

Never Be Alone

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Rating: G

Summary: Sort of a Missing Scene to "A Time To Sleep". Clara finds herself back home, not understanding why the Doctor leaves her behind.

Disclaimer: BBC and Steven Moffat claim right on Doctor Who, and I'm happy about it, because I think they do quite a good job with creating and keeping alive this incredible show.

A/N: Companion piece (in every sense of the word...) to "A Time To Sleep". Shows Clara's side of the events, as indicated in the other story. Can be read as a stand-alone story though.

This ignores the 50th Anniversary (and a certain new Doctor). Still not sure how much exactly Clara knows about herself and the Doctor's life (lives), so this is my interpretation.

For days now, there'd been this unusual air of sadness around her otherwise always chipper Doctor; that mad man with a box and a smile on his face who was suddenly missing exactly that smile. No rambling at light speed, no elaborate explanations, no adventures marked by hilarity and danger. Just a quiet, thoughtful man her heart went out to even though she didn't know why.

It was just another day, another trip that ended by him landing his ship, looking to the doors as if to tell her that she should go and see what she found outside. The surprise he always reserved for her because, that much she knew, he loved seeing her excitement about a new world, a new place, a new fascinating experience.

"So where are we this time? You know, back before... well..." She trailed off, not willing to again voice the events that had changed so much. Instead, she coughed slightly and then put on one of her smiles that never failed to lighten up his mood as well.

It didn't seem to work today.

"There's this planet you promised me, remember? And I very much hope you finally live up to your promise, Doctor, because I have this new--" This time her words died on her tongue because she opened the TARDIS doors - and faced a familiar scenery. The Maitland house. She was back home.

She felt and heard him approach her, but didn't turn; not willing to let him see the tears dwelling up in her eyes. She'd lived enough of these lives as part of the Doctors' own to know what their sudden return, especially after an adventure that hadn't really been one, meant.

She had been born to save the Doctor, many times; but there was one thing she would never be able to save him from: Himself.

Swallowing her tears, she finally allowed herself to speak; if only one single word: "Doctor?" He remained silent, though; watched the house and the street for a while; didn't say anything until minutes later, Clara outright pleaded with him to talk to her. He then looked at her with regret in his eyes, and endless sadness in his young and yet so old eyes.

"I'm sorry, Clara. But this is where the journey ends." He'd never know whom his words caused more pain - him or her. The last thing he wanted to do was leave her behind, let go this clever, lovely, magnificent girl, and send her back to her old life. He had never liked doing it, it hurt him as much as it did them; but every now and then, the responsibility he felt had to win over his hearts' desires.

"Why, Doctor?" She used all her willpower to keep her tears from falling; she didn't understand, but she wanted to - and she was not going to accept the reality of the situation any sooner than it was explained to her. They had seen so much, went through good times and bad together, to hell and back, and now he was about to just leave her

back, in her plain old home, in this house that wasn't bigger on the inside, that couldn't travel in time and space... that would never be a home again.

"Because everything is going to change," he offered her, before he pulled her into a hug, holding her to him. "Live a good life, Clara; live a happy life. It's going to be wonderful if only you allow it to," he whispered into her hair, his arms tightening around her when she started to cry; she hadn't wanted to, but now her shaking and the wetness of tears on his neck where her face rested must have given away what she had tried to hide.

Minutes passed, maybe hours - neither of them cared. As long as he held her, he wasn't yet gone, that was the logic Clara's sadness-filled brain clung to in this moment. He hadn't yet left her, sent her back to her old life, and broken her heart that needed him so much to be with her.

She wished he'd just tell her what was happening, why he suddenly abandoned her, why he felt the need to leave her back, now, of all times. But words of explanation never came.

Instead, he let go of her, framed her face with his hands and pressed a kiss to her forehead.

"Goodbye, my impossible girl," he said, his voice choked, before he quickly turned and headed back into the TARDIS, not once again looking at her. The sound of the TARDIS' doors closing was the cruelest she then thought she could ever hear, and the sight of the blue box disappearing made her soul crumple.

He was gone. And this time, he wasn't coming back.

Life went back to normality. The most terrible of normality that could happen to a girl who'd been traveling the universe, past, present and future. There was housework, there were the kids to take care of, there was the old routine that almost killed her inside.

In her loneliness, her once exciting times turned into the memory of a nightmare, haunting her in her sleep where no Doctor was around to save her, save everyone; where she had to face hardships she'd taken bravely before, but now felt unable to conquer, with arms and legs and a mind made of lead, keeping her rooted to the spot as she watched horrors engulf her.

No minute went by that Clara didn't wonder where he was, what he did. Why he had left her. Day after day she watched the neighborhood in every free minute, hoping against hope that maybe, he would return; but he didn't. The happy life he'd asked her to live seemed so far out of reach, and she had no idea how she was ever going to find it, on this one planet, in this one time. It seemed so small, so insignificant for someone who'd been created for only one purpose, who'd come to life to protect this extraordinary man, again and again, through lives and times.

But now she was so far away from him, unable to ever reach him, and she felt how she'd lose him, one way or another, if she already hadn't.

How she was going to survive even the sheer knowledge of it, she didn't know.

The noise of the TARDIS landing had become a part of her very essence; she felt and heard it with every fiber of her being, no matter where she was and what she did. Even when she slept, as she did this late at night when the sound of the blue box invaded her dreams and pulled her back into reality.

She entangled herself from her sheets where a nightmare, the nightmare of losing her Doctor, had bound her in, and found her way to the window where, looking out, she was greeted by a sight that competed with everything

else she had seen in her life and on her journeys with the Doctor, and won. The blue box with the bright light on top - there it stood, waiting for her, and in no time Clara was dressed and knocking on the TARDIS' door.

The wings swung open by themselves, the Doctor standing next to the console when she entered, his face a mask of seriousness and sadness.

"I said goodbye to River. And she was right. I shouldn't be alone." Clara frowned at that, not understanding what he was talking about.

And then he explained it to her. Explained how his life would end, how he would be in agony, how his body and soul would hurt so terribly he would want to die properly, how he would change his face and his personality and everything she knew about him. And how he didn't want to be alone, although he felt selfish for it, knowing that while it was painful for him, it was even more disturbing for those who were with him. But he couldn't be alone.

"You won't be alone," was Clara's reply, who'd always known he changed faces every now and then, but never what it meant for him, to him. She took one of his big hands in her two small ones and squeezed it, her eyes filled with happiness just as much as they showed deep grief; filled with compassion and sorrow for him, the life he would lose, the unknown life he would gain that could turn out so wrong, the dangers of turning into a completely different person. She was happy that he'd come back, that he trusted her so much he'd allow her to be with him, that he'd chosen her to accompany him in this important moment, but she also felt his fear, his despair because he had to give up who he'd become so used to, who he loved to be.

Still, for the first time in what must have been weeks there was this glimpse of her old Doctor, the cheerful and funny one, who smiled at her and thanked her, and she swept her into his embrace, holding her tight in gratitude and affection.

Soon he wouldn't be like this anymore, or maybe he would, Clara didn't know. And it didn't matter either - as long as her Doctor was with her. He trusted her, he allowed her to be the one to stay with him, to be the last to see his old face and the first to greet the new one, and she'd be there for him.

Because even if he wouldn't be her Chin Boy anymore - he'd forever be her Doctor.

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