

ANTIQUES



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Adventure of a Lifetime: Relationships

by malicehaughton (silver_wolf101@hotmail.com)

New Who | R | Alt!Ten/OC, Jackie/Pete | 22,000 words

Jack Noble Jones learns more about love, sex and family life for humans as he lives through the start of his second year in the Alternate Universe.

Betaed by: Persiflage_1

Warnings: None

Spoilers: None

Notes: A continuation from my last year's Big Bang fic [Adventure of a Lifetime: Beginning](#). It will help to read that one first.

Art by Attempt_unique (creativescreenname@gmail.com) and Erin Ptah (sailorptah@yahoo.com | <http://sailorptah.deviantart.com>)

There was something odd going on. For one thing, he was a hormonal sack of bones that wanted nothing more than to have sex with his girlfriend. But, on the other hand, he was terrified of taking that step.

So far, he had only got as far as kissing with Katie and he was beyond frustrated, both with himself, his inability to go any further, and the hormones teeming through his body. There was no way for him to balance it all, and it was driving him crazier than he already was.

6 months. He had been dating Katie for 6 months and with nothing but kisses to show for it.

He had hoped that cleaning up what Rose and the Doctor had done to him by abandoning him here would help him ease up a bit, but he had been home three days, all of which Katie had been over, and still nothing.

He couldn't commit. At all, it seemed. He wanted it, but couldn't allow himself the relief and pleasure of sex with his girlfriend. He couldn't allow himself to let her touch him any way sexually. He froze if she put her hands to his chest.

Now it was day four and it was nearing the time when Jackie liked to do her Christmas shopping. Yes, in October, which seemed the best time here if you wanted to beat a rush. He sighed loudly and jabbed his pencil angrily onto the blank page he was staring at, leaving a messy line of graphite behind. He couldn't even draw anymore.

He was useless.

A few days ago he had been on cloud nine, having talked to Rose and the Doctor and found a bit of closure. Now it all was fading away as

once again normal life reared its ugly head and decided it hated him.

He threw the pencil down, not caring if it meant it broke inside, and angrily stood up, determined to at least try to do something.

His end of year assignments were near to being due, but he'd already done them to the best of his ability. He couldn't concentrate to draw. Television could barely hold his interest anymore, not that it had to begin with. Tony was beginning to stay over other children's houses to get used to life away from mummy and daddy, and Katie wasn't coming over today. Add on Jackie and Pete's rather active sex life and he was ready to scream.

Growling, he left his room, heading towards the kitchen, hoping that maybe some good food would help ease his mood a bit. It was just his luck that he ran into Jackie. He wasn't in the mood to talk to her right now.

"Jack! Just the man I was looking for. Katie called. Said she couldn't make it over tomorrow either. Something about her parents."

He snorted at that one. "Oh yeah, probably going to see them but doesn't want to take me because I'm such a rotten boyfriend." He couldn't help being short. His mood was sinking. He was getting close to just plain exploding in anger and he didn't want to take that out on Jackie or Katie. They'd both put up with so much from him.

He wondered, sometimes, why Katie had decided that she would date him. Probably out of pity, and knowing he didn't have much else in his life. Nothing else in fact, except his business course and the Tylers. His life was so simple, that he was finding it extremely hard to keep his spirits up.

Jackie blinked at him for a few seconds before frowning. "What's got into you? If you were that lousy, Katie would call it off. She's smart, that one."

"She'll probably end up calling it off anyway, because I am that bad. 6 months! We haven't even *done anything!*"

All he got for that was a blank stare. He growled and shook his head. "What, you'd stay with a loser bloke who can't even control his own bloody emotions half the time, runs at the mouth on occasion, and can't seem to get any further than kissing?"

"If I loved him, yeah I would! What, you think the Pete of my world was the same as the Pete here? He was a down in the dumps nobody, you know? I was probably the bitch from hell with him, but he stayed with me anyway, because he loved me back! That's how it works, Jack. You have to learn to take the bad with the good."

"But there is no good! What is good about it? I feel like every day that goes by, I'm going to be dumped and left in a bigger emotional mess than I am already! I can't do anything to speed this damn thing up or go to a next step without freaking out or freezing. I don't want it to end. I like her, Jackie. I really do, but my stupid mind is stopping me from doing anything."

Jackie sighed and patted him on the shoulder, as if that was meant to make it all better. She left her hand there for a few moments, before rolling her eyes and bringing him in for a hug. "You never get a break from it anymore do you, and you're not used to that."

"Used to what?" he asked, curious as to what she was going on about, and returning the hug.

A hug was at least comforting to him. He was a very huggy man.

"Dealing with all your emotions. It's like suddenly your brain switched over to human and you're dealing with it all. Or trying to anyway. You're alright, Jack, you just need more time than most people would. Nothing wrong with that. First major thing to happen to you here was being dumped by the woman who you loved after making said confession. It's alright for you to be an emotional wreck. And it's only been a year. Slow down a bit."

He sniffed loudly, feeling awkward that he felt the need to cry. Again. Lately he either cried, went into a depression which put him into a low beyond crying, or some small thing went right, and he'd go manic for days.

He was seriously beginning to think he was bipolar. He decided if he was, he'd blame the Doctor for it. If he ever saw the Doctor again that is.

The one thing he definitely knew he couldn't do was slow down. If he did that, he'd die. "I can't, Jackie."

She patted him on the back and let him go. "Yeah. Well, there's still your classes. You can ask her next Monday what's happened."

"If she'll talk to me. Can't even talk to me over the phone..."

Rolling her eyes at him, she turned around and began walking over to where the nearest phone was. "Call her yourself then."

He stared at the phone for a few seconds, before shaking his head. "Nah. I'll just get yelled at if it isn't her who answers the phone..."

Hoping Jackie would take the hint, he made his way into the kitchen, staring at the cupboards. What would he have to eat? He rummaged around the shelves, until he came across a jar of marmalade. Grabbing a spoon, he decided to eat it raw. He hoped Maureen and Jackie both didn't spot him. He wasn't allowed in the marmalade unless it was on toast.

He couldn't help if it was a comfort food for him though, and he needed that right now.

He scooped out a spoonful, stuffed it in his mouth and slowly let it melt down his throat. He closed his eyes and wished life was better. He wished he was better. When he opened his eyes again, it was to see the cook glaring angrily at him.

Sighing heavily, he pulled the spoon out of his mouth, handed over the marmalade and went back to his room. He couldn't even have some of his favourite food when he was down. No wonder he found it hard to get in a good mood nowadays. He decided to have a bit of a sulk. Lying on his bed was the best place for that, and he was quite good at it.

He angrily glared at the ceiling, before rolling over onto his side.

Maybe he could read? He liked reading. He had got the complete Harry Potter box set of stories for Tony as a birthday present to the boy in September, and had been reading a chapter to him every night both of them were available.

They were possibly a bit too adult for him, considering he was just now 4 years old, but he was enjoying the first story immensely.

They were now halfway through the first book.

Sitting up, he reached for it on his bedside table. He'd already read the Harry Potter books, and enjoyed them himself. So far they were the same here as they had been in the other universe. If they had been different from the start, like, say, they were all about Ron taking the main role, or Hermione, he'd have been completely lost.

The books were familiar and just as comforting as anything else he had. He flipped it to the start and began to read all about Privet Drive and the Dursleys.

He had been reading for a few hours, almost finishing the first book at a slow pace, when there was a knock at the door, making him jump. "Enter!" he called out, hoping it wasn't Jackie come to yell at him for being mean to her earlier.

It was too early for dinner, so he knew it wasn't for that. It could be Tony though. When the door opened, he raised his eyebrows when he saw that instead it was Pete.

"Jacks told me you were worried about Katie and the whole being a boyfriend thing. Prefer to talk to a man about it?" Pete asked, and Jack couldn't help it, he grinned and chuckled.

"I went off at her for nothing. Yeah I am a bit worried but...I don't think it's anything that can really be helped. I was just bored and I'm easily frustrated lately. Reading has brightened my mood, if you're wondering. Harry Potter is good! You should read it yourself!"

Pete looked at the cover, made a weird face at it and shook his head. "Nah, not my thing really, sorry to disappoint. Still, at least it makes you happy. Got to have something like that in your life."

"Yeah. So! Does Jackie forgive me for letting loose on her? I don't mean to do that."

"You know our Jackie, she'd forgive you almost anything. Almost. She did hear from Maureen that you got in the marmalade again."

He froze at that and scrunched up his nose.

"Oh, brilliant. Now I'm in for it." He grinned and before he could even think about why, he began laughing over it. It was completely ridiculous. Well, at least he wasn't laughing alone. Pete was too, standing by the open door and grinning down at him.

"Well, do you want me to leave you to your reading then, or do you want to talk about men stuff."

Jack calmed down for a bit, took a few cleansing breaths, feeling better for having had a good chuckle at something and thought about what he might want to do. "I don't know. It's not really something to discuss. We're not having sex, and it's my nerves that are the problem. I can't let her get that close without freezing up."

Pete came in, closed the door behind him, sat on the bed and slapped his ankle. "Tell you what, sounds like you're afraid to commit. Not the worst thing to happen. With enough time, your body should take over for you. And if not...well, you could always go back and talk to the Torchwood psychologist, see if she could sort it out a bit."

He grimaced at that idea. He still wasn't happy that he had been told that he was perfectly fine by that harpy of a woman. He was not fine by a long shot. Though he was feeling better since saying his farewell to the Doctor and Rose.

"That...woman is not nice. She lied to me. I don't like her."

Pete nodded. "Well, we've got other people in the profession working for Torchwood. People who have heard of the Doctor and you. If it doesn't work out on its own after a few more months, would you try one of them, then?"

He grimaced but nodded. "Yeah, but not that bloody woman again!"

"I got that the first time, Jack. Well, good luck with Katie and all. I'm sure after a while, your nerves will fade. It's normal to go like that a bit for the first time. Some women actually like a guy who can wait."

Shaking his head and coughing, he grinned at Pete. "Oh, believe me, if I could, I would. I'm well and truly ready for it in body. Everything works right too. A little too well sometimes. I think having gone to that beach a few days ago has helped. I feel a lot calmer in myself. Maybe now I'll be able to settle down with the whole commitment thing. I mean, right now I'm not looking for marriage, I just want to be able to really be with my girlfriend in the way we both want."

Pete patted his ankle again, got up and walked to the door. "Well, I'm sure it'll work out sooner or later for the both of you. I've got to go pick Tony up now from the Fabers. Want me to tell him to come in for some early story time?"

"Nah, I'll probably finish the book and look over my work again. Never know when you've missed some vital little thing that could mean failing the entire course. And I already passed the easy stuff. Time Management makes me nervous. I have trouble telling apart short, mid and long term goals..."

Pete nodded, and smiled at him. "I'll leave you to it then. See you at dinner."

"Yep!"

After Pete had left, closing the door behind him, Jack felt a lot better than he had earlier. It seemed like Pete might know a bit about the current problem he was facing. Made it even sound like a common, normal problem to have. It had been a relief to hear it.

He went back to his book, easily falling into the final pages with interest and a grin.

Yep, he definitely felt better about the whole situation, though he didn't know how long that would last for.

Hopefully a few days...

Monday dawned cold, wet and dreary. It figured. It was the kind of day that awkward break ups looked like they were made on. He immediately wanted to roll over, wrap himself further up in his blankets to get warmer and go back to sleep. He had somehow lost his sheet during the night...

He had almost succeeded when a loud and persistent knocking came from the door. He knew it was Jackie without even needing to hear the loud yelling that he needed to get up and ready so she could drive him to his lessons.

He pulled the duvet over his head so that he could pretend for a bit longer that he was still asleep.

He hated cold weather. He tended to get sick during the winter. Thankfully, it was still autumn, but he had forgotten in the heat of summer how cold it got on this alternate universe's Earth. The weather was a lot different to the normal Earth he was used to.

A few seconds later, Jackie barged in and ripped the duvet and blanket off him. It was good he didn't sleep naked or he had been doing anything she really wouldn't want to see, because he tended to wake up hard nowadays.

Hard for sex, not hard because he had a full bladder which had been the norm for him before he had started dating. One was easily ignorable, but needed a bit of a push to go to the loo. The other he was too busy wanking away as soon as he woke up as it was practically impossible for him to ignore when he was alone in his bed.

He couldn't remember what he dreamt last night, but it had nothing to do with sex and he was thankfully erection free.

"Jackie! It's cold!" he shrieked, trying to grab his blanket back off her to wrap around his suddenly very cold body.

"Well, you should have thought of that before ignoring me banging at your door! Get dressed. You're going to be late as it is now."

He rolled his eyes. "Yes, mum."

She rolled her eyes right back and he wondered if he was in trouble over it.

When she had left his room, he got up and looked at his ever growing collection of suits. He chose a dark blue one, hoping it would keep him warmer, and it fit the day and his upcoming mood. Well, if he was going to get dumped or not was the real question, but he wouldn't go through that wearing his favourite blue suit that had once belonged to the Doctor.

He had no idea if Katie would even talk to him, considering she hadn't bothered telling him about the thing with her parents. He pouted all

the way to the college. He switched that out to a downright frown when he noticed Katie waiting for him out the front, near the TARDIS blue doors.

Why must he think of the TARDIS now? She had left him here alone too, though not by any fault of her own. He missed the TARDIS more than Rose nowadays. He would always miss the TARDIS. He'd known her since the moment he had been made under her song. She was a part of him, just as much as the Doctor and Donna, or so it felt sometimes.

He stared at where Katie was for a few long moments, before Jackie sighed. "She's not going to dump you."

"But...why did she not tell me about this thing with her parents. I don't even know what kind of thing it is. And she told you about it and not me...why would she do that?"

Jackie shrugged. "Dunno. You're never going to find out unless you ask, either. So get out of the car and go talk to her."

Sighing, he nodded, before opening the car door and slowly stepping towards the building. He took his time, wanting to meet with Katie, but dreading it at the same time. She was looking at him with a worried little frown on her lips.

"Are you alright, Jack? You look down today."

He grimaced and thought that it would be enough to convey his emotions. Was he alright today? Hell no.

"Nice to see you too. I'm amazed you're talking to me." He tried to, but couldn't keep the bitterness out of his tone.

The worried look on Katie's face sharpened to one of deep concern. "Jack? What happened to make you think that?"

He glared, beginning to get angry at her feigning ignorance. "You ignored me! You couldn't even get me to the phone. You'd rather talk to Jackie instead. For all I know, you just left me alone because you're that fed up with me! Yes, I may be more needy than even I like, but damn it I think I have a bloody good reason! I don't need the people in my life who I can talk to just suddenly begin ignoring me! What did I do? Or is it what I can't? Yeah, that's it, isn't it? How typically...mammalian!"

Katie blinked at him, and he didn't know if she was angry with him or letting him rant. He didn't know anything lately. He was that bloody pathetic. And he thought he was finally over feeling like this. He didn't know what was worse, if she wasn't angry, or that her silence meant that he was right. That it was his fault. That he was just too needy for her and she couldn't take it anymore.

"Just...if you're going to break up with me do it now and get it over with, alright? I'm fed up of not knowing, of thinking that I can't do anything right."

A hand made its way to his face, and he leaned into it slightly, not being able to help himself. He didn't know what it would be like if she ended up actually breaking up with him, but he felt horrid having just outright asked her to get it out of the way with if that was what she wanted.

"Jack, my parents were down, and they visited me. It was supposed to be just for the day, and just me and them. A family only type thing. I have them over once a month. They decided to

stay for the whole weekend. We were about to go out the door for lunch when I called to let you know that I wouldn't be over on Sunday either. I didn't have the time to wait."

"But you did! You had time! You just didn't want to!"

"If I hadn't wanted to, I wouldn't have called at all!"

"I would have preferred that! At least then I wouldn't feel like I have done something wrong to have you ignore me for no reason! It's all I've been able to think about for days. What did I do wrong to make you ignore me? To make you not want to spend time with me. Is it my inability to have sex right now? I mean, damn it. Fine! You know what, if that's it, I'll end it now. Just...go to class. I'll just go back home and stay there. Not like anyone really cares about me. The only thing I'm good for is being abandoned in the gutter like some kind of monster that isn't worth the air there is to breathe!"

He hadn't noticed he had started to yell, until he noticed that the class nearest the door were watching him through the window, some of them giggling over some of the things he had said. He did the one thing that made any sense at all right then, he turned around to get back in the car, clear on never coming back here again. Only to find that Jackie had abandoned him to his fate.

No wonder he had abandonment issues. As soon as he turned around another person had left him.

He ended up sitting down on the concrete outside those blue doors and bursting into helpless tears. He hadn't even bothered turning around again to see if Katie had done as he had

said and gone back to class. He didn't want to know. Right then all he wanted was to drown in his own tears and die.

Hands wrapped around him, and he didn't know whose they were. He was too blinded right then to see and too hurt to care. All he knew was that it was comforting.

After a while, he was gently persuaded to stand up and was taken to a nearby office and sat down.

It took him a while to calm down, and when he did he was surprised to find that not only was Katie with him in that small room, but so was Jackie. He couldn't remember when they had arrived but was sure that the big arms that had brought him in here didn't belong to either woman.

"Where am I?" he blurted out, before he could ask anything else. He hadn't been in this particular room before and it was worrying him.

"Counsellor's room. You got really upset, and I didn't know who else to get."

He glanced at Katie, before looking away again. He must have worried her a lot for her to have done that. It must have been the counsellor who had brought him in here then. "And Jackie?"

"I was called here to pick you back up! Wasn't even half way home when I got the call."

Grimacing he shrugged his shoulders. "Sorry." He truly was too, but whether or not either of them believed it was another thing entirely. And, oh god, he had just broken down in a very public place, with people gawking at him.

His face was burning. Damn his half human self for blushing more often than a Time Lord ever

did. And it was much warmer too when it happened. He could feel the flush of heat travelling down his body and he buried his head in his hands.

"I'm so embarrassed! God, what are people gonna think of me, now! It's not like I had a bloody good rep to begin with, was it? Shit! Bloody hell. Damn it. Jackie, I wanna go home."

Jackie folded her arms and frowned at him. She wasn't getting up off the seat she was in. That was definitely not a good sign. He turned to look at Katie and found her to be fidgeting aimlessly with a loose bit of stitching on her shirt.

Oh god, what was wrong?

"You're going to have to talk a bit to the counsellor first. He wants to know what happened..."

He froze at that. Shit! He was in it now. "I don't know what to say other than I felt like I had just been abandoned by both of you! I hate feeling like this! I thought I was over the worst of this, and now it's like it was back at the start..."

Jackie stared at him. "What do you mean you felt like I abandoned you?! I'm the one that hasn't!"

He felt himself grow hotter if that was at all possible and shrugged helplessly. "I turned around, the car wasn't there anymore. It's stupid, I know, but I honestly couldn't help it right then. I didn't know that I was going to get that over emotional. Or else I wouldn't have bothered getting up at all, you chucking off my covers or not!"

He was being stared at by both women and he felt the insane urge to both laugh and cry. He ended up doing neither, though he didn't know which one would be worse.

After finally feeling the worst of that feeling vanish, the counsellor walked in. A man he had seen on and off, since his class was in the same building as the offices, but had never officially talked to, though throughout the year, Katie had been trying to get him to go.

The only experience he had with anything like this was the crazy harpy bitch from Torchwood.

He still couldn't understand why she had said he was fine, just not entirely human or alien. Yeah, that had been so wrong in most ways and completely unhelpful too.

This man was carrying a file already. He hadn't even been to see him.

Oh yeah, he had told his teachers about what had happened in the most human way he could. He had lost everything, up to and including his clothes and other belongings in a fire, and had lost his girlfriend because of that. Friendless, lost and very alone and confused, he had been ecstatic to have been accepted into the course to begin with. And it was only a beginner's course to Business Studies.

Still, it beat working at Torchwood.

"Hello, Jack. Good to finally meet you. It's too bad it's under these circumstances, though. Was that the first time you have broken down publicly?"

Grimacing he nodded. "Yeah. Only took, what, a little over a year to make a complete fool of myself."

"Crying is good. It relieves stress and can help with the grief."

Frowning he nodded. "Yeah. I'd like to stop at one point during my life though. Might be good. Or am I going to go through several decades worth of this crap..."

On almost automatic pilot, Jackie reached up and begun rubbing his head. She usually did that when he was upset, but this time it was a bit embarrassing. It's not like she was his mum or anything, regardless of what he called her earlier that morning.

Katie held his hand and squeezed it. That did comfort him. At least it looked like he wasn't getting dumped today.

"How long depends on a few things, one of which is support. You seem to be getting that, by the people you're close with, which is a good thing. Another is resilience. Past experiences with grief. Some people find it easier to move on than others. Some never do."

He could feel his mood slip a bit. "I want to move on from this. I've been doing a lot better. I suppose it's possible that I am starting again because I found out a few days ago that my best friend from before I moved here had died. I was actually relieved to hear the news...relieved!"

"Had you heard from her before it happened?"

He shook his head. "No. I found out a year after it happened. I did wonder what had happened to her the entire time though. I kept bringing her up all the time, didn't I, Jackie. Poor Donna."

Jackie nodded. "Yeah, he talked about her a lot. Wondering what she was doing. That type of thing."

"So, you wondered the entire year why she wasn't contacting you and finally found out that she had died. It's alright to feel relief at finally finding out the truth."

He nodded. "Yeah. I guess it's kind of made me feel down again. I was happy for a few days though, from knowing and then it was the weekend and Katie spent it with her parents and...I guess I just flipped out." He turned to Katie and squeezed her hand back. "I'm sorry."

Smiling, she squeezed back and nodded. "I know. I tried to explain and you kind of lost it, but I wasn't even anywhere near dumping you to begin with. I still don't know why you thought that."

He grinned slightly at her. "Neither do I."

There was an easy silence in the room for a few seconds before Jackie cleared her throat.

"Umm, so, are you coming back home, or are you going to stay for classes today?"

And he suddenly remembered how embarrassed he was, and some of the things he must have shouted out loud and felt himself get all hot again. "Will I get yelled at if I go home?"

"No."

He nodded. He didn't want to answer any more than that. He didn't like coming home early or not going, because it usually left Jackie angry at him.

The slight tension in the room held there by unknowns evaporated as the counsellor got up and nodded. "Well, if you feel like you're going to break down again, you can always come here

and talk it through. I'm not as qualified as some others in the field, but I can offer my services in the areas of stress, and any problems you have with your classes."

Nodding, Jack stood and waited for the two women to do the same. They all walked out together. It was the first time since Pete had his chat with him about commitment that he truly felt he had friends.

Katie ended up going back to class, telling the teachers what had happened earlier and informing them that he might not be back again the next day either, but that he would be back. He'd also get the work he'd miss off her later on that evening, as she had promised to come over for dinner.

Dinner that night didn't last long for him. A wasp had somehow made it into the kitchen and he had started, like he had when he had first got here, crying uncontrollably over it.

It reminded him of Donna. Donna who was now truly dead.

His best friend was dead.

No one else seemed to understand why an insect had affected him so much, but he ended up hiding in his room for the remainder of the night.

He didn't go back to college for the rest of the week. It wasn't necessarily because of unexpected crying jags either. Those had calmed down a lot faster than when he had been dumped here, though he did manage to make himself cry a few times a day. It wasn't a

constant thing, and it was more a want than a burning need.

It was from the sudden embarrassment that had come up on him about what the people at the college would think of him. Not from crying, but from the comment he had shouted out about being unable to have sex.

It wasn't bothering him as much now. Since Monday he hadn't even been able to get it up, as the humans said. Apparently this was normal too, according to Pete. Stress, he blamed it on. Thank God Pete was here to help him through all this human male crap. He would have been completely lost otherwise.

So, he felt a little under pressure between trying to find out more about himself, deal with his grief, and the constant need to feel he should be having sex with his girlfriend.

It was stupid, and he thought about it way too much. For someone who had basically barely worried or even thought of sex until he was half human, it was far more than he was used to. He still didn't know how normal humans coped with all the feelings they had to deal with.

Saturday was colder than ever, and he was wrapped up in a blanket in the downstairs family room, sitting on the couch with Katie by his side. For once he felt his mind go blissfully blank, as the movie they were watching refused to capture his attention. It was a mindless kid's movie, but he didn't mind.

Tony, sitting on the floor was paying so much attention to the screen that it looked like he was trying to do something in his pants. He hoped that wasn't true. Jackie might blame him for not watching him properly.

That and Tony was definitely potty trained. The occasional accident did still occur though.

He noticed that he had just lost five minutes worth of film and blinked. His mind was all over the place today, less active than the Time Lord brain it was working in. He couldn't concentrate on anything without something else gaining his attention soon afterwards.

Why he was going like this he didn't know, but he was getting a headache. Or maybe he was going like this because of the headache. Either way, he rubbed at his head and grimaced.

"Jack?" Katie asked, rubbing his hair in an affectionate manner.

"I'm fine, just a sudden headache. I can't concentrate on anything either."

She nodded, but didn't turn back to the movie right away. She smiled at him, hugged him to her side and let his head rest on her shoulder. "You should get some rest. You look really tired."

He sighed and nodded. "Yeah, I've been suffering from a touch of insomnia." It was true too, he had got very little sleep this week. It wasn't for any reason he could figure out either. He was just finding it hard to fall asleep, even though he was tired.

"Mmm, bed sounds good. I get a sore back or neck from sleeping on the couch."

Tony turned towards them, put his hands to his lips and let out a very loud "Shush!" before turning back to his movie.

Giggling, Jack got up, stretched, and didn't even bother trying to hide the huge yawn that took the opportunity to escape his control. Katie grabbed his hand and began nudging him in the

direction of the stairs, which led up to the bedrooms.

Together they made their way to his bed, big enough to fit two quite comfortably, but he had only slept in it alone up to this point. He stared at it for a bit, looked at Katie, shrugged and dropped her hand. "Umm, not that I am not wanting you in here or anything but...I'm not really in quite the mood for anything other than sleep right now..."

She nodded. "You look like you're about to drop. Get some sleep then. I can always come back later. Or tomorrow."

He sighed loudly and closed his eyes. "Will you at least stay until I'm asleep? I don't really want to be alone right now and it might help me to sleep a bit."

"Sure." She went over to one side and lay down. She patted the other side and, reluctantly, he went and lay down beside her. She wriggled closer to him so that they ended up hugging each other. It was warm and comfortable and very nice.

He fell asleep before lunch with a slight smile on his face. He woke up at 9 that night, still feeling tired, but at least more rested than he had been. Katie was gone, but he had expected that and didn't get upset over it. It wasn't as if they had begun sleeping at each other's house or anything. Well, there had been that one time, but he had got into trouble over it and had been reluctant to do it again.

He was definitely feeling better on all fronts. How long that would last, he didn't know, but he liked that it could happen to him. His good moments were few and far between, but coming closer and closer together.

He decided that he'd just had a bad week after that weekend and hearing the truth of Donna's death.

He got up, wandered his way down to the kitchens, hoping that a meal had been made for him, and was instead surprised by Pete and Jackie sitting at the table, playing cards of all things.

"Hey. Any food? I'm hungry after sleeping through two meals."

Jackie jumped, having not seen him, and Pete quickly looked up, just as surprised.

"Bloody hell, give a man a heart attack! When did you get up? Sleeping like the dead, you were." Pete stated, laying his cards down and finishing the game. Some type of poker by the look of it.

"I just got up. Didn't mean to sleep all day, I just haven't got much sleep lately. Feel a lot better for it, though, which is good."

Jackie smiled at him. "Well, if you want anything, you'll have to make it yourself. We're about to go to bed."

He nodded and made his way to the fridge. Rummaging around, he ended up with a slice of cheese, a few pieces of cut ham, and a small salad. It wasn't really the weather for salad, but what Maureen wanted to make for them is what they normally got. He wasn't really in the mood for a big meal, knowing he'd be going back to bed after eating and hopefully sleeping through the night.

Jackie and Pete were gone by the time he had his meal ready. He had said his goodnights while looking for food. He sat down at the table and made a cheese and ham sandwich, eating

the salad things after it. He was still slightly hungry afterwards, but he decided that he could wait until breakfast to eat again.

Bed was a welcome place to him when he made his way back to his room, and now with some food in his stomach, and in a contented mood, he fell asleep without a problem.

He woke up bright and early the next day looking forward to Katie coming back over like she had promised; perhaps he'd take her out for dinner tonight. A proper date was something they hadn't done in a few months and he felt it was about time they had one again.

A dinner and a movie sounded good. There was a new movie out that he'd like to see. Some sappy love story, but he was a bit into that nowadays, probably thanks to Donna.

He bounced out of bed, had a bath, got dressed, went downstairs for breakfast and got to planning the evening.

He hadn't been able to get a reservation at any of the posh restaurants he had wanted to go to for the night, so instead they ended up eating at a little pizza place he was rather fond of. It was the perfect little spot for a normal date and he was actually quite glad his plan for the restaurant had fallen through.

He was in a stall with Katie, blocked off by a divider on either side so the other people eating meals couldn't see them unless walking towards their table, so it gave them some measure of privacy.

Mainly they didn't need it, but it was nice to know it was there anyway. He held Katie's hands most of the time while waiting for their

food to arrive, and occasionally, he'd lean over to share a kiss or two.

He was beginning to get a bit worked up over it, since he was rather excited that the night was going better than he expected. They ate their pizza together, having a good time while doing it too, and then it was time for the movie.

He couldn't remember what it was called, so instead of looking at the listing of movies, just asked for two tickets to see the love movie.

That was his big mistake.

The ticket lady had smiled at him and Katie, handed him his two tickets and pointed them to the right room. He frowned, knowing something wasn't right. When he found only three others in there waiting for the movie, another couple down front and a man on his own, he was really beginning to think they had the wrong movie.

"Umm, this isn't right..." he stated, looking at to Katie. The movie he wanted to see was new to the cinema and there shouldn't be this few people seeing it.

She smiled back, shrugging. "Well, let's see what it is then. Never know, we might enjoy it."

As the cinema went dark, he heard the sound of the man by himself taking off his belt and got a bit confused, until the movie started. It was a gut reaction to fiercely blush and look away from the screen when he found out that the movie was, in actual fact, a porno.

"Why are they showing this type of movie in a theatre like this?!" he asked, quite taken aback, as it wasn't common in the universe where he came from for mainstream cinemas to show

these types of film. Sure there were places to go, but not like this place.

Katie, knowing he wasn't originally from this universe held his hand and grinned at him. "What? They didn't have this type of movie where you come from? Never know, it might get you in the mood enough to actually, you know, have sex."

He glanced at her, saw her actually watching the film and was rather taken aback that she wasn't the least bit embarrassed over it.

He looked back at the man and quickly looked away, seeing as he had his hands down his pants. The couple in the front of the theatre were busy with their own hands, and were also kissing up a storm.

"Where I come from, they did have movies like this, but they were basically banned from being shown in cinemas unless you went to the right places, and then it was at night, not this early! It's still light outside!"

Katie blinked at him, squeezed his hand and shrugged. "Here the police found that with showing adult pornography, the sex crimes went down significantly. Also, it's enjoyable to watch with someone you want to have sex with. It's normal human behaviour. Nothing to be ashamed about."

He nodded but didn't think he'd be that comfortable. He had been tempted to just get up and walk out, but Katie was watching, and she was all flushed and he realised quite suddenly that she was enjoying the movie on a base level. She was turned on by it.

He refused to believe that he was too, even though he was sporting an erection that was beginning to hurt. The volume was turned up

extra loud, so even if he didn't watch he had full surround sound of the act of sexual intercourse.

A few grunts from the man came about ten minutes into the movie, and then there were just four people left, as the man got up to leave, having been here for what he had come to do. Wank to a movie, in full public view of others. Legally.

Oh god, he was *majorly* turned on by this...

The couple in the front were completely ignoring the movie, the girl having moved onto her boyfriend's lap and to his shock, he found that he ended up watching them have sex.

His trousers were way too tight, but he didn't want to unbutton them, because he didn't want the other couple to see. Though he needn't have worried so much about that. His attention was brought back to Katie as she lifted his hand and placed it between her legs.

"It's alright, you know. That's what these movies are here for. To get you all hot and bothered. Some people like being public about who they're with. Some are exhibitionists. Some are perverts and others would have been in jail for things like indecent exposure."

"I think I'd rather watch a movie like this in private..." he whispered back, his voice coming out quite a bit more rough than normal. He began to twitch the muscles in his thighs, trying to ease the pressure in his groin.

Katie placed a hand over his, bent his fingers and started moving his hand in a way she liked. She closed her eyes and sighed. "Well, I don't mind doing this at least...It's at least not a full on public display..."

He gulped and nodded, keeping up the movement she had started quite well on his own, especially now that she was unbuttoning her own jeans so he had more access to her actual body instead of doing this over clothes.

He began panting, never having actually done this before. His hand was touching her flesh then, and hair, and he had a few seconds to note that she didn't shave down there, or at least wasn't right now, and that she was very moist.

He licked his lips, scrambled with the buttons and zip on his trousers and sighed harshly as the pressure was released a bit and he had more room to move. Move he did too, he was flush up right against his stomach with need.

The pressure was still there, a heady feeling that he knew quite well now. It was that same irresistible urge to touch himself that he got mornings after he was dreaming of sex. The fingers of his free hand twitched with the need, but he couldn't. Katie was watching him, her eyes dark and her breath coming out in pants.

His hand that was currently busy between her legs was wet now, and he couldn't hold out much longer before he would inevitably give in to the need to come that was building with every breath. And then she did it, she moaned and the sound was deep and full of need and wanting, and he swore that if she did that again he wouldn't need touch to come, he'd just damn well go ahead and reach orgasm right there and then.

He whimpered with need. "Katie, please..." he said, not sure what exactly for, but he threw back his head and shouted, loudly, when her hand found his erection and gave it a squeeze.

He bucked his hips once and it was enough for him.

He felt like he had literally exploded with pleasure, and felt the evidence of such hit him on his chin, which was the only part of him it could actually reach that wasn't clothed and with his head at the angle it was.

Katie's other hand joined his, and making his fingers do what she liked, she soon reached her own orgasm.

He needed a few minutes to catch his breath, which was quite a bit longer than normal. Yet again, he hadn't come quite so hard before in his life. He was horribly embarrassed to find that he'd need a clean shirt. His was in a right state.

"Bloody hell! I am definitely not doing that in public again..." he stated, as he looked around to find something to try and get rid of the mess he had made.

"Here," Kate said, handing him one of the leftover serviettes from their dinner. He had no idea why she had kept them, except that maybe this had been a bit planned on her part. He frowned, wondering if it had been her plan all along. After all, this movie had gotten him into such a worked up state he had practically begged her to touch him. He *had* begged her to touch him.

He felt like such a perv right then. Yet again, she had initiated all touch to begin with, and he had wanted that type of thing for quite a while now. And she had said that it was one of the purposes of such movies...

God, what were Jackie and the maids going to think when they saw his shirt?

He cleaned off his shirt as best he could, horrified when it wouldn't come off properly as it had begun to dry, and it was going to leave a mark for the whole world to see.

His face was bright red and he felt the insane urge to start laughing and never stop.

They waited until it was time for the cleaners to come in and clear up before leaving, him hoping that it was dark by the time they got outside.

Thankfully, it was. His shirt wasn't as bad in the dark.

He got them a taxi to the mansion. If she wanted to go home, she'd have to find her own way, because he wanted nothing more than to change out of the clothes he was wearing. Perhaps even burn the shirt.

Yes, he was probably slightly over exaggerating the event, but still. Why did it have to be like that? Their first sexual encounter? It hadn't been...right. Well, it had felt good for sure, but it hadn't been what he had expected, or what he wanted. It sure as hell wasn't what he had been imagining.

He left Katie to explain why he was in a state to Jackie, as he rushed to his room to change. He got into his pyjamas, looked in a mirror, saw the look of a deer being caught in headlights, and felt himself go.

He collapsed onto his bed, sniffing like a stupid idiot into his pillow, until the soft knock at the door, before Katie poked her head into his room.

"Hey. Jackie thought I should stay here the night. So budge up a bit. Are you alright?"

He nodded and rubbed at his face as he sat up and moved from the middle of the bed where

he normally slept to one side. "Yeah, just feeling a bit stupid. Sorry, that's not how I had actually planned tonight."

She nodded, sat down beside him and grinned. "Well, are you going to let me borrow your shirt, or should I sleep naked?"

He coughed, surprised by her. "Umm, I get really cold this time of year. I'm a stick and my temperature is slightly lower than most people's. Not a good combination."

"Well, I have plenty of nice body heat to share..."

With that said, she took off her clothes, slid into the bed and grinned at him. "Well, we'll see each other naked anyway at some point, and we did just have our hands down each others' pants. I don't see the need to be shy about this."

He saw the need. He saw the need in how his eyes wouldn't go any higher than her chest, and his hands clenched at his sides with the urge to touch her breasts. He'd never felt like this before. He'd wanted to see them, yes, and now that he was, all he could think was how nice they looked and how they would feel.

She looked good naked. He didn't really have many people to compare her to right now, but she definitely looked good naked. Well, to his eyes anyway. He licked his lips and a grin spread out across his face.

"Wow. You look beautiful. I didn't imagine you'd look like this in real life while naked."

She winked at him and his heart began beating faster. "Think of me naked often?"

He nodded and managed to lift his eyes up to meet her face. "Yeah. All the time. I dream

about us regularly. I think about you when I touch myself. I can't help it. You're the only one I've wanted like this."

He thought that his words would scare her away, but instead she gave him a giant smile. "Wow, a guy who actually isn't afraid to admit that! And yeah, before you ask, I have thought of you naked too. Since before we even started dating. Actually, it was closer to when we first met. Probably when I helped you pick out clothes with Jackie that time. I had an irresistible urge to just...keep you to myself."

He laughed at that and shook his head. "Not like Jackie, I hope. I think she's treating me like a breakable adopted son. It feels good though, to have people care about me. I forget when I'm feeling bad that people actually *do* care for me. It's horrible to feel that way. I wish it'd just stop..."

Katie moved out from under his blanket, padded over on all fours to him and dragged him into a much needed hug. A hug in which she was naked while giving him, now a full view of everything. He begun to breathe just that little bit heavier and he could feel a familiar stirring in his groin. God, this was the first time he'd ever been erect twice in one night.

Slowly, as if not to startle him, Katie took off his shirt and tossed it to the ground. When her hands reached for his pants, he grinned and held her hands back. "Umm, I'll take them off. I don't think I'd be able to do anything if you did that for me."

She nodded, lay back and stared at him. Waiting for the moment he lowered his pants and knelt just as naked as she was in front of her.

He was nervous, but managed to get to the fully naked part, his growing erection showing just how this was affecting him. He had the urge to reach a hand down and touch himself. His mind telling him that this was just a dream, that it couldn't possibly be true that Katie was on his bed, in the room with him, naked and wanting him.

It wasn't until Katie reached out a hand and touched him, one hand splaying out on his chest and making its way down to where he really wanted to be touched, that he knew it was real. He felt the insane urge to cry. He pushed down the feeling and let her continue on with her exploration.

In return he placed his hands, very gently as he was afraid of doing something wrong, on her breasts and examined them through touch. She wasn't pushing him away and she was grinning at him, so he guessed it was alright for him to be doing so.

Her nipples hardened, but he wasn't too sure if that was from the cold or from desire. If he was a bit smaller down below, he sure knew it was from the cold. His body, without him wanting it to, and even though he was warming up with desire himself, was beginning to shiver with the cold.

Katie stilled her hands from where they were tracing the line of hair from his belly down to his groin. "You alright with this?" she asked.

He nodded and grinned. "Yeah, sorry. Not you. I told you, my body feels the cold. I'm all hot inside and that's keeping me warmer than I'm used to this time of year, but outside it's still cold...I have a hard time controlling my body temperature. Something I really am not used to."

"Still?"

He knew what she meant by that. It had been over a year and he wasn't yet used to this being half human deal. Still having only one heart worried him greatly. "Yeah. Don't think that will ever fully change. I don't exactly fit in as it is. Never really have, for that matter. Guess I never will."

"I thought you were being shy. When you said you felt the cold that is."

"Me? I don't think I've ever been shy. Nervous, yes. And scared, definitely, but shy? No."

She giggled and laid her head on his shoulder. "No, you're too open for that."

He grinned and buried his nose in her hair and smelt her. She was using a peppermint based scent, and it was making him feel a little dizzy. He lifted his head off hers, nudged her face up with a finger and kissed her, slowly, and with a much longing as he could fill it with. She pressed their bodies together and he groaned as the bare flesh of his erection came in touch with her belly.

He pushed as close to her as he could get, wriggling from one knee to the other in an attempt to get closer. When that didn't work he broke off the kiss with a grimace. "Umm, I don't think I'm quite ready for intercourse yet..." he said, his voice coming out deeper than he was used to hearing it.

He didn't know why that was what he had said when a few seconds ago all he had wanted was to get inside her. Maybe it was last second nerves, or maybe it was that little commitment issue raising its head again, but she nodded at him and instead lowered her hand to grip him.

He closed his eyes and sighed. "This is nice though. I like this." Well, if it was something to do with commitment, he was at least getting better. He hadn't yet frozen and she was touching him now. It was a definite improvement. Maybe he just wasn't ready for that kind of step yet.

He didn't know if all relationships went in steps like this one, but he was glad that Katie was ready and willing to put up with it.

He raised his hands to her breasts again, and went back to kissing her.

He didn't last very long, not used to anyone else touching him there just yet, but it was definitely better than the one second immediate release he'd had in the cinema. It felt more like what he was used to by himself and he was glad that he had been able to go through with it.

He had squeezed her a bit more than he liked when he had come, but she didn't say that it hurt, and there hadn't been a look of pain in her eyes. If anything she had enjoyed it. It was when she put his hand back between her legs that he frowned.

"Umm, just so you know...I've never actually done this before that time in the cinema, so if I hurt you or don't do anything you like...yeah. Tell me."

She breathed heavily into his ear for a few seconds, before telling him, that yes, she would tell him.

With that out of the way, he looked down to see what he was doing and was infinitely grateful he had already reached orgasm. He wasn't able to get an erection again this soon after having finished, but just seeing where his hand was guaranteed that if he had been

capable of it, he'd be quite ready to go again already.

He cupped her, before moving his fingers much like she had made him do in the cinema. Unlike in the cinema, she had no jeans on, stopping his hand from going only so far. So, in the moment of experimentation, he curved his fingers just that bit more, moved them a bit further down and gently moved one finger over her folds, until he felt he could slip it inside her without hurting her.

She let out a sigh against his shoulder and hugged him. "Yeah, I like that."

He grinned. Well, it seemed there was something he could do right in this department after all. After a few more seconds, he repeated the procedure with another finger, then another, until she had three inside her. He was afraid he'd do some damage if he added anymore, so he began to move them as they were.

It was the same thing she had done to him. A simple and quite enjoyable alternative to what he knew as reproductive sexual intercourse.

He was beginning to understand why humans did this just for fun and not just to have babies.

He began shivering with cold again, but he kept up the movement of his hand. Maybe now would be a good time to go out and buy a pack of condoms. Well, in the morning anyway. He felt like he was going to be ready for sex very soon.

"Jesus, rub me where you were before. Now, please..." she said; her voice was breathy and, like his, had gone deeper in tone. She let out a groan afterwards that made him gulp, knowing

he'd like to hear that sound all the time if it was possible.

He fumbled a bit then, when he tried with the hand that already had fingers inside her, before sighing, giving up on that, reaching down with his other hand, having to duck a bit when he did, and got the right spot.

"Oh god, yes, like that!" she cried out loud, startling him a bit. Her hands gripped hard onto his shoulders, keeping him in that position, and her body was moving independently to his fingers, falling when he was pulling out and rising when he was pushing them in. He didn't have to do so much now that she seemed to be doing half the work here for him.

She was grunting, actually *grunting* with the motions. He wondered if he made sounds like that too when he was really wound up, because there was no mistaking she was wound up. He looked up, catching the look on her face. To his surprise, she looked like she was in pain and he began to stop.

She whacked him on the shoulder for that and barked out a very high "Don't even think about stopping!"

He nodded, went back to what he was doing, and a few seconds later, Katie was throwing back her head letting out a few panting shouts, before they died down to a moan of relief. He knew *that* sound. That was the sound he made when he got in the mood in the middle of the day and had to wait until he was either in the shower or in bed to wank.

He had thought that, like him, she'd be touching herself to get rid of the need that seemed to come upon both of them when they had been together the past few months. Surely he wasn't wrong about that?!

Oh god, if he was, he'd been leading her through very rough terrain and only just brought her release. Then again, she had made it to orgasm in the movie too, but nothing like this... Yet he hadn't had anything inside her then, just stimulated her clitoris. He had thought that would have been enough for her. Apparently not.

He was beginning to stir again. Third time in one night. If he kept that up, he'd be rubbed raw.

"Oh, bloody hell that was good. You have very nice fingers."

He gulped and nodded. "Umm, thanks. I'm uh, having a bit of a hard time keeping it down..."

They both looked down, and, as if they were linked together, they burst out laughing. It felt good, *he* felt good. A mixture of chemical and psychological wellness swept over him, and right then he felt like he was safe and lucky, happy in his life. It was the first time, truly the first time, he had felt like that.

Ignoring his half hard penis, he reached down and picked up his discarded pyjamas and put them back on. He was really beginning to find the weather cold, as his body was cooling down from what it had just been through.

In a matter of minutes, he was once again flaccid and happy with that state. He didn't think he had the energy left to keep it up anyway, so was glad that they hadn't tried to start anything with it. He was sleepy now, and content.

He fell asleep that night wrapped up in Katie's arms.

He woke up with her still holding him and he her.

It was the best Monday he thought he'd ever have.

The end of term came faster than he expected, and he was flustered with the need to check, recheck, and triple check every tiny thing he had done for his end of year assignments that weren't group work.

He had been a lot calmer and more himself since being able to move ahead somewhat in the bedroom with Katie. There was, to almost everyone he had been in contact with the past year, a change in his behaviour. Well, not his normal behaviour which he had got from the Doctor, which made him a bit bouncy in certain circumstances, but a general feeling of contentment.

The school councillor said it was probably due to him letting go of some of his fears and learning to live past the things that had happened to him before. Starting a relationship with Katie was helping him. He was glad, though, that he had waited until he was a bit more right in the head for it.

That was probably the mistake he had made with Rose. He had picked her up and immediately became attached to her. He had been so dependent on her, he wouldn't have been able to live with her death.

Well, that was the Doctor, but in this case, it was alright that he thought of them as the same person, he felt, as it was the way he remembered meeting Rose. Sure, he now thought of himself as a different being, but he sometimes had no way of distinguishing himself

from the Doctor. Some things he did were even odder, as he'd picked them up from Donna.

Either way, right now he had the Doctor's memories of end of year exams and he was beginning to dread that his work wasn't good enough, even though he knew that Earth standards were way below that of Time Lord standards.

"Settle down. I'm sure you'll do fine!" Jackie told him at the dinner table the day before his first assignment was due.

"I can't help it! I've got rotten memories of end of year exams..."

"Think of it like this, Jack. Afterwards, you'll have more time to be with Katie, and you'll be able to choose a job in an area you'd like to work in part time, in case you still want to become a teacher and study for that," Pete stated, eating his dinner without a care that if he failed, his entire life, and all the plans he had started to make would unravel, leaving him right back at square one.

"I can't fail. I can't! And the more I think that, the more it feels like I *am* going to fail..."

Jackie and Pete exchanged identical expressions which he couldn't quite place. He was sure it had something to do with his rather panicked mind. He didn't care right then. All he wanted was tomorrow to come, so he could hand in the first two assignments, and be done with it. If he failed, he would die. He knew that, he felt that. He'd be nothing if he couldn't pass a simple human business course.

He ended up playing with his food instead of eating it, as his nerves were making his stomach all wonky and he was feeling rather ill. He had the thought that if this was the human norm for

end of year things, he didn't half wonder why a lot of adults didn't bother going to college or university, rather settling with what they had got from school instead. He hated going to college, right now, because of it.

"Ugh! I can't eat. I don't feel good..." he muttered, pushing his plate away and dropping one hand to rub at his belly, which was beginning to churn at the sight and smell of the food. He wanted to get up and go outside for some fresh air to try to calm himself down, knowing that the cold might help a bit right then, since he was feeling slightly warm.

He hoped to whatever deities may or may not be looking down on this planet that he wasn't getting sick. Not now. He couldn't risk not going because it was probably the most important week of his life to date.

A hand was put on his forehead, and he quickly pulled it off and scowled at Jackie.

"Well, you're not running a temperature or anything. Just nerves. You'll feel better if you eat something."

He grimaced and stuck out his tongue. "If I stay here much longer, I'm going to be sick..."

Jackie glared at him for that, but let him go. He went out the front door and spent 5 minutes breathing in the frigidly cold air. It made him feel a bit better, but still awful inside.

He went to bed early that night, spent the night tossing and turning, and was almost dead on his feet the next morning, when Jackie came banging on his door, telling him it was time to get ready.

The first thing he did that morning was vomit. The second thing he did was dress. The third

was dry heave over the toilet for a rather horrid minute.

If he wasn't sick there was something majorly wrong with him. He needed to go see a doctor. He couldn't keep this up much longer, especially since he didn't have anything left in his stomach to bring up.

He was shaking, literally shaking with nerves. If this wasn't so utterly important to him, he knew he wouldn't be like this. He'd be more like the Doctor. Sod the consequences, didn't matter, can try again sooner or later, once everything had quietened down.

He couldn't do that. He didn't have a TARDIS, he didn't have the Doctor's time line, and this single event that would happen throughout this last week would spell whether or not he'd be able to earn his own money in this world, and find a life of his own, or forever be dependent on Jackie and Pete.

A knock came at his door again and Jackie poked her head into his room. "Come on, or you'll be late. Want a repeat performance of last time that happened?"

He grimaced, remembering well, and shook his head. "I can't eat breakfast. I really don't want to go but if I don't I'd be throwing my whole life away. Shit! I'm so scared, Jackie!"

She looked at him for a few seconds before sighing and reaching out to hug him. "Now you're just being silly. Come on, time to get ready. Get whatever you need for today and we'll go. I can stay outside if you feel you can't stay for longer than it takes to hand in your work."

He nodded, knowing that the idea would slightly brighten his mood and the prospect of

doing what he was about to do a little bit better and lighter on his shoulders. "Yeah, I'd like that. Please don't leave me...not today. I need the support. And I feel like such an *idiot* for that."

She smiled at him and patted his shoulder. "Well, idiot or not, you're going to do it. Now come on, get your things."

He reached over to his desk, where the work he had to hand in for that first day was already waiting. Without pausing to think of what he was doing, he scooped the papers up and left with Jackie.

The drive to the college was done in silence. He couldn't think of a single thing to say and spent the time staring blindly out of a window, since he'd found out the hard way that he felt sick in a car if he tried to read.

When he reached the college, he hurried in, took his seat, jumped to his feet and begun pacing. Most of the class was already there, and he was getting a few odd looks thrown his way, but since he was used to odd looks, he didn't pay any attention. What he was paying attention to was his heart beating twice as fast as it should.

God, he was going to faint...

He sat heavily down in his chair and laid his head on the table. Closing his eyes he tried to calm himself down, but was finding it impossible. He could feel his head spinning from behind his closed eyes.

Next moment, he was waking up with his teacher shaking his shoulder. An hour later. He blinked and frowned. His work was no longer on his desk with him and, though he tried not to make a sound, he shrieked loudly. "Where's my work?! It's gone! *What am I going to do?*"

He was sent right into a panic attack in that moment, and it wasn't until he had calmed down again that he noticed that the rest of the class wasn't there anymore. Was it an extended break, or had he sent everyone out by his stupid bloody state of mind?

He couldn't help it. Calmer now, and finding his work neatly in with the rest of the class's, he began to cry. He needed to stop these stupid and sudden public shows of emotion. They were completely embarrassing!

His little crying spell didn't last long, but it was enough to calm him down further. Truthfully, he'd wanted to let that out for the past few days, since he'd been under so much stress.

The stress of the situation wasn't gone, but it had definitely lessened considerably. Still, he was afraid that he'd fail.

He didn't bother telling his teacher that. He checked to make sure his other project due in that day was handed in to the right person, before going out to Jackie who, true to her word, was waiting for him in the car, music on to keep out the quiet and she had a book which she was avidly reading.

He frowned when he noticed said book was his copy of Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. Why did she have to take his book? He still hadn't got around to finishing it with Tony, as he had been too nervous lately to do much reading. Poor kid was probably wondering what happened next, since he was up to the part where they were about to enter the corridor on the third floor, guarded by Fluffy.

Tony, as far as he could tell, loved Fluffy.

"Hey!" he called out, not wanting to just open the car and get in if she wasn't paying attention.

She jumped slightly, bookmarked the page (he refused to let people dog ear his book pages) and turned a smile towards him.

"All done for today then? Didn't take too long."

"I should have been out ages ago, Jackie. I...fell asleep for an hour or so. And then I kind of had a panic attack. And then I cried for a bit. Stress does not suit this human body. I wish I could take that kind of stuff like a Time Lord. Let it all just...roll off my shoulders like the Doctor..."

She frowned at him, and he didn't know if it was the comment or what had happened to him that made her do so. Either way, he didn't let her answer him, he climbed into the car and waited for her to go. After a few seconds, Jackie sighed loudly, in a put out sort of way, and they were on their way home.

He hoped it wasn't home for the rest of his life.

After a week of handing in his last assignments, he felt ready to burst with relief.

He had spent the rest of the week at Katie's, most of it in the bedroom, none of it in the way he truly wanted though. He still hadn't got that far with her yet.

He had got into the habit of carrying around a condom though. Just in case it did happen.

He hoped that happened soon.

A letter arrived for him in the mail. A letter which would show him his results. It wasn't a big envelope which would house a certificate and his hopes of passing plummeted so much he couldn't open it.

He froze. Standing by the letters that had been brought in and put on the desk where the mail was usually put, he couldn't move. He didn't want to know how badly he had failed, but all it would take would be to fail one part of the course and he'd fail the whole lot of it.

When he felt a hand on his shoulder he jumped almost out of his skin and his heart started beating so fast in his chest, he was beginning to think he was at the start of having a heart attack.

"You want me to open it?" Jackie asked, from where she was now standing by his side.

He nodded, unable to form words at the current time.

She smiled at him and grabbed the envelope out of his hands. She undid it with care, and unfolded the pieces of paper inside to read. After a few seconds, she looked at him, smiled, and pulled him into a hug.

He almost started crying with disappointment then, as the only reason he could think of to have Jackie hug him was that he had failed.

"You passed, sweetheart. You don't have to worry. I'm just saving you the trouble of almost crushing my ribs by starting the hug."

He was sure he had misheard her and asked in a tiny voice, almost afraid of the answer. "I really passed?"

She chuckled and rubbed his back a bit. "Yeah, with Honours. You did really well. Now you'll be able to get a job somewhere good."

He was beginning to lighten up, to let himself believe that this wasn't some sort of sick joke on Jackie's part, not that she was that kind of person to begin with, and a grin started to make

its way onto his face. "I passed! Part-time job then. Starting next February, I think I might start another class. Introductory teaching I think. Start from the beginning. Hah! I feel like something has finally gone right in my life, Jackie! God, I feel *great!*"

He hoped that the good feeling stuck around longer than normal. But knowing his life was finally on some type of track and going in the direction he wanted was definitely a sign that he was moving on from being nobody.

He was going to go out there, leave his mark in the world, and make himself somebody important.

He disentangled himself from Jackie, smiling widely, before laughing loudly and running to the phone. He had to call Katie to let her know. And Pete too, Pete should definitely know about it, too. Tony was in his playroom and, as a treat, he took the boy into his room and finished reading *Philosopher's Stone* to him.

Good results and Harry Potter.

Nothing could be better right then. Nothing.

He kissed Katie deeply, making sure she could feel that he was truly in a good mood, that he wasn't just doing this to do it. That he truly wanted to experience all of her. He was ready now, or he felt ready at any point.

Adrenaline had been pumping through his system for the past few hours, and he was excited, really excited, over any tiny little thing. So, when Katie came over after he had hung up, news that she had passed too, and was already on the job seeker's list, he decided the best way

to celebrate was to go that extra step he had been stopping at until now.

Tonight, unless he made a complete fool of himself, he would be inside Katie. With the right appendage, not just his fingers. That so happened to feel like a good thing right now, since he was shaking with all he was feeling.

He cut off the kiss to let himself breathe, a giddy smile on his face.

He was ready. He was more than ready. He was hard and ready in that way, and just looking at Katie right then, lying naked on his bed and breathing hard from the touches they'd been sharing, and the kisses, he felt ready for more.

Knowing it was now or never, he sat up, grabbed at the pack of condoms he'd been keeping in his bedside table and quickly ripped open the foil. He had to stop then. He'd never before needed a condom and was unsure, even after being told how to do it, how to put it on.

"Umm, you want to do the honours?" he asked, holding the condom up, still curled up in its small circular way. It was teasing him. He just knew that sex would be off if he couldn't get the blasted thing on.

"Sure," Katie said, crawling her way towards him on all fours; taking the small piece of latex from him she carefully unrolled it over his erection. The motion made him groan with a need he knew was about to be sated.

It felt odd. Like it was there to cut off a bit of feeling and not just to stop sperm from getting to any eggs that Katie might have circulating in her body. It wasn't uncomfortable though, and less feeling meant he might be able to last a bit longer than flesh on flesh. Not that he was

someone who came within seconds any longer. He could last much longer now with Katie.

Still, this was a new sensation and a new thing entirely for him, and he was always a bit quicker with new things when it was sexual in nature. He remembered quite vividly the embarrassment of the few seconds he had lasted the first time she had lowered not her hand, but her head, to him.

He was afraid that he had almost choked her to death, since he'd had no time to warn her he was about to come.

Shaking his head, his breathing quickening more than it already was, he turned around and crawled up to the pillows. "Umm, how will we do this? Lots of positions."

She grinned at him, joining him within seconds and held his hand for a few seconds. "Well, start off simple. We can either do it the normal way, with you on top, or with me on top. We can work up to other ways."

He nodded, licked his lips, turned to her and began slowly, and with as much passion as he could possibly show, kissed her. Grabbing her waist, he pulled her to him, feeling himself rub against her stomach. He just let his own natural instincts take over then, lowering her to the bed, and climbing on top of her, a knee used to nudge open her legs a bit wider.

He had to look down then. He didn't want to enter her in the wrong place after all. He frowned, his tongue sticking a bit out of his mouth, as he ended up having to take himself in hand to line up his erection to enter her at all.

After the tip was in, closing his eyes and letting out his breath in a pant, he was able to take his hand off once he'd slightly pushed forward. He

was halfway in then, his body so caught up in an overload of sensation that he had to stop and stay still for a few moments. He dropped his head on top of hers and grimaced. "Oh god, this is the most intense feeling I've ever had!" he whispered to her, planting a rather chaste kiss to her forehead, before moving his head down slightly to claim her lips with his.

When he had acclimated himself a bit to the sensation, he moved forward in a thrust he hoped didn't hurt her. It set his whole body tingling. This...this was nothing like her hand or even her mouth on him. This was...he didn't know what this was, but he was sure that right then it was one of the best things to have ever happened to him.

No wonder humans had a fixation on sex, if this was how it felt to have it.

His body took over, his mind grinding to a halt, leaving nothing but feeling and movement.

He pulled back, almost to the point of popping right back out again, before thrusting back in, this time hearing a welcome groan of pleasure from Katie. He did this twice more, before the need to stay buried in her took over, and his thrusts became more of a grinding sensation.

Much sooner than he expected, and much to the delight of them both, he found a rhythm that pleased them both. And he did so before coming. He'd have to remember the way Katie liked it, and right then, he was just plain happy with any type of way possible. He had no idea if there was something he liked better.

Something better would have him ejaculate rather prematurely right then anyway.

Katie wrapped her legs around him, and he felt himself slide further into her and he closed his

eyes and panted at the thought. He was doing well, he wasn't going to blow this now by...well, by 'blowing'. But he could feel himself getting closer and closer with every passing moment to one hell of an orgasm. This was not going to be a surprise to either one of them.

He lost the rhythm, and started to thrust into her as fast as he could while buried in her. He never got more than half way out, before shoving himself back in and it was getting to his head. He was dizzy with the pleasure. His eyes rolled up, he felt himself speaking but couldn't hear the words.

And then he came. Orgasm rolled over him in waves and he shouted out very loudly; all he could do was hold on tightly and let the sensation happen. He never stopped moving throughout, and it wasn't until the last shudder of pleasure had left him that his body, suddenly exhausted, collapsed on top of Katie and he groaned.

He was aching. Was he supposed to ache afterwards?

"Jack? Jack, are you alright?"

He couldn't seem to slow down his breathing, so instead he just nodded, hoping she didn't notice that he was slightly shaking.

Well, at least he wasn't crying over it. The thought alone made him giggle, which didn't help with his breathing.

"Jack?! Should I get Jackie?"

He was beginning to catch his breath now, and while he was desperately shaking his head, he also managed to squeak out the word. "No! No Jackie! I'm fine, just...just got a bit breathless

there. I don't think I've ever come so hard in my life..."

And that was true. While that first time with her in the cinema had been explosive and very sudden, this had been neither sudden nor explosive. This had been slow building (for him anyway) and had been waves of pleasure the likes of which he had never felt before. He hoped it always felt so good.

Katie grinned at him when he kissed her after he was back to breathing normally, and his body, while still having a bit of an ache to it, had calmed down quite a bit. In fact, he was feeling sleepy. He began laughing and shaking his head. "God help me, I've become a cliché."

He slipped out of her before he had grown soft, and knowing about as much on getting the damned things off as putting them on, Katie helped him get the much stickier condom off. They wrapped it in a tissue and dumped it into the little bin he had in the bathroom.

He forgot that first time about sharing and fell asleep wrapped in Katie's arms, without her having achieved orgasm herself.

When they were called down to dinner, he was pretty sure, with the noise they'd been making, that Pete and Jackie knew what had happened and the mood at the table was full of jovial happiness. It was only then that he remembered that he had left Katie, if she had really been enjoying herself, high and dry as he had fallen asleep.

As soon as dinner was over, he made sure to give her two orgasms of her own.

He had been unable to get another erection, but they had both enjoyed themselves and that was all that mattered to him.

He woke up the next morning aching more than he had when he went to sleep for the night. While they hadn't had sex of any type again after he had pleased Katie, they had talked for quite a while, mainly about their plans for the future now that they had passed their business course. It had felt normal and nice to be able to do something that had become such a norm for them, after something so...big.

Katie was still beside him dressed in one of his pyjama tops, while he was wearing the bottoms. Her knickers were still on the other side of the room.

Normally that would arouse him, but right now he didn't feel...right. He rolled over to face away from Katie as a sudden coughing fit overcome him, and he remembered the last time he had body aches like this. He groaned. Well, at least he had finished his course before he had got sick.

At least this time it looked like he wouldn't be sick on Christmas either.

"You alright?" Katie asked, her voice husky and deep from just having woken up. Again, something that usually aroused him.

"Some time in the past two days, I must have picked up a cold from someone. I'm sorry. If you get sick too, you know why."

She made an 'Aww' noise behind him and gently begun to rub at his back. It caused him to cough a bit more, before he sighed and got up to go to the bathroom. He wanted a shower. He felt sticky with sweat and he was sure that most of the sweat on him now had nothing to do with what he and Katie had done

last night. After his nap, they had both had a shower.

He had a bit of a temperature. How he hadn't woken Katie with that was beyond him. His throat was all scratchy and his eyes were aching.

He made his way back to his bed and buried himself under the covers, while Katie got out and smiled at him. "I'll go get you some breakfast. Anything you want?"

He frowned and shrugged. "Just some toast. Will hurt like hell to eat. Marmalade." He buried his head under his pillow after that and had almost succeeded in falling asleep again when Jackie entered with Katie, carrying a tray with his breakfast on it.

"Trust it to be you to get sick first this year. Going to give it to everyone else, you are. Thankfully, it's not Christmas this year."

He grinned and nodded sleepily at her. "I had a similar thought." He would have laughed if he didn't feel so tired. What was it about being sick that made him more tired than normal?

Katie sat down on the bed with him, and smiled. "Food first, then you can sleep all you want. Want me to stay?"

He shook his head. "No, I'll probably just sleep a lot. I did last time. At least this time I'm not a miserable sick person. Just kind of tired. Very tired in fact."

Jackie handed over his breakfast and he sat up, kind of feeling a bit hungry now food was in front of him, but not hungry enough to want to eat it. He grimaced as he grabbed a piece of marmalade covered toast and bit into it.

He was fine with the biting, he was fine with the chewing and he was definitely fine with the taste. The swallowing made him almost choke. His throat was burning. "Can I have some of your paracetamol for this, Jackie? I've got a bit of a temperature and it might ease the pain in my throat."

She patted his shoulder and nodded. "Sure. Be back in a tick. You eat! There's nothing worse than cold toast."

He ate. With Katie watching his every move and willing him to every time he wanted to stop, he didn't feel like he had much of a choice. After one slice, he was full. He let Katie eat the other slice. Thankfully she did, not badgering him to eat it.

By the time Jackie got back, he was in a light doze and had to be woken up a bit to swallow the painkillers.

After that, he slept.

His new human immune system was barely any better than a human's at combating disease. It took him a very slow and boring 5 days to get out of bed after that first day. Not because he was too miserable to, but because he was too tired. Thankfully, that was passing now, and he was ready to get up and venture into the lounge room to at least watch some television.

Katie had gone home that first day probably hoping to see him again on the next. He specifically told Jackie to tell her no. There was no need. He was fine, it was just a bit of a cold and he was perfectly fine sleeping it off.

Whether Katie came over or not he didn't know. He hoped she hadn't. He would have been no

fun at all, and his body couldn't concentrate on fighting illness and his girlfriend at the same time. And he was put off by her seeing him so weak. Like his entire life was held up by her thinking he was at least strong in one area of his life.

He was skinny, he was weak physically and he was weak mentally. The least he could do was combat a normal, quite tame illness without any fuss and bother. And now the disease was mainly gone, though he was still a little clogged up in the sinus area, but he was feeling much better and he didn't know what was on the telly any longer.

Why didn't he watch it more often to at least keep track of one show? He used to like a soap as the Doctor, he recalled. Some space opera type thing. In this human life with only the normal human programmes, he was bored out of his skull. But it was better watching something than spend yet another day lying around in bed.

Flicking through the channels he found a human soap. Someone was possessed by something at the moment, making the characters act differently towards people who knew them. It was almost something he was used to and kept it on. By the end of the half hour, he decided that he could quite easily become a faithful viewer of the show, for at least the possession arc.

He didn't catch the title, so he'd just have to wait until the same time slot tomorrow.

After the show was finished, he went off to get the phone. He wanted to call Katie to let her know that he was sorry for not having her around, but he had spent his week asleep, quite literally. Well, that had been the plan anyway.

He couldn't help chuckling and shaking his head at the stuffed up voice of his girlfriend, as Katie answered her phone. She had caught his cold then. Well, they were about as good as each other then.

"Hello. I hope you feel better soon," he said, after she had told him that she was sick too.

She laughed, and the sound was less than healthy. It was the first time he had heard her laugh and it hadn't made him at least feel a bit better. If anything, he was worried.

"I'm fine, Jack. Just got your cold. I've been spending most of my time in bed too. Right fine pair the two of us make."

And this time he laughed, because it was true, though he was more damaged than she was. Only slightly...and by slightly he meant a lot more. Still, he was shedding his cold so had faith that she would soon shed hers, since she would have been sick for only roughly 3 days.

"Well, I'm beginning to get better, so it'll only be a matter of time before you're up and about. Mind you, I am bored to pieces here."

"Well, I better be off then. Talking's hurting my throat," Katie replied, and with a farewell that was rather a bit more soppy than he was used to, though he hadn't yet told her he loved her, as he wasn't sure if he did or not yet. He knew he was definitely in lust though, and deep affection. He figured if he did love her, he'd just blurt the words out on his own when the time was right. That's how it was shown in movies anyway.

At least he knew he could say it, being half human, which was more than he ever could as a Time Lord.

He hung up the phone and went in search of something to eat. His appetite which had fled him soon after breakfast that first day of his sickness, was now returning.

Christmas was only a month away now. A month! And he hadn't done any shopping for it yet. He didn't have to borrow money to do so anyway, which was good, considering he was reluctant to do that.

As soon as he had got better from his illness, he had joined on the job search, and was now getting a fortnightly pay check as long as he was actively looking for work. He didn't want a job at any low end place, so he had begun looking in places where he thought he might like to work, mainly, electronics stores.

So far he had been to three, and had no luck, but he was still optimistic, since the last place had looked rather tempted by the breadth of his knowledge in all things to do with electronics. It was the lack of credentials that was scaring them away, but he knew there were people that would let that part slide if a person was good enough for the job, or the boss was willing to help a newcomer to the workforce. He just had to find it.

But first, Christmas shopping.

He'd have to buy a present for Katie some other time, because right now he was shopping with her. He was sure that Jackie, maybe even Pete, would take him back out sooner or later. Still, he was still a bit unsure of what to buy.

Tony was easy enough. He had managed to find, in a shop that sold Harry Potter merchandise, a toy version of Fluffy from the Harry Potter books. He had that tucked under

one arm, while holding Katie's hand. It was a bit awkward, but they were both happy at the moment.

His good mood hadn't yet faded. Sex agreed quite well with him in that regard. It was the longest he'd ever felt good with himself.

"So! Any thoughts on what to get Pete and Jackie?"

He grinned and shook his head. "Nope, still nothing. Just like it was five minutes ago when you last asked me. Any ideas?"

She grinned at him and shrugged. She had said the first time the conversation played out that if she spotted something for either one of them to tell him, and so far had kept quiet about anything that they'd seen.

He had originally thought maybe jewellery for Jackie, but that was still way beyond him money-wise. He had wanted to buy a watch for Pete, but again, money was still pretty much an issue. So, he had left those ideas alone, in favour of window shopping and hoping to get lucky.

They had been wandering aimlessly around London's biggest shopping district for a few hours now, and the shops were becoming older and more the sort that wouldn't sell anything any of the Tylers would want.

He was about to call it a day and start again tomorrow, after asking Pete and Jackie what they wanted, when he spotted it in an old antiques and collectibles store. Some customers were exiting and it had grabbed his attention as his gaze was wondering past the front window.

He walked over to look at it and gaped. It was perfect in every detail, right down to the panels. And he wanted it, oh how badly he wanted it.

Quickly, he pushed open the door and found the owner of the shop at the desk, trying to shut the old fashioned register.

"Hello? I would like to know how much you're selling that for?" he asked, pointing to what had caught his attention.

"That," the old man replied, "Is not for sale, unless you have a particular name. There's a curse on it, you see. It's only meant for one person, and I won't be selling it to anyone but that person. It comes with a letter and a warning if you're interested in reading those."

He was hit by a wave of disappointment so strong he almost fell to his knees from it. He nodded and begun to turn around, before something stopped him. They didn't exist in this universe. He had checked early on, and had spent weeks crying. Though that was also the loss of Rose and his universe.

It 'felt' different too. His eye would have eventually grabbed hold of it anyway, so it was just luck that it was today.

"What name would this be?" he asked, daring to hope he said his.

"It's Jack. There's a second and third name given too."

"Noble Jones, right?!" he asked, his voice becoming just a little bit more intense than he would have liked. He was beginning to scare the poor man.

"Yes, yes it is. Jack Noble Jones. Signed by two thirds of his namesake..."

"Captain Jack Harkness and Martha Jones! Where was this found?! How is this even possible!" he stated, and without even asking, walked up to the small replica and opened its doors. Inside were the two letters.

The first one was a general warning, telling whoever found it that they better take it to some antiques or collectibles place, or there would be a curse on their family, in which monsters from outer space would come to get them. Photocopied onto it was a picture of Janet, Jack's pet Weevil. He chuckled, knowing it to be a hoax but knowing that it'd scare most people off right away.

He put that one down in favour of pulling out the letter. It was written in Jack's scrawl.

Dear Jack Noble Jones,

Nice name by the way. We would like to send you a gift, in case you were homesick and missing us. Don't worry, the Doctor dealt with the Rift so it would cross over to the right universe and the right time period (we hope) and enclosed we hope our little warning has scared off any potential thieves and this ends up in your hands. The nasty Weevil won't attack you.

We know how much the TARDIS means to you, and we hope that this will ease some of the loneliness you must be feeling without her. Oh, and nice for getting a girl too! Hope she knows what she's getting herself in to!

Martha had a carpenter friend make it for you. Hope you don't mind that it's not a full scale model, but a smaller version, as the larger one would have been too big to fit through the tiny

crack that is there for the moment. This one was as big as it could get and still we are told it might get stuck.

Hope life treats you well on your side.

The Doctor and Rose say hi!

Love and well wishes, from two thirds of your namesake

Captain Jack Harkness

Martha Jones

He laughed at the letter and hugged the model to his chest. He didn't want to part with it by either hand.

Fluffy was now on the ground, and was being picked up by a very confused Katie, while the shop owner glared at him.

Knowing he'd have to prove himself, he let go, quickly dug out his I.D and passed it to the man. It clearly showed him as Jack Noble Jones, thankfully, and after a bit of trying to see if the card was faked (it wasn't, it was as real as he was) the shop owner admitted defeat and nodded. "Alright, seems it was meant for you. What is it by the way? No one knows what the purpose of a police public call box is..."

"Oh, where I used to come from, they had them in the 60's. They were police cells in case a criminal was caught on foot and a car wasn't around to take them to police stations. It was



used as a holding cell. But this, this isn't a model of a police public call box, this is a model of the TARDIS! Best ship in the universe she is! Or, at least, that universe. She isn't on this one...

The man nodded at him slowly, and Jack knew he had begun to sound demented. He laughed. "It's all a bit alien, like Janet there in the photo."

With that, he left with his new TARDIS model now firmly grasped in his hands. He wasn't going to let go of it until he knew it was in a safe spot. Just in case, he had put the warning back in. That'd stop most people taking it if they thought he might be hiding valuables in there or something.

He entirely forgot about present-buying in his happiness at finding Jack and Martha's gift to him, that he got Katie to just drive him back home.

He put the TARDIS on his bedside table and stared at it with a soppy grin on his face for the rest of the day.

He knew the hole was closed by now. The Doctor wouldn't have allowed it to stay open for long. Just like his quick message through to him, when he had said his goodbyes to him and Rose. This hole must have been smaller though.

It must have been left over. Or it was the same hole, just used at a later time period on the Doctor's end. He did say there could be a possible connection every few decades, and he wouldn't risk another talk just yet.

Either way, his mood had taken an even higher curve up.

He had a job!

Sure, it wasn't what he'd imagined, but he had a job in a chain store as a person that could be called to fix broken equipment. The job had a proper name, but he referred to himself as a fixer upper.

It wasn't very busy most of the time, and the things that he fixed had to be purchased from the store only, but it felt like the tinkering he used to do all the time on the TARDIS, just at a much easier and smaller scale.

He already loved it.

The best thing was, he only worked three days (it was a part time job, so he'd be able to study again come next year with not much problem at all), and while the pay wasn't much at all, it was something he definitely enjoyed doing and he was glad to have been picked up at all.

He took the Tylers out for dinner to celebrate.

Katie was out of town, visiting her parents again. He was disappointed that she was not there too, but family was important, and so he decided not to push it and let her go spend the day with her mum and dad.

He laughed as he watched Tony eating chips and plunking them in tomato sauce so thick the chips were barely visible through the red. Jackie was scowling at the boy, and Pete was busy trying to ignore the mess.

He revelled in it. Children were a rare treasure on Gallifrey, and so even when the things they did were messy or disgusting, it was still something to show off. Or so he felt.

Jackie sighed, grabbed a napkin once Tony was done eating and tried to clean him off. After a moment she sighed loudly, got up and grabbed a sticky had.

"Right you two, I'm going to clean this one up. We'll be back soon. Eat more if you feel like it."

With that, Jackie walked towards the changing room that was between the men's and women's toilets.

Jack leaned towards Pete and whispered in a worried voice. "What does Jackie want for Christmas? Times running out and I'm out of ideas!"

Pete frowned at him, but he recognised that as his thinking look, not that he was angry at the question. "Dunno. She might want some new clothes, or something. You could try shoes. She can't ever get enough shoes. But make sure it isn't a repeat pair."

He blinked. Shoes. He had noticed that Jackie had a wide collection of footwear now and had thought nothing of it. A nice pair of shoes might fit his price range. He might even tease her a bit and get her some running shoes. With how much she had to run after Tony, they might come in handy for around the house when she didn't have to dress up.

Tonight she was dressed up and wearing a pair of light blue high heels that looked a bit glittery when the light hit them. They matched her heavy dress perfectly.

Jackie liked the dress up here (and was meant to appear as such to everyone else too), but she didn't like to overdo it too much. Thankfully.

He nodded and grinned, relaxing a bit, as Jackie came marching back out with Tony in her arms. The boy was clean, but crying his heart out.

"Right, that's it. This one's having a temper tantrum, so I think it might be good to get back home. You two done here?"

Nodding, Jack got up out of his seat and made his way back to the car.

Well, he was sure of one thing, life with the Tylers was definitely never boring.

He had found, just before the real last minute rush started, the perfect pair of shoes for Jackie. They were a light pink colour he knew was her favourite and had tiny prints of roses on them. They were a pair of converse high tops, much like the ones the Doctor wore in his tenth form.

He figured they'd be a nice reminder of both Rose and the Doctor all rolled into one, but also something she might like herself.

For Pete he had decided on something for the office. He didn't have many pictures of the family, and most of the ones he did have were taken in a hurry and a bit blurred. So, he had got him a reservation to have a family portrait done. He'd had to fork out more money for it than he had really liked, but he thought it would be worth it.

Both he and Jackie could share that one if they wanted, but mainly it was a thank you to Pete for putting up with him for the past year and a bit.

He also brought them both a block of chocolate. Dark for Jackie and white for Pete.

For Katie he hadn't had any idea, until he was walking by a charity store. In there, standing in a corner all on its lonesome was the loveliest jacket, and he knew it was of a type she liked. He had gone in and brought it without even giving it a second thought.

It was a little big for her, but it would do, he was sure. If anything they could get it altered so it

fitted a bit better after Christmas when he had saved up a bit more money.

All he could hope was that he had chosen the right type of gifts for them.

They were all important to him, after all.

Christmas dawned grey and freezing, and it had started snowing again the night before.

He was bundled up in so many layers, it sounded like people were talking all muffled. And yet, he was happy and content, and even the cold temperature couldn't bring down his mood.

He had presents again. That thing that he had found so odd from the year before was there, waiting for him all over again and he itched to rip off the festive paper to see what was hidden beneath, just for him. But first, he apparently had to wait for Jackie and Pete to get out of bed, because they were holding everything up by sleeping in.

He was out by the tree, staring at the brightly coloured gifts, with Tony.

"Could we open one without them knowing?" Tony asked, turning his gaze to look at him for a few moments, before turning back to his rather big pile of gifts.

Jack only had three presents under there, one from each of the Tylers, but those were plenty enough for him, though he was getting a bit jealous staring at the pile for the small boy by his side.

"Nah, think we'll get into trouble if we do that."

Tony pouted but nodded, before getting up to his feet, running full pelt for the stairs and Jack couldn't help smiling as he called out a quick "Oi! No running in the house!" He knew that the boy was going to get his mum and dad so that he could open up his presents.

He wondered if he'd be able to have tarts for breakfast again this year, or if Maureen had a different treat, or none, for him this year. His stomach growled at the thought of food.

After only a few short minutes, in which he had inched closer to his small pile of presents, Tony came running back down again, squealing loudly, and bounced to sit right next to his presents. Jackie followed much more slowly down the stairs, while Pete went off to the kitchens to start the percolator.

Coffee sounded good. Though, it wasn't as if he wasn't already wide awake.

He shoved his present at the boy and grinned. "Here's mine. Open this first, while your dad's getting something for us to drink."

Tony blinked at it for a few seconds before giving him a wide smile, and ripped the paper off as if it hadn't taken him five minutes to wrap the blasted toy up. Tony squealed loudly and pounced on him, seeing the three headed dog. "Fluffy! Thanks, Uncle Jack!"

Grinning and letting out a happy sound of his own, he hugged the boy, until Tony squirmed to be let go. He soon had a present, a bigger one than last year by all means, shoved at him. "Here! I got you this!"

Last year, Tony had got him a small box of coloured pencils. This year, it was a kit including pens, pencils, paints and other art supplies. He hugged the boy with a giant grin

on his face. "Aww thanks, Tony! I can draw you something if you want, later?"

He got a huge nod that looked rather painful in reply, but the boy didn't seem to mind. He was too happy to care about little pains.

After they had exchanged presents, Pete was back, the cups of coffee and one cup of orange juice. There was nothing in there from Maureen this year, but he didn't let that get him down. He still had Katie's present, so he wasn't down or anything. More like up. Katie was coming round at midday for lunch with her parents.

It would be the first time he'd met her parents, and while he was beginning to get a little nervous, he was much too excited about it being Christmas to really mind all that much.

He decided he was acting as much a child as Tony was. More importantly, right then, he didn't care, because he was having fun.

Fun was important. Oh yes, it was.

Next it was he and Jackie who exchanged presents. She actually put the shoes on to see if they fitted, which he took as a good sign. Even better when she kept them on. He knew that pink was her favourite colour, though blue was Pete's World Jackie's favourite. Thankfully, he had the one he knew to shop for.

She had got him a laptop of all things. It was a bit out of date with today's technology, but he didn't mind because he knew he could make it much better. He instantly loved it. So much so that he spent five minutes hugging her for it.

Pete, predictably, had got him clothes again. He didn't mind, because they were blue, and they were always different cut suits. Last year he

had got a suit identical to the one he had worn when he had been 'born'. This time it was a navy blue one, and much more business-like. He didn't yet own a business suit, and if he got a better job at some stage, he'd probably needed one.

He hugged the man for a bit, thanked him, happy with all his presents so far, before turning over his present to Pete.

"Now, Pete, this is more a little bit of a joint thing, but I could only think of getting you something for the office, and while I could have given you an office organiser or something like that, I thought this might do well on a wall, or on your desk."

He had no idea what Pete would think, so when he got no reply after seeing the gift under the chocolate, he got a bit upset that he didn't like it. "Well, if you don't want it, I can always get the money back and refund it for something else..."

It had been most of his fortnightly pay too, that one little gift. Hopefully he would be able to refund it if it came down to that, because he hadn't bothered checking. He'd been too excited just getting it to check.

"No! Don't worry about that, Jack. It's great, it really is, but...expensive. How did you afford it?"

He shrugged. "I helped them fix something they thought broken beyond repair, so they lowered the price for me."

Nodding, Pete came over to him and gave him a hug much like the one he had given Jackie.

"Thanks! My desk is bare of any personal belongings. Not by choice, mind. It's just...with

the hectic life that is Torchwood, I can never really find the time to book something like this. It'll be good to have something to look at when I'm in there."

Grinning and nodding, making sure that Pete knew he was relieved that he liked it, he let go and laughed. "I bought presents! For Christmas! And got some too, but that part I did last year."

None of the Tylers really got the reason why that made him so happy. Personally, he didn't want them to know how much it actually meant to have people to exchange gifts with. He felt less a burden now, and more part of a family.

He doubted he'd get in the photo though. Not that he really expected to. He had meant it just a true family photo of Pete, Jackie and Tony. Well, no use moping over that, when he could be happy all day, he scolded himself, shaking his head slightly, before Maureen came in to say breakfast was ready.

Breakfast was a Full English Breakfast, with extra rashers of bacon. The maids and cook herself joined them, before going off to celebrate with their own families.

All in all, it was a brilliantly fantastic day before Katie arrived. And after that, it just got better.

Katie arrived just in time for lunch with her parents.

For the first time, her name (Katie Hall) made sense. Her mother was from India, and he had known at least one of her parents were, if only by her complexion. Her father was a lot like Pete, except older, and with grey hair and paler skin.

He had grinned like a maniac at them, and he was terrified while doing so that they'd automatically hate him. He often had thoughts he wasn't good enough, he just hoped that he wasn't proven right.

He had nothing to fear apparently, since by the time they had gone through lunch and had started a rather large and fun game of cards, he found out that they knew quite a lot about him, well, the official human story of him anyway, and they dismissed his madness as him dealing as best he could with everything that had happened.

That wasn't true though. He was definitely getting better, but the madness he got from the Doctor. If he could even rightly call it madness. It was just his natural personality shining through the depressions he kept on falling into.

Well, definitely not today. He refused to let himself get into any mood below content. And he was definitely that.

"So! Katie tells us that you got a job? What do you do, Jack?" Katie's father, George, asked.

"Oh! It wasn't that long ago. Umm, I fix things, electrical things. It's only part time, but I'm very good at it, and it's thankfully something I love doing, and I'm getting on with everyone, and haven't yet had any sick days or anything, which I suppose is a good sign, all things considered. I couldn't get through every day of class..."

He had to stop himself from telling them about the times when it was Katie who dragged him out of bed and got him moving again, from when the pain of merely existing was too much to bear. He doubted he'd still be alive if not for Katie.

"Still, it's good to have something to do and get paid for it. Not much, mind, but it's better than living off everyone else like I was before I got the job. I'm not as dependent anymore, and that's...that's a good thing. I think."

Yep, if they hadn't thought him crazy before, they would now with his constant rambling when nervous.

He shut up and left the table, moving into the lounge room and sitting in his favourite seat on the couch. After a few minutes during which he contemplated falling asleep since he'd been too excited to sleep much the night before, Katie joined him, a present in her hands.

"Haven't had the chance yet to exchange gifts, have we? Well, this one's all for you, Jack," she said, smiling wickedly at him. It wasn't a big present, and it looked as if it was a book or movie. He grinned and went to get hers from under the tree.

"And this," he stated, holding up the box and handing it over to her. "Is for you. Hope you like it. I had no idea what to buy, but I saw this and thought of you."

He let her open hers first, watching as she carefully unpeeled the sticky tape, careful not to rip the paper, and pulled out the box the jacket was in. Her face lit up when she pulled off the lid and, he grinned. She liked it. Good.

"Now I just feel bad! I didn't know what to get you either, and went for more of a...gag gift. Sorry."

He cocked his head to the side, gave it a slight shake, and decided it was a movie, not a book, opened it up and cracked up laughing. Hidden behind the bright green and red paper was the porn movie that they had gone to see at the

cinema. He remembered his words there, that night.

"I'd rather watch something like this in private! Hah! I can't believe you remembered me saying that."

She grinned and it was even more wicked than her last. "Well, we can watch it again tonight, after mum and dad have gone."

Grimacing, he shook his head. "Not here, we won't. Pete has a Christmas party, every year without fail. Family during the day, work and friends during the night."

Taking the DVD out of his hands and wrapping it up as tidily as possible in its paper again, she put it in her bag and winked. "Well, there's no party at my place. We can go back to my flat. Spend the night with me."

His breath caught and his mouth went dry at the thought of spending Christmas night with his girlfriend, just the two of them, doing what they wanted and not what everyone else expected of them. Quickly he nodded his head. "Sounds like a great plan," he replied, clearing his throat when he found his voice had taken on a more husky tone than normal.

Oh yes, he was excited about watching the movie this time, not that he expected much actual watching would be going on.

He was going to enjoy this Christmas a great deal more than he already was.

It was New Years Day already. The start of his second full year here in Pete's World, and he decided that his life was going to be good.

He had successfully finished his first course of study, he had a job doing something he loved, he had a girlfriend who was wonderful, and he had Jackie and Pete to look after him if his mood dipped too low and Katie wasn't around.

All in all, he decided that while he hadn't done too well the first year and a bit, this year would be different. This year would be the year he left behind the worst of his depression and truly went on about living his life, instead of moping it away.

This year was the year he would see if he could be what he wanted.

He still had a month and a bit to go before his beginner's course in teaching would start. A few more weeks before he could enrol altogether, but he knew he could get in. He could even do it through the same college where he had done his business course. Though he would, at some point, need to get some work experience in an actual school.

For this year was the year he had decided that he wouldn't think of himself as the freak of nature who shouldn't exist.

This year was the year that he would truly begin to live.

The world was wide open to him now, and he wanted to enjoy the journey of being just an ordinary man. Because he was doing it now. He was having that one adventure he could never have had as the Doctor, or with the Doctor.

The adventure of a normal life.