our meetings to once a week,” Celia told Ianto. She had been quite impressed by how well Ianto Jones had adapted to being a woman. Oh, he hadn’t completely accepted his status, seeing as he had refused to change his name and still requested that those in the know refer to him in a masculine sense. Despite that, she knew that Ianto had started to have sex once again with Jack Harkness and had even consented to wear lingerie, dresses, skirts and even shoes that had a small heel to them. Not for the first time since she had begun to see Ianto did he wear a business suit; however, unlike previous sessions, the one he wore today was a skirt suit - and not in his traditional black or grey. The suit was a vibrant blue - the result of a lost bet or so Ianto had claimed when she had asked. Regardless, Ianto looked quite nice in it and even appeared comfortable. For all of these reasons, Celia was happy to only see him once a week.

“Truly?” Ianto asked, surprise evident in his voice.

“Yep,” Celia responded. “UNIT’s transferred me permanently to the Cardiff area, and on the suggestion of several interested parties, I’m to continue seeing you and will start to see your colleagues at Torchwood Three and members of UNIT-Cardiff.”

“I find that difficult to believe,” Ianto commented.

“Your bosses and my bosses decided in the interest of preventing burn out, their employees should speak to a psychologist on a regular basis.”

“Huh,” Ianto frowned, “makes sense really. God knows this job isn’t easy and I doubt UNIT is any easier, not with what we see or deal with.”

“Exactly. So you’re stuck with me.”

Ianto shrugged. “You’re easy to work with.” It was the closest he would ever come to praising someone in her profession and for that, Celia knew she had done a good job with him, especially given the comment in his file. “So, once a week, huh? I’ve improved that much?” He sounded as if he was teasing Celia, but she could detect his interest and concern just as much.

“Ianto, you came here, having been made into a woman without your permission. In the time you’ve been in my care, you’ve grown a lot. I’m very proud of you. Not everyone would have reacted as well as you have.”

Flushing, Ianto turned away from her gaze. “Didn’t have much of a choice, did I? Not if I wanted to stay here and with my memories.”

Celia nodded in agreement. “Be that as it may, you’ve succeeded in ways that I wager most others in your situation wouldn’t have.”

“Thank you,” lanto said after several moments of silence. “It’s been... difficult, as I’m sure you can imagine. I’ve been lucky though. Between you and the team and... well Jack, it’s been manageable, I suppose.”

She had no doubt he spoke the truth. Her skills as a psychologist and a counselor to transgendered and transsexuals might be considered amongst the best in the country, but she knows without a doubt that if lanto had not had the support of his colleagues and of his lover, he would not have dealt with what the Arde’thi had done to him nearly as well as he had.

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Saturday, December 26, 2009

lanto giggled as his nephew smacked Jack in the face with a snowball. Jack growled in frustration before scooping some snow in his hand and tossing it in lanto’s direction. He shrieked in mock fear as he raced away from his lover, his nephew trying to keep pace with him, all the while laughing at the silly antics of his “aunt” and her boyfriend. Rhianon and Mark remained in the house - perhaps a smart decision, given how wet and cold lanto now felt.

“Oi!” lanto yelled as Jack grabbed him around his waist and spun around. Jack’s eyes sparkled with mischief as he dumped the handful of snow on top of lanto’s head. Daffyd attached himself to Jack’s leg and tried to pull the larger man down. Jack was just off balance enough that he fell, dragging lanto with him. Daffyd decided to join them and the three of them wrestled for a little bit in the snow until they got too cold and decided to head in.

“Come on, Daffyd. Let’s get some of your mum’s special hot chocolate,” lanto urged as the young boy insisted he wasn’t too cold and could remain outside longer. It appeared the promise of chocolate trumped even the snow and Daffyd raced inside. lanto shook his head in amusement. “God, I wonder if I ever had that much energy,” he mused to Jack. Jack smirked as he placed a kiss on top of lanto’s nose.

“I think all kids are like that,” he commented as they strolled at a much more sedate pace into the house where Daffyd, Mark and Rhianon all waited.

“Hmm... I suspect you’re right,” lanto laughed. Jack smiled down at him, happy that lanto appeared to enjoy his visit with his sister. While the Rift had kept them busy for most of December, they had had a bit of a rest these last few days. Maybe Owen was right and the lack of activity was the Rift’s Christmas present to the team. No one really wanted to complain though, since it meant they could visit their friends and family for the holidays. Jack had been pleasantly surprised but also secretly pleased when lanto had invited him to join him in visiting his sister’s family for Boxing Day.

“Having a good time?” lanto asked.

“Very much. Thanks for inviting me,” Jack responded. He hoped it meant that they had moved onto another stage in their ever evolving relationship.

“Just don’t mention it in front of Gwen. I swear, she’s decided to marry us off,” Ianto muttered under his breath. Jack bit back his laughter at that.

“What, you don’t want to marry me?” he asked in a hurt tone.

“It’s not that. We’re not ready for marriage for one thing,” Ianto began and Jack turned to pay attention to Ianto’s words. Apparently, he had taken his teasing words at face value. “For another, she only says that because of the Arde’thi and why they changed me.”

Jack shifted uncomfortably before the door. They really hadn’t spoken about what the Arde’thi had done for several months. Last time they had, Ianto had insisted that he didn’t hold Jack responsible or resent him - overly much, but he still feared that Ianto did. And he worried what that might mean for his relationship.

“Jack?” Ianto questioned softly, taking hold of Jack’s hand and forcing him to face him. “You didn’t ask the Arde’thi to do this to me. And you haven’t asked me to suddenly be your brood mare, simply because I’m now a woman. Gwen... she doesn’t see what this did to me - she just sees the romantic side of things.”

“I don’t understand why you don’t blame me,” Jack confessed, pulling Ianto closer to him.

“I could blame you, but you also stood by me through this. You were patient and you didn’t push me to do anything - either professionally or personally. You’ve helped me and believe me, it wasn’t just the sessions with Doctor Grant that helped me to acclimate. Am I thrilled to be a woman? Not really, but unless something unexpected happens, I’m stuck like this. I could pout and whine, like I’m sure Owen would do in my place, but I want to live, Jack. Torchwood? We don’t always have a lot of time before it’s too late. And God knows, I’ve survived more than my fair share of disasters. My luck has been good so far, but who knows when it’s going to end? So, I made a decision and it’s not one I regret too much. I could refuse to accept what the Arde’thi did to me, or I could do what I’ve done.”

“You’re amazing, Ianto Jones,” Jack said and kissed his lover.

“Oi! Get inside, you two!” Rhianon called out. “I’m not going to keep protecting your cocoa for much longer!” Ianto grinned against Jack’s lips and led him inside.

His sister’s cocoa was quite good, after all.

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Tuesday, March 16, 2010

A rarely used alarm blared through the Hub. Even Ianto, who claimed - and probably did - to know everything looked up in confusion at it’s sound. “Jack?” he called out as the other man ran down the stairs and up towards the invisible lift. Tosh, Ianto noted, had employed the CCTV feeds on her computer and was searching to find what the alert meant. Owen and Martha emerged from the autopsy

bay, where they had been arguing - or discussing, as Owen claimed - the results from the latest Torchwood captures. That left Gwen, who gravitated towards Tosh to see what was going on.

"In a minute!" Jack called out, fingers programming the lift to take him to the Plass. Ianto turned his attention to Tosh and raised an eyebrow.

"Not quite sure," Tosh responded to the unasked query. "Got some interference I'm not sure about." She poured her attention to her computer, clearly annoyed that something prevented her from obtaining the most information possible.

"Don't bother, Tosh," Owen commented. "Jack's bringing whoever it is down now." He exchanged a cynical look with Ianto. "Let's hope it's not Captain Hart."

Ianto's eyes narrowed at the possibility. "Let's hope," he said.

"Doctor?!" Martha exclaimed as the lift returned to the Hub. Jack grinned as he stepped aside so Martha could hug the Time Lord.

"Martha Jones! What are you doing here?" the Doctor asked.

"Just visiting Jack," Martha replied. "Tom's in Africa and I needed to get out of London for a bit. But what are you doing here?"

The Doctor rocked back on his heels, his eyes seeming to take in everything, his hands in his pockets. "You called me to come here, didn't you?" he asked.

Everyone blinked at his statement. "Um... Doctor. We asked for your help over a year ago," Jack answered.

The Doctor waved a hand languidly. "Wibbly-wobbly timey-wimey," he explained. "'S not the end of the world is it?" he asked as he suddenly darted to where Tosh sat and began examining her computer. "So, this is Torchwood. Bit dank and dark, isn't it? Very different from that one in London. Probably a good thing."

Jack threw a desperate glance at Ianto, who, he saw, had stiffened at the comments made by the Doctor. Last thing he needed - any of them really - was for Ianto to take offense at what the Doctor said. "Yes, well... we're happy you're here," he finally said.

As he finished looking at the computer, the Doctor turned towards Jack. "Figured it was important, given the amount of messages you and Martha left me. I'm not too late to help, am I? Just... you said it wasn't an emergency, so I came when I could."

"Doctor," Martha began, "we called because well..." she trailed off, looking at the other members of Torchwood Three, all of whom seemed to be in various states of shock.

"What Martha is trying to say, Doctor," Ianto finally said, hands clenched in front of her, "is that I was changed from a man into a woman by the Arde'thi as a thank you gift for Jack."

“What? Really?” the Doctor asked, moving closer to Ianto and seeming to peer at him. “Huh... You don’t look too bad. Must have been some help that Jack gave.” Ianto shrugged in response and Jack did the same, when the Doctor glanced over at him.

“Unfortunately, the Arde’thi left right after they changed Ianto,” Tosh informed him. “Neither us nor UNIT had the appropriate technology to reverse the process.”

“We had hoped you’d be able to help,” Gwen broke in. The Doctor glanced at all of them.

“Oh, well...” he started before a giant grin flashed across his face. “Of course I’ll help.” He rubbed his hands together in glee. “What do you need? A trip to their planet? Or a bit of the old sonic screwdriver?”

Jack shook his head. “We don’t have a lot of Arde’thi technology.”

“So it’s a trip in the TARDIS. Haven’t been to the Arde’thi system in a while. Hm... I wonder if they still sell that gadget...” the Doctor mused. He turned eyes that gleamed with a manic energy towards Ianto. “Well, come on then. One gender reversal coming right up!”

Ianto shifted uncomfortably beneath everyone’s gazes as they all looked at him with various degrees of interest. He’d been a woman for over a year now; he’d grown used to wearing bras and thong underwear and skirts and dresses and yes, even heels. He’d discovered the pleasure of having sex as a woman with Jack and his relationship with the immortal had only grown and become stronger in the time. He had formed stronger bonds of friendship with Tosh, and had grown to see a different side of Gwen. And even Owen had proven just why he had gone into medicine, when he didn’t try to anything on Ianto and had, instead, shown himself to be quite protective of Ianto’s mental state.

He had waited for this moment for a while, had dreamed of it even. And now, faced with it, he didn’t know what to do. He was confused and had no idea what he was anymore, whether he was a man or a woman.

“Ianto?” Jack asked, concern tinging his voice as he no doubt wondered why Ianto hesitated. Ianto didn’t know how to respond and he closed his eyes, trying to calm himself.

Ianto turned towards the Doctor and chose. “Doctor, I -”

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Nothing in the world is permanent, and we're foolish when we ask anything to last, but surely we're still more foolish not to take delight in it while we have it. If change is of the essence of existence one would have thought it only sensible to make it the premise of our philosophy. - W. Somerset Maugham

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